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*F R A N C I S,*  
THE  
PHILANTHROPIST:  
AN  
UNFASHIONABLE TALE.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED FOR L. WHITE, No. 86, DAME-STREET.

M,DCC, LXXXVI.

TO  
LADY WILLIAMS-WYNNE.

MADAM,

THAT I am urged by an impulse, which I cannot resist, to lay at your Ladyship's feet the production of hours devoted by sinister events to involuntary retirement, will, I am apprehensive, prove an apology very inadequate to my presumption; it is in your Ladyship's goodness that I must seek an excuse; nor will I despair of finding it in that benign disposition, which is the theme of universal admiration.

IF your Ladyship shall be of opinion, that the following volumes are calculated, as they are intended, to promote the cause of virtue, I shall not in vain solicit your Ladyship's protection for them; nor will the want of merit in the work, or the obscurity of the author, prevent its being sanctioned by that approbation, which will stamp on it a value above the reach of critical censure or popular depreciation:—to deserve from the good the praise of having meant well is my utmost ambition, to receive it from your Ladyship would be my highest gratification.

VAIN would be the efforts of my pen to trace the faintest sketch of your Ladyship's character, and useless would be the attempt; it is engraven on the grateful hearts of multitudes, and recorded by that Being who can alone reward your virtues.

IT is a philanthropist, humble, diffident, and unassuming, who claims not, but sues to your Ladyship for, patronage; condescend then to inspire him with hope, and to receive the poor, but only, return in his power, the most respectful acknowledgements of

Your LADYSHIP'S

most devoted

and obedient servant,

August, 1785.

THE AUTHOR.

F R A N C I S,  
THE  
PHILANTHROPIST.

CHAPTER I.

*Which may serve as an introduction to this book as well  
as any other, and to any other as well as this.*

AS it has been an invariable custom, for the book-makers of every denomination, from the voluminous editor of Chancery reports to the equally-improving collector of little stories for masters and misses, to give account, at the tribunal of the public, by what particular motives he is influenced to commence author, and with what particular views and expectations he ventures among the rocks of censure and the quicksands of criticism, we hold ourselves bound to conform to a rule long since established by prescription; and, considering ourselves as now standing at the dread bar where we must either be justified or condemned, we shall endeavour to deserve the lenity of the court, by a full, ample, and unreserved disclosure, under each head of examination.

But, as the wisdom of the law, for purposes, which, though by us incomprehensible, are unquestionably wise and good, not only admits of, but encourages, fiction, and the pleas of *Good right* and *No right* are as acceptable in the sight of my lords the king's justices, as those of *Harrison and Thompson*, we shall avail ourselves of this notable privilege, and make confession in the following short story.

During the rage of the last continental war in Europe, occasion,—no matter what,—called on an honest Yorkshire squire to take a journey to Warsaw. Untravelled and unknowing, he provided himself with no passports; his business concerned himself alone, and what had foreign nations to do with him?

His route lay through the states of neutral and contending powers. He landed in Holland, passed the usual examination, but, insisting that the affairs which brought him there were of a private nature, he was imprisoned,—and questioned,—and sifted;—and, appearing to be incapable of design, was at length permitted to pursue his journey.

To the officer of the guard, which conducted him to the frontiers, he made frequent complaints of his treatment, and of the loss he should sustain by the delay; he swore it was uncivil,—and unfriendly,—and injurious;—five hundred Dutchmen might have travelled through England without a question;—they never questioned strangers in Great Britain,—nor stopped them,—nor imprisoned them,—nor guarded them.—

Roused from his native phlegm, by these reflections on the policy of his country, the officer slowly drew the pipe from his mouth, and, emitting the smoke, "Mynheer," says he, "when you first set your foot on the land of the Seven United Provinces, you should have declared that you came hither on affairs of commerce;"—and, replacing his pipe, he relapsed into immoveable silence.

Released from this unsocial companion, he soon arrived at a French post, where the centinel of the advanced guard requested the honour of his permission to ask him for his passports; and, on his failing to produce any, he was intreated to pardon the liberty he took of conducting him to the commandant, but it was his duty, and he must, however reluctantly, perform it.

*Monsieur le Commandant* received him with cold and pompous politeness; he made the usual inquiries, and our traveller, determined to avoid the error which had

produced such inconvenience to him, replied, that commercial concerns drew him to the continent.

“*Ma foy*, says the commandant, *c’est un négociant, un bourgeois*;—take him away to the citadel, we will re-examine him to-morrow; at present we must dress for the *comédie*—*Allons!*”

“*Monsieur*,” says the centinel, as he reconducted him to the guard room, “you should not have mentioned commerce to *Monsieur le Commandant*; no gentleman in France disgraces himself with trade; *we* despise traffic. You should have informed *Monsieur le Commandant*, that you entered the dominions of the *grand monarque* for the purpose of improving yourself in singing, or in dancing, or in dressing; arms are the profession of a man of fashion, and glory and accomplishments his pursuits. —*Vive le roi!*” —He had the honour of passing the night with a French guard, and the next day he was dismissed.

Proceeding on his journey, he fell in with a detachment of German chaffeurs. They demanded his name, his quality, and his business in that country. He came, he said, to learn to dance,—and to sing,—and to dress.—“He is a Frenchman,” says the corporal; —“a spy,” cries the serjeant; and he was directed to mount behind a dragoon, and carried to the camp.

The officer, whose duty it was to examine prisoners, soon discovered that our traveller was not a Frenchman, and that, as he did not understand a syllable of the language, he was totally incapable of being a spy; he therefore discharged him, but not without advising him no more to assume the *frippery character of a Frenchman*:—“We Germans,” says he, “eat, and drink, and smoke, these are our favourite employments; and, if you had but informed the party that you followed no other business, you would have saved them, me, and yourself, trouble.

He now soon approached the Prussian dominions, where his examination was still more strict: to the most scrutinizing enquiries he gave no other answers, than that his only designs were to eat, and to drink, and to smoke.—“To eat! and to drink! and to smoke!” exclaimed the officer, with astonishment, “sir, you must be forwarded to Potsdam; war, sir, is the business of mankind; and he, who follows it not, is unworthy the protection of the most puissant monarch in the universe.”

But the acute and penetrating Frederic soon comprehended the character of our traveller, and gave him a passport, under his own hand, to pursue his journey through his territories without interruption:—“It is an ignorant and innocent Englishman,” says the veteran; “the English are unacquainted with military duties; when they want a general, they borrow him of me.”

At the barriers of Saxony he was again interrogated:—“I am a soldier,” says the traveller, “and war my business; all other occupations are beneath the dignity of a man: behold the passport of the first warrior of the age!”—“You are a pupil of the destroyer of millions,” replied the centinel, “we must dispatch you under a guard to Dresden: and hark ye, sir! conceal your passport, as you would avoid being torn to pieces by those, whose husbands, sons, and relations, have been wantonly sacrificed at the shrine of Prussian ambition.”

A second examination at Dresden cleared him of suspicion. He arrived at the confines of Poland, and flattered himself that he should be suffered to proceed to the capital of that kingdom without farther molestation; but he reckoned without his host, he had the same ceremony to go through here, and the same questions to answer.

“Your business in Poland?” interrogated the officer.—“I really don’t know sir,” replied the traveller.—“Not know your own business, sir!” resumed the officer, “I must conduct you to the Starost.”

“For the love of God,” says the worried traveller, “take pity on me! I have been imprisoned in Holland, for being desirous to keep my own affairs to myself; I have been confined all night in a French guard-house, for declaring myself a merchant; I have been compelled to ride seven miles behind a German dragoon, for professing myself a man of

pleasure; I have been carried fifty miles in Prussia, as a prisoner, for acknowledging my attachment to ease and good living; and, I have been threatened with assassination in Poland, for avowing myself a warrior; and, therefore, if you will have the goodness to let me know how I may render such an account of myself as may not give offence, I shall consider you as my friend and my preserver.”

And as, in all human probability, different motives may be ascribed to us by our different readers, and we are extremely unwilling to incur the fate of the traveller, by entering into disputes at our outset, we intreat those who may be of opinion that the merit of the work depends on the views of the author, to assign for us those by which they would themselves be actuated, and, if they should all happen to be wrong, we promise not to be offended.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Very necessary for such as mean to read the book, but useless to those who only intend to dip into it.*

SIR William Fairborn derives his birth from a family, which, in a long course of descent, had been equally eminent for virtue and riches. The first of his ancestors, who bore the title, attached himself to the cause of his misguided and unfortunate sovereign, with a zeal which lessened his fortunes, and involved him in difficulties; but his son, and immediate successor, by prudent management and an advantageous marriage, restored the estate to its former magnitude, and the family to its ancient dignity; and, from that period, both had rather increased than diminished, till the commencement of our history, when the sixth baronet of the name succeeded to honours which derived additional lustre from the character and conduct of the possessor.

Though an unincumbered estate of 8,000l. a year, and a seat in the British parliament, acquired neither by influence or corruption, might have been pretences for the baronet to aspire to the first alliances in the kingdom, without the adventitious, and, in general, disregarded, aids of a pleasing person, an unimpeached reputation, and mental qualifications of the first class; and though such alliances had been tendered to him from parents of the highest consideration; yet Sir William Fairborn remained uncaptivated by the advantages of birth and connexion, and, with a resolution equally wise and virtuous, determined, that, in the choice of a wife, he would rather be directed by beauty and merit, than by the extrinsic endowments of illustrious titles and splendid fortunes.

With such sentiments, it may be easily conceived that he did not hastily fix on a partner for life; it was, in his estimation, a subject of too much importance to be discussed with impetuosity, because not only his own happiness was involved in it, but that of the object of his addresses, as he was too much a man of honour to marry where he could not bestow his whole affections, and much too delicate to receive the hand of any woman on earth, unless he could, from the nicest observation, satisfy himself, that it was accompanied by a heart warmed with a passion, pure, animated, and unlikely to change.

For three or four years after his return from his travels, in the course of which his acquirements were very different from those of the most of his contemporaries, he betrayed no particular inclination to engage in a state, into which he frequently professed a determination to enter, but at the same time, used to declare he would never make it a matter of business, or seek the occasion till it happily presented itself. His employments were of the most rational kind, and he enjoyed all the pleasures of life, without satiety, disgust, or intemperance. In the metropolis he attended his duty as a senator with regularity and attention: what fell from his lips in parliamentary debate was marked with decency, propriety, and moderation; the diffidence of youth, and the consciousness of inexperience, rendered him amiably timid and modestly indecisive; and; though he applied the most powerful arguments to the subject he meant to enforce, his language seemed rather to call for information to himself, than to claim the attention, or challenge the conviction, of his hearers.

In the country he acted as a magistrate, with candour, unrightness, patience, and temper: unwarped by prejudice, and unbiassed by preference, he heard and determined with equal satisfaction to himself and those who appealed to his authority; petty disputes vanished under his discouraging frown, and oppression shrunk from his equal and discriminating judgment.

Having discharged his public functions, he indulged himself in every amusement which could be regulated by taste, and enjoyed with reputation: he visited public places, and mixed in the assemblies of the gay and the fashionable, but he was neither a gamester, and adulterer, or an avowed debauchee. He joined in the diversions of the chace and the field without being a professed fox-hunter, or assuming the dress or

manners of a groom; and he entered into scenes of conviviality without commencing a toper, a glutton, or a reveller.

In private life he was social, liberal, and benevolent; a gentle master, a kind landlord, a warm friend, and an agreeable companion; so inoffensive in his manners and conversation as never to have made an enemy, and so dignified and manly in his carriage and appearance as never to have received an insult. If, on a portrait so generally perfect, the smallest shade could be discovered, it was the pride of ancestry; but even this might have been allowed to have been a justifiable foible, as the subject, though never officiously obtruded, afforded him an opportunity of displaying his gratitude, in recapitulating the exploits and enumerating the virtues of those, to whose superior qualities he was indebted for the favourable circumstances of hereditary rank and fortune.

Such was Sir William Fairborn; and as virtue, however unfashionable the practice of it may be, fails not to excite the admiration, even of those whose lives and actions are diametrically opposite to all its rules, so the dissolute and the dissipated were awed by his presence into decency and respect, and courted his companionship as a source whence they might borrow reputation, with the value of which they were well acquainted, though they wanted resolution to endure those restraints which were necessary to establish it in their own characters.

By those of kindred souls, and similar manners, it is unnecessary to say that his acquaintance was esteemed the highest gratification, and his friendship held inestimable; but, though in the performance of every kind, humane, and benevolent office, his attention was unbounded, yet that uncircumscribed confidence and communication, which constitutes the soul of friendship, was confined to few; nor did he ever form this intimate connection, till he had received more than common proofs of perfect worth and reciprocal regard.

Among those who were thus intitled to his peculiar favour, Mr. Ellison stood foremost. He had been his play-fellow at school, his friend at the university, and his companion in his travels: never were two human beings so completely formed for each other's society; and if a small abatement, on the score of talents, be made on the part of Mr. Ellison, the same description of character will serve for each of this pair of brothers.

A match provided for Mr. Ellison, by his father, with a young lady to whom he was distantly related, took place almost immediately after his return from abroad; and, contrary to the fate of most marriages of this sort, both parties were so pleased with each other when they first met, which was not till after a considerable progress had been made in preparation for the wedding, that the contract of convenience was immediately converted into a band of love, which cohabitation had ripened into a friendship, pure, lively, and unalloyed with one debasing passion.

As Mrs. Ellison had in three years after her marriage become the mother of as many children, and, as neither she or her worthy husband were content with being the nominal parents of their offspring, they had gradually declined mixing a great deal in those pleasures which are pursued in places of public entertainment; but, as they were both of dispositions too social, too cheerful, too contented, to live wholly either to, or for, themselves, their house was the rendezvous of those, who, like its inhabitants, were capable of tasting the untumultuous enjoyments of rational society, and of deriving satisfaction from amusements, which were neither purchased with vice, folly, pain, or extravagant expence, or attended in the retrospect by disgust, satiety, or regret.

Nor, however such an opinion may militate against the current of popular judgment, or the ideas of fashionable life, do we scruple to persuade our readers, that many such societies, as those we have just described, do still actually exist, even amidst the present tide of luxury, and in spite of the torrent of dissipation, which has long threatened to deluge every virtue, and drown every noble exertion. We trust we shall, in the course of this work, be enabled to point out many bright and glorious examples of the most illustrious and dignified characters, emerging from the general inundation of folly, and rising superior to the too prevalent customs of the world, and the too-justly-lamented



depravity of the times; and we shall hold them up as stars in the dark firmament of corruption, to light the struggling, but not yet devoted, victim, and direct him to shun the paths of destruction, and guide him in the road, which leads to virtue, honour, and reputation.

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### CHAPTER III.

*In which the history advances by the usual and natural progression.*

AS a batchelor, Sir William Fairborn was precluded from making his own house the seat of the same domestic comfort which he so highly enjoyed at his friend's: but Mr. Ellison's house was his second home; it was there he unbent his mind, after it had been engaged in the most arduous attention to the cares of his public station; it was to this mansion of peace and virtue that he retreated from the fatiguing rounds of pleasure and the toilsome solicitations of folly; and it was there that he constantly found a society, equally capable of dispelling the gloom of melancholy, when the misfortunes of mankind had depressed the most susceptible of minds, and of heightening the relish of satisfaction, when he had been the happy instrument of assisting, by his advice, or relieving, by his benevolence, the unfortunate objects of oppression, penury, or affliction.

Among the constant visitors at Mr. Ellison's was Mr. Thompson, a merchant not more distinguished by the extent of his commerce than by the probity, regularity, and universal reputation with which he conducted his mercantile concerns, and the generosity, liberality, and humanity, which marked his private life; all conspiring to render him one of the most valuable members of society.

Mr. Thompson had the misfortune to lose a beloved wife at the moment which gave birth to her first child; and to this infant, a daughter, who bore the name as well as resemblance of her mother, did Mr. Thompson transfer all his affection, and, far from suffering a second love to divide his heart, his regards, his attentions, his hopes, his fears, and his wishes, all centered in this offspring of his first, his unabated passion, the representative of his amiable, his ever-regretted, Amelia.

Emily Thompson was now in her eighteenth year; and, though by no means a complete beauty, yet was her composition, taken altogether, so delightfully pleasing, that every attempt to point out a blemish was sure to end in the discovery and praise of some hitherto-unnoticed charm. Her eyes were not strikingly brilliant, but they possessed that mildness of lustre, which, like the declining sun, gilded every object around them, and softened it into harmony and grace: though the turn of her face was not perfectly Grecian, yet its inclination to roundness was lost in the thousand dimples which every smile provoked;—though her complexion boasted not the dazzling whiteness of marble, yet it was pure, transparent, and delicately healthful;—and, though her height was very little above the middle size, yet her whole figure was so exquisitely proportioned, that it bespoke admiration and commanded respect.

Her mind was in perfect unison with the frame we have described. Her excellent understanding acted under the restraints of modesty, diffidence, and humility;—her spirits, naturally lively, were guided by the strictest decorum;—her temper, naturally warm, was checked by such a degree of discretion, that it never exceeded the bounds of animation. She was prone to friendship, but correct in her choice, open, affable, and undesigning, untainted by vanity, uninfected by folly, unused to modern dissipation.

Such was Amelia Thompson, the supposed heiress of immense wealth, and the mistress of every polite accomplishment, the darling of her father, the delight of her friends, the admiration of her acquaintance; for, whilst she shone superior to most of her sex, unconscious of pre-eminence, she neither excited envy by an assuming air, nor malice by even an implied comparison.

Sir William Fairborn's heart had hitherto resisted every impression, it was to Emily Thompson that he surrendered it; and, perfectly convinced, that with her, he should taste the purest joys of conjugal felicity, he sought not to resist the pleasing impulse, but having, with the utmost delicacy, prevailed on the fair Amelia to listen to his suit, and betrayed her into acknowledgements flattering to his hopes, he, with her permission,

communicated his wishes to her father, and obtained his consent to win and wed the object of his affections.

As the baronet and Mr. Thompson were equally liberal in the propositions which respected fortune and settlement, no difficulties occurred in making the necessary arrangements; and, whilst the usual preparations were carrying on for an event which promised perfect and lasting happiness, Sir William Fairborn took the opportunity of making a journey to the West of England, to adjust and close the accounts of an executorship, a trust which he had been prevailed upon to accept by a dying friend, and which he had performed with honour to himself and advantage to an embarrassed family.

After a tedious absence of ten days from the mistress of his heart, he had nearly drawn the business to a conclusion, and had almost fixed the hour of his return to the completion of the most interesting event of his life, when he was surprised by the arrival of a messenger, who had travelled express, with letters, of which the following are copies, from Mr. Thompson and his amiable daughter.

“Dear Sir,

“TO you, who are a man of sense, virtue, and morality, I need offer no reflections on the instability of human happiness. When your absence from us commenced, I computed my fortune at near two hundred thousand pounds, and had proposed to lay down half that sum as the marriage-portion of my beloved Emily; but, by a heavy and unexpected loss, my affairs are thrown into such a state, that it is a matter of doubt whether a shilling will remain, after the payment of those debts and demands, which it is my first duty to discharge, and my principal comfort that I possess the full means of performing it.

“For myself, I submit to this event with the most perfect resignation to the dispensations of that almighty and merciful Being, who has hitherto blessed my endeavours with success, and, for purposes unquestionably founded in wisdom and justice, has now thought fit to visit me with affliction: nor do I feel the smallest anxiety on account of my only remaining treasure, my darling child, as I have too much confidence in the rectitude of your heart, to apprehend that this change in her fortunes will occasion the smallest alteration in your regards to her, which, I have long been satisfied, are placed on a foundation, too solid to be shaken by the blasts of misfortune or the gusts of adversity.

“Hasten, then, my dear Sir William, to pour the balm of consolation into the bosom of your distressed friend, and, by the renewal of your vows to the partner of your heart, calm her perturbed spirit, and restore the most amiable mind in the world to ease and tranquillity.

“Believe me, dear sir, in all circumstances and situations,

Your most faithful and

affectionate humble servant,

EUGENIUS THOMPSON.”

“WHEN, with my willing hand, I yielded my too fond heart to its sovereign lord and master, and received, in return, the softest and sweetest vows of love and fidelity, I trusted that the unequal value of the poor gift I offered would have found some compensation in the increase of wealth, which, in hands like your’s, would have proved a blessing to the world, and have extended your powers of generosity, liberality, and benevolence. Alas! Sir William, I am now deprived of that hope, and, stripped even of this little weight in the scale, the consciousness of total inferiority will no longer allow even a wish to retain your affections. Take back then, sir, your plighted faith, and every

engagement to the unhappy Emily; banish her for ever from your remembrance; seek the happiness you so richly merit in some more fair, more deserving, more fortunate maid; and, that it may ever remain uninterrupted by the obtrusion of a single thought, or a sigh of recollection, shall be the earnest prayer of,

Sir,

Your obliged and faithful

AMELIA THOMPSON."

A lover less ardent, a man less generous, might have received, from such intelligence, impressions unfavourable to love and friendship; but different, very different, were the effects produced by them in the mind of Sir William Fairborn. The first resolution, which presented itself, was to order post-horses instantly to his carriage, and to leave his business unfinished; but a moment's recollection having suggested to him, that a delay of a few hours would prevent the necessity of another separation, he directed one of his own servants to hold himself in immediate readiness for a journey post to the metropolis, (his humanity not permitting him to return the wearied domestic of Mr. Thompson,) and in a few minutes he was dispatched with the following answers to the melancholy packet.

"To Miss THOMPSON.

"How can my dearest Amelia harbour suspicions so injurious to the honour, to the love, of her friend, her protector, her husband? She well knows I have ever considered myself as the trustee of the fortunes I possess, and that the increase of them would only have served to augment my cares in the application of the sacred deposit. My Amelia, too, has a mind infinitely superior to splendour of appearance and the glare of wealth, nor will she scruple to add, to the obligations she has conferred on me, that of consenting to share the diminished, yet still ample, fortunes, of her grateful, affectionate, devotees,

W. FAIRBORN."

"To Eugenius THOMPSON, Esq.

"Dear Sir,

"MOST sincerely do I thank you for your justice to my honour and integrity, both which would have suffered the severest impeachment from an opinion contrary to that which you have so kindly formed in my favour; and most heartily, though rather for the sake of others than yourself, do I regret the loss of that fortune, which has been so worthily employed in promoting the happiness of every being within your reach. From the retrospect of the whole tenor of your life you will derive consolation to support you in your afflictions, and enable you to sustain misfortunes much more grievous than, I trust, will ever fall to your lot.

"You know, my dear sir, that I have ever been an œconomist, though I have by no means scrupled to indulge myself in every rational enjoyment; and, as I have money, to the amount of at least twenty thousand pounds, in the public funds, I have, by the bearer of this letter, given an order to my banker to sell out my stock, and to wait on you with the produce. I shall not apologize for insisting on its being applied in any manner that may be useful to you on the present occasion, as you have given me the highest proof of your confidence and esteem, in consenting to bestow on me that happiness, which no wealth could purchase, nor any addition of fortune increase.

“As my business here will be completed in a very few hours, I must console myself for a little farther separation from all I hold dear, by the consideration, that this delay of my happiness will prevent a farther encroachment on it, and that all my future care may be devoted to the invaluable charge, which I flatter myself I shall soon receive from your hands, and, with it, a claim to interest myself in your welfare as your son, as well as,

Dear Sir,

Your most obliged, faithful,

and humble servant,

W. FAIRBORN.”

This messenger was soon followed by the baronet in person, whose presence dispelled the anxious fears of the lovely Emily, and contributed to raise the spirits of her drooping parent, whose misfortunes, upon a close investigation of his affairs, appeared to be so very far from irretrievable, that it was apprehended the safe arrival of the West-India fleet, after reports had prevailed that it had fallen into the hands of the enemy, would, in a great measure, repair his loss and re-establish his credit.

Meantime, Sir William Fairborn, more impatient than ever to secure the blessing within his reach, pressed the celebration of his nuptials with such ardour and fervency, that, in three weeks after his return from his western journey, the marriage was announced in the public papers, to the utter discomfiture of the belles and flirts, who, on the failure of Mr. Thompson, had renewed their attacks on the person, title, and estate of the baronet; and to the astonishment of the whole polite world, who had already provided a hundred rich heiresses to fill the department in his heart, which it was impossible to suppose could any longer be occupied by the portionless Amelia Thompson.

Gratified in the great object of his anxious wishes, and no longer solicitous to raise a fortune, the possession of which, when obtained, he had found to be so very precarious, Mr. Thompson, after consulting his son and daughter on the subject, determined to relinquish his business, and retire into the country; and the balance, on winding up his affairs, appearing to amount to a sum which would place him in a state very far above mediocrity, he contracted for the purchase of an estate, on which was a comfortable mansion, within a very few miles of Sir William's seat, in Dorsetshire, where he proposed to spend the principal part of his days, making occasional visits, in the winter, to his son and daughter in the metropolis.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The reader becomes acquainted with the hero of the tale.*

THIS happy family thus disposed of, we shall leap over a period of twenty years, passed in perfect felicity and domestic content; in the four first of which Sir William and Lady Fairborn became parents of three sons and a daughter, all participating the amiable dispositions of their excellent father and mother, and promising a perpetuation of those admirable qualities, which drew respect, even to veneration, on their names, and pointed them out as the brightest examples of public and private virtue.

But we must apply to the pen of Sir William himself to characterize his beloved offspring, who, in a letter to his friend, Mr. Ellison, has happily described his family.

“The manhood of my two eldest sons, and the approach of the third to that state, has indeed added to my cares; but the investigation of their characters, and the appropriation of their different dispositions and talents, have proved a source of amusement and delight; since, in the performance of the former part of my task, I have discovered no such blemishes as ought to give me pain, nor has the latter part of it been attended by any of the difficulties which would arise from want of sincerity, obstinacy, or self-opinion. Constantly accustomed to find their father their indulgent, communicative friend, concealment and restraint are equally unnecessary and unknown, and, in every proper instance, their secrets have been deposited with him, and his counsels have guided their actions.

“Of William, my eldest son, you already know enough to form your own judgement of his talents, temper, and habits; but he wears, even to you, an air of reserve, which, notwithstanding appearances, is much less the effect of gloom or dissatisfaction than of unconquerable timidity, and a doubt of his own abilities, which neither the most flattering commendations of his preceptors, nor the kind assurances of his parents, have been able to remove; yet I do not despair but that general converse with the world, which his travels on the continent will afford him, and the variety of men and manners, which must necessarily fall in his way, will open his mind to the comprehension of its own powers, and fit him for that public sphere of action, for which no young man of the age is better qualified, either in capacity or principles, and from which it is now almost time for his father to retire. Whenever this event shall take place, and he succeeds to a seat in parliament, I am perfectly satisfied he will tread in the steps of his predecessor, and, scorning to own a party connexion, will disdain to act under any other influence than the dictates of his own conscience, or to keep any objects in his view but his allegiance to his sovereign, and the faithful discharge of the trust reposed in him, to preserve unimpaired by encroachments and unmutated by faction, a constitution, from which are derived the purest blessings of liberty, and on the preservation of which depends the existence of the British empire.

Charles, my second son, now in his twentieth year, was formed by nature for a soldier; his vigorous constitution and athletic form are admirably adapted to a mind, firm, determined, and manly, and a disposition open, generous, and friendly. From his infancy his diversions and amusements were military; and, when he had asked and obtained my consent to enter into the army, he solicited to be employed in the most active part of it, and has already served three campaigns in a regiment of foot, on dangerous and fatiguing service, with such a degree of reputation, both as an officer and a gentleman, as warms my heart, and bids me look forward to his riper years for great and glorious achievements.

“Louisa,—but I may spare myself this part of my task;—Mrs. Ellison is perfectly acquainted with all the virtues, and, if her partial eye can discover any, all the

imperfections, of her young friend; and Mrs. Ellison is much too unfashionable a wife to have any concealments from her husband.

“Francis, my third son, has now almost reached his eighteenth year. His figure is uncommonly graceful, his countenance so smilingly pleasing, and his manners so gentle and engaging, that he never enters without attracting the notice of the company, nor departs without making every one of them his friends. He has passed through his early academic exercises with unusual rapidity, and is a very good, but, in my opinion, not a deep, scholar. Though naturally lively and volatile, he has dedicated a large portion of his time to reading, and is better acquainted not only with history but the *belles lettres* than could possibly be expected from a youth of his age and complexion.

“At school he has been equally the delight and the terror of his masters, the favourite and the tyrant of his companions, the idol of the unfortunate and necessitous, and the scourge of the niggardly and worthless. Though his school-exercises were performed with such exactness as to excite the continual praises of his instructors, yet the warmth and impetuosity, not to say violence, of his temper, drew him into a thousand scrapes, and engaged him in a variety of enterprises, which were continual sources of uneasiness to those who had the care of his person and morals as well as of his literary instruction; and, though the natural benevolence of his disposition led him to the performance of every office of kindness to his school-fellows, yet an ungrateful return for his favours, for an improper use of them, was sure to be marked with punishment so exemplary, that the dread of falling under his displeasure operated altogether as forcibly as the desire of obtaining his esteem.

“His early exploits turned on the protection of every animal, both in the human and brute creation, whose inferiority of strength had subjected it to the merciless cruelty of conscious power. In the rescue of lesser boys from the insults of superior strength, he encountered various black eyes, bloody noses, and consequent flagellations; and, in preserving from destruction devoted kittens, puppies, cockchafers, and callow birds, he was involved in eternal squabbles, and was not unfrequently charged with carrying his humanity beyond the strict line of justice, in laying violent hands on the property of his neighbour, for the purpose of putting it out of the reach of such a disposition as a legal title might warrant, but a merciful heart would shudder at.

“As he advanced in years, his reason, still unused to the controul of discretion, directed him to sufferers of other descriptions. The petty thief, whose poverty, and not his will, consented to pilfer bread for a sick wife or an infant family, was, in his opinion, a very unfit victim of legal vengeance; on behalf of such a wretch, though silently abandoned by those who were really virtuous, and loudly condemned by those who were pretendedly so, did he lavish the liberal supplies furnished for his pocket by his indulgent grandfather, and prostituted his opening talent of declamation in the extenuation of such heinous offences; whilst the vices and follies of the affluent and the great were the constant themes of his severest censure; and he scrupled not to maintain, with vehemence of argument, that he, who withheld from necessities which it was in his power to relieve, was a robber in a double capacity, depriving the unfortunate of their due, and himself of the merit of bestowing.

“With such principles, under the influence of a warm imagination, untempered by a communication with the world, and unacquainted with the various modifications which have metamorphosed virtue into a science, and bound her in shackles of form and ceremony, you will not be astonished to hear, that, by the time he had entered his fifteenth year, common fame had bestowed on him the different characters of a meddling, pert, and forward coxcomb; an easy, extravagant dupe; an amiable portrait of nature, in colours which heaven alone could furnish; a diamond of the first water, and a liberal, generous, and active, as well as speculative, philanthropist.

“Such is my Francis, the darling of his grandfather, with whom the greatest part of his school vacations, from his infancy, have been spent; who has taken upon him the whole care of his fortunes, whose partial eye can discover no defects in his composition,

and who cannot, without great difficulty, be brought to admit of the smallest degree of imperfection.

“But, to me, whose affection is somewhat more equally divided between him and the other branches of my family, there appears no small hazard, that a disposition, naturally volatile, and a mind, pliant, susceptible, and fanciful, may be too easily perverted, and the first valuable impressions effaced by the too prevalent bias of that world, which he is now about to enter, to vice, folly, and dissipation.

“Yet, after all, these are more the expressions of doubt than of actual apprehension; never did a father form higher expectations of a son than I do of this young man; and, grievous indeed will be my disappointment, should the flattering prospects, which now present themselves, be obscured by any future misconduct of *Francis the Philanthropist*.”

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## CHAPTER V.

*In which the hero sets out on his journey.*

I NEED not inform thee, gentle reader, that the progress of human life is a journey; it is an observation, almost co-eval with the world in which we travel; that it is a journey, too, full of hills and sloughs, of interruptions and difficulties, thine own experience will have enabled thee to ascertain; for, though thou shouldest have the comforts of a commodious equipage, a full purse, and a pleasant companion; and though thy route should be over those delightful roads, which, for the convenience of the valetudinary traveller, extend from Hyde-park-corner to York-house, in the health-restoring realms of Bladud; yet thou wilt readily allow, that there are certain ascents and descents to retard thy progress, certain inequalities and roughnesses to shake and discompose thy frame, and I will stake my reputation as an author against thy veracity as a traveller, that, in all thy journeys to Bath, thou hast murmured at the difference between the stage from *Maidenhead* to *Reading* and that from *Marlborough* to the *Devizes*; and hast compared, with no trivial marks of dissatisfaction, thine entertainment at —, and —, and —, with that of Salt-hill, Speenhamland, and Marlborough.

But, if it has been thy misfortune to travel in other directions, where execrable roads and worse inns were rendered still more uncomfortable by an uneasy vehicle, a dissatisfied fellow-traveller, and a scanty provision for thy journey, how many twitches and twangs of mind hast thou felt! how many jolts and pangs of body has thou endured! and unless, like me, thou canst turn the edge of thine afflictions with a smile, how many curses hast thou bestowed on the jumbling *voiture*, the gloomy companion of thy sorrows, the villainous cooks, the uncivil hosts, the hard beds, and the still harder fate of slender finances!

Yet, if thou hast hitherto made such untoward journies, let me advise thee not to be discouraged; unpropitious aspects often forerun happy events, and the evils, of which we are most apt to complain, are not unfrequently productive of the most favourable consequences.

And, as we are on the road together, and thou peradventure not over-pleased with thy *compagnon de v yage*, I shall tell thee a travelling story; and, if it does not put thee in good humour, why, e'en grumble on to the end of the chapter, thou wilt find it long enough to try thy patience.

In the spring of the year 1781 two English travellers, neither of the smellfungus, the mundungus, or the sentimental-*sans-sentiment*, tribe, set out from Paris, on their return to the metropolis of their own country. It was the holy week, and, knowing they could only be accommodated with fish and eggs on the road, they stored the well of their carriage with cold *poulards*, *patés de jambon*, and *saucissons*, to eke out the miserable *maigre* of wretched French and Flemish inns. With this reinforcement they made tolerable meals; and, determined to laugh at exactions and impositions, and never to give themselves the trouble to investigate the precise difference between the practices of a French *aubergiste* and an English inn-keeper, they jogged on by slow stages, which the indisposition of one of them (who had been condemned by the physicians of Paris for a liver case, and was creeping to London to get a reprieve from the faculty there) rendered absolutely necessary, till, on the evening of the fourth day, they reached the village of Pont-à-marque, about three leagues short of Lisle, and they lost so much time in debating the possibility of their entering that city before the gates should be closed, that they were compelled to take up their lodging for the night at the place where they were.

In consequence of their enquiries for the best house, they were recommended to one, the mistress of which, by her rotundity of figure and rubicundity of countenance, promised to atone for their delay by affording them good humour and good cheer.

The alacrity of her deportment, after she had received an affirmative to her demand of "*Soupez-vous, Messieurs?*" confirmed the travellers in both their expectations; for, having required a state of her larder, she added, in her enumeration of the several articles with which it was furnished, such luxurious descriptions and inviting epithets, that the traveller who was in health had scarce patience to order somewhat of every sort she had mentioned, and the appetite of the sick man seemed to promise him a species of enjoyment, to which he had long been a stranger: she had "*du saumon,*" she said, "*que le roi ne'en mange pas de meilleur;—des harengs plus exquis que la table de l'archevêque pourroit sournir;—et de la morüe toute vivante, qui venoit d'être attrapée, et qui pourroit transporter jusq'à Paris sans être gatee;—qu'elle avoit de vin de Bourgogne, que les caves royales n'en pourroient sournir de meilleur;*"—and her cook was a *cordon bleu*.

Our travellers had no sooner issued their orders for the preparation of repast, than a proposition was made by the sick man to his companion to visit the repository of such dainties, that they might feast their eyes with the sight of living cod, an exhibition to which they had been total strangers during their residence in Paris, that and every other species of sea-fish being generally in a state to emit certain unpleasing tokens of mortality, long before it can be conveyed to that metropolis.

In pursuit of this previous entertainment, they requested their hostess to conduct them to her larder, which they had no sooner entered than their noses were saluted by an odour for which they were totally unprepared, but which they immediately discovered to proceed from a small piece of dried salmon, and a considerable bundle of red herrings, which their loquacious conductress soon informed them were some of the identical morsels, in praise of which she had been so extremely lavish.

Deprived of two-thirds of their expectations, the disappointed travellers turned their attention to the living cod, and eagerly demanded a sight of their only remaining hope; but, alas! after every shelf had been surveyed, every corner of the sweet-scented store-room searched, they were mortified to death by an exclamation of "*Mon Dieu, la moruë est p rdu! Que diable est de venu la morüe? Mari-Joseph! Nannette! va chercher la moruë; assurément l'abbé, qui vient de partir tantot, ne l'a pas emporté!*"

The ladies of the kitchen and bed-chamber now appeared, the former producing the jaw of a cod on a small plate, in weight about half a pound, and so highly favoured, that the same quantity of musk would hardly have afforded stronger, or more powerful effluvia; and this, she informed her mistress, was all that remained of the fish, after the fat priest had supped on it, and the two *marichausse* had taken what they liked.

Our travellers were too well acquainted with the state of the country, through which they journeyed, to express the smallest degree of resentment against any member of the church or the police; on the contrary, they acknowledged, in terms of civility, their gratitude to these illustrious anticipators for having left them any thing, and retired to their apartment, determined to admit, and pay for, the miserable remains, but to have recourse to the well of their carriage for the means of making their meal.

The whole accommodations of the house were of a piece with the contents of the larder; the wine was sour, the sheets wet, the windows broken, the warming-pan out of repair, and the servants unapprehensive and impertinent. The traveller in health was disconcerted, the sick man distressed, and they lay down without even the cordial night-cap of good-humour to lull them to rest or insure them refreshment.

Under such circumstances they needed no awakening drum, but were eager to start with the dawn; and, having demanded their horses from the post-master, nothing remained but to satisfy the expectations of their hostess for their execrable entertainment.

For this purpose a bill was ordered, but she appeared without it, and, on its being required, gave certain omen of intended extortion, by replying, "*C'est que je ne s ai pas trop bien écrire, malheureusement.*"—

She was now desired to signify the amount of her charge, but, to such a requisition, a direct answer would have been impolitic; she prefaced her's with "*Mais en*

*conscience, messieurs, je ne vous surchargerai pas un seul liard, tout le monde me connoit pour une femme raisonnable;*” and then announced 27 livres, being somewhat above 11. 3s. English.

His temper soured by repeated disappointments, his spirits ruffled, and his pains augmented by the want of rest and accommodation, such enormous imposition threw the unfortunate valetudinarian entirely off his guard; he fell into a violent rage, cursed the country, the house, the fat landlady, and every article of her poisonous entertainment; nor could the remonstrances, and even entreaties, of his companion, reduce him to reason, till, in a paroxysm of passion, he burst an imposthume, which had formed itself on his lungs,—the contents of which being plentifully discharged by his mouth, put an end at once to his vociferation, and the rupture to his disorder.

For, this extraordinary accident having given him immediate relief from the most excruciating pain, the bill was paid without farther altercation, the travellers pursued their journey to the metropolis of Great Britain in such spirits as could receive no check from the little inconveniencies of the road, and, the happy discovery which had been made being communicated to a skilful physician at their arrival, his prescriptions were productive of the most salutary effects, and our traveller, restored to perfect health, fails not, at least once after every meal, to drink long life to the plump landlady at Pont-à-marque.

Now, if, in the journey through these little volumes, thou shouldest happen to find certain chapters, or certain parts of chapters, dull, unentertaining, or uninteresting, let me advise thee to consult thy pulse, for peradventure thy mortal frame is discomposed by disorder, or to examine thy mental faculties, which may probably be disconcerted by disappointments, and thou mayest be able to convince thyself, that the defects are thine and not the author's; and, under this conviction, mayest be able to relish the entertainment which he has provided for thee.

Or, if thou shouldest fail to make such discoveries as will reconcile thee to his labours, still let me admonish thee to read on; some unexpected sally may provoke a smile, and, if it does, cherish it as the herald of good humour, who wishes to conduct thee to health and happiness.

But it was neither from *Paris* to *Pont-à-marque*, or from *Pont-à-marque* to *Paris*, that *Francis the Philanthropist* was about to travel; his intended journey was only from Mr. Thompson's seat, in Dorsetshire, to the university of Oxford, where it was intended that he should finish his classical studies, and complete that part of his education.

The time being fixed for his departure, and his allowance being settled on the most liberal plan by his generous grandfather, nothing remained but the choice of such an attendant as might answer the double purpose of a servant, and a watchful, though humble, friend.

And, on this occasion, it was impossible that the choice should fall on any other than Jeremy Twister, with whose pretensions to a charge of so important a nature the reader will be acquainted in the following short history.

Jeremiah Twister had, at the age of seven years, been apprenticed from a parish in the west of England to the master of a merchant-ship, who, happening some time after to engage in the employ of Mr. Thompson, had the honour to entertain his owner and a party of his friends on board the ship he commanded, soon after her arrival in the river from a voyage to some of the ports of Italy. At this entertainment the honest tar strained every nerve to give tokens of his gratitude to a generous employer, and his sense of the favour then conferred on him; and young Twister, who possessed penetration enough to discover, in four years apprenticeship, that he had a kind and indulgent master, and virtue enough to acknowledge his kindness and indulgence by every effort in his power of assiduity and faithfulness, in a strenuous exertion to mount aloft and let fly the colours, the moment the owner should set his foot on the deck, had the misfortune to miss his hold; and, though his fall was somewhat broken by the rigging, so that his life was preserved, yet he did not escape without a fractured thigh, an accident which was

announced in terms of seaman-like pity by the whole ship's crew, and had no sooner reached the ears of the captain, than he declared, with an oath which did him much more credit as a man than a christian, "that he had rather have carried away his main-topmast in a gale of wind, or lost his reckoning in foul weather, than poor Jerry should have been brought to the splicing-block."

These exclamations having drawn the attention of the company, and, among the rest, of the humane and liberal Mr. Thompson, he ordered all possible care to be taken of the poor little sufferer, and gave particular directions that he should be conveyed to his own house in town the moment he could be removed with safety; and, these injunctions being faithfully complied with, he was, about six weeks after, brought to Tower-wharf, in the ship's boat, and thence to Mr. Thompson's house, in a hackney-coach, where he was committed to the immediate care of the house-keeper and butler, who had both lived too long in the service of the best master in the world, to require any more than an intimation of his wishes on any point of charity, benevolence, or humanity.

In a very few weeks the little fellow began to *crawl* about the house, and, by his zealous endeavours to repay, in acts of gratitude, the care and attention he had received, he, in a very few weeks more, *crept* into the hearts, not only of the two upper servants, but of every individual domestic in the family.

As his recovery advanced, apprehensions arose that he would be returned to his former employment, against which event the good butler presumed to protest, in the form of insinuations to his master, that "poor Jerry would never be strong enough again for a seaman,"—that "another fall would cripple him for life,"—that "it was a thousand pities such a handy boy, and so good humoured, and so civil, should be sent among a parcel of rough tars, where his morals would be debauched, and he would learn to curse and swear, and forget the good order he had been accustomed to in his honour's house;"—and the house-keeper more explicitly solicited her young lady to ask her father's permission that Jerry might become one of the family.

Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, that a youth, who appeared to have conciliated, in so extraordinary a degree, the regards of those to whose protection he had been committed, should attract the notice of Mr. Thompson and his daughter. He was now frequently sent for into the parlour, the state of his strength enquired after, and his inclinations sounded as to his return to captain Capstern; and his replies were always so artlessly honest, and so bluntly civil, that he soon carried his favoritism one step higher, and made a very considerable progress in the good graces of Mr. Thompson and his amiable daughter.

As Jeremy betrayed no very strong marks of desire to resume his former way of life, so no propositions of the kind were ever made to him, but he continued in the family as a sort of supernumerary, ready to step into any place where absence, sickness, or other accident, made a vacancy, but obtruding himself on no department; nor was he ever known to shew the smallest mark of dissatisfaction at any proposal that was made to him, but once, when his friend, the butler, offered to speak to Mr. Thompson to give him a livery, on which occasion he ventured to remark, that no other coat than a pay-jacket could become a sea-boy; and, from this moment, he was indulged in this particular till he grew to manhood, when he exchanged it for a blue coat, with narrow open sleeves, and buttons of the same colour; the other parts of his dress consisting of a short scarlet waistcoat, black plush breeches, grey worsted stockings, sharp-pointed shoes, buckles of an enormous size, and a hat perfectly triangular, with the brims nautically depressed to the crown.

Nor did this singularity of dress subject him to the smallest degree of ridicule; the simplicity of his manners, the integrity of his heart, the mildness of his deportment, and, above all, the universal good will which he bore to all human beings, secured him the respect of all who knew him, and the affection of those who moved in the same domestic circle.

To his patron (for Mr. Thompson would by no means permit Jeremiah to call him master) his gratitude and attachments were boundless and immovable; he loved him, not from interested motives, but from admiration of his virtues, and he served him with a fidelity, which could only be rewarded by the condescending acceptance and acknowledgements, which were manifested from a thousand of those minute intelligencers, that dwell in the smiles of complacency, and float on the accents of heart-bestowed approbation.

During the time Mr. Thompson continued engaged in a line of commerce, the employments of honest Jeremy were various. He was the bearer of confidential messages, the purveyor of little parties of pleasure and amusement, the promoter of all domestic petitions and requests, and the happy instrument of distributing that bounty, which flowed in constant streams from the hearts and purses of this most amiable and excellent father and daughter.

In addition to these avocations, Jeremy had made two voyages, one to the West-Indies, the other to the Mediterranean; the first, to convey to England the orphan-daughter of a friend and correspondent of Mr. Thompson, who had bequeathed the infant to his care; the second, to return to his parents a youth who had received his education under the eye of the same gentleman, and whose welfare and safety were much too dear to them to be entrusted to a common servant; and, on both occasions, he had acquitted himself with so much discretion as to merit the warmest acknowledgements of the interested parties, and to increase the esteem of his already-affectionate employer.

The retirement of Mr. Thompson into the country made but little alteration in the departments occupied by Jerry Twister: his business indeed was somewhat lessened, but his amusements were increased; the system of rural oeconomy afforded him unceasing pleasure; and he took upon himself the offices of gamekeeper, fisherman, and poultryman, for each of which he was qualified by activity, patience, and tenderness.

At this period of our history he had nearly reached his forty-ninth year. His figure was rather short, squat, and square; his cheek-bones high, his eyes grey and small, his nose sharp, his chin short, his mouth somewhat wide, but pursed up by a contraction which partook, in equal degrees, of smile and grin; his hair, which had been black, but began to admit a mixture, hung in short curls round his head; and his neck, which somewhat resembled a bull's, was bound with a silk handkerchief, confined by a seaman's knot to a tightness which drove his blood into his face, and seemed to threaten immediate strangulation.

To what has been already intimated, concerning the ornaments of his mind, may be added, that his expression was quaint, sententious, and phraseological, and that he was a wit, a philosopher, and a poet.

Such were the qualifications which united to recommend Jerry Twister to an office, on the faithful and able discharge of which depended, in the opinion of Mr. Thompson, a considerable part of the credit and happiness of his adopted and darling child.

But we should not deal candidly by our readers if we attempted to conceal another recommendation, which, we apprehend, had at least an equal weight in the scale, and we are rather inclined to believe actually preponderated in favour of this appointment;—Mr. Thompson himself could hardly entertain a higher degree of affection, or a warmer attachment to Mr. Francis Fairborn, than did his honest, humble, grateful, domestic.

From his earliest infancy Jerry Twister had been his attendant, his play-fellow, and his friend; he fabricated paper kites for him of astonishing dimensions, and elevated them to the most uncommon heights, with lanterns of unusual magnitude and lustre.—He broke-in a poney, which had been presented to him by his grandfather, and practised on its docility till it would not only carry its little owner with ease and safety, but would play a number of tricks and gambols for his diversion and amusement.—He procured him a light and elegant fowling-piece, and attended him on shooting-parties, unknown to his grandfather, whose care and anxiety for the fond object of his hopes would have

restrained him from the pursuit of sports, in which he might, in his apprehension, incur a considerable degree of risque and danger.—He furnished him with all the materials for angling, provided him bats and balls for cricket, fed his birds, nursed his puppy, managed his rabbits, joined him in every plan which his little heart suggested of conferring happiness on those who seemed to want it, and scrupled not to promote innocent schemes of revenge on those who had incurred the displeasure of our young philanthropist by acts of inhumanity or ill-nature, which were almost the only offences that could excite his anger.

Grateful then was the proposition to our intended traveller, and thrice grateful to honest Jerry, whose utmost wish was accomplished in his preference to a trust, in the performance of which his attachment to his old patron, his affection to his young charge, and his laudable pride and ambition, would all receive the highest gratification.

Hitherto, however, we have only exhibited one side of our account, for this, like most other accounts, had two sides, and the other presented a formidable set of *items*, to be opposed to those already produced, consisting of the vacancies which the absence of Jeremiah would occasion in the offices of almoner and walking and riding companion to Mr. Thompson,—of gamekeeper, guardian of the poultry-yard, and purveyor of river-fish.

But, as the wise and gracious Power, who governs our actions and intentions, seldom suffers us to be at a loss to supply any apparent deficiencies, if we choose to lay hold of the means that offer; so, in this case, candidates of unquestioned characters and abilities appeared to discharge the different functions of Jeremiah's various employments, as deputies or substitutes to this much-admired domestic officer.

Mr. Thompson's personal loss was worthily supplied by the grey-headed curate of the parish; a venerable clergyman, whose virtue and integrity had, at the close of fifty years laborious and exemplary ministry, advanced him from a curacy of 25l. a year to one of 40l. and that almost doubled by the liberality of Mr. Thompson, on which income he lived, an honour to his sacred profession, and a disgrace to dignities and mitres.

The worthy son of a farmer in the parish, whose only relaxations from labour were dedicated to the sports of the field, in which he had been encouraged by Jerry as a much better shot than himself, solicited to be placed on the temporary establishment as superintendent of the game and fishery.

And, happily for Mr. Thompson, for Jerry, and for herself, the government of the poultry-yard was bestowed on the industrious widow of a blameless labourer, who had left her to struggle with three infant children, in a world which hardly promised to afford them a means of existence.

The balance of the account was now clearly in favour of Jerry Twister's wishes, all difficulties were surmounted, no obstacle occurred, and the day appointed for the departure of Mr. Francis and his humble guardian, arrived, without the intervention of any sinister event to retard their journey, to cloud the pleasing prospects which presented themselves to the active mind of the young academician, or check that honest triumph of his faithful companion, on his preferment to an office which he felt so highly pleasing, and esteemed so truly honourable.

On the morning of that day, Mr. Thompson having summoned Mr. Francis to his closet, and bespoke his attention for a few minutes on a subject of the most important nature, proceeded to offer him such advice, on the regulation of his conduct in life, as might be expected from his wisdom, his experience, and the paternal affection which he bore for the hero of our tale.

"My child," says he, "you are now about to embark on that ocean in which so many adventurers perish; the distant prospect presents it in a state of serenity, and the sun-beams of youthful imagination play cheerfully on its seemingly-unruffled surface; but, however calm and pleasing the present appearance may be, however prosperous the gale which wafts you from the shore, storms will arise to disturb, rocks appear to perplex, and fogs interpose to misguide, you in your long and doubtful passage; and, to pursue the

metaphor a moment longer, the dangers of the voyage can only be averted by your own care and attention, and by a reliance on that Being, who can alone support you in the most arduous attempts, and rescue you from the most perilous situations.

“From the most scrutinizing attention to your temper, disposition, and all the actions of your childhood and youth, I am satisfied that I have nothing to fear from your principles; heartily do I wish that I had as little ground for my apprehensions on the score of your passions; for, though your duty and respect to your parents, and those to whose care you have been committed, have hitherto restrained them within decent bounds, yet my Francis must himself have discovered that they are warm, impetuous, and somewhat ungovernable, and it is to the correction of your passions that my advice will principally tend.

“Hard is my task when I attempt to set bounds to your pity and benevolence, yet too great an indulgence, even in these most amiable feelings, will throw you off the guard of discretion, and render you an easy dupe to fraud, deceit, and iniquity: when, therefore, you are assailed by the appearance of distress or the tale of woe, suffer not your heart to be too hastily interested, but compromise with your inclinations, afford temporary assistance, examine the case with minute, but delicate, attention, and, when you find the object truly deserving, consult the strength of your purse and your power, and employ both with liberality and spirit.

“Yet, in the defence of the injured or oppressed, (for the sweetness of your deportment will, I trust, secure you from offence yourself,) proceed not with violence; represent, expostulate, solicit; but if, after having tried these means without success, you are forced into a quarrel, go through it with resolution, though even then with moderation, and embrace the first advances to conciliation.

“Above all, my dear boy! guard yourself against the allurements of vice, and the equally dangerous, though less dreaded, fascinations of pleasure; nor let the solicitations or examples of your companions work *on your too easy nature*, and seduce you from those paths which can only be trodden with safety, and which, once quitted, are not, without great difficulty, to be regained; conscious rectitude and an unblemished reputation, are sacrifices too precious to be offered at the altar of complaisance or the shrine of pliability.

“Select your acquaintance, not from the most showy, but the most steady; brilliancy of parts, unregulated by the sober directions of reason, is always dangerous, and often destructive: the flash of wit is calculated to dazzle and mislead, reason emits a mild and temperate ray to light us to honour and happiness; and, to that almost-unerring guide I commit you, with the blessings of a fond and affectionate parent.”

Tears of sensibility, gratitude, and momentary regret, had stolen down the cheeks of our young traveller during the whole of this engaging and instructive lesson: at the conclusion of it he had lost the power of utterance, and, every effort to speak proving ineffectual, he dropt on his knee, imprinted the warmest kiss of grateful and dutiful affection on the hand of his venerable grandfather, and a scene ensued which can only be related, as it passed, in audible silence.

Jerry Twister now approached to bid farewell to his kind, his generous, benefactor, and to receive any instructions he might choose to give as to his performance of the office he had undertaken; and, as for the last twenty years he had never been absent from Mr. Thompson a single day, the present separation, though but for a few months, produced such a conflict of contending passions in the mind of Jeremiah, that he found himself wholly disqualified for delivering a speech of two lines, which he had prepared for the momentous occasion.

Mr. Thompson, though little less affected at the departure of his worthy dependent than at the loss of his beloved grandson, was the first to “*give sorrow words*.”—Having seized the humbly-reluctant hand of Jerry Twister, he mingled his wishes for his health and long life with such kind and condescending acknowledgments for his acceptance of this new employment, that the tender-hearted veteran, unable to stem the torrent of

gratitude and affection, which rushed upon him with such violence as almost to overpower his reason, fell involuntary on his knees, and, in strains of vehemence, interrupted by sobs and tears, intreated his benevolent patron, for the love of God, to spare his life:—"You know, sir," says he, "that I hate words; for why? words are but wind; if I have desired to attend Master Francis, why, (no offence, I hope, to your honour,) it was, because I love him as the son of my own body: and no thanks neither; for who does not love Master Francis? and why? one good turn deserves another, and Master Francis loves every body."

"Jeremiah," replied Mr. Thompson, "I have no doubt but your personal regard to my child was a very strong inducement with you to accept this employment, but I know also that you are equally influenced by your grateful attachment to me; and, acting as you do, under both these motives, I am persuaded the care of the young man could not have been more worthily committed to any human being."

"But, perfectly satisfied as I am with having provided for him an attendant, or, as I hope he will always rather consider you, a companion, of whose probity, attention, and affection, I have the most perfect opinion, I cannot see you depart together without an observation or two, which may prove as useful to yourself as to him."

"The danger, to which a youth of his disposition will be chiefly exposed, arises from the goodness of his heart, which, unconscious of deceit itself, entertains no suspicion of others; and hence follows a too ready propensity to form connexions upon slight acquaintances, and very superficial knowledge of the characters, conditions, and situations in life, of those who are candidates for his favour and friendship."

"Let it be your care, Jeremiah, to caution him on this head as often as occasion presents itself and opportunity offers: Francis, you know, is neither proud, insolent, or headstrong; he will listen to your advice with complacency, because he will be convinced that it is offered by a sincere, though humble, friend."

"But there is another subject on which I wish to add a few words, because, I think, you are nearly as much interested in it as the young man whom you are to accompany."

"It does not appear to me, Jeremiah, that either Francis or yourself possess any considerable degree of worldly prudence, I mean with respect to the management of money-matters, for I verily believe that neither of you would hesitate to part with the last shilling you possess to relieve real, or, what must operate in exactly the same way on the unsuspecting, represented distress. Now, though nothing in this world can be so delightful as the performance of acts of generosity, liberality, and benevolence, yet they ought always to be so performed as to leave you possessed of power to repeat them, when other solicitations, equally pressing, may offer, and, if possible, so as that they may not be misplaced."

During this last period of Mr. Thompson's address to him, the eyes of Jerry Twister were alternately engaged in watching the countenance of his patron and in a survey of his own person, much too significantly conveyed to escape the observation of Mr. Thompson, who fully comprehended his meaning without an explanation, which Jerry, however, thought it necessary to give in the following reply:

"Why, to be sure, as your honour says, and I believe the scripture too, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive;' and, if you will be pleased to cast your eyes about you, and reflect half a minute, you will neither be offended or surprised at that want of prudence in Jerry Twister, which you have taught him to despise.—Odds heart, sir! how can you expect me to refuse lending a helping hand to a brother in distress, when you yourself have been loading me with kindness these seven-and-thirty years, and giving me, every hour in the day, what I neither want, desire, or deserve? howsomever, I shall take care that Master Francis does not outrun the constable; but, if he has a mind to purchase a little of that pleasure which your honour was speaking of, instead of spending his money in fine clothes and raree-shows, let him oppose him that will, but it shan't be Jerry Twister."



This was probably the longest speech Jeremiah had ever uttered in the whole course of his life, and so completely were his oratorical faculties exhausted by this exertion, that no efforts of Mr. Thompson could extort from him another sentence; and when; at his leaving the room, his generous patron presented him with a purse of gold, of no inconsiderable value, he only pronounced aloud the monosyllables “too much,” and muttered, in a key too low to be perfectly intelligible, that *he supposed Master Francis would have occasion enough for it.*

The chaise was at the gate, the trunks fixed, the postillion mounted, and the youth, with eager pace, hurrying to the carriage, round which all the servants of the family were gathered to pour their last blessings on their universal favourite, when, in his hastening through the passage, he trod on the foot of an old spaniel, who had been the play-fellow of his infancy and the companion of his boyism. The cry of the animal penetrated his soul; he looked down, and the faithful quadruped had raised himself on his feeble legs to express, by the fondest tokens of brute affection, his sense of the accident. In such a moment it was too much to be borne; he seized the poor creature in his arms, hugged him to his heart, shed a flood of tears on him, and, delivering him with the extremest tenderness to the butler, bespoke for him, in silent gesticulation, his care and protection. The domestics wept before, their grief was now audible; he bowed and kissed his hand to each individual, flung himself into the chaise, and, being followed by Jerry, who seemed to have lost all other sense but that of motion, the scene shifted, and, at the distance of three miles from the hospitable mansion of Mr. Thompson, our young traveller had so far recovered as to enquire of his companion the hour of the day.

Silence once broken, a conversation ensued, in the course of which the gloom, which at first hung round our travellers, gradually diminished, and, by the time they arrived at the end of the first stage, they were perfectly capable of giving their orders with spirit, and of pursuing their journey with alacrity.

## CHAPTER VI.

*In which atonement is made for the length of the last.*

READER, if thou has ever been upon the turf, and has travelled from London to Newmarket, and from Newmarket to London, thou mayest have observed, indeed it could hardly escape thine observation, that the mile-stones appear to be placed at much wider distances in the outward than in the homeward journey; and the reason is as obvious as the observation; thou hast travelled to Newmarket big with expectation, and eager to grasp the golden prizes which were to be won, unquestionably won, by *Firetail*, *Blacklegs*, and *Potatooooooooo*. But the race is not always to the swift; honest art and noble jockeyship have interposed; Firetail has been distanced, Blacklegs fallen lame, and Potatooooooooo run the wrong side of the post:—then comes a reckoning, a dreadful reckoning; empty pocket-books,—bankers accounts,—exhausted credit,—bets to be paid the moment of arrival in town.—What, at Hockrill already! damn this fellow, he’ll kill my horses! why the mile-stones move to meet us!

And, are not these the common symptoms which mark the progress of human life? do we not look forward from infancy to youth, and from youth to manhood, with fond and flattering expectation of some hitherto-unattained pleasure? do not the lingering moments seem arrested in their progress, and the dull finger of Time too slowly move from point to point till we have passed the summit on which our hopes were fixed, and begin to slide involuntarily into the vale of years? Alas! how different then our sensations! how rapidly fly the days, the months, the years! Forty! and fifty! and sixty! and the numbered days of man, how swiftly do ye approach! how gladly should we then

command *the sun to stand still in Gibeon, and the moon to be stayed in the valley of Ajalon!*

Critic, I am aware of thy strictures,—“trite remarks,”—“common-place observations,”—“wretched gleanings from better books,”—“unmeaning trash, introduced to eke out a chapter,”—“the common trick of scribblers,”—“borrow, and borrow, and borrow!”—Hold, critic! whilst I tell thee a short story.

Richard Savage, the ingenious, the dissipated, the unfortunate, Richard Savage, put the manuscript of one of his poems into the hands of —, no matter whom, he may read and apply,—a critic.—After keeping it three weeks, the poet, whose occasions grew pressing, requested his friend to return it, with his opinion, which was delivered in the following words: “Very pretty, Savage, very pretty indeed; but the serious part, those lines about the — what is it? “Upon the creation you mean?” “Yes, about the creation; they are flat, Savage, rather flat, something in the Old-Testament way; could not you get your friend Thomson to dash a few lines for you there?” Savage bowed, and applied.—Thomson, whose candour was only equalled by his abilities, returned the manuscript to Savage the next day, with the following short note.

“Dear Savage,

“I HAVE read and admired the poem. The lines cavilled at by — are the best in the piece; but, take my word, he never read more than the two first of them. I have transcribed the part; shew it to him as mine, and he will be caught.

Your’s,

J. THOMSON.”

Savage followed his advice; the critic took the bait, he read, and was in raptures. The poem was published; the critic puffed it to the skies, but took care to point out Thomson’s lines to every human being.—At length the poets discovered the deceit, and the crest-fallen critic was under the necessity of rescuing his literary reputation at the expence of a round confession, “that the subject was dull, and he took it for granted the poetry must be insipid.”——Critic of the present hour, apply!—

Too soon advanced the night for our impatient young traveller, yet was not the day-light prolonged a moment beyond the usual time to light him on his way, nor was the motion of the wheels in the smallest degree quickened to keep pace with the impetuosity of his imagination, but both sun, moon, and post-boys, pursued their usual courses, without any extraordinary occurrence to mark the progress of our hero, till his arrival at —, where he intended to dine on the day of his departure from the seat of his grandfather.

After giving the necessary orders for his repast, he proposed to his companion to employ the half-hour, which would be required to prepare it, in visiting the public walk, the church, and the town-hall, each of which had been mentioned to him as worthy his notice. As he approached the latter building, he observed the doors open, and a considerable croud about the entrance; and, on enquiring the occasion, was informed that a court was, at that time, held there, for the determination of questions arising on demands for small sums. As he had never been present at the proceedings in any court of justice, he determined to avail himself of the present opportunity to hear some of those petty trials, which, though not conducted with all the forms required in superior tribunals, might serve to give him some idea of the manner in which justice is administered. For this purpose he mingled with a party of the suitors, and soon found himself placed in a commodious situation to see and hear what passed, an accommodation which he owed to the civility of the presiding officer, who had marked his endeavours to get forward, and distinguished him from those whose busy countenances bespoke their unsatisfied claims,

and the wretches who, from lack of ability or inclination, were too tardy in complying with their demands.

Several causes were heard, in which, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Francis, rapacity, on the one hand, had been properly checked, and supplicating poverty, on the other, protected and indulged, when the name of a defendant was announced, which seemed to take the attention of the whole audience, and whose appearance excited, in our young philanthropist, sensations of the most opposite natures; for, in almost the same moment, he was subject to the impressions of grief and joy, of pity and the sublimest satisfaction.

Through a silent and respectful croud advanced to the bar, supported on crutches, a youth of the most amiable and striking aspect. He did not appear to be more than twenty, though perhaps his emaciated frame and pallid countenance might have deprived him of two or three years manhood. His dress was a thread-bare scarlet frock, brushed to a degree of niceness, and a perfectly-clean, but well-worn, white waistcoat and breeches: his hair which was of the lightest brown, was tied and pinned with the utmost neatness, which, being dressed without powder, added to the elegance of a face, every feature of which was uncommonly dignified, expressive, and pleasing. He was attended by a clean, but meanly-dressed, person, of at least fifty years old, in the lineaments of whose hard and war-battered face might be discovered affection, concern, respect, and indignant solicitude. He walked by the side of his crippled master, and carried for him his hat and his handkerchief.

As he drew near the bar, the president and his fellows, from an involuntary impulse, rose to receive him, and his graceful bow to the court was returned, not from every head only, but from every heart.

In language which reflected honour on his humanity, the presiding officer acquainted him, that he had been summoned before him to shew cause why he neglected to discharge a debt of forty shillings to a woman, who asserted that she had supplied him with some necessaries in a long and dangerous sickness.

The unfortunate debtor, having listened to the charge with the most patient and attentive countenance, addressed himself to the president in the following words.

“To deny the debt, demanded of me, would be to add injustice to injury; it is a debt honestly due, and requires of me more than retribution,—it requires gratitude and acknowledgement; nor do I believe my creditor would have enforced payment, if she had not been compelled to a measure, apparently severe, by the necessities of an infant family. Conscious of such obligation, what must be my feelings, constrained as I am, in this public manner, to avow my inability to discharge so trifling and so just a debt! My pay, as a subaltern officer, has been exhausted in the cure of wounds, not ingloriously received; my friends too, my dearest friends, have fallen.—But I trespass on your time and intrude on your sensibility;—in one month I shall be intitled to such a sum as will enable me to be just.—would to God it may ever be in my power to be grateful.”

A murmur of respectful pity ran through the whole assembly, the president himself was too much affected to reply, he could only bow his approbation of the proposition; when the plaintiff made her way to the bar, and informed the court and the defendant, that a relation of his, who had arrived in the town whilst the cause was hearing, had discharged her demand, and generously added a guinea for her forbearance, and that he now waited for the captain at his lodgings, where he desired to see him immediately.

The confusion of the mangled soldier, at the public exposure of his poverty, could only be equalled by his astonishment at so strange, so unexpected, an event. He knew that his father was descended from a family, noble and affluent; but he knew also that he had been rejected by every branch of it on his marriage with a young lady, who wanted every requisite to make the marriage-state happy, except beauty, sense, consummate virtue, and the most amiable disposition, qualifications which could by no means atone for a deficiency in the most essential article: in plain English, it was a match of love; the lady,

though honourably born and elegantly bred, did not possess a single shilling, in consideration of which defect, it was held necessary to punish her in the person of her husband, from whom all the patronage of his powerful relations was immediately withdrawn; and, twenty-four years after the marriage, his name stood on the army-list as eldest lieutenant in a regiment of foot on service in America, where he was reported to have fallen, but whether only wounded or actually slain, his son, who had served in a different quarter, had not been able to discover, and his family had not thought it worth while to enquire.

It was not, therefore, probable that his noble relations, to whom he had applied by letter immediately after his return to England without obtaining the least notice, should, after ten months total neglect, take the pains to enquire into his situation; nor, if any accident should have recalled him to their remembrance, was it likely that either of them would condescend to pay him a visit, for the purpose of rescuing him from distress.—The corps in which he had served, any officer of which, he was well assured, would have travelled five hundred miles, and have parted with the last guinea, to assist him, still remained on the other side of the Atlantic; and, if any one of them had been in Great-Britain, it would have been almost impossible for him to discover the place of his residence.—Besides, it was a relation who expected him at his lodgings, and to whom he had been already so greatly indebted.—His only sister had accompanied his father to America, and, should she have survived him, he had little reason to suppose she could be in such circumstances as would admit of her undertaking a journey to him, much less of being able to administer to his necessities.

Every suggestion which his mind presented to him, as he hobbled to his lodging, seemed to be equally ill-founded; nor were his difficulties at all lessened on his arrival there, for, instead of his benevolent relation, he found only the following note, which had been left, about ten minutes before, by a waiter from the principal inn in the town.

“Dear Sir,

“I RELY on your goodness to excuse the liberty I have taken in claiming a relationship to you; nor is the pretence wholly groundless, for I am convinced we have kindred souls. I could not presume to intreat your becoming my debtor for the inclosed trifle, if I was not absolutely certain that it is impossible for you to discover your creditor till he demands re-payment, which shall be the moment you are perfectly recovered, and in possession of a fortune equal to your merit.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The journey completed with a single adventure.*

“JERRY,” says the philanthropist, as the chaise ascended a hill, about six miles from the house where the dinner had been ordered, “I never was so oppressed with hunger in my life as at this moment; how far do you apprehend it is to the end of this stage?”—“About six miles,” replied Jerry; “but, as your appetite is so sharp, pray, sir, why did you leave that excellent dinner untouched at ——, for which you will perceive, by this bill, I have paid no less than seven shillings?”

Now, the truth was, that when Mr. Francis had returned to his inn from the court of justice, his attention was so fully employed in other matters, and his mental faculties were so completely feasted, that he did not perceive the least occasion for corporeal food, nor did the dinner he had ordered once occur to his recollection; but, having directed the chaise to be got ready, while he was engaged in a manner which the reader’s imagination will readily suggest to him, he threw himself into it, and had proceeded thus far on his journey, when he was awakened from a most delightful reverie by a call, which, however inferior, he was obliged to admit as a call of nature, that demanded, and must receive, satisfaction.

“I do now recollect, Jerry,” says Mr. Francis, “that a dinner was ordered at ——; but, honest Jerry, the business we had to transact there was of such a nature as to satisfy my appetite without eating; I had never less stomach to a dinner in my life, Jerry, than at ——.”

“*Many men, many minds,*” replied Jeremiah; “I think I never ate so heartily as the day I jumped into our river, and saved Ned Coker, the blacksmith’s boy, from drowning; but *one man’s meat is another’s poison.*”

“And, your appetite, Jerry,” says Mr. Francis, “and my want of it, proceeded from exactly the same causes;—the satisfaction you felt, at the successful exertion of your humanity, gave a keen edge to your’s, and similar sensations blunted mine; and so much, Jerry, in justification of your proverbs.”

Reader, if thy curiosity is not as keen to learn the exact amount of the contents of the note received by the wounded subaltern, as Mr. Fairborn’s appetite to his dinner, I shall be grievously disappointed; and, as I do by no means choose to attribute thy *nonchalance* to any defect in my manner of telling the story, I give thee notice, that I set thee down as a stupid, unfeeling, mortal; and I do intreat thee to lay aside my book, and resign the task of reading through these volumes, in pursuit of information on this subject, to those who possess virtue and activity of mind enough to be interested in the discovery; and, to such, I promise ample gratification.

And, if thou hast not penetration enough to sound the depth of Mr. Francis’s cogitations, during the first six miles of the stage he is now travelling, or lackest urbanity to rejoice at his rejoicings, thou art intitled to pity for the weakness of thine understanding, or to contempt for the hardness of thine heart.

After a plentiful dinner at F——, our travellers were proceeding rapidly to the last stage of their journey, when their progress was stopped by an accident, which, however unpleasant, is by no means uncommon to those who content themselves with the vehicular accommodations which are provided at the inns on the road, with the construction or good order of which, passengers, who are aware they have only temporary interests, are not very apt to concern themselves.

About three miles short of Kingston inn, one of the hind wheels of the chaise suddenly gave way; and, though the failure was discovered by the driver timely enough to prevent any injury to those who occupied the carriage, yet all farther use of it was suspended till another wheel could be procured; and, for that purpose, the postillion rode

forward to the inn, and, the evening being fair though rather dark, Mr. Francis chose to walk on, and leave the care of the carriage and trunks to Jeremiah.

When he had proceeded a little more than a mile from the place where he had been obliged to leave the chaise, a difficulty occurred, of which he was not aware when he left his companion; he was totally unacquainted with the road, and, at this place, it divided in such a manner, as to make it impossible for him to determine whether the right-hand way or the left was most likely to conduct him to the place of his destination.

In this dilemma, he thought it prudent to wait the return of the post-boy, which, he apprehended, would not be very distant; and, in pursuance of this resolution, he seated himself at the foot of a stile, which led to a path from the road across some fields, and, as the day was too far spent to admit of his looking round him, he amused himself with recalling to his remembrance the last act of benevolence which he had happily been enabled to perform, and in figuring to himself the various conjectures and ideas of the person who had been benefited by it.

But he had enjoyed these pleasing reflexions only a few minutes, before he was alarmed by the sound of blows, which seemed to pass with great violence in the field behind him, and were accompanied with repeated cries for mercy and assistance, uttered by a voice which seemed to be weak and faint, as if on the point of being exhausted from struggling or violence.

The most distant intimation of distress was, in any case, sufficient to call our hero into action: on the present occasion he hesitated not a moment, but, plucking a stake from the hedge, flew along the path, and, in a very few moments, discovered the subject of the alarm.

Almost under the opposite hedge of the field he found a single man, without any other weapon than a pitch-fork, defending himself against the attacks of two stout fellows, one of whom was provided with a pistol, which, however, he did not attempt to fire, and the other had only a large walking-stick; and, with these arms, they pressed hard on the single man, who, at the arrival of Mr. Francis, seemed to have been so roughly handled, that he was ready to give up the contest.

But, re-inforced by a fresh and powerful partisan, who instantly ranged himself on the weak side, he renewed the fight with restored vigour, and the assailants were, in two minutes, compelled to quit the field, and betake themselves to flight, after receiving undoubted proofs of our young traveller's strength and spirit.

No sooner had the enemies turned their backs, than the rescued victim of their violence, in terms of vulgar gratitude, returned his thanks to his new associate for his timely assistance, which, he said, had prevented his being robbed, and probably murdered, by a couple of desperate ruffians, who had attacked him in his way from the next market-town to a neighbouring village, where he was going to pass a few days with a friend.

Our hero had previously mentioned his being fortunately delayed on the road by the accident already recounted, so that, after he had received the acknowledgements of his newly-acquired friend, he left him to pursue his walk, and hastened to regain the spot he had quitted by the high-way, where the chaise arrived soon after he reached it; and we shall leave him to pick up his baggage and companion, and proceed on his journey, whilst we return to enquire after the discomfited assailants.

Now, though these gentlemen had thought it necessary to retreat, yet, like many other skilful generals on like occasions, they no sooner found themselves out of the reach of immediate danger, than they rallied their scattered spirits, and held a council of war, the result of which was, a determination to keep behind the hedge, watch the motions of the enemy, and act accordingly.

But, as our readers may possibly have entertained suspicions unfavorable to the moral characters of the last-mentioned pair of friends, it is our duty, as a faithful historian, to set them right in this particular, and to assure them, that, according to the

best evidence we have been able to procure, they were a couple of as innocent, honest, and worthy, farmers, as any in the county of Oxford.

And, in compliance with the sacred impulses of truth, which will not permit us to degrade the dignity of our character with that species of modern wit with which the dramatic productions of the present day are, to the exclusion of all those sprightly sallies, which, in the scenes of Congreve, Wycherly, and Farquhar, were wont to set the galleries, aye, and the pit and boxes too, in a roar, so abundantly supplied, and which consists in mistaking a gentleman for an inn-keeper, a lawyer for a fidler, a physician for a Merry-Andrew, and a sermon for an act of parliament; we hold ourselves bound to acquaint our readers, in this place, with certain circumstances, which, though in the ordinary course of things they would be disclosed hereafter, we cannot conceal a moment longer, lest we should be suspected of an attempt at *équivoque*.

The truth then compels us to declare, that the two honest farmers, who were found by our hero engaged with the person to whom he gave his protection, had been making merry at a harvest-feast in a neighbouring village, and were quietly returning home, when they were attacked in the field above-described by a single footpad, who had, the preceding morning, been discharged at a general jail-delivery at Oxford, where he had been tried for a capital offence, and had been acquitted from a failure of evidence, occasioned by the death of a principal witness; and, the odds of numbers, together with an additional portion of spirit, imbibed at the before-mentioned entertainment, having inspired the assailed with the resolution to defend their persons and properties from the invader, a scuffle ensued, in which the pistol was wrested from the robber, who, in return, seized the pitch-fork, with which he was armed when our hero arrived at the scene of action; and this exchange of weapons, together with the disparity of strength, unfortunately led the philanthropist into a mistake of so extraordinary a nature, as to be productive of consequences equally dangerous and disagreeable to him.

We have now placed the characters of the farmers out of the reach of suspicion, and accounted for their taking a post of observation; and the sequel will serve to establish a doctrine which has not yet been universally assented to, *viz.* that a man may be born a general as well as a poet.

For, no sooner had they discovered, from their lurking-place, the separation of their enemies, one of whom, the actual robber, took the path which led to their habitations, than they determined to pursue him, and once more attempt a conquest which had been snatched from their hands in the moment of victory; and, in pursuance of this resolution, they soon overtook him, and, after a short struggle, secured him, and conducted him in triumph to a neighbouring justice of the peace, where he underwent a strict examination; and having with much apparent contrition, acknowledged *this his first attempt*, he entreated to be admitted evidence for the crown against his accomplice, who, he asserted, had, by the most artful insinuations, prevailed on him to engage in so wicked and perilous an undertaking; and, being himself, though young in years, an old and practised offender, had cunningly persuaded him to attack the farmers alone, and only came to his assistance when he saw he was likely to be overpowered, lest, being apprehended, he should be tempted to make that disclosure, which, on the present occasion, was not the effect of regard to his own safety, but to public justice.

To this plausible tale the captivated thief added assurances, “that his accomplice might be easily overtaken and apprehended, as he was to sleep that night at Kingston inn, and proceed the next morning to Oxford, where he had promised to re-join him; though such a measure was very distant from his intention, he having proposed a separation, under pretence of avoiding suspicion, but in truth to make hit escape from so dangerous a companion.”

In consequence of this confession, the culprit in custody was directed to be conveyed to the county-jail, and a warrant was issued for the apprehension of the supposed author and partner of his guilt; and the execution of it was committed to certain myrmidons, commonly in attendance on those occasions, and who, with views perfectly

disinterested, excepting only in the expectation of conviction-money, are so extremely unwilling that a highwayman or house-breaker should escape punishment, that they are not only ready to lend their personal assistance in the caption, but are equally liberal of their evidence towards the conviction of such delinquents.

Meantime, Mr. Francis Fairborn having returned in the chaise to the spot where he had left his baggage and faithful companion, with whom he very soon after it was dark reached the end of the stage, and having ordered his supper and made choice of his bed, he entertained honest Jerry with an account of his adventure, and received with pleasure the congratulations of the worthy sympathizing veteran, on his spirit and success.

The supper was just served, when an extraordinary bustle in the inn-yard induced our traveller to postpone his meal to his curiosity, whilst he enquired into the occasion of this sudden disturbance; and, for this purpose he quitted his room, and perceiving several men on horseback in the gate-way, and the whole family of the inn, together with many of the guests, assembled round them, listening to some tale which two or three of the horsemen were earnestly relating at the same time, he advanced and mingled with the croud, and, to his utter astonishment, discovered two of the orators to be the very persons with whom he had contended about two hours before, and from whom he had rescued the man who had been so unequally engaged with them.

Nor was the recollection of the farmers less faithful; for, the moment Mr. Francis made his appearance, they quitted their horses, and each of them seizing an arm of the confounded youth, they rudely dragged him towards their companions, to whose charge they committed him as the footpad of whom they had been in pursuit.

The exultations of the successful parties, the exclamations of the by-standers, together with loud and mingled expressions of pity and detestation, produced so universal an uproar, as to awaken Jeremiah from a reverie, in which he was contemplating, with wonderful satisfaction, on the disposition and merit of his charge; and, as his philosophy was of the practical kind, and he was by no means convinced that virtue was merely speculative, and might arrive at the consummation of excellence without being called into action, an opinion which, he shrewdly conceived, was founded rather on convenience than conviction, he hastened towards the scene of confusion, which he reached at the moment that the ministers of the law were treating the darling of his patron, and the delight of his own soul, as a villain, a felon, and a thief.

Now, though Jerry, as we have already observed, was one of the most inoffensive of God's creatures, and resembled, in this his pacific disposition, that animal, whose gentleness has rendered it the invariable subject of sacred and profane allusion, yet he also partook of the character of another animal, which, though not celebrated for meekness, hath been distinguished, in praise, from other beasts of the forest, for dignity of deportment in overlooking petty offences, and nobleness of spirit in resenting and revenging designed and malicious affronts.

The truth is, that Jerry Twister was a lamb in temper, but a lion in resolution; and, being wholly unable to comprehend the occasion of the indignity to which his beloved Mr. Francis was exposed, he darted through the croud with astonishing velocity, and, at two blows, rescued him from the ruffian-hands of the dealers in death.

To their assistance the farmers entered the lists, and Mr. Fairborn and his co-adjutor were on the point of being worsted, when they were, in their turn, reinforced by the postillion, who had conducted the travellers to the inn, and an Irish soldier, who, at the very critical moment, arrived in the yard with a billet, and swore "by Jasus," that *"four to three was two to one, and he always took part with the weakest side."*

Now, though the postillion had a dislocated hip, and the honest Irishman had returned from Gibraltar with one leg less than he carried out, so that for some moments the victory seemed doubtful; yet, at length, our hero and his friends appearing to have a manifest advantage, he demanded a parley, which being readily granted, he desired to be informed why the assault had been made on him, and why he had been subjected to such coarse and disgraceful usage.



The warrant was now produced, and the nature of the information on which it had been granted was explained to him by the bearer of it; and now the philanthropist began to discover his real situation, and to comprehend, in some measure, the mistakes and misapprehensions which had misled him, and misguided the other parties.

He therefore signified his readiness to appear immediately before a magistrate; and, having provided by express stipulation against personal violence, he accompanied his accusers to a justice of peace, who resided within half a mile of the inn, attended by Jerry and the postillion, as witnesses on his behalf, and by all those who had been spectators of the combat, every individual of whom seemed deeply interested in the event of such an extraordinary affair.

This magistrate possessed certain qualifications, which, however essential they may be to the due administration of justice, do not always fall to the share of the *quorum*; he had good sense, a competent knowledge of the laws, and a considerable portion of humanity, so that the investigation of so perplexed a business could hardly have been submitted to a more competent judge; yet, after he had read the warrant, and taken the depositions of the accusers, and the totally-contradictory evidence of Jeremiah and the postillion, he found himself so extremely embarrassed, that he was wholly at a loss how to proceed: the defence of the prisoner, it is true, was clear, and apparently artless; but this was counterbalanced by the positive information of the accomplice, a copy of which had been forwarded with the warrant, and was produced to him with that instrument.

A cause in which the evidence on each side, though in all respects contradictory, carried with it such equal weight and credibility, was, perhaps, hardly ever brought before any court of judicature: on one hand, the farmers, who were the accusers, were men of respectable characters and unimpeached veracity, and their charge was supported by the confession and testimony of the accomplice in the intended robbery, and corroborated by the prisoner's admitting the fact of his engaging in the assistance of the foot-pad: on the other, the appearance and manners of the supposed delinquent, his rank in life and connexions, which were proved by many papers in his possession, as well as by his baggage and his mode of travelling; the testimony of Jeremy Twister, that he had never been out of his sight from the time he left his grandfather's house till within one hour of that fixed on by the accusers, and the confirmation of the postillion, who had driven him the last stage, and who accounted for his separation from his companion by relating the accident which had happened to the chaise; the whole presenting so complicated a scene of difficulty and confusion as to baffle every effort of the worthy magistrate to form such a judgment as might enable him to guard the accused from oppression, if he was innocent, or to consign him to punishment, if he was guilty.

In this state of perplexity, he desired to retire for a few minutes, that he might weigh the matters before him with more undisturbed attention than could be bestowed on them in a public room; but his deliberations were soon suspended by the arrival of another set of suitors, who had conducted to his house the miscreant, on whose account Mr. Fairborn had been deprived of his liberty, and exposed to insult and dishonour.

To account for this extraordinary meeting of the real and supposed offender, it is necessary for us to inform our readers, that, very soon after the departure of those who were charged with the conveyance of the thief to Oxford jail, a gentleman arrived at the justice's who had issued the warrant for his commitment, and exhibited a new complaint against him, under such a description of his person as it was impossible to mistake, of a robbery which he had actually perpetrated, in the morning of the same day, on the gentleman himself, his lady, and daughter, at the distance of some miles from the spot where he had been apprehended, in the commission of which he was unaccompanied by any accomplice, and had behaved with such insolence and brutality as to provoke the injured parties to a pursuit, in the course of which they became acquainted with his apprehension, and traced him to the house of the justice, by whom he had been just before forwarded to prison, and by whose advice the new complainant pursued the road towards Oxford, and overtook the robber and his guard about two miles short of Kingston

inn; these gentlemen, whose equipage consisted of a farmer's cart, having proceeded less expeditiously than the pursuers of Mr. Fairborn, who were mounted on horseback, and inspired by the most powerful of all motives to lose no time in the performance of their journey.

The robber was no sooner conducted into the justice-room, than he espied our hero in a situation from which he now found he could himself derive no advantage, as the present charge against him was direct and complete; and, as he was perfectly accomplished in the art, or mystery, which he had for several years professed, and had been accustomed to all the subterfuges, shifts, and evasions, usually practised by adepts in this science of defence; he instantly conceived, that he might derive some favour from assuming an appearance of ingenuous concern for the villainy of his conduct towards our hero, whose liberation and honourable acquittal, by his means, would, he supposed, inspire him with such pleasure as would not only stifle every mark of resentment, but induce him to become his advocate, and afford him some protection from this newly-threatening storm.

Thus persuaded, he desired to approach Mr. Fairborn, before whom he threw himself on his knees, and made a full and ample confession of the truth, confirming, in every particular, the account given by the youth himself in his defence, and beseeching his forgiveness in terms of the most abject and supplicating humiliation.

The scene was immediately changed; the accusers of our hero, convinced that his interference was occasioned by motives of the most generous humanity, desired that the warrant against him might be withdrawn, and that he might be immediately discharged; a request with which the worthy magistrate complied, to his own great satisfaction and that of the whole company, who expressed their joy in loud acclamations, and invoked the choicest blessings for him, whom some of them had, but a very few moments before, loaded with imprecations; for, so depraved is the mind of man, that it is too often ready to receive ill impressions, though conveyed through the medium of the grossest improbability, whilst innocence and worth require the full force of conviction to support and establish their claims.

By the time this business was dispatched, and the robber once more recommitted to the care of those who were to convey him to his former, and probably his last, habitation, the evening was so far advanced, that Mr. Fairborn thought it prudent to accept the magistrate's pressing invitation to partake of his supper, during which he received the congratulations of the lady and daughters of that gentleman on the developement, so much to his honour, of this intricate and confused affair; and, at his departure, the good justice not only bestowed on him the most friendly wishes for his welfare, but, as a farther proof of his regard, offered him such advice for the regulation of his conduct, on future exigencies, as made a deep impression on the sensible and grateful heart of our hero, and inspired resolutions of prudence and circumspection: how tenaciously these resolutions were adhered to will be seen hereafter.

At the return of Mr. Francis to Kingston inn, he ordered horses to be ready by seven the next morning, and retired to rest with a mind somewhat more than usually agitated, by the consideration of the inconveniencies which he had incurred in the indulgence of the noblest passion of the mind, and by mortifying reflexions on the villainy, baseness, and ingratitude, of the wretch, for whom he had hazarded his life and endangered his reputation.

His spirit thus perturbed, sleep forsook him at an earlier hour than usual; and, having awakened the faithful companion of his journey, he directed him to enquire for his warm and disinterested friends, the postillion and mutilated soldier, both of whom he meant to reward for the services they had rendered him: the former was found, and tasted of our hero's munificence; but, to his great mortification, he was informed that the latter had quitted the inn at the earliest dawn, and must, by the time of his enquiry, be several miles on his way to Chester.

Nothing material occurred on his journey to Oxford, where he arrived early in the forenoon; and, having presented letters, with which he was furnished, to several persons of eminence resident in that university, he was admitted a gentleman-commoner of Queen's college, and, being provided with an excellent tutor, he entered upon his studies with that alacrity and earnestness which marked all his pursuits; and his relations had soon the satisfaction to receive the most pleasing accounts both of his regularity of life and progress in learning.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*A long journey, a long chapter, and another adventure,  
more melancholy, and less disastrous, than that re-  
counted in the last chapter.*

DURING six months residence at Oxford, no particular event happened to interrupt the uniformity of a college-life; and, if our hero did not pass all his time exactly in the way usual with gentlemen commoners, his deviation was not so remarkable as to render him ridiculous, even among that respectable body; for, though he determined to perform his exercises, and avoid violent excesses, yet he readily engaged in all reasonable parties of pleasure, and promoted every plan of rational entertainment; so that he passed among his compeers as a cheerful, good-humoured, youth, somewhat too bashful and unenterprising, but bidding fair to dash out when he was qualified by manhood and experience.

And, different as was his present manner of life from every former scene, the easy, unruffled, disposition of Jeremiah soon accommodated itself to the change, and even brought him to submit to certain alterations in his exterior appearance, which he readily adopted on the first hint from his charge, that, in a place where there was so much juvenile spirit afloat, it might not be prudent to allow it singularity to work upon; and, in consequence of this hint, Jerry Twister soon exhibited a hat cocked in the mode, and fashionable shoes and buckles, and exchanged his silk handkerchief for a muslin cravat.

Nor was the interior man wholly uninfluenced by the air of an university: Jeremiah, whose literary attainments had, till this his fiftieth year, never, even in imagination, soared above reading, writing, and common arithmetic, now determined to adventure on classic ground; and, having engaged a Scotch student of Baliol to be his preceptor, he attacked the Accidence with wonderful assiduity, and, in less than two months, was surprized by our hero in the act of construing Phædrus to his tutor.

Nothing could equal Mr. Francis's astonishment at an undertaking which appeared to be of so extraordinary a nature, notwithstanding the assertions of the Scotchman, that "*though Maister Tweester was a little advanced in years, he would make a bra scholar;*" but, as our hero had much too high an opinion of Jerry's heart to dispute the qualifications of his head, and too great a regard for him to interrupt his innocent pursuits, he would not even treat his project with contempt, but congratulated him on the spirit of his undertaking, and on his fair prospect of success under a master of such assiduity and ability.

From the moment of this discovery Mr. Francis not only made frequent enquiries after the advancement of this antiquated graduate, but attempted, at different times, to sound the depth of his learning by questions suited to his probable progress, the answers to which evinced so considerable a degree of genius as well as industry, in the new votary to erudition, as to satisfy him, that a competent knowledge of the learned languages might be acquired without a fourteen years apprenticeship to a dull, rule-ridden, pedant, and without those methods of inculcation in practice at most of the seminaries of learning, which, however pleasant to the operator, serve in general only to expel from the sufferer the power of applying the talents with which God hath blessed him.

But the studies of the principal and his second were now interrupted by an event, which filled the heart of the former with the keenest anxiety, and awakened in the bosom of the latter sensations of dutiful, grateful, and affectionate, regret.

As there was a daily intercourse between the families of Mr. Thompson and Sir William Fairborn, the latter gentleman dispensed with his son's paying his duty to him by letter oftener than once a month, but he had accustomed himself, during his residence at Oxford, to write to his grandfather once in every week. Mr. Thompson's answers were dispatched with equal regularity, and were received with the most respectful pleasure by

the young student, and carefully preserved as precious pledges of his second parent's approbation of his conduct and continued affections.

Three weeks had now elapsed without the arrival of a line from Mr. Thompson, though, on the part of our philanthropist, the correspondence had been continued as usual; and, as this extraordinary silence had given him inexpressible uneasiness, he had determined to apply to his father for an explanation of the occasion, when he received a letter from his beloved grandfather, which, though it accounted for his not answering his three last letters, rendered his adopted child still more disturbed and unhappy.

For two or three years past Mr. Thompson had been subject to a slight asthmatic complaint, but, as he was too far advanced in years to expect uninterrupted health, and the returns of the disorder were neither very frequent nor extremely violent, it was in a great measure disregarded both by himself and those friends, whose anxiety for his welfare would not have suffered them to overlook an indisposition in the smallest degree alarming.

But a late attack had been so unusually severe as to excite extreme apprehension in the mind of his excellent daughter, her husband, and every branch of the family; and, in compliance with their urgent intreaties, Mr. Thompson had consented to consult a physician, who, discovering some symptoms which threatened a pulmonary case, advised a journey into Wales, and a regimen of goat's milk; a prescription, we confess, diametrically opposite to the usual course of practice, which, we are aware, directs, that the patient shall by no means be committed to the vulgar and simple remedies of air, exercise, and diet, while a hope remains of removing his disorder by the administration of drugs and the powers of art; and strictly forbids a removal of more than three or four miles from his habitation, till it is morally certain that he cannot survive the journey, in which emergency he is urged to undertake it, as it is a matter of indifference, to those who are only interested in the prolongation of his *life*, whether Bath, Bristol, Scotland, Wales, or any stage in the way to either, serves for the place of his interment: yet we trust our physician will, in the present case, escape the censure of the faculty, when we inform them that he received so large a fee at this first consultation, that he could not have expected another, had he detained him within his own reach till the last stage of his complaint.

The intent of Mr. Thompson's present letter to his grandson was to inform him, that, in consequence of this advice, he was preparing to proceed immediately to visit an old acquaintance, who had retired into Merionethshire about the same time that he himself quitted the metropolis, at whose house he was sure to find comfortable accommodation and a hearty welcome, and where he earnestly desired our hero and his old friend Jerry to join him with all convenient expedition, as his health, though by no means in a dangerous, was in a somewhat precarious, state, and he was disposed to indulge in every cordial which might contribute to its re-establishment.

The requests of Mr. Thompson had ever acted as commands on Mr. Francis Fairborn, and it had been his highest gratification to watch the earliest appearances of inclination in his venerable parent, and to anticipate his wishes with the most dutiful and affectionate assiduity; and so successful had been his endeavours in this way, that Mr. Thompson has frequently declared to his friends his perfect assent to the doctrine of mental sympathy, as the suggestions of his mind were constantly carried into execution by his grandson before they could reach his lips.

On the present occasion he would have given instant directions for the commencement of his journey, but his faculties were absorbed in emotions of too tender a nature to admit of attention to ordinary concerns:—his dearest, his best, friend, the tender, fond, protector of his infancy, the guardian of his youth, the patron of his riper years, was in a situation of possible danger; the life of him, who had dedicated all the latter part of it to his happiness and welfare, was, perhaps, at this moment, drawing to its period; the eye, that had been used to survey him with such rapturous expression of pleasure, might now be grown dim; the hand, which had so often grasped him with

affectionate ardour, might now be cold and lifeless; and the tongue, which had so constantly been lavish in his praise, might, at this moment, and for ever, be mute!—It was not in human nature, in virtuous, undebauched, human nature, to support such acute reflexions; the letter dropt from his hand, the vital functions paused for a moment, the vibration was suspended, the pulse ceased to beat, till the heaven-bestowed crisis of sorrow, the heart-relieving tear, bursting from the seat of woe, gave vent to passions, the suppression of which threatened consequences of the most fatal nature.

Nor was honest Jeremiah less agitated, though somewhat differently affected, at the communication of these melancholy tidings; equally susceptible with Mr. Francis, his expression of concern was instantly audible; he lamented, with uncommon volubility, the hardship of his fate, who seemed doomed to survive his honoured, his respected, his beloved, friend, patron, and benefactor; and, without waiting for a declaration of Mr. Francis's intentions, he began to pack a portmanteau with such impetuous violence as bespoke the temper of his mind.

But a second perusal of the letter restored the philanthropist and his companion to reason and consideration: the contents being now discussed with more calmness and composure, they perceived that no apprehensions of danger were suggested by the writer, but, on the contrary, he had guarded his grandson against giving way to such ideas; and they derived consolation and hope from reflecting, that a journey of such length could not have been undertaken by a person in such a state as their affectionate fears had represented.

Thus re-inspired, they prepared for their expedition with all possible dispatch, Mr. Francis by communicating his grandfather's letter to his tutor and two or three of his more particular acquaintance, and Jerry Twister by getting together the necessaries for their journey, and ordering a post-chaise, that, about five in the afternoon, conveyed them from the college-gate, which they left amidst the good wishes and benedictions of the different classes who were assembled as spectators of their departure; for both Mr. Francis and his companion had friends of every rank, from the humble skink to the dignified and self-important doctor.

On the morning of the third day they reached that delightful and picturesque part of Denbighshire, which has been so highly celebrated under the description of the Vale of Cluydd, in the very center of which they stopped to change horses and take their breakfast; and, as all travelling cares devolved on Jeremiah, Mr. Francis, as soon as he had finished his meal, took a short walk, under the direction of his host, to view one of the richest prospects which imagination can conceive, the happy combination of woods, water, corn-fields, and meadows, disposed in all the pomp and beauty which the artless arrangement of nature alone can exhibit, presenting, at this season, (for it was now the middle of August,) a scene so luxurious, that our hero would probably have spent much more time than he intended in the contemplation of it, if his guide had not received a summons to attend on some guests who had arrived at his house since he had left it.

Mr. Francis had just entered the inn-yard, and was proceeding to his chaise, which he saw waiting for him, when a female figure flew through an open gallery, exclaiming, in the most heart-piercing tone of horror, "My father! my father! my father!" and, at one step, came from the head of the stairs to the bottom, where she was received, totally lifeless, in the arms of our philanthropist, who had happily moved towards the staircase at the instant of her appearance in the gallery.

With the assistance of Jeremiah, Mr. Francis conveyed his inanimate burden into a room, and a surgeon was, at his desire, instantly called, by whose direction the lady was removed into a bed-chamber, and, as he seemed to be no stranger either to her person or the occasion of her distress, he was requested by our hero to favour him with a visit, as soon as his patient's restoration to life, and the proper attention to her safety, would permit; and, in the mean time, Jeremiah was acquainted with Mr. Francis's intention to delay his journey till he had received the information which he impatiently expected.

In a very few minutes Mr. Francis had the satisfaction to learn that the lady, whom he had so happily preserved from extreme danger, and on whose behalf he had so humanely interested himself, was recovered from the fainting-fit, though there was reason to apprehend the agitation of her mind might occasion a relapse; and as, in that case, farther medical assistance might be necessary, the surgeon, from whom he received this intelligence, yielded to his intreaties that he would indulge him with his company, till he could venture to return to his house without hazarding his patient's safety.

The curiosity of our hero was now gratified as far as the knowledge of his informer extended, whose acquaintance with the lady had commenced only about four or five days before, in a manner which enabled him to explain fully the cause of her present distress.

He said, that, in the middle of the preceding week, he had been desired by a servant belonging to the inn to visit a sick gentleman, who had arrived at the house the day before, and had been taken so extremely ill that he had been unable to pursue his journey; that he had accordingly attended the sick man, whom he found to be an officer, about fifty years of age, of the most engaging appearance and elegant manners; that his illness was occasioned by a gun-shot wound which had penetrated his lungs, which, having been superficially healed during his voyage from America, had, from the motion of the carriage, aided by great apparent anxiety of mind, brought on internal complaints of the most dangerous nature; that he had no servant, nor any other companion but a daughter, about seventeen, of whose person and behaviour he spoke in terms of rapture; that he had earnestly recommended calling in a physician, and had been seconded by the urgent entreaties of the young lady, but the importunity of both had been resisted by the patient, who was not without great difficulty prevailed on to permit a nurse to be procured, and, that only in consideration of the great fatigue of his amiable daughter, who, notwithstanding, had never quitted the room, taking the only repose in which she would indulge herself in an armed-chair, and with the most dutiful, affectionate, and engaging, solicitude, watching over the life of a parent, whose existence seemed dearer to her than her own.

That the unfortunate gentleman's disorder had gradually gained ground, and that he had been hastily called to him about an hour before, when he perceived evident symptoms of approaching dissolution; that, in compliance with the repeated solicitations of his amiable, and almost distracted, daughter, he had retired to prepare a medicine, which, however, he knew would be unavailing; and that, during his absence, his patient had breathed his last, an event which, notwithstanding it was expected, had excited such horror and grief in the fair orphan as had actually affected her senses, and, but for the happy intervention of Mr. Francis, would, in all probability, have proved destructive to her life.

To this melancholy tale the worthy surgeon added his apprehensions, that the slender state of the traveller's finances prevented the deceased gentleman from complying with the wishes of his daughter to seek the advice which he had recommended, and he lamented, with a sigh of genuine compassion, that he could only contribute his professional care and attention towards the relief of the surviving sufferer, to which she was most heartily welcome.

Distress, in all its various forms, was sacred to Mr. Francis Fairborn, but youth, beauty, and innocence, unbefriended, unprotected, and possibly unprovided for, had irresistible claims on his philanthropy. He thanked his medical companion, with the most grateful fervour, for the part he took in the afflictions of this child of sorrow, and he intreated his assistance in concerting some plan to alleviate such complicated wretchedness.

After much consultation on a subject so difficult, it was agreed that the first step towards consolation would be to introduce to the unhappy lady, in her first moment of tolerable composure, a companion of her own sex, who might, by degrees, prevail on her to pour out her sorrows on her friendly bosom, which might lighten the load of her

afflictions, and, at the same time, enable our hero and his coadjutor to hit on some expedient for offering every species of assistance which might be needful, without creating fresh anguish by inflicting wounds on her delicacy.

In the performance of this painful, though necessary, task, Mr. Lowther (the surgeon) offered to engage his wife, who, by an excellent understanding, tenderness of heart, and gentleness of disposition, which had been often, too often, disciplined in the school of adversity, was peculiarly qualified for all the offices of humanity.

To this lady our hero desired to be immediately introduced; and, having accepted an invitation to dine with this worthy couple, he found the good doctor had by no means over-rated the merits of his valuable partner, who, in the obscure situation of an apothecary's wife, in a country village remote from the metropolis, exhibited, in her person and manners, a pattern of neatness, discretion, and unaffected elegance, which would have done honour to the most polite circle, and whose every expression bespoke a heart replete with the richest sentiments of liberality, benevolence, and humanity.

During the early part of the day Mr. Lowther's visits to his fair patient were repeated at very short intermissions; her faintings returned several times, but each fit was less violent than the former, and, before the hour of tea, she was so far restored to a state of calmness as to yield to his solicitation, that his wife might be permitted to wait on her to take any commands she might wish to have executed, and convey such orders as she could not, in her present circumstances, communicate in person.

This was gaining a point of importance, and the pair of friends presaged success to their wishes from the length of Mrs. Lowther's visit, which lasted till eleven at night, when she returned with her eyes swoln out of her head, and her mind so affected with pity, admiration, and regret, that it was with the extremest difficulty she could collect spirits to relate what her interested auditors were so impatient to hear.

As she entered the room, she said, the poor soul was reclining her head against the back of an armed-chair, her face covered with a handkerchief, and her hands clasped and extended in the most moving posture of supplication. As she advanced, the nurse, who stood by the chair weeping, and holding a smelling-bottle in her hand, said, "the lady, madam;" on which she threw off the handkerchief and attempted to rise, but was prevented by Mrs. Lowther, who drew a chair and seated herself by her side: the lady then turned to her, and, in almost inarticulate sounds, thanked her for her charitable attention to a forlorn and miserable—; she seemed as if she would have added— orphan,—but the word was too emphatic of her immediate cause of sorrow to be uttered, and she again fell back in her chair and remained silent. Mrs. Lowther now addressed her in the most soothing strain of tenderness; she joined in lamenting her affliction, and bewailed the loss she had sustained with the most affectionate and maternal expressions of pity and kindness. These assiduities produced the effect she hoped; the lovely mourner turned her eyes on her commiserating visitor, and extended her hand as a pledge that she gratefully accepted her proffered friendship; a plentiful shower of tears restored to her the powers of speech, and, from this moment, the good matron continued to advance in her esteem, and she, at intervals, confided to her the particulars of her melancholy and distressful situation.

She said, the parent, whose loss she had such reason to deplore, was nearly allied to a family of the highest rank, but that he had disoblged them by what the world called an improper, and the most candid must allow to be an imprudent, marriage, since his whole dependence was his merit and interest, and the only fortune which his wife brought him were beauty and virtue; so that, his family declining to exert themselves in his favour, and his own qualifications or those of his lady being wholly inefficient to procure him friends or preferment, he had never obtained a higher rank than that of a captain in the army, and that only in the last campaign.

That her mother and herself had accompanied him to America about five years before, but that her mother had survived the voyage only about three months: that her father, with a view to her particular advantage, had soon after engaged in a second



marriage with a woman of reputed fortune, but had been grievously disappointed in that respect as well as in the character and disposition of his second wife, the former of which he discovered, when it was too late, to have been somewhat worse than doubtful, and the latter to be most diabolical:—that the regiment, in which he had been promoted, having been ordered to be reduced, he had left the continent, with his daughter, without taking leave of his wife, having given proper directions that every shilling of her property should be restored to her, though he had detected her in an attempt to betray his beloved child into the hands of a profligate officer of rank and fortune; and was retiring into Wales, as well for the purpose of living frugally on his scanty income, as to elude, if possible, any endeavours of his wife to discover his retreat and disturb his quiet:—that her name was Melcombe, and the earl of M. her great-uncle, though, as he had constantly refused to enter into any correspondence with his brother, she had no reason to suppose he would afford her any protection; and that, by the late dispensation of Providence, she verily believed she was left without a friend on earth, her only brother, who had also borne a commission in the army, having been slain at the attack of Charles-Town.

During the recital of this affecting narrative, the passions of our hero were wrought up to such a pitch of energetic sympathy, that he frequently interrupted the relater with exclamations of pity, grief, and detestation, as the different circumstances operated on his mind; and the conclusion of it had so nearly deprived him of his reason, that he started from his chair, and, with the extremest vehemence of voice and action, called God to witness, that she neither was, or should be, friendless, as he would support her with the last shilling he could command, and protect her, with the utmost exertion of his strength and ability, to the latest moment of his life.

The worthy apothecary and his lady had, before this time, discovered the name, rank, and condition, of Mr. Francis, partly from himself, and partly from Jeremiah, who, from the first interference of our hero, had been admitted to the councils of him and his associate, and had actually so far got the better of his taciturnity on the present occasion, as to offer, without solicitation, his opinion, “that their journey had better be delayed a day or two than the poor girl should be left without a friend; and if Master Francis had a mind to stand by her, as he always used to do by those who were in distress, why, as to the matter of money, he had a parcel there in the portmanteau, which Mr. Thompson had delivered to him the day he left Eastburn-Hall, as he supposed, for the purpose of its being applied to some good use or other; and he believed a better could hardly offer than the present, for belike the young woman had need enough of it, as a half-pay captain could not be burdened with cash.”

If Mr. and Mrs. Lowther had already conceived the highest opinion of their young visitor, they were now no less prepossessed in favour of his travelling companion; and, being perfectly convinced that our hero possessed the power as well as the inclination to afford effectual assistance to the lovely orphan, they expressed their highest approbation of his intentions, and only submitted to him the necessity of restraining the violent sallies of his benevolence, lest the earnestness of his zeal should prove subversive of the end it was meant to promote.

To this friendly caution Mr. Francis, the ebullition of whose good will had by this time subsided into calm determination, readily and cheerfully subscribed; and, after various modes of introducing him to the lady had been suggested by each member of the council, it was concluded, though not without much reluctance, on account of the necessary deviation from truth, that Mr. Lowther, in the course of his morning visit to his fair patient, should acquaint her that the young gentleman, who had happily been the instrument of preserving her life on the preceding day, was a native of Dorsetshire, the county where the Melcombe family resided, whose father had been well acquainted with her lately-deceased parent, and that he had often heard Captain Melcombe mentioned by him with expressions of the most friendly regard; that he therefore presumed, as the representative of his father, Sir William Fairborn, to solicit the honour of being permitted to wait on her, to tender those services which he would himself be happy to render her, as

the daughter of his old friend, if he could be informed of her present distress, which must have incapacitated her for worldly concerns, though even these required immediate attention, and might probably occasion such a disregard to her health and personal safety as might be productive of those consequences, which he begged leave to remind her it was her duty to prevent, as it was his, and would be expected from him by his father, to offer his assistance towards the arrangement of her affairs, in the immediate exigency, and his protection to her person, till application could be made to those relations who had a natural right to a charge so precious and important.

This message was faithfully delivered by Mr. Lowther; and, as it was impossible to deny a request made in such kind and respectful terms by the person to whom she stood indebted for the preservation of her life, and who had not only a claim on that account to her gratitude, but to her respect as the son of her beloved father's friend; and, as she really felt herself in the situation which he had so feelingly described, and stood in immediate need of advice and protection, she desired Mr. Lowther to assure the gentleman that she was perfectly sensible of his humane and generous offers, which she would so far accept as to solicit his advice in the performance of a task to which she was wholly unequal, both from the present disordered state of her mind, and from inexperience; and, for this purpose, she was ready to receive the honour of his visit as soon as he pleased, and should unreservedly confide to him, in the character which he had so benevolently assumed, the full particulars of her circumstances and situation; but she wished, from motives of delicacy, that her sympathizing friend, Mrs. Lowther, might accompany him on this occasion, by whose presence her communications would not be in the smallest degree restrained.

Under this permission our hero immediately prepared to wait on Miss Melcombe; and, though he exulted in the prospect of being permitted to exercise his philanthropy, in turning the edge of distress from a victim to it so young and amiable, yet had he never before felt his mind in a less firm and enterprising state than in the few minutes which intervened between the receipt of the lady's answer to his message and his introduction to her by their common friends, Mrs. Lowther.

If Pity herself had been to name her ambassador on this occasion, her choice would have fallen on Mr. Francis Fairborn; his figure, features, manner, and tone of voice, all conspired to soften, to conciliate, to soothe, and the trembling tenderness of his accent, when he first addressed himself to the lovely mourner, operated like strains of music to calm her mind: the horror of admitting a perfect stranger to her confidence vanished by degrees; and, though she looked up to him as an angel sent from heaven to her relief, yet she regarded him with less awe than esteem, and felt herself more disposed to claim protection from him than from any other man she had ever seen, except the parent and brother, the irreparable loss of whom had rendered it necessary for her to seek it in a manner so unusual, and almost unprecedented.

It was some minutes before Miss Melcombe could collect herself so far as to enter into a conversation with our hero, or even to acknowledge in words the grateful emotions of her heart for first rescuing her from the grave, and then extending his benevolence to offers of consolation and friendship towards the being who was already so deeply indebted to him; but when, by assurances, on his part, of the most inviolable respect and the most scrupulous delicacy, she was enabled to dispel her apprehensions, and to overcome the timidity which might naturally be supposed to affect a young creature in circumstances so very forlorn, her expressions of gratitude were so animated, her language so pathetically characteristic, and her manner so enchantingly elegant, that Mr. Francis, whose heart had received no slight impression from her personal charms, was completely enslaved by those of her mind, and, for the first time in his life, though he felt it not himself, he was actually urged by interested motives to acts, which, in every former part of it, had been the spontaneous offspring of universal benevolence.

To the particulars of her history, which Miss Melcombe had before communicated to Mrs. Lowther, she now added the following: that her father, before he left London, had

been informed of his wife's arrival there, accompanied by the officer to whom she was meant to have been devoted, who had assumed the character of Captain Melcombe's son, for the purpose, as she supposed, of giving a sanction to their enquiries after that gentleman: that this intelligence hastened his journey, the fatiguing hurry of which, added to the perturbation of his mind, in all probability shortened his life:—that, having settled matters with his agent, and established a method of remitting his half-pay, he had left the metropolis with a sum which was now reduced to about thirty guineas, which was all the fortune she possessed in the world; but that would be sufficient, she hoped, for the decent performance of the last offices to her now happy father, and to subsist her in some way, the more humble the better, till the return of a general officer's widow from America, who, she apprehended, was now on her passage home, and who had repeatedly offered her an asylum in case of the melancholy event which had now happened, and to which the Almighty had been pleased, since the first shock, to enable her to submit with due resignation, and to inspire her with fortitude to endure the severest losses that could befall a human being, the total deprivation of a provision and parental protection in one moment:—that, however, she had little reason to repine, and less to despond, when it had pleased God, in the bitterest moment of distress, to provide her a friend and protector, who, from the relation he bore to her father's friend, must be a man of honour, and whose generous interposition in her favour was a sufficient testimony of his humanity and benevolence: and she concluded the little continuation of her story with invoking the blessings of heaven on those who had administered consolation to her in the hour of affliction, with such tender and affectionate zeal as had already lessened the weight of woe, and awakened in her mind the balmy comfort of the wretched, hope.

To form an adequate idea of the feelings of Mr. Francis Fairborn, during the delivery of this artless and unaffected tale of innocence in distress, it will be necessary to remind our readers that our philanthropist had but barely attained his nineteenth year, and to describe the person of Miss Eliza Melcombe, with whose mental qualifications they are already in some measure acquainted.

Those, who are disposed to quarrel with the sculptor of the Venus of Medicis for not displaying the skill of an anatomist, will condemn the *tout ensemble* of Miss Melcombe, when we admit that she had enough of the *en-bon-point* to grace a height above the middle size, and give the most delicate turn to limbs formed by symmetry itself; her face was of the Grecian model, her eyes the clearest blue, her hair of that species of the auburn, which, without the smallest inclination to yellow, reminds us of the golden locks and reconciles us to the taste of the ancients; her complexion was the lily itself, which, in her days of peace and ease, had been contrasted by tints more lively than those which paint the opening rose, or adorn the summer peach in ripened beauty; but fatigue and grief had driven the damask from her cheek, and left only that snowy and dazzling whiteness, which conveys the idea of languor without annexing apprehensions of indisposition; and the same cast had prevailed over the ruby of lips, which surrounded a mouth of the smallest size, and covered teeth whiter than ivory and more transparent than pearls. Her dress was a close-wristed morning habit, of corded muslin, which was rather disordered than soiled; her hair, the discomposure of which served to discover its beauty, was covered with a plain cap of muslin; and her whole appearance bore the traces of that elegant simplicity which dignifies beauty, and renders even homeliness tolerable.

With such a person, and manners which bespoke accomplishments of the first magnitude, it will not surprise our readers that this amiable orphan should inspire a youth of Mr. Francis Fairborn's sensibility with admiration:—he was indeed in love, and never did a more pure, generous, and respectful, passion actuate the human mind.

In consequence of the lady's explicit declaration of her situation, our hero begged leave to retire for a few hours, that he might have an opportunity to consult with Mr. Lowther on the state of her affairs, and to determine on such measures as might be most conducive to her immediate comfort and her future interest; and he left her with the most cheering assurances, that he should return the next morning with some fixed plan for the

immediate regulation of those concerns which required instant attention, and for the disposition of her person in safety till the arrival of her expected friend.

And, to this end, the deliberations of Mr. Francis, Mr. and Mrs. Lowther, and honest Jeremiah, commenced the moment the former had left the fair object of his care; nor did they conclude till a plan had been digested which promised to answer all their purposes, and at least to remove some part of those complicated distresses, which it was so much the wish of this amiable set of counsellors to alleviate.

The consideration of the associates was directed to two points, the interment of the deceased officer, and the immediate settlement of his afflicted and destitute daughter. The first Mr. Lowther undertook to manage; and, in order to avoid the possibility of alarming the young lady by apprehensions of obligation, it was agreed, that a small sum should be accepted from the lady, who must be wholly unacquainted with matters of this kind, as the total of the expence, the real amount of which our hero proposed to make up and deposit in the hands of Mr. Lowther. The directions of the lady were also to be taken as to the place where she would wish the body to be deposited, and the time when she would choose that the last offices should be performed.

As to the lady herself, Mrs. Lowther, with the fullest approbation of her husband, offered to accommodate her in the best manner in her power till she could dispose of herself more to her satisfaction; and, as there was no doubt but she would insist on making satisfaction for her board, she was to be indulged in that particular, that her mind might be disburdened of every idea of pecuniary obligation.

On the succeeding morning our hero attended Miss Melcombe, and communicated to her the several arrangements. To the first she subscribed, with the most grateful acknowledgements for these continued proofs of his benevolent zeal and attention to her concerns; nor was she less sensibly affected by the goodness of Mr. and Mrs. Lowther, whose humanity prompted them to submit to such an inconvenience as the admission of a stranger into their family, for the sole purpose of affording a comfortable retreat to a forlorn and destitute orphan: but an objection now presented itself to this part of the plan which had not before occurred, and which was of such a nature as completely to overturn it, even in the opinion of the projectors themselves.

It would be impossible, Miss Melcombe observed, to conceal the death of her father, and, that event being known, the place where it happened might easily be discovered; in that case she had no doubt but her wicked step-mother and abandoned accomplice would follow her to the place of her residence, where, without attempting any violent outrage, they might claim the care of her person as her mother and brother, and, under these characters, she feared they might even obtain such legal authorities as would prevent the possibility of her being kept out of their hands:—that, if they should once get her into their possession, her fate must be dreadful, as she could have no hope to escape dishonour but by the last act of desperation:—that she apprehended her only chance of avoiding such horrors would be to return as soon as possible to the metropolis, and to bury herself there in some situation so very obscure as to elude the search of her pursuers, which would hardly be directed to the class among which she must endeavour, as well on account of her circumstances as for the sake of concealment, to hide herself.

To overcome a difficulty founded in such apparent reason, was a task not easily accomplished: the apprehensions of Miss Melcombe were founded in the strongest probability, and the bare possibility of her being subject to the practices of so infamous a confederacy excited such alarms in the breast of Mr. Francis Fairborn as drove him to the brink of distraction, and absolutely rendered him incapable of suggesting the means to avert the mischief. Miss Melcombe's proposition he considered as chimerical, and in a great measure impracticable: nor was she inclined to think better of it, after he had represented to her the danger of meeting those from whom she wished to fly even on the road to London, when she was alone and unprotected; and, if she should reach the end of her journey without molestation, the insults to which she would be liable in associating with those, whose educations and habits had been so different from her own that they

were equally strangers to delicacy and sentiment, who, from the want of the former, would be apt to treat her virtue with contempt, and, being devoid of the latter, would be readily induced, for the gratifications of interest, to betray it to some profuse and lawless invader of innocence and beauty.

This was a prospect from which the unfortunate Eliza was desirous to turn; the horrors of it were too obvious to be endured, yet heaven seemed not to have marked a path in which she could tread with safety. Her mind was as humble as her condition, but even her humility exposed her to misfortune. Providence had inspired with friendship for her strangers on whom she had not the smallest degree of natural or acquired claim, yet such was the perverseness of her fate that she was unable to avail herself of their kindness.

Such were the reflections which agonized the mind of the beautiful orphan, nor was that of the philanthropist more free from anxiety: he wished to offer her an asylum among his own friends, but they were too distant to be applied to immediately, and the moment of danger might be at hand. His duty, his affection, his gratitude, urged him to prosecute his journey to his grandfather, and, if that call could be dispensed with, delicacy forbade his personal attendance on Miss Melcombe in search of a retreat. To desert a charge, which seemed to have been committed by Providence to his care in so peculiar a way, would be repugnant to every principle of humanity;—to leave her for a moment in her present unsettled situation, would be little inferior to barbarity:—his judgment represented her as the most amiable of her sex, and his heart informed him that on her welfare and happiness depended his own.

Thus embarrassed, he once more apologized to Miss Melcombe for the necessity of a short absence, whilst he should again consult the worthy couple who had tenderly interested themselves in the alleviation of her afflictions, and returned to Mr. and Mrs. Lowther in a state of mind scarce less distressful than that of the object of his solicitude.

To this gentleman and lady, and his faithful companion Jeremiah, he stated the present difficulty; nor did the smallest doubt arise of its weight, though there appeared so little probability of its being obviated, that Mrs. Lowther was not easily prevailed on to acknowledge the prudence of declining that part of the plan which promised her, at least for some time, a most delightful companion, and the full exercise of that benevolent disposition which constituted the chief happiness of her life.

But, as she candidly acknowledged, that, in her adherence to the former proposal, she had been influenced, in some measure, by the interested motives we have just hinted at, she was ready to abandon the gratification of her own wishes to the safety of her unfortunate friend, and not only heartily concurred in opinion with the other members of this benevolent council, but was the first to suggest an idea of a much more hopeful nature than any which had occurred in the course of their several conversations on this very perplexing subject.

“Pray, my dear,” says this excellent woman, “what do you think of an application to Sir Felix and Lady Benefold? I have no doubt but a visit in person from Mr. Fairborn, and his explanation of the extraordinary situation of the dear young creature, will immediately incline them to afford that protection to her, which they have never yet refused to the unfortunate of any denomination or description.”

“The very thing in the world,” replied the delighted surgeon, “to complete all our wishes! You must frequently have heard, sir, (addressing himself to the philanthropist,) of this illustrious couple; for if virtue, as we are told, is the only true nobility, who can deserve that epithet so well as those whose lives are spent in the continual practice of it both in public and private?”

Our hero acknowledged that he had often heard his father mention Sir Felix as an example of integrity in his public character, with which he could not be unacquainted, as they served together in parliament, and that his hospitality, generosity, and liberality, had been frequently spoken of in the highest terms in many companies where he had been present.

“And with the strictest truth,” replied Mr. Lowther, “though these attributes constitute but a very small portion of his praise:—descended from a race of ancestors, distinguished for that patriotic spirit which consists not in declamation but in action, he has inherited from them, together with an immense estate, that glorious independence of principle, which prefers the faithful discharge of the duty of a senator and a citizen to the pageantry of coronets and the fascinating sounds of titles, too often right honourable only in the herald’s book and the meritless patent of creation. Though a country gentleman only, and graced with but the lowest hereditary title, nobility shrinks from the lustre of a reputation founded on universal benevolence; and he is more truly a king, (as he is commonly called,) in the country where he resides, than any monarch in Christendom, for he reigns only in the hearts of his people, and has no other tie on their allegiance than their own voluntary submission, which is so complete, that I do not believe, in a circle of twenty miles, a human being could be found, who would not join in the most grateful acknowledgements of his protecting care, as well as his bounty, his munificence, and his extensive and unbounded charity.

“His lady too, though of the first rank by birth, is still more conspicuously honourable from the splendour of qualifications, which neither title can confer or wealth purchase. In the present æra of conjugal degeneracy she is a perfect example of affectionate fidelity; and, unaffected by the riot of dissipation which surrounds her, she has resolution to maintain, in the utmost purity, the valuable titles of wife, mother, patroness, and friend.

“The hospitality of this excellent family is not confined to the entertainment of their equals in rank, or the reception of their own immediate dependents; it extends to the traveller, the stranger, the hungry, the weary, the oppressed, and the afflicted. Want is with them a sufficient claim to relief, nor do they bestow it with a sparing hand. Their bounty, like that of heaven, is as liberal as it is universal; it is not for the moment only that they rescue from wretchedness, it is their care that the joy of the morning return not to sorrow at night.

“Even their amusements tend to the public benefit; instead of the horse-race, or the gaming-table, they have instituted, within their own mansion, entertainments of the most rational kind, where virtue is brought forward to approbation and reward, and vice exposed to ignominy and punishment.

“Wonder not, my good young gentleman, that I should be loud in the praise of such virtue; I could dwell with rapture for hours on the exhaustless theme; for know, my dear sir, that the infants who are now playing at your knee, and their happy and contented parents, owe all the comforts they enjoy, nay, even their very existence, to this amiable, excellent, angelic, pair.”

By whomsoever the incense was offered, never did our philanthropist scruple to accompany it to the altar of gratitude: with a mind as pure as an inhabitant of the ætherial regions, he was ever ready to join in the song of applause; his soul claimed friendship and connexion with virtue wherever it resided; and he felt the same glow in his heart, when he found it in another, as when the consciousness of well-doing reminded him that heaven had seated it in his own bosom.

“Mr. Lowther,” says our transported hero, “Providence inspired you with the thought of applying to Sir Felix and Lady Benefold for the most blessed purposes! I will instantly solicit their protection for our fair orphan, and I will avail myself of the occasion as an introduction to these exalted characters.—Jeremiah, pray order a chaise immediately.—How far distant is this mansion of virtue and honour?”—

But, as the day was now far advanced towards dinner-time, and he was informed that the seat of Sir Felix Benefold was within the reach of an afternoon visit, he took a slight repast at the inn, and then proceeded on his embassy with the most elevated expectation of success.

And, as we apprehend our readers may be of opinion, that their patience and their passions have been sufficiently assailed in a chapter, which has already been extended to

an almost immeasurable, and perhaps they may think unconscionable, length, we shall give them pause, as well for these reasons as to give them an opportunity to determine, in the usual way, the success of the philanthropist's expedition.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### *A pleasant journey and a speedy return.*

“FIVE to four they don’t bite,” says Lord Edward.—“Three to two, and I say *done* first, scores or hundreds,” cries the marquis.—“Perhaps you don’t know Benefold,” says Billy Slumber;—“he’s a dupe ’pon honour,—Lady Mary can tell you all about him.”—“Oh! yes,” rejoins her ladyship, “he and his an-ge-lic wife, to my certain knowledge, gave ten guineas a-piece to clothe the brats of a broken gentleman, and refused to set their names for five to Squallini’s subscription:—only think of that, Lady Sue!—not five guineas to the dear Squallini!”—“And yet,” says General Truman, “both Sir Felix and his lady are universally allowed not only to possess the most refined tastes, but to be the most liberal and generous encouragers of genius wherever it is found, though they might probably be of opinion that twenty guineas might be as properly bestowed on an unfortunate English gentleman, as two thousand on an Italian singer:—and, if you are serious in your bets, why, look ye, I’ll hold ye both, gentlemen; for, though the worthy baronet and his amiable lady may not think it necessary to worship every idol which folly, vanity, or caprice, may set up, yet, where the object is deserving and the purpose good, never will solicitation meet a repulse from two of the best hearts in the universe.”

“Very *good* sort of people, indeed, I believe,” says Lady Mary, with a titter which was re-echoed by two-thirds of the company, “very good, indeed!”—The bets were unrepeatd, and Billy desired another subject might be called, for “it was a cursed bore,—and tiresome to the last degree to teize one about benevolence, and generosity, and charity, and such stuff.”

But, as we sincerely hope our readers heartily concur in the opinion of the brave general, who had a sword always for his enemy and a tear for his friend, we shall attend them with pleasure in pursuit of the philanthropist, and accompany them in following his chariot-wheels with eager and anxious expectation.

As the driver, who was also a stranger in that part of the country, was unacquainted with the road to the baronet’s house, frequent enquiries were necessary, and these were answered with such chearful satisfaction, such pride and pleasure of communication, as bespoke duty, obligation, and affection; and, as the traveller approached nearer to his residence, it was impossible to restrain the grateful peasants from shewing their attachment to their benevolent lord by conducting his visitor to the very gates of the hospitable mansion, where they loaded him with blessings, as the supposed friend of their universal benefactor.

To Sir Felix Benefold there was no difficulty of access. The moment our hero’s name was announced he was introduced to the baronet and his lady, and received with the most perfect ease and politeness; and, as it was by no means unusual for travellers of rank and taste to visit Felix-Park from motives of curiosity, founded on the general reports of the magnificence and elegance of the house and its environs, Mr. Fairborn’s arrival there excited no idea of business; and, though the most flattering attention was paid to him, it was only in common course, and the conversation for some time was maintained on ordinary and indifferent subjects.

But, after tea had been served, and Sir Felix and Lady Benefold had proposed a walk into the gardens and grounds, our philanthropist thought it necessary to apologize for his unceremonial introduction of himself at Felix-Park, and to explain the occasion of his intrusion; and, having requested the attention of the gentleman and lady for a few minutes, he addressed himself to the former in the following manner.

“I believe, Sir Felix, you are not unacquainted with the person or character of my father, Sir William Fairborn; and, being convinced that I am his son, of which I have ample testimony in my pocket, you will hardly suspect me capable of a design to impose on you, or to engage you in any concern which may bring into danger your peace,



honour, or fortune; an attempt, which, without a possibility of effect, would recoil on my own head, and load with infamy and disgrace a name which I have received, marked with respect, from my ancestors, and trust I shall preserve, through my life, untainted and unsullied by any designed act of baseness or dishonour. But the tale I have to relate and the request I mean to found on it are both so extraordinary, that I have not resolution enough to go through the task I have imposed on myself, till I have received your's and Lady Benefold's assurances of credit and confidence."

He now produced the letters of his father and grandfather, letters of credit on his grandfather's banker in London, and other unquestionable proofs of identity, which Sir Felix and his lady perused, much less with any view to remove the smallest doubt from their own minds than to convince our hero that they were perfectly satisfied in this particular, and that his story, whatever it was, would produce in their minds no suspicions injurious to his rank in life, or the character he professed to maintain; and, as the curiosity of the baronet was strongly excited by the preface, he earnestly intreated Mr. Fairborn to proceed with his communication, and pledged himself to render him every good office which the nature of the case should require, or which it was in his power to offer.

Thus encouraged, the philanthropist, in language which bespoke the honest and noble feelings of his heart, related all he knew of the history of Miss Eliza Melcombe, of her sufferings, her distresses, and her present melancholy and perilous situation, suppressing no circumstances but such as tended to disclose the immediate state of the lady's finances, which he did not hold it necessary to mention, because that was an evil for which he was himself provided with a remedy; and one other particular, with which the reader is by this time better acquainted than he was himself at this period of the history.

The narrative was too interesting to be coldly received by hearts replete with human kindness. In the gentle bosom of the fair auditress, pity, compassion, and admiration, presided by turns; she wept for the unfortunate orphan, but she gloried in her virtue and her fortitude; heaven, she thought, had dealt severely in the exposure of youth and innocence to such unexampled affliction, but heaven had been bountiful to her in affording her the means and the opportunity of pouring the balm of consolation into the wounds it had thought fit to inflict, of affording protection to an object so undeservedly abandoned, and of defending from every possibility of danger and distress an amiable young creature, struggling in the same moment against the severest shock which filial affection could receive, and against the threatened attacks of a base and powerful combination to complete her destruction.

Nor was the worthy baronet less affected; he felt, nor did he endeavour to suppress his feelings, the most acute anxiety for the sufferings of the fair Eliza; he determined to protect her; he resolved to be her father, her friend, and her guardian. It was on such occasions only that Sir Felix Benefold knew the importance of his situation; he exulted in the power of doing good, and looked down with contempt, not on poverty or humility, but on the pride of ancestry, the dignity of titles, and the parade of wealth, unaccompanied by that benevolent spirit, which, in his opinion, constituted the only value of birth, rank, or fortune.

The very moment the philanthropist had concluded his recital, and before it was possible for him to add a single word by way of request, Sir Felix rose from his chair, and, taking our hero by the hand, thanked him, in the warmest terms, for the honour he had done him by his visit, and the favour he had conferred on him by permitting him to participate in the pleasure which would result from the delightful office of restoring, to some degree of peace and comfort, a heart which appeared to have been supported by virtue alone, in such a variety of misfortunes as had hardly ever fallen to the share of female youth and innocence.

In terms expressive of equal satisfaction did Lady Benefold address herself to Mr. Fairborn; and, as the hearts of this excellent couple were tuned in the most perfect unison, the same idea presented itself instantly to each; and, as the same words escaped the lips

of both in one moment, it was impossible to determine from whom the proposition came, that Miss Melcombe should be invited to take refuge at Felix-Park till the storms which threatened her were overpast, and her fortunes should take a more propitious turn.

But, to the infinite satisfaction of our hero, the proposition was made, and, as with great minds to propose a benevolent act is to determine on the performance of it, a plan, in which each of the parties concurred, was soon suggested; and the philanthropist took leave of his newly-acquired friends, fully authorised to offer to his fair charge the protection of Sir Felix and Lady Benefold *as the particular friends of his father and family*.

Reader, thou hast tasted the felicity of having conferred benefits,—or thou hast been suddenly delivered from the pressure of some severe affliction;—thy *Gimcrack* has distanced *Whitelegs* by half a neck at Newmarket, or thou hast won a *va-tout* at quinze;—the height of thy phæton has excited applause, or the fashion of thy coat admiration; and, at one or other of these momentous triumphs, thou hast found thy

——“bosom’s lord sit lightly on his throne,”  
and  
——“an unaccustom’d spirit  
“Lift thee above the ground with chearful  
thoughts.”

And, such were the sensations of Mr. Francis Fairborn as the dull post-horses and tardy driver crept, in spite of repeated admonition, towards the object of all his attention.

But, in justice to the worthy landlord at——, than whom no man on the road has better cattle, or boys more experienced and alert, we feel ourselves bound to acknowledge, that the dulness and tardiness, of which our hero complained, were phantoms, created by the fever of his own impatience to discharge the overflowings of his joy at the success of his embassy; for, in sober truth, he travelled at the rate of little less than ten miles an hour, and arrived at the end of his short journey early enough to alarm the good surgeon and his wife with false apprehensions of failure and disappointment.

Their fears, however, were instantly dispelled by the enlivened countenance of the philanthropist, and mutual congratulations took place on the propitious dawn of happier prospects for the parentless, friendless, persecuted, Eliza Melcombe.

In a few minutes after the return of our hero, he dispatched Jeremiah to the lady with a note, requesting her permission to wait on her immediately, and hinting his hopes that the difficulties which presented themselves in the morning were now in a great measure, if not wholly, obviated.

As, in the present stage of their acquaintance, this was merely a message of ceremonious respect, his admission was readily granted, and he communicated to the beautiful orphan all the circumstances which occurred in his interview with the benevolent baronet and his lady, excepting only such as might have served to discover the mode and occasion of his introduction to that family, which it had been previously determined to conceal, lest the tender and depressed mind of the innocent sufferer might receive a fresh wound from the humiliating idea, that her situation was so completely destitute and forlorn as to admit only of hope from the interposition of perfect strangers, and, what was still worse, from the recommendation of those strangers to others, a condition little superior to that of a dependent on casual charity.

To avoid, therefore, suggestions of so disagreeable a nature, it had been agreed between Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, and the philanthropist, that he should mention them to Miss Melcombe as old friends of the Fairborn family, whose residence in that neighbourhood had fortunately occurred to him since his last conference with her, and should announce their intentions to visit her in that character early the succeeding morning.

It will be equally unnecessary and absurd to attempt a recapitulation of the expressions of thankfulness and admiration which fell from the lips of the grateful Eliza on this unexpected offer of shelter and protection; her's were the impassioned strains of warm, susceptible, animated, acknowledgement; cold and spiritless would be every effort of imitation.

And, as unprofitable would be our endeavours to describe the meeting which took place between Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, and the amiable and afflicted orphan; on their part, all was tender, sympathizing, encouraging; on her's, gratitude, ineffectually struggling for words to express emotions too powerful for utterance.

Nor was the heart of our hero, who acted as master of the ceremonies on the occasion, less affected than that of even the fair Eliza; she felt a load of obligation conferred on herself, but he was doubly indebted for the confidence reposed in his representation, and the benign effects produced from it.

Yet, before the genial benevolence of Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, diffidence and restraint vanished like morning mists; accustomed to communicate happiness, and in habits of unaffected affability, their open, friendly, and condescending, attentions, "*thawing cold fear*," operated as spells to disperse the gloom of superiority, and to charm into ease and familiarity even the objects of their bounty and humanity.

As the baronet and his lady had determined not to permit Miss Melcombe to remain a moment longer at the inn than would be necessary for the adjustment of her melancholy concerns, they cheerfully accepted the humble invitation of the good Mr. and Mrs. Lowther, (whose praises, liberally bestowed by our hero, were re-echoed by their most excellent benefactor Sir Felix,) to partake of such a dinner as they could provide, and directed their coach to be ready at an early hour in the afternoon; and, in the mean time, Mr. Fairborn undertook the painful office of questioning the lady on the subject of her late beloved parent's interment, and of prevailing on her to accompany Sir Felix and Lady Benefold on their return to Felix-Park.

With respect to the funeral of her father, she submitted that matter wholly to the kind management of our hero and Mr. Lowther; nor did she differ in opinion from those gentlemen, who had proposed to deposit the body in the church of the parish wherein it then rested; but it was not so easy to combat her inclination to be present at the mournful ceremony, or her reluctance to depart from the filial duty of watching by the sacred remains till they should be consigned to their last peaceful mansion.

And, to get the better of resolutions, formed in piety and affection, would probably have proved a task too arduous to have been accomplished by the most powerful arguments, or the most earnest entreaties, that could have been urged by the philanthropist; though, to do him justice, we must admit he was by no means an indifferent casuist, if his eloquence had not been reinforced by a suggestion which at once effected all he wished, at a moment when he had almost despaired of succeeding, and was himself on the point of becoming a convert to an opinion supported by such energy of virtuous obstinacy.

But, when it critically occurred to him to represent the danger that might arise from the pursuit of her father's widow and her accomplice, and the probability that they might arrive at the very spot which she was solicited to quit before the last duties to her deceased parent could possibly be performed, her apprehensions, on that score, operated so forcibly on her delicate, agitated, and distressed mind, as to produce agonies of terror sufficient to justify, even in her own judgment, her departure from the plan of filial duty, which religion and affection had dictated to her.

Thus convinced, she determined to accept at once the kind and benevolent invitation of the good baronet and his lady, and to avail himself of their humane offer of protection, without such a delay as might endanger her future happiness in a way of all others to be dreaded; and she empowered her good Samaritan, Mr. Fairborn, to signify to her future guardians her grateful acquiescence with their generous proposition, and her intentions to attend them at the hour they should choose to set out.

But, though she had formed, and determined to adhere to, this resolution, yet she could not bring herself to desert the remains of her honoured, her beloved, parent, without taking a last farewell of the precious relics, and dropping the tribute of heart-felt woe on the shrine, which, but a few hours before, contained the brightest gems of honour and virtue.

It was in vain that Mr. Fairborn represented to her the impropriety of indulging this inclination to renew her griefs, and to draw the blood afresh from wounds which had yet scarcely ceased to flow: she resisted his arguments with such artless strains of eloquent declamation that he was constrained to yield to her intreaties, and he actually offered to attend her in this office of sorrow.

To describe this scene would be a task to which we are wholly unequal, nor are our nerves so firmly strung as to justify us in the attempt: to those, whose souls are formed of materials capable of the finer impressions, description is unnecessary; and to those, whose hearts are steeled by self-love or apathy, it would be useless; suffice it to say, that it would have awakened pity in a barbarian, and have "*drawn iron tears down Pluto's cheek*."

After a retirement of an hour to her apartment, our hero received a message from the beautiful mourner, purporting her hopes that she was now sufficiently collected to attend her benefactor and benefactress whenever they should be disposed to commence their journey; and, as Mr. Fairborn had declined the pressing invitation of his new friends and admirers to return with them to the Park, his duty to his grandfather urging him to obey his commands without farther delay, he availed himself of a pretence to prepare Miss Melcombe for the reception of Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, who had considerably proposed to conduct her themselves to their carriage, to visit that lady alone, for purposes which, at this moment, appeared to be derived from the most exalted friendship only, but which, a very few minutes afterwards, were discovered, even by our philanthropist himself, to have been suggested by sensations somewhat less disinterested, though altogether as pure.

At his entrance he acquainted the lovely Eliza with the kind intentions of her friends, and informed her of some particulars respecting herself, which had been concerted since their first visit to her, the most material of which was a proposition, that, to elude the possibility of her being discovered by her persecutors, she should exchange the name of Melcombe for some other, and, if she had no objection, for that of Thompson, which had hitherto been more dear to him than any other.

To the propriety of this caution she readily assented, but having, in the course of this conversation, discovered the intention of our hero to take his leave of her as soon as he had consigned her to the care of those who had so liberally undertaken her protection, the yet unsuppressed tear obtruded itself involuntarily into the loveliest eyes in the world, and, in trembling, and scarce articulate, accents, she demanded of Mr. Fairborn if he intended to accompany Sir Felix and his lady to their seat.

To this question she received no immediate reply, for, alas! the philanthropist had lost the powers of speech; the tender tone of her voice, the starting tear, and the visible dejection of her countenance at the moment of interrogation, had so completely overpowered his faculties, that some minutes had elapsed before he could give a rational answer, which he attempted by offering to state the occasion of a journey so happily interrupted by the opportunity, which had offered, of giving her some little assistance in the exigency of her misfortunes.

But, when the charming Eliza found her apprehensions justified, and that she was almost instantly to be separated from the friend which heaven had, in such a moment of bitter distress, raised to comfort and protect her, the only being on earth on whom her heart told she might rely for support, the torrent of anguish would no longer be restrained by forms of prudence and exterior fashions of delicacy; she threw herself on her knees, and, in an attitude and tone of voice which heaven itself must have regarded with approbation, she invoked its choicest blessings on her deliverer, her protector, her

guardian, her friend, her parent, her brother; on him, to whose humanity she was indebted for her existence, and whose generous interference alone had procured her the means of escaping dangers, infinitely more dreadful than death in its most hideous form.

Fain would the philanthropist have interrupted the grateful Eliza during her delivery of this impassioned eulogy, fain would he have raised her from the ground at the first moment of her prostration, but he was awed by the inimitable dignity of her manner and expression, and transfixed by admiration and love: thrice did he essay to speak, thrice attempt to extend his arms to support her, but his nerveless tongue and limbs refused their offices; he sunk on his knees before her, and, seizing on her unreluctant hand, he bedewed it with the noblest effusions of humanity.

But, returning recollection put a speedy conclusion to this silently-pathetic scene; our philanthropist gently raised his fair charge from the ground, and, having placed her in a chair, and seated himself by her, his eyes spoke a language, to which, on future reflexion, she found her heart perfectly responsive.

A more unconstrained intercourse of conversation now ensued, in which our hero explained the necessity of his immediately prosecuting his journey into Wales, and fully satisfied the anxious mind of the fair Eliza, that no verbal declarations were necessary to prove attachments superior to those created by humanity or excited by friendship: he was withheld, by motives of delicacy and propriety, from professions of a particularly tender nature, but he besought her permission to commence a correspondence with her in terms so strikingly expression of the emotions he endeavoured to suppress, that the gentle Eliza, whose mind had received impressions, which, in its present state, she wished not to admit, but was unable to efface, was at no loss to discover, in its fullest extent, the secret which he affected to conceal.

A servant now announced the approach of Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, who, in the most soothing and affectionate manner, reminded the fair mourner of the purpose for which they visited her; and, as her spirits were at this moment in a more composed state than she had experienced since the fatal event which deprived her of her parent and protector, she immediately accepted the offer of the baronet's hand, who led her to his carriage, and, Mr. Fairborn having performed the same office for Lady Benefold, seated her by the almost inanimate object of her beneficence.

Sir Felix having in vain re-iterated his solicitations to our hero that he would accompany him to the Park, was obliged to content himself with the promise of a visit during his next academic recess; the reasons offered by the philanthropist, in excuse for his declining to accept the kind invitation, being founded on such sentiments of duty and gratitude to his indulgent grandfather, as to heighten the opinion already formed by the baronet of his new acquaintance, though they served, at the same time, to increase his regret at being so immediately deprived of his company and conversation.

The coach now ready to convey from him the newly acquired treasure on which he had so fondly set his heart, the philanthropist impressed a respectful kiss on her lovely hand, and, in this act, a pearly drop fell on his from the eye of the disconsolate Eliza, which he wiped with his handkerchief, and, as the carriage drew off, bowed on it with significant regard, and, placing the precious deposit next his heart as a sacred pledge, he mentally vowed on it everlasting fidelity to the fair, virtuous, amiable, mistress of his affections.

Nor did this delicate proof of his regard escape the observation of the beautiful mourner; she saw and comprehended the full force of every gesture, and a heart-rending sigh burst from the purest bosom in the universe, which her kind companions attributed to excess of grief, but which, we are perverse enough to suspect, might possibly be occasioned, in some degree, by a less poignant, though perhaps an almost equally painful, passion.

When the philanthropist could no longer mark the progress of the carriage, his eye continued fixed on the track it had pursued, and his mind remained wholly occupied in contemplating the beauties and excellencies of the fair passenger, till he was awakened

from his reverie by an exclamation from honest Jeremiah of "heaven bless her wherever she goes!" An invocation so congenial to our hero's wishes could not fail to catch his attention; he turned to his affectionate fellow-traveller, and, perceiving the big tear rolling down his hardy cheek, he caught the infection; and, having covered his face with his handkerchief, he sacrificed a few moments to unrestrained emotions, and the indulgence of the tenderest ideas which love and admiration could inspire.

Reason now resumed her throne; he turned to Mr. and Mrs. Lowther, who had accompanied their patron and patroness to their carriage; and, having politely apologised for his mental absence, he complied with their request, that he would return and spend the remainder of the evening at their house.

The funeral of Captain Melcombe became the first object of attention; and it was determined that the body should be interred in the evening of the succeeding day; that some of the most respectable of the worthy surgeon's acquaintance should be invited to attend the awful ceremony, and, in particular, two or three retired officers who resided in the neighbourhood; and, Mr. Lowther having, to quiet the lady's mind, accepted ten guineas from her as a sum fully sufficient to defray all expences, our hero added to it much more largely than, in the opinion of Mr. Lowther, would be necessary to answer every purpose with liberality, though he was compelled by Mr. Fairborn to accept the deposit, on a promise of receiving back any balance that might remain at his return to this part of the country.

The philanthropist also requested that a neat monumental stone might be placed over the grave of the unfortunate veteran, on which should be engraved the following inscription.

Sacred to the MEMORY  
Of HENRY MELCOMBE, Esq.  
Late a captain in his Majesty's — regiment of foot;  
An accomplished gentleman, a brave officer,  
And an honest man.  
To the first, his numerous acquaintance will bear  
testimony,  
His wounds to the second,  
And every transaction of his life to the last.  
But virtue cannot escape misfortune, nor  
fortitude avert its effects;  
For, depressed by disappointment and neglected  
by friends,  
In his flight from domestic wretchedness and  
undeserved contempt,  
His body worn out in the service of his country,  
And his spirits exhausted by an unequal  
contention  
With difficulties and disquiet,  
He was overtaken by the inevitable fate of mortals,  
And released from pain and affliction,  
On the 16<sup>th</sup> day of August, 177-  
In the 46<sup>th</sup> year of his age.

All matters of business being discussed, the conversation between the good surgeon, his lady, and our philanthropist, turned principally on the praises of the lovely Eliza and her kind and benevolent protectors; and the honest zeal of the worthy Mr. Lowther, on this favourite subject, having reminded our hero, that, in the course of their short acquaintance, he had more than once acknowledged personal obligations to the baronet, and always appearing desirous to be more explicit, he took this opportunity of

throwing out hints expressive of curiosity on this head, which were perfectly understood by his kind host, who eagerly seized the occasion of indulging his own grateful propensity to record the virtues of his benefactor and of gratifying the wishes of his guest.

Encouraged by the readiness of Mr. Lowther to favour him with the communication he had even distantly solicited, our hero ventured, though not without many apologies, to extend his request to a narrative of those circumstances of his life which had involved him in distresses, and reduced him to incur those obligations of which he appeared to entertain such a just and lively sense: nor was this proposition in the smallest degree disagreeable to the honest surgeon, whose conduct, though he had, in many instances, been unfortunate, had, in no single one, been dishonourable or disgraceful; on the contrary, he rejoiced in the opportunity of opening his own character to the amiable philanthropist, and of commemorating the generosity and humanity of his patron.

But, as we mean to give this little history in the relater's own words, we shall reserve the commencement of it for the next chapter, in which such of our readers as can relish English beef and pudding, and be content with the plain fare of virtue and integrity, may feast themselves without the risk of surfeit or the danger of repletion.

## CHAPTER X.

*The history of Mr. Lowther, eventful, but unimportant, and very proper to be passed over by those who scruple to admit the existence of worth and honour in a humble apothecary.*

THAT a *private station* is, in certain cases, *the post of honour*, is a maxim supported by authorities of the first eminence; that it is always so, when it is maintained with moral rectitude and unswerving integrity, is a truth which we dare assert; and we offer the gauntlet to any man who shall be hardy enough to deny, that the character of the honest Irishman, to a slight acquaintance with whom we have heretofore introduced our readers, is less heroic than that of Hyder Ally or the king of Prussia; or, that the manners of the notorious female, now happily employed in procuring a clean crossing-place at the head of the Haymarket for her former admirers; or the still more celebrated fair, who boasts the subduction of whole regiments by the power of her charms; are not altogether as amiable as those of the Perdita or the Bird of Paradise.

And, this position of ours being admitted, it will follow of course, that the merits of the historiographer, who exhibits to public notice the virtues of an obscure apothecary in the vale of Cluydd, are precisely on a foot with his who blazons the conquests of a Howe or the victories of a Keppel.

Having thus established our claim to praise and reward, we shall, "*nothing doubting*," pursue the pleasing task of holding up, to applause and admiration, an individual, whose life, though chequered with misfortune, is unblotted with ignominy, and whose artless recital shall serve to inculcate this useful lesson, *that his situation only is to be despaired of who deserts himself; and, that he who, though overwhelmed with affliction, preserves inviolate the dignity of virtue, may look forward to emancipation with sure and unfailing expectation.*

"The early part of my life, sir," said Mr. Lowther, addressing himself to the philanthropist, "was neither marked by singular or sinister events. My father, a clergyman of respectable character in the west of England, gave me and a brother, two years older than myself, a competent share of classical learning, in a grammar-school which he had himself established to increase a scanty income, derived from two little livings, both producing somewhat less than 150*l.* a year. Among the small number of his pupils was the second son of Lord S——, who, though remarkable for pride and a mischievous disposition, used to profess a particular regard for me, and gave me a very visible preference to my brother and his other school-fellows. At the age of fifteen my father bound me apprentice to a surgeon and apothecary of extensive practice in the neighbouring town of R——. With this very ingenious, but imprudent, man, I served five years, so much to his satisfaction, that, at the expiration of my apprenticeship, he offered to admit me to a share of his business; a proposition which I thought it prudent to decline accepting, as his expensive manner of living had involved him in difficulties from which I saw no prospect of his being extricated; and, added to this, my heart had received such impressions from the beauty and merit of my master's only daughter, (*here he bowed to Mrs. Lowther,*) who at the same time received, under her father's command, the addresses of a man of considerable fortune and influence in the town, though I had presumption enough to flatter myself that mine would have been more acceptable to her, that I dreaded an exposure to the misery that threatened me of seeing her torn from my wishes, and sacrificed to a wretch, vain, fantastic, and sordid.

"Under these considerations I determined to apply a small legacy, which an uncle of my father, who was also my god-father, had just at this time bequeathed me, to professional improvement; and, for this purpose, with the approbation of my father and friends, I went to London, where I attended the hospital and lectures about a year, at the



end of which time, finding my finances considerably lessened, and conceiving myself qualified to commence the practice of my profession, I prepared for my return to the west, with an intention to consult those who had my interest at heart as to a place of settlement.

“But, a few days previous to that on which I had proposed to quit the metropolis, chance threw in my way my old school-fellow, Mr. S. at this time a captain in the navy, who immediately recognized me, and, in terms of the utmost civility, invited me to breakfast with him the next morning at his lodgings in Piccadilly. I accordingly waited on him, and was received by him as an old friend, and treated with every possible mark of attention and esteem.

“In the course of this visit, Captain S. politely turned the conversation to an enquiry into my pursuits and prospects; and, on my mentioning my intention of leaving town, and opening a shop some where in the vicinity of my friends, he hinted his disapprobation of my plan, and suggested an idea so perfectly correspondent to my inclinations that I hesitated not a moment to adopt it.

“He said, he was appointed to the command of a ship of the line, just then off the stocks;—that, if I would go through the necessary examinations, he would immediately get me a warrant to act as surgeon’s-mate on-board some ship employed in the channel-service;—that, after I had served a few months in that station, he could, by his interest, procure an appointment for me to be surgeon to his own ship, which would by that time be ready for the sea, and was destined to re-inforce the British fleet in the West-Indies.

“With the most lively sense of gratitude for such liberal offers of patronage, I took my leave of my future commander, and, at the end of three days, returned to him with proper testimonials of my being duly qualified to serve in the capacity he had pointed out as a necessary introduction into the navy, and he immediately gave me a letter, which procured me at once the employment of first surgeon’s-mate of a frigate, then lying at Portsmouth, but preparing for a channel-cruise; and, as I had received directions to repair on-board with all possible expedition, I lost no time in providing necessaries for my new destination, and, having made my parting acknowledgements to my patron, in ten days was actually at sea.

“As I entered on my new occupation with alacrity, so I pursued it with spirit; and, at our return to port, after a short cruise of two months, in the course of which an engagement with, and capture of, a French frigate, of superior force, had given me an opportunity of displaying my professional abilities, my conduct was so thoroughly approved by my captain, that he kindly offered to make application for my being appointed surgeon of the ship, the gentleman who now occupied that department having signified his intentions to retire from a service in which he had acquired a decent competency; but my dependence on Captain S—— rendered it necessary for me to decline this generous proposal, and I continued to act in the same capacity as before, during a second cruise, in which I had the good fortune to improve my circumstances as well as my knowledge.

“At my second arrival, I found Captain S——’s ship, the ——, of seventy-four guns, nearly ready for sea, and a letter from him, purporting his success in procuring my nomination to be surgeon to her; and, in the course of a week, he arrived himself at Portsmouth; and I was installed in my office, and introduced to the officers of the ship as his old school-fellow and very much esteemed friend.

“As we were to sail without any other ship in company, neither the commencement or progress of our voyage could admit of delay; and we arrived in six weeks at Jamaica, without any other material incident than the capture of three or four of the enemy’s vessels, whose cargoes promised to enrich the officers and encourage the men.

“During the voyage the treatment I received from Captain S—— was equal to my warmest wishes; our intercourse was on the most familiar footing, and he admitted me to a full share of his confidence, so that it is not surprising that I should overlook his faults,

‘and be blind to the capriciousness of his temper and the insolence of his demeanour, though both were loudly complained of by the major part of the officers of the ship.

“After our arrival at Jamaica, Captain S—— was ordered to take the command of a small squadron, and to proceed immediately to protect the island of ——, against which it was supposed an expedition, preparing by the enemy, was intended to be directed; and, on this occasion, he hoisted a broad pendant, and was received by the inhabitants of that island with the respect due to a commander who bore that rank, and the regard which must naturally be entertained for a man who was publicly invested with the character of their protector; and each planter vied with his neighbour in making splendid entertainments of the commodore and other officers of the squadron.

“Among those who stood foremost on this occasion was Mr. Sainthill, a man not less remarkable for opulence than generosity, and at his table Captain S—— was not only entertained on formal occasions, but received a general invitation to it for himself and any particular friends; and, in this character, I was frequently called on to partake of this friendly indulgence, and accepted it with particular satisfaction, as the most perfect domestic harmony reigned in the family, the discretion of Mrs. Sainthill being as eminent as her beauty was admirable, and her husband appearing to be equally sensible of the charms of her person and her understanding.

“But a few visits to this happy family opened to me the character of my patron and commander in a new and most unfavourable light; I discovered that he was devoted to intrigue, and equally arduous and unprincipled in the pursuit of means to gratify his unjustifiable passions, and to accomplish his ends, however infamous.

“Shocked as I was at this discovery, I was still more alarmed at hints too broad to be misconceived, that he expected me not only to be an accomplice in schemes of the basest nature, but the actual pander to his loose desires; an office, at which my soul revolted with such fervour of abhorrence, that his first attempt to work me to his purposes produced a repulse in such terms as convinced him that he had formed very mistaken expectations from me, and at once converted his pretended, but interested, friendship, not only to dislike, but to the most malevolent and pernicious hatred.

“After spending a day at Mr. Sainthill’s, in the course of which the amiable lady of the house had, by a thousand polite marks of attention, shewn her inclination to do honour to her husband’s invitation, and render the entertainment pleasing to his guests, we retired to a little house which the commodore had hired for his residence on shore during his continuance on this station; and, in our way thither, he repeated a question which he had before very frequently asked, whether I did not think Mrs. Sainthill one of the sweetest women in the world: I replied, without hesitation, ‘yes, in person and mind.’—‘Poh! poh!’ rejoined the captain, ‘I am in love with her person, and, if you will procure me the possession of that, I will resign all other pretences to you;—

‘I take her body, you her mind;  
Which has the better bargain?

“But, my dear Bob,’ continues this virtuous commander, ‘I am persuaded you are too grateful, and have too much friendship for me, to refuse me your assistance in a little plan which I have concerted to procure me the greatest blessing on earth;’ and, without waiting for an answer, he proceeded to inform me, that he intended to invite Mr. and Mrs. Sainthill to dine on-board his ship; that, soon after dinner, a message should be conveyed to the former, that some particular and unexpected business demanded his immediate presence at his plantation;—that it would be no difficult matter to prevail on him to leave his lady to his and my care, especially as he could return in the boat which brought the messenger, but it would take some time to prepare the barge for the accommodation of Mrs. Sainthill;—that, having disposed of the husband, our stay on-board might, on a variety of pretences, be protracted till the evening was far advanced, and that, on her arrival at his house on the sea-shore, I should undertake to acquaint Mr. Sainthill, whose

habitation was distant from it at least a mile, that his lady wished him to order a carriage to convey her home, as she was fatigued with her little voyage; 'and while you are absent, my dear fellow,' says he, 'and only negroes and my own faithful servant in the house, the lady's regard, as you may perceive, pleading in my favour, the devil must be in it if I fail of success.—Hey! what says my old friend? will it do?'

"Thunderstruck at a proposition so replete with villainy, it was not till after a pause of some minutes that I could frame an answer. I then affected a smile, and asked him how long he had supposed me the greatest scoundrel on earth? to which he fiercely replied, 'I never thought you so yet, but shall from henceforth consider you in that light, if you refuse to repay the obligations I have conferred on you, or attempt to betray or interrupt me in my pursuits.'

"As I now found that I was unfortunately connected with a miscreant equally devoid of honour and common decency, and that expostulation would only serve to render me still more the object of aversion to a wretch apparently vindictive, and possessing a degree of power over me which I had no means of opposing, I thought it prudent to avoid adding fuel to his animosity; and, as we had now reached the door of his house, I retired to my bed without taking the least notice of his violent declaration, or opening my lips, and passed a restless night, though I could scarce help entertaining some hope that he would recollect himself against the morning, and, for his own sake, attempt to explain away or extenuate the brutality of his behaviour to me, which, he might naturally apprehend, would stimulate me to revenge myself, by divulging his nefarious intentions against the peace and honour of a worthy man and a virtuous and amiable lady.

"But I was disappointed in my expectations, and had soon too much reason to be assured that I had fatally mistaken the character I had to deal with; Captain S—— was a desperate as well as a daring villain; he had not only hardness enough to undertake the most atrocious acts, but he had audacity to go through with them; and, instead of conciliating measures, he sent me an order, early in the morning, to go on-board immediately, and not to leave the ship again without his particular permission.

"This order I obeyed; and, as the first lieutenant was a man of most respectable character and my very intimate friend, and the disposition of our commander was the only point on which we had ever differed in opinion, I communicated to him, in confidence, what had passed the preceding evening, and desired his advice in my present disagreeable and critical situation.

"My tale affected him with no surprise; his judgement and knowledge of the world, (for he had been an officer before the wretch who commanded him was out of the nursery,) had led him to observations which had escaped my youth and inexperience; he was perfectly acquainted with his character, and, by declining, with the appearance of respect, all overtures of intimacy, had happily avoided the difficulties into which I had fallen.

"Counselled by him, I gave not the least hint of disagreement between the captain and myself to any other officer; and, at his return on-board, I took not the least notice of his apparent coldness, but persevered in treating him with civility whenever I met him on the quarter-deck, for I was no longer an invited guest at his table, or a familiar visitor in his cabin; and, by this line of conduct, he was induced to believe that I had not yet promulgated his shameful proposition, and to conceive that it might be prudent not to drive me to extremities by a continuance of rigour; he therefore relaxed, in some degree, the severity of his carriage towards me, and brought himself to return my salute by a constrained and distant bow.

"As I could by no means condescend to accept, much less to solicit, any favour from him, I remained constantly on-board, though he was almost continually on-shore, till orders arrived from Jamaica for the return of our little squadron to that station, the storm which threatened the island where we now lay having burst on another quarter; but, on the receipt of intelligence that we were to sail in a day or two, as I had some accounts to settle on the island, I ventured on-shore in the dusk of an evening, under the leave and

with the approbation of my friend, the first lieutenant, at this time the commanding-officer of the ship; who, however, recommended it to me to avoid, if possible, being seen by our tyrant, who might avail himself of such an act of pretended disobedience to wreck his vengeance on me and work some mischief against himself, towards whom, he was well assured, he bore no cordial regard, as he looked on his superior nautical knowledge, and the veneration with which he was treated by the whole ship's company, with a very jealous, and consequently envious, eye.

"In strict conformity with this advice I walked from the beach to the town of —— by paths less frequented than the high road; and, having completed my business, and purchased some necessaries for the voyage, which I had dispatched to the boat that waited to re-convey me to the ship, I was returning through the same by-ways to the sea-side, wrapped in a boat-cloak, to serve as a disguise in case I should happen to meet the person I wished to avoid, and armed with a hanger, which I carried in my hand, but quite alone, when, just about the mid-way between the town and the beach, my ears were invaded by piercing cries of female distress at a very short distance before me, and, as I could gather from the sounds, in the very path I was pursuing; and, as the calls for assistance seemed to be the effect of some pressing danger, I drew my hanger, and pushed on with all the expedition in my power.

"It was just past ten o'clock, and the night was remarkably dark considering the climate, so that, as the cries ceased as I advanced, I could only discover, by the rustling of the leaves, that there was some struggle a very little to the left of the path, which struck me as the efforts of some passenger, who had unfortunately fallen into the hands of ruffians, to avoid being forced from the path-way; and I reached the spot in a moment, where I perceived two men, one of them covered like myself, with a boat-cloak, dragging, with great violence, a female, who appeared to resist by every exertion she could make, but, as I apprehended, had lost the powers of voice either through faintness or terror.

"As I menaced the perpetrators of this violence with immediate death if they did not instantly desist, they both quitted their prize, and one of them betook himself to immediate flight; but, as the other was too much encumbered with his cloak to escape, I laid hold of him at the instant he released the lady's hands; and, pausing a moment to consider by what means I could secure my prisoner, he turned short upon me, and, in a tone of voice too familiar to me, and which at this moment vibrates on my ear, exclaimed, 'Villain! is it you? are these your pretences to delicacy and sentiment? hypocrite, as you are, your life shall answer for this base attempt.—Mrs. Sainthill, my dear Mrs. Sainthill, I hope you have received no injury; Providence guided me to this spot to protect your honour, and probably your life.'

"It is unnecessary for me to tell you, sir, that the assassin was no other than Captain S——, whose daring effrontery, in thus turning the tables upon me, and transferring the appearance of criminality from the guilty to the innocent, actually struck me dumb, and the charge stood confirmed before I could collect myself sufficiently to make my defence, which I now attempted, but too late to gain credit. The similarity of our appearances favoured the fraud, and the effect produced by my astonishment amounted to conviction:—the lady herself was deceived, and, having recovered her speech, which had only been obstructed by a handkerchief thrust into her mouth by the ruffians, became a witness to dishonour me. It was in vain that I asserted my innocence, and my assuming the character of the lady's protector was treated as an aggravation of my offence and the consummation of impudence.

"The perfidious S—— had now a complete triumph, and, in the height of exultation, insolently demanded the name of my accomplice; the lady having declared, that, as she was returning to her own house, after paying a visit to a sick neighbour, she had been attacked by two men, who compelled two negro servants, by whom she had been attended, on pain of death to leave her to their mercy;—that they drew her by force from the path, stopped her mouth with a handkerchief, and seemed determined to convey

her to a house at a considerable distance, in which a light was discoverable; and, whatever their purposes were, though she dreaded the worst, would certainly have accomplished them, but for his gallant interposition, for which she should ever consider him as the protector of her honour, and, to the latest moment of her life, regard him as the happy instrument, in the hands of Providence, of her preservation from dangers, the very recollection of which filled her with the extremest horror.

To this painful narrative she added, that, of all men on earth, she should least have suspected Mr. Lowther of so unprovoked an outrage, as the mildness of his manners, the apparent complacency of his disposition, and the benevolent turn of his mind, had procured him the general esteem of his acquaintance, and the particular regard of his friends; 'and, for myself,' continued this doubly-injured lady, 'so highly did he stand in my opinion, that no evidence, less conclusive than that of my own senses, could ever have awakened in me a suspicion derogatory to his universal character.'

"Hard as this speech of the deceived Mrs. Sainthill seemed to bear on me, there was a part of it which gave a gleam of hope;—the light, towards which, according to her account, the ruffians endeavoured to force her, was in the house which Captain S—— had hired for his residence, as I could now plainly discover by its situation, which was remote from any other habitation; and this circumstance inspired me with resolution to repeat my protestations of innocence, and to re-criminate on my base accuser in such direct and positive terms as to throw him into confusion, and draw from him such absurd contradictions as I began to flatter myself had actually made some impression, in favour of my assertions, on the injured lady.

"Encouraged by this apprehension, I dared this assassin of the lady's virtue and my reputation to repeat his accusation either in the presence of Mr. Sainthill or the governor of the island, before either of whom I declared myself ready to appear; conscious that I could vindicate my reputation against his foul aspersions, and retort on him the false and malicious charge.

"But this was a proposition by no means conformable to his wishes; he knew that his pretences would no more bear the light than his actions, and he trembled at the idea of confronting me before candid and discerning judges, which, notwithstanding, he knew not how to avoid without incurring suspicions which would be but very little distant from conviction.

"But the father of mischief would not yet desert his promising pupil; in this critical moment he was rescued from his dilemma by the return of Mrs. Sainthill's negroes, who, having retired only behind some bushes, had listened to what had passed, and, finding their mistress's enemies discomfited, had ventured from their lurking-place; and the arrival of his own confidential servant, with three or four other persons, whom he pretended to have brought to the assistance of the female, whose cries had reached his master's house; though I was convinced that he was the man who had fled at my coming up, and that he had procured this re-inforcement with a view to extricate his infernal principal from the danger which threatened him.

"The scene was now changed; the drooping spirits of my abandoned persecutor revived; he treated with contempt my offer of meeting his accusation before the governor or Mr. Sainthill, and pointed out this proposal as a subterfuge to find means of escaping from the hands of justice; and, having directed his servant and attendants to make me their prisoner, he ordered them to convey me immediately on-board the ship, and deliver me to the commanding-officer, with positive injunctions to confine me to my cabin, and place a sentinel at the door of it, that I might hold no communication with any human being till he should himself return to the ship, which would be early the next morning; and, to this humane mandate, he added another still more cruel, enjoining the officer to debar me from pen, ink, and paper.

"I knew it was in vain to expostulate, and therefore submitted to my fate with patience, though not in silence: I exhorted the lady not to trust herself in the hands of a villain, who had long meditated, and would by this time have completed, her ruin, but for

that interposition, which, to my infinite satisfaction, had been the means of preserving her, though at the expence of a reputation dearer to me than my life, which yet, I trusted, would one day be cleared from these most false and villainous imputations; and I was proceeding to intreat her, as well for the sake of justice to her real protector as in regard to her own future peace and safety, to examine minutely into the circumstances of this misrepresented business, and not suffer herself to be the dupe of an artful, designing, miscreant, who was now wrecking his malice on me, and, if not prevented, would, in revenge for the failure of his present plan, by the most diabolical machinations, involve her either in his own guilt or my disgrace; when, observing that Mrs. Sainthill seemed attentive to my advice, and dreading the consequences of farther investigation, he pressed her to listen no longer to the pretences of a wretch, who, but for him, would have robbed her of her honour and happiness, nor expose her life to fresh danger by remaining in the open air at this unseasonable hour; and, at the same time, repeated his order to his accomplice and his companions not to lose a moment's time in taking me to the ship, lest a rescue should be attempted, which, he apprehended, would very probably be the case, as my associate, who fled from his attack, was, in all likelihood, some profligate islander, who had engaged in this iniquitous scheme for hire, and who might naturally be supposed to be connected with a banditti as desperate as himself.

"But the faithful minister to his pleasures needed no such motive to urge him to a compliance with even the wishes of his employer; he knew that he could, on every such occasion, levy a tax on his liberality proportioned to the service, and, in the present instance, he knew also how highly he could rate it; he therefore called on his attendants to assist in forcing me to the sea-side, if such measures should be necessary, and, giving me a caution as I valued my life not to open my lips till I got on-board the ship, he rudely bade me go on; an order, with which, in my present situation, I thought it prudent to comply.

"When we reached the beach, I found we were at a considerable distance from the spot where I had directed the boat, which had brought me on-shore, to wait for me, but I observed, with some surprise, another ready, manned with six stout fellows; and in this boat I embarked with my conductor and two of his myrmidons, the others, to each of whom he gave money, taking leave of him at the boat-side; and, as soon as we reached the ship, which was about two in the morning, the captain's orders were conveyed by the officer of the watch to the first lieutenant, who, convinced that this was not a time to dispute them, issued his, that they should be strictly obeyed, and I was conducted to my cabin, and left to reflexions which could only be rendered endurable by conscious integrity, and a firm reliance on that Being who never suffers the righteous to be wholly forsaken.

"In this situation, cut off from intercourse with any human being, excepting only a sea-boy, who brought me provisions from the ward-room, but to whom I found total silence was enjoined, did I remain till the third day after the arrival of the ship at Jamaica, when one of the lieutenants, entering my cabin, desired me to prepare myself for going on-shore, as a boat would be ready to carry me in about an hour.

"You may be assured, sir, that this intelligence filled me with joy; for, though I entertained no doubt but I should find the governor or magistrates, to whom, I supposed, I was to be conducted, prejudiced against me, by the heavy charge which would have been previously urged by this fiend of hell, yet, supported by my innocence, I trusted I should make such a defence, as would at least stagger the belief of those whose interests were not concerned in my dishonour.

"But, to my utter astonishment, I had no sooner set my foot on-shore than the officer who had accompanied me, and who had hitherto observed a perfect silence, took me cordially by the hand, and, acquainting me that I was appointed surgeon of the R——, a ship of the same rate with that which I had just quitted, congratulated me on being released from the malevolent tyranny of a wretch, who was abhorred by his own officers, and detested by all others who were acquainted with his real character.

“He also informed me, that, on the morning after the squadron sailed from the island of —, on its return to our present station, the commodore had opened a packet, the seals of which were not to be broken till the service on which he had been dispatched was completed, and had found that part of its contents was a commission, appointing my friend, Mr. Forrester, his first lieutenant, to the command of a sloop which was with us on the expedition;—that, on his arrival at Jamaica, he thought it his duty to embrace the earliest opportunity of thanking the admiral for his promotion, and that he critically arrived at the house where he resided a few minutes after Captain S—— had been introduced;—that his immediate admission threw his old commander into the utmost confusion, and interrupted some narrative, the subject of which he rightly conceived to be the crimes attributed to me, in which, however, he was desirous to proceed, but was soon observed by the admiral to be so embarrassed, that he would much rather have quitted the charge than have pursued it;—that, in consequence of this observation, he had applied himself to Captain Forrester for an account of my former behaviour and character, in which he was so perfectly satisfied by the warm and zealous encomiums of this worthy officer, that he had hinted to my accuser his apprehensions that his state of the case might be exaggerated, and his intention to send for me and examine me in his presence.

“The very idea of confronting me affected my already-abashed accuser with such horror, that every doubt of my guilt was removed from the penetrating mind of the admiral; and, as he did not choose to enter into a disagreeable contest with a man of his high rank and powerful connexions, he avoided noticing his embarrassment, and told Captain S——, that, as he found his surgeon was obnoxious to him, and had (possibly very justly) incurred his displeasure, he would order him on-board the R——, and send the surgeon of that ship to his; and this offer Captain S—— accepted with apparent satisfaction, abandoning at once an accusation, the prosecution of which, if it had been founded in truth, he could not have given up without relinquishing every pretence to the character of a man of honour, an officer, or a gentleman.

“In consequence of this information, I immediately went in pursuit of my good friend, Captain Forrester, and, having luckily met with him, was by him introduced to the admiral, who received me with great civility, and confirmed my appointment to the R——, but was totally silent as to the occasion of it; a caution, which, I confess, gave me great uneasiness, as I earnestly wished for an opportunity of justifying myself to this excellent commander, but could not venture to obtrude on him a subject which he chose to avoid.

“In a few days after I was settled on-board the R——, where, by the recommendation of Captain Forrester, I found the officers prepossessed in my favour; I had the additional satisfaction to find that the present captain of that ship was to be removed to another, and that his place was to be supplied by Captain Forrester, who was to conduct the ship to England for a repair, carrying with him letters from the admiral, strongly soliciting his being put on the list of post-captains, as a reward, to which he was well intitled, for long, able, and some very brilliant and distinguished, services.

“In about three weeks we departed from Jamaica; and, after a favourable passage, in which the friendship and humanity of the captain, the harmony which prevailed among the officers, and the excellent order which, enforced by such examples, was maintained among the crew, conspired to render our little society easy and happy, and particularly contributed to remove from me some part of the chagrin which I had incurred from treatment so totally underserved, we arrived at Plymouth in the month of August, just two years from my departure.

“As the ship was immediately paid off, in order to go into dock, I took this opportunity of visiting my friends; but, before I could reach the peaceful habitation of my youth, and whilst my heart anticipated the joy of meeting my longing parents and affectionate relatives, I had the mortification to be informed that the former had both paid the debt of nature somewhat more than a year ago, and that my brother had accepted a

commission in the service of the East-India Company, and had sailed for Asia about a month before my return.

“In addition to these disappointments, I also learnt that my old master was dead, leaving his daughter, unportioned, to the mercy of an unfeeling world and the fidelity of a mercenary lover;—that she had been slighted by some of her acquaintance, and, to her great satisfaction, entirely deserted by a wretch, whom she had always despised, and now detested; and, that she had actually solicited her friends to procure for her the means of preserving her independence, by placing her in some station where she might turn to advantage the fruits of a liberal and expensive education.

“Though this relation affected me with extreme regret, on account of the beloved sufferer, yet it was no small alleviation of my anxiety, that I could now give her the best proofs of the sincerity of a passion, which I had yet hardly ventured to disclose, by intreating her to accept my hand at a time when, she must be convinced, my conduct could be influenced by no interested views; and I flew to the spot, which contained the dearest object of my wishes, with an ardour excited by love in its purest state, and heightened by considerations of friendship, tenderness, and pity.

“My reception was such as I expected from the well-known good sense and virtue of my Jemima; her behaviour was at once delicate and candid; she avowed the attachment my fond heart had suggested, but wished to decline an offer, which, she contended, was too noble and generous to be accepted, as her compliance would militate against my interest, which was much dearer to her than her own happiness.

“I soon found means, however, to overcome scruples, founded on false, though specious, argument; and, having possessed myself of a treasure, the value of which, highly as I then estimated it, has continued to increase from that hour to the present, I returned with my prize to Plymouth; and, finding that my friend, Captain Forrester, was commissioned for a frigate then ready for sea, that the surgeon appointed to her was not arrived, and that the repairs of my own ship, the R——, would not be completed in less than six months, I yielded to his intreaties that I would supply the place of his surgeon for the present cruize, which was only intended to be a short one; and he immediately procured from the port-admiral an order for that purpose.

“As Captain Forrester’s lady and family were settled in a pleasant village, at a very small distance from the port, I took a small house for my wife in the same neighbourhood; and, as I was in possession of some hundreds, the amount of my savings and prize-money, I provided her with every convenience, and our parting, though more painful than I have words to express, was however unimbittered by any apprehensions of leaving her in pecuniary difficulty or distress.

“After being at sea about a month we fortunately fell in with the fleet of merchant ships belonging to the enemy, the capture of which was the principal object of our instructions; and six of them having fallen into our hands, which, though outward bound, were supposed to be tolerable prizes, we proceeded with them to Lisbon, and, having left them to be disposed of there, as we could not venture on our home-ward voyage without the crews with which they had been manned, we returned to Plymouth, after an absence of little more than four months.

“As we had no sick on-board, the captain gave me his permission to go on-shore in the first boat which came off, the care of mooring the ship and settling other matters detaining him for some time; and, being charged with the communication of a message to his lady, purporting his intention to be with her the next morning, I left the ship, and early in the evening hastened on the wings of love to my Jemima.

“But, in my way to S——, to my great surprise, I met the very lieutenant of Captain S——’s ship who had released me from my confinement at Jamaica, by whom I was informed that the ship had been sent home in a very few weeks after we had left that island, on account of some material defects which had been discovered in her rudder and after-part by the captain and his carpenter, who was his great favourite, and on whom violent suspicions had fallen of having occasioned the damage at the instance of his



commander, who soon grew tired of a station where he was under the immediate eye of an admiral, who, he had reason to believe, entertained no very favourable opinion of him;—that the ship was now in the harbour, there being yet no room for her in the dock, and the captain, he believed, still in town, though, he apprehended, he would soon set out for London, as he had, during his absence in the West-Indies, been elected a member of parliament.

“Though I was no longer under the command or controul of this graceless being, yet this information affected me with a certain degree of uneasiness, and I felt an unusual weight and oppression on my spirits during the remainder of my walk, and, as I approached my own house, I was seized with such a tremor and icy coldness that I could hardly reach the door.

“But, at the instant I drew towards it, my terrors were realised by the cries of my beloved wife, who seemed struggling for breath, and, in the most moving terms and plaintive tones, implored assistance from heaven, and pity from some wretch who seemed little disposed to afford her any.

“Rage gave me strength; I struck my feet with violence against the door, the lock yielded to the blow, and, entering the parlour, my dearest Jemima, paler than ashes, with dishevelled hair and disordered dress, in an effort to rush into my arms, fell breathless at my feet.

“But, what was my astonishment, when, on casting my eyes round in search of the occasion of this distress, I perceived the most atrocious of all villains, the abandoned Captain S——, riveted to the floor by terror, and exhibiting a complete spectacle of guilt, disappointment, and horror.

“Not even my affection for the injured angel at my feet could restrain me from immediate vengeance; I flew at the accursed disturber of my peace, and, having bestowed on him a hundred blows, which he received without resistance or remonstrance, I kicked him into the road, and returned to the assistance of my, by this time, reviving wife, to whom I administered some drops; and, having received in my bosom a plenteous shower of tears, she was soon in a condition to relieve my anxiety, and gratify my impatience with an account of the outrage from which I had providentially arrived to rescue her.

“She told me, that, soon after the arrival of Captain S—— from the West-Indies, she had received a polite note from him, congratulating her on her marriage with me, and requesting her permission to wait on her, for the purpose of explaining the misunderstanding which had been the occasion of my receiving from him treatment for which he was now extremely concerned, and for which he wished not only to apologise to her, but to atone by rendering me every future service which his interest could command.

“That she communicated the contents of this billet to her friend, Mrs. Forrester, who advised her by all means to admit him, and offered to be herself present at the interview;—that, in consequence of her returning a favourable answer to his request, he visited her the next day, and, in the presence of Mrs. Forrester, related a story of Mr. Sainthill’s having discovered the villains who actually attacked his lady, and having brought them to punishment, with so much plausibility, and accused himself of rashness and indiscretion with such appearance of candour, that it was impossible to deny credit to his protestations of contrition, or to decline his repeated offers of exerting his and his family’s interest to procure me a respectable appointment on-shore, either in one of the dock-yards or hospitals.

“Having thus artfully laid suspicion asleep, he expressed his regret at his want of acquaintance among the families in that part of the world, and earnestly intreated both the ladies to admit him to their tea-tables on friendly terms, at such times only as they should be together, for he had too great respect to decorum even to wish they should receive him singly; and, to this request, urged with such propriety, it was impossible to oppose any reasonable objection.

“That he had availed himself of this permission with such cautious delicacy, always announcing his intended visit by a previous message, and had behaved with such circumspect attention, that he had actually insinuated himself into some degree of esteem with them both, and that, in particular, she had looked forward with pleasure to the perfect reconciliation that would take place between us at my return.—

“That, in the afternoon of this fatal day, she had sent her maid-servant to Plymouth in search of letters from me, and expected her return time enough to get her tea;—that, towards the evening, Captain S—— rapped at the window of the parlour where she was at work, and asked if she was disposed to walk with him to her friend’s house, where he had called, and promised to come back to drink tea;—that, not having the most distant apprehension of what followed, she imprudently acquiesced, and asked him to walk in whilst she got her hat and cloak;—that, having gained admission, he took the opportunity, as she supposed, whilst she was gone up stairs for the purpose of preparing for the walk, to lock the door, and, on her coming down, he intreated her to be seated for a few minutes, as he had a matter of the utmost importance to communicate to her;—that she now began to be alarmed, and requested, with great earnestness, that he would delay his communication, whatever it might be, till they got to Mrs. Forrester’s, as there was no subject on which she chose to hear him in the absence of that lady;—that he then laid hold of her hands, and began a strain of fulsome panegyric on her beauty, which, however, she soon interrupted by requiring him to release her, as she determined not to submit a moment longer to such improper behaviour;—that he persisted, however, in detaining her hands, on which she called aloud, but in vain, for assistance; and he proceeded to take liberties which she had resisted with her utmost efforts, till it had pleased God to work a miracle in her favour, by sending me to her relief at the moment her strength was almost exhausted.

“We now joined in the most grateful acknowledgements to our great Preserver for this wonderful escape from the most imminent of all dangers, and in forming conjectures as to the consequence of this new proof of the villain’s animosity to me, till the return of Mrs. Lowther’s servant, which was not till late at night, brought us fresh proofs of his wicked ingenuity in concerting his plan for our undoing.

“She said, that, soon after she left the house, she met Captain S——, who asked her where she was going, and, on her acquainting him, informed her that he had just been at Mrs. Forrester’s, who was coming to her mistress to request her company in a walk to Plymouth, and that therefore he would advise her, by all means, to wait at the house of a friend of the ladies, whom he mentioned, till they called there, as they would in all probability make some little purchases, which they would be glad to return by her;—that, in consequence of this conversation with Captain S——, she had attended at the house to which he had directed her till the evening was too far advanced for her to expect her mistress, and the lady of that house had given up all hopes of seeing her.

“As I did not choose to give a fresh alarm to the already-agitated spirits of my dear wife, I suppressed my opinion of the consequences of this affair, which was, that I should receive a message from him the next morning, calling on me to give him satisfaction for the indignities he had received; nor should I have felt the smallest repugnance to accept an opportunity of expunging from the list of human beings the name of such a execrable miscreant.

“But the morning arrived, and, contrary to my expectations, I heard not a syllable from him; and therefore as soon as I had breakfasted I took my leave of Mrs. Lowther, and, promising to return to dinner, I posted to Plymouth, and, having provided myself with pistols, repaired to his lodgings, where, to my utter astonishment, I was informed that he went off for London about five in the morning.

“As I could now obtain no other satisfaction, I consoled myself for this disappointment by publishing the story of his delinquency, and giving the account of the correction I had bestowed on him in all companies; and, as my old ship, the R——, was now out of dock, and a captain appointed to her, I prepared for a voyage, having

determined no more to leave Mrs. Lowther in a hazardous situation, but to place her in some respectable family till my return.

“But here the malice of my persecutor had again been exerted to compass my ruin; his interest had been employed to prejudice me in my professional pursuits, and I had the mortification to find myself superseded, and another surgeon appointed to the ship.

“As I had no means of opposing such a powerful adversary, and was aware that any remonstrances or representations of mine, unsupported by the sanction of any consequential connection, would fail of producing any effect, I resolved to relinquish at once my hopes in the naval line, and to employ my little capital in settling myself as a surgeon and apothecary in some country town.

“You may believe, sir, that this proposal met Mrs. Lowther’s full approbation; she rejoiced in the idea of having a protector always at hand, and painted to herself the most pleasing prospects of domestic felicity and increasing fortune; and, an opportunity soon offering, I purchased the shop of a man of eminence, who had lately died, in the town of T——, and opened it with the most flattering hopes of success.

“But the demon of malevolence still pursued me; I had hardly time to look round me before an action was commenced against me by Captain S—— for aspersing his character; and, though all my little ready money was exhausted in making a defence, which I was assured would be effectual, yet, as the plaintiff proved my having publicly related circumstances which reflected highly on his character as a gentleman and an officer, and I could bring no witnesses to the facts I had been taught to believe would plead my justification, a verdict was obtained against me for 1000*l.* damages and cost of suit.

“As I was utterly unable to pay this enormous sum, I had no means to avoid the imprisonment of my person but by flight; and, having converted my few effects into ready money, I departed privately for Bristol, accompanied by my dear and faithful associate in misfortune, and an infant, whose birth had been prematurely hastened by the event of the trial at law.

“On my arrival at Bristol, I engaged myself to go surgeon of a letter of marque, bound to the Mediterranean, and, leaving the unfortunate partner of my cares and the little pledge of our loves slenderly provided with the means of existence, I submitted to this degradation of situation with resigned and patient hope; but we had not been a fortnight out of port before we were attacked by a French privateer, of very superior force, and, after a very gallant defence, fell victims to superiority of strength, and were conducted to Havre-de-Grace, where the officers and men were indiscriminately lodged in the same place of confinement.

“From this miserable situation, however, I was providentially relieved by a successful application of my medical abilities in the cure of the principal of a convent of black friars, who, having charitably visited the prison, and accidentally conversed with me, conceived so good an opinion of my skill, that, being attacked by a fever, which threatened to be of the malignant kind, he desired I might be permitted to visit him; and, as the request of churchmen in a certain rank, in countries where the catholic religion prevails, operate as commands, his was immediately complied with; and, a lodging being provided for me in the town by my patient’s direction, who speedily recovered under my care, though he had been despaired of by the French faculty, in gratitude for his restoration to health, he procured an order from the government for my total liberation, and furnished me with the means of returning to England, where I arrived in safety, but with the loss of the better half of what I possessed in the world.

“I now made a tolerably successful cruise in a privateer; but, at my return from it, found that the place of my retreat had been discovered by my blood-thirsty pursuer, and that I could no more venture abroad with any regard to my liberty.

“Thus circumstanced, I sold my share of prize-money for 70*l.* though I suppose it amounted to 150*l.* and left Bristol by night, with an intention to bury myself in some very

obscure part of Wales, and endeavour to procure a scanty livelihood amidst wilds and mountains; but, on my arrival at this place, I learnt by accident that a vacancy of an apothecary had happened here within a few days, and, as the value of his shop and furniture were within the compass of my finances, I determined to try my fortune without proceeding farther.

“And here I once more began to taste the comforts of domestic peace, and to enjoy the pleasing hope of future competence. My patients, though not rich, were honest, and comparatively liberal; and their payments enabled me to indulge my feelings in attending and supplying with medicine those, whose limited circumstances denied them the use of means to preserve lives, in all cases valuable, in many, precious: and, by the exercise of these offices of humanity, together with unsparing assiduity and moderate charges to those who could afford to pay, I was soon established in reputation, and in the esteem of the whole neighbourhood.

“But the all-wise Dispenser of good and evil had yet prepared one more bitter cup for me; the very wretch who had been Captain S——’s instrument to insult me in Jamaica, having failed in some base attempt to gratify his pleasures or minister to his vices, had been discharged from his service; and, having consumed, in drunkenness and dissipation, the wages of iniquity, was returning to Ireland, of which kingdom he was a native, by the way of Holyhead, on the outside of the stage-coach, from which he had fallen in a state of inebriety, about a mile short of this town, and had dangerously fractured his thigh. Though I recollected his person the moment I was called to his assistance, yet, in his present circumstances, I retained no resentment, but, having reduced the fractured limb, I not only attended him, but supplied him with food and necessaries, till the benevolent baronet, from whom ye have just parted, hearing of the accident, came himself to enquire into the circumstances of it; with which he was no sooner acquainted than he sent for me, and expressing, in terms which I cannot repeat, his approbation of my conduct, he gave me directions to make him debtor for every thing the patient should want in future till his perfect recovery, and, as soon as he could travel with safety, to supply him with such a sum as would enable him to reach the end of his journey; and he kindly desired me to be myself the bearer of the account to Felix-Park, as he wished for my acquaintance, and would be happy to render me service by employing and recommending me. And thus new and happy prospects were opened to us, equally unexpected and encouraging.

“But, what I have now to relate, sir, will stagger your faith; nor could I venture to offer it to your belief, if I could not produce the most authentic and unequivocal proofs in support of my assertions. The monster, who recognized me the moment the fumes of the liquor he had swallowed were dissipated, and expressed the deepest concern for the part he had acted against me, was no sooner sufficiently recovered to sit up, than, in order to regain the favour of his old employer, he wrote him a letter, and betrayed to him the man, to whose care and attention he was indebted for the preservation of his life; and, in less than a week after I had forwarded this devil in human shape on his journey, I was arrested on a writ of execution and conveyed to D—— jail.

“My spirits now, for the first time, forsook me. My dearest Jemima had just been delivered of her second child, and was yet in her bed; our little all was invested in my business and the few necessities about us; and the sum with which I was charged was so enormous, that I could not entertain the most distant hope of emancipation, but must expect to linger out a miserable life in the horrors of confinement, aggravated by the keenest reflexions on the forlorn situation of a beloved wife and helpless infants.

“But, (Mr. Fairborn will excuse my moralizing,) let no short-sighted mortals arraign the decrees of Providence, or prescribe limits to mercy as boundless as our wants, because it is not always extended to our wishes;—the arm, which inflicts misfortune, knows how to spare; and the hand, which holds the cup of consolation, when to administer;—it is our duty to wait with resignation, and expect with humble reliance.”

At this pious apostrophe the gentle bosom of the philanthropist emitted a sigh; but whether it was occasioned by considerations which concerned his beloved Eliza, or arose from reflexions on the baseness and ingratitude of mankind, of which he had, in his short acquaintance with the world, already tasted, we must leave to be determined by our readers; on whose ideas, however, we shall hazard a conjecture, that the former opinion will be universally adopted by the softer sex, and the latter generally by the male part of the human creation; with an exception, out of those high and mighty lords, of such as have been inspired by the tender passion, and have received its pure and uninterested impressions.

“My patients and numerous friends, though incapable of extricating me, not only poured out the bitterest execrations against the villain, who had thus basely returned my kind offices, but, to the extent of their abilities, tendered their assistance to my disconsolate wife and her unhappy offspring; but, the moment the news of my misfortune reached the ears of the favourite minister of heaven, my patron, my benefactor, my preserver,—the noble, generous, compassionate, Sir Felix, whose feeling heart and powerful hand always act in unison,—he had the godlike humanity to visit me in person, whilst the amiable partner of his virtues was performing the same condescending office by my desponding wife, who, hopeless of their relief, was mourning over the undeserved calamities of her unfortunate husband and her unprotected family; and, having listened with attention to the recital of my melancholy tale, he assured me, in terms which soothed my sorrows and revived my hopes, that he would immediately consult his own attorney on the means of restoring me to my family and business; and in the mean time kindly cautioned me against giving way to apprehensions of wretchedness, which, he trusted, it would be in his power, by some means or other, to avert.

“Thus encouraged, I submitted to my confinement with cheerfulness; the irksomeness of it being also considerably alleviated by the arrival of my dear wife, who was conveyed to the prison-gates in the baronet’s own carriage, the moment she was in a condition to travel, loaded with proofs of his bounty, and enjoined not to leave me till she heard farther from Lady Benefold, who had provided a nurse for her infant, for whose care and tenderness she would be responsible, and would also herself, from time to time, watch over the welfare of the poor little innocent orphan.

“But, before a month had elapsed, I had the happiness to receive a second visit from my guardian angel, whose countenance, at his entrance, bespeaking the sensations of his mind, gave presage of some pleasing intelligence.

“Nor was I disappointed in the hope I had formed from it; for, regardless of my expressions of gratitude for this fresh proof of his humane attention to the concerns of a humble, insignificant, individual, he took Mrs. Lowther by the hand, and, in the kindest expressions of congratulation, acquainted her that her husband was no longer a prisoner;—that he had just received from his attorney, who had discovered an error in the proceedings, in consequence of which the judgment against me had been set aside, an authority to the jailer to discharge me, which he was instantly ready to do; and that his carriage waited at the gate, in which he desired to conduct us to our own house, that he might enjoy the satisfaction of restoring us to that comfort, which had been so cruelly interrupted by the most unprecedented acts of barbarity and oppression.

“If I could have found words to pour out my sense of this unparalleled goodness, my tongue would have refused to give them utterance; overpowered by the sudden burst of joy, and overwhelmed with gratitude, I stood speechless, motionless, and in an absolute state of stupefaction, till I was roused from the momentary lethargy by a call from my benefactor to assist my dear Jemima, whose gentle spirits had yielded to the storm which assailed them, and left her pale, breathless, and senseless.

“By the application of the ordinary remedies she was, however, soon sufficiently recovered to attend our benefactor, who, having retired during the continuance of her indisposition, had taken that opportunity of discharging the fees due for my liberation, and gratifying the jailer, by a very liberal present, for the indulgence and civility with

which he understood I had been treated during my confinement: but, as his motives for conferring benefits were of the purest and most disinterested kind, so he performed great and generous actions with a delicacy peculiar to himself, and in a manner calculated to lessen the weight of obligation; and, on this occasion, he slightly noticed to me the generous act he had just performed, as a transaction which he had taken upon himself merely to save time.

“During our little journey we received the most encouraging assurances of future friendship; and our return was no sooner announced than our kind friends and neighbours, flocking round us, joined in felicitations on this happy period of our afflictions, and the most fervent invocations of heaven to bless, with unintermitting and everlasting happiness, the author of their present rejoicings.

“I have now,” continued this worthy man, “brought my little history to a conclusion. Delivered from apprehension, and befriended, protected, and recommended, by Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, our minds have, from that hour to this, been tranquil, and our affairs prosperous, we aspire not to be affluent, and we possess a sufficiency; and, if at any time we feel ourselves ruffled by any of those little disappointments, with which the fairest passage through life will sometimes be chequered, we restore ourselves to serenity by recalling to our minds the dangers we have escaped and the difficulties we have surmounted; a subject, which fails not to awaken us to a due sense of the mercy of that gracious Being, who hath conducted us, through the rough and thorny paths of affliction, to comfort, competence, and content; and to inspire fresh strains of grateful acknowledgements to the benevolent pair, who, in the hands of heaven, have been the instruments of our deliverance.”

“Gracious Father of mercies!” exclaimed the philanthropist, when Mr. Lowther had closed his narrative, “why hast thou not bestowed, on all the rich and powerful, souls as virtuous and beneficent as those of Sir Felix and Lady Benefold? or, why hast thou, in ten thousand instances, permitted wealth to prove a curse to its possessors, and dignity a disgrace? Grant me, oh! grant me, poverty and content; or, with the enjoyment of the gifts of fortune, teach me to profit by the endowment!”

As it now grew late, and our hero intended to pursue his journey very early on the succeeding morning, he took his leave of the good surgeon and his lady, with the sincerest professions of regard, and the most faithful assurances of his intentions to repeat the visit: nor did he neglect to remind them, in language which betrayed the secret of his heart, of the melancholy office they had undertaken for the lovely Eliza; with the performance of which he requested Mr. Lowther to acquaint him by letter, addressed to him at the place of his grandfather’s present residence.

To Mrs. Lowther, whose admiration of the philanthropist had increased from the first moment of her acquaintance with him, and whose countenance bore evident marks of regret for his intended departure, he offered the politest acknowledgements for her humanity to the unfortunate Miss Melcombe, and her hospitality and attention to himself; and, intreating her to accept and wear, as a token of his high esteem, a ring, set with diamonds, from his finger, he left this humble mansion of peace and virtue, not a little affected with the proofs which he had received, from its worthy inhabitants, of respectful and affectionate regard.

## CHAPTER XI.

*In which, if the reader travel far enough, he may overtake an old acquaintance.*

THE bosom of our hero had now entertained a guest too active to be restrained by the lazy fetters of sleep; he slumbered, and the person of his Eliza presented itself to his

imagination lovely as her sister-angels; he awoke, and the charms of her mind took possession of all his faculties:—again he gave way to the impressions of mental fatigue, and new visions of illusive happiness courted his acceptance in all the fancied forms of approved and successful love;—again the velvet-footed deity deserted his pillow, and reason offered to his consideration doubts, difficulties, and apprehensions. At the earliest dawn he forsook his bed; and, having summoned his faithful attendant from a repose, unbroken by violent, and undisturbed by the gentler, passions, he obeyed the dictates of duty, gratitude, and filial affection, and proceeded on a journey which had been delayed by a mixture of events, painful, pleasing, and interesting.

During the first stage our hero gave plenary indulgence to the natural taciturnity of Jeremiah, who, in perfect complacency of mind, surveyed the beauties of nature in the lofty mountain and chequered shade, the meandering river and the trickling rill, all gilded by the rising beams of the representative of universal light, and, admiring the wisdom of the great Author, failed not to adore his power and exalt his praise; while his companion, unconscious of the delightful scene, and his visual ray unimpressed by the variegated prospect, in his mind's eye contemplated the fairest work of God, his last best gift to man.

But this pleasing reverie was interrupted at the entrance of the town where our travellers had proposed to breakfast by an exclamation from Jeremiah of—"Stop, boy! stop! for the love of God, stop!—it is, upon my soul it is, ———— !" and the sudden bursting open of the chaise-door, whence he descended without the assistance of the step, and darted across the road towards an alehouse, about twenty yards distant from it.

As Jeremiah was by no means subject to violent emotions, the philanthropist was struck with astonishment at this extraordinary effort, and, his eyes naturally following for information the steps of his fellow-traveller, he perceived, at the door of the house to which he hastened, two or three decently-dressed men rudely attempting to force a clean pretty-looking young woman from the arms of a soldier, who, straining her to his bosom, endeavoured to detain her by the utmost exertion of his strength, while a rosy-faced curled-up urchin, about four years old, lent his little assistance to her rescue, and rent the air with his cries.

And now our hero discovered the spring which had wound up the passions of Jerry Twister to such an extraordinary pitch. The protector of the struggling fair was the identical mutilated soldier, who had so gallantly and disinterestedly lent his aid to our hero in his unequal conflict with the thief-takers at ———, and who, being perfectly satisfied with the victory which had been obtained by his interposition, had never entertained a single idea of profiting by it, but had coolly marched off the ground the next morning before day-break, without even saluting the commander to whom he had been auxiliary.

Before the philanthropist, who was now no less earnest than honest Jerry to return the kindness he had received, could reach the scene of action, Jeremiah had entered the lists; and, having, by a single blow, levelled to the ground the most active of the assailants, he placed himself in a posture to sustain the attacks of his coadjutors, who appeared to meditate great revenge for the injury and indignity which had been offered to their comrade.

The female was now at liberty, and, ranging herself in a line with her protectors, a more equal battle would probably have ensued, but for the interposition of Mr. Fairborn, who required an immediate cessation of hostilities, and demanded an explanation of circumstances which appeared to him so very extraordinary.

The appearance of our hero always claimed respect, and his manners commanded attention: he had no sooner signified his desire of information than one of the intended combatants undertook the office of spokesman for the rest, and acquainted the philanthropist, that he and his companions were constables of the parish;—that the law had decreed punishment to vagrants, and rewards to those who should apprehend them;—that those who presumed to beg, without certain testimonials of authority, came within that description;—that he had himself seen the drab with the bastard, on the preceding

day, soliciting a farmer's wife for small beer, which she had actually obtained;—that, in consequence of this breach of the law, he had carried her before a justice of the peace, by whom, as she could produce no pass, she had been convicted of the offence, and ordered to be conveyed from parish to parish, receiving, at certain periods, the discipline of whipping, to the sea-side, as she had refused to discover that she had any place of settlement in England, pretending to be newly arrived from Ireland; “and,” continued this experienced minister of legal vengeance, “we were proceeding to do our duty, and had only just stopped at this house to spend a shilling or two of the reward in a drop of good liquor, to keep up our spirits on the road, when this hang-dog, who had taken up his quarters here last night, and, who, I suppose, lost his leg in a man trap, had the impudence to swear, that the b——, who we saw begging without him yesterday, was his wife, and the brat their child, and so, without more ado, he lays his hands upon the wench, and bids defiance to the law; and, it being our duty, as your honour knows, to maintain the king's authority, we were going to put the lady into a cart, when this here chap, with the blue coat, assaulted my brother-officer, as your honour saw; and I hope your honour will stand by the law, and help us to carry that there boisterous blade before his worship, that he may give an account what business he had to meddle or make in parish-affairs and the consarns of the law.”

“Jasus reward him,” says the honest Irishman, “for this one good action, with a place in Abraham's bosom, while you, and all such hard-hearted, flinty-bowelled, sons of b——s lie howling at your master's feet in a hotter place than ould Gib. You would whip a poor young woman because she asked a mouthful of small beer!—devil whip ye all, and be after carrying ye before a better justice than he that would have sent my poor Sukey to the halberts!—I tell ye what, Mr. Constable, I got the loss of one precious limb at Gibraltar, in the sarvice of my king and country, and devil burn me but I had rather lose the other three, and that one too, than a single stoke of your's and your justice's ungodly lash should fall on my poor girl.” And he closed this eloquent address with an embrace so sincere as to penetrate, with tender sympathy, the soul of the philanthropist, and fill, with the tributary tear of heart-bestowed approbation, the eye of the humane Jeremiah.

Our hero, of whose person the faithful Hibernian had not the smallest recollection, as the cause and not the man had engaged him in battle, now assured the maintainers of good order that he had very particular reasons for giving credit to his assertions, as he was not only well satisfied that the loss of his limb had been incurred in the most distinguished service, but had himself obligations to him of a nature which demanded a very grateful return; and, therefore, if they would permit their prisoners to accompany him to the house where he should breakfast, he would himself be responsible for their forthcoming, and would liberally recompense the loss of time which this little delay might occasion; and, adding to this proposal the offer of a piece of gold to drink a glass of wine in the mean time, these united arguments prevailed, and the chaise proceeded to the inn, followed by the rejoicing pair and the little object of their mutual affections.

As soon as the pedestrian travellers had been refreshed by a breakfast, which our hero had humanely ordered to be provided for them, he directed honest Jeremiah to introduce them; an office, which that milky-hearted veteran performed with much more alacrity, and altogether as much attention, as was ever exhibited by the Sir Clement Cotterel of the British, or any other, court, on the introduction to royal presence of the most brilliant member of the *corps diplomatique*; the civilities of the last-mentioned officer being dictated by the duties of his office, but those of Jeremiah Twister being the voluntary emanations of his own benevolent heart.

It was in vain that the philanthropist, in whose opinion virtue and integrity levelled all conditions, enjoined the war-worn soldier and his beloved Sukey to be seated, before he would enter on enquiries which he was anxious to make; they withstood his solicitations with such determined, but respectful, refusals, that, in kind indulgence to their own wishes, he gave up the point, and desired to be made acquainted with the real



circumstances of the story, some slight intimations of which he had received from the offended constables.

At the instance of the soldier, the task of complying with this request fell on the gentle Sukey; for, though humble her station and forlorn her circumstances, a more gentle, or a more faithful, spirit never inspired the human breast; she was the child of nature, pure as that universal parent, and artless as innocence itself.

Encouraged by the mild intreaties of our hero, she commenced her little history: she said, Terry Connel and she had been born in neighbouring cabins, that they had been at school together, had played together, and had worked together;—that they had loved each other, she believed, from their infancy, for she always thought Terry the sweetest lad, and he had told her she was the loveliest lass, in all the village.—That, as Terry grew to manhood, he talked of marriage, nor had she a wish beyond that of making him happy;—that fortune, however, had crossed their loves, for Terry's father fell into misfortune and her's was prosperous;—that, on this alteration, her parents looked unkindly on poor Terry, but her heart could never change; and when Terry, urged by despair, enlisted for a soldier, she offered him her hand, which he would fain have refused, because he would not involve her in distress, but she persisted, and he, for love, complied.—That she followed him to his embarkation, and then, with broken and desponding heart, returned to her parents, who dealt unkindly by her, and refused her their protection;—that she bore it all for the love of Terry, and worked with pleasure to provide for the little offspring of their loves, who had been born about eight months after his father's departure;—that she now and then got a letter from Terry, and lived on the comfort of one till she received another;—that the last had informed her of his misfortune, of his arrival in England, and of the time when he expected to be at Chester, in his way to his native land;—that she had mustered all she could collect in the world to meet her Terry at Chester, lest he should apprehend that she too was unkind;—that his arrival there having been retarded by the difficulty of travelling in his condition, her little money was almost exhausted, and she had determined to set out to meet him;—that she had left Chester five days, and had walked as far each day as her strength and the care of assisting her infant-companion would permit;—that she was reduced to her last shilling, and, meeting yesterday a woman carrying a jug of beer into the fields, she had requested her to permit her child to drink, with which she had kindly complied; and, the rest, she said, his honour knew; who, she was sure, heaven had sent there on purpose to save three innocent lives; for she would have died of fear and shame, and poor Terry's heart would have broken; and what could have become of the friendless infant?—he must have died too!

To such a tale, who could refuse a tear? Jeremiah quitted the room, and the philanthropist withdrew to the window. Terry thought it would be proper to retire; but the noise of his stump on the floor recalled our hero, and he lifted his eyes, for the first time, towards the guileless pattern of conjugal fidelity. She appeared to be about three and twenty, rather taller than the middle size; her complexion naturally fair, but tarnished by trouble, travel, and exposure; her eyes of the bluest cast, diffusing all the graces of native modesty; her cheeks dimpled by smiles of grateful sensibility, beaming through the glistening tear.—Blind, unfeeling, insensible, wretches, who could consign, to whips and chains, the fair, faithful, and faultless, Sukey Connel!

Terence Connel was about two years older than his Sukey; his height had qualified him for a grenadier, and traces yet remained of his having once merited her flattering epithet; but hard labour, hard fare, wounds, and a warm climate, had furrowed a face, which yet bore evident marks of better days.

The philanthropist desired them not to leave the room; he wished for a few minutes farther conversation with them.—Sacred be the privacies of the virtuous and benevolent!—by us they shall not be interrupted, nor will we pry into the secrets of him, who wisheth not his right hand to know what his left doth.

But we will not deny to our readers the satisfaction of knowing, that the Chester stage-coach, stopping at the same inn to give the passengers breakfast, our hero, before his departure, had the pleasure to see Terry Connel and his Sukey embark in it, the happiest, and perhaps one of the worthiest, couples in the universe.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*The best, because the shortest, in the book.*

OUR travellers completed their journey the next day before dinner, and Mr. Francis had the pleasure to find his kind and indulgent parent in a much better state of health than he had expected; the wholesome air of the mountains, and the nutritious draughts of goat's milk, which, by the direction of his physician, he had swallowed since his arrival at the habitation of his old friend, had contributed, in a very considerable degree, to the improvement of it; and, the additional restoratives which he now derived from the company and conversation of his beloved grandson, and the satisfaction he received from observing an advantageous alteration both in his person and understanding, the former having drawn several months nearer to manhood, and the latter having acquired solidity and enlargement from his academical studies and his intercourse with the world, having conspired to complete his recovery, he proposed, after the young gentleman should have rested a few days, to set out on his return to Eastburn-Hall, though not by the direct road, but by a circuitous progress through the southern countries of that delightful and romantic principality; and this little tour was performed without the occurrence of any material circumstance, and with great pleasure to the philanthropist, whose heart rejoiced at the welfare and perfect re-establishment of his benefactor, and enjoyed, with the most dutiful and affectionate sensibility, every look and expression which bespoke the total removal of his complaints, and the return of spirits, which, though not depressed, had suffered a considerable diminution by a long and painful illness.

During the course of this agreeable journey, our hero had amused his kind parent, who, from an epistolary communication of our hero's adventure with the footpad, had already an acquaintance with Terry Connel, with the continuation of his and his Sukey's story, but neither Miss Melcombe's name, or a syllable of the circumstances which attended his meeting her, escaped his lips; and, on this head; he had also enjoined silence to Jeremiah, assigning, as a reason for this caution, a promise made to that lady, never to disclose the place of her retirement till after the friend she expected from America should arrive in England; but, whether this reason was completely satisfactory to Jerry Twister, or will prove so to our readers, we must leave to the discussion of these several parties; giving them, however, full liberty to adopt any other, which either their reasons or their fancies may suggest.

As our travellers did not reach Eastburn-Hall till towards the approach of winter, our hero, at the solicitations of all his friends, determined to postpone his return to the university till after the Christmas vacation; at which time also the leave of his brother, the young soldier, whom he had the pleasure to find just arrived at his father's house, after an absence of more than five years, would expire: and that festive season was spent in the laudable scenes of hospitable conviviality, usual among respectable families in the distant provinces of the kingdom, who generally avail themselves of this opportunity to renew the bands of friendship and good neighbourhood; when even the countenances of the poor and the unfortunate are gladdened by the benevolence of the rich and charitable, and the tear of sorrow is wiped from the eye of wretchedness by angel-robed compassion, the softest, sweetest, loveliest, messenger of heaven.

During this interval, a correspondence was opened between our philanthropist and Miss Melcombe, in the course of which the state of his heart was, by degrees, fully explained: nor did the fair object of his wishes scruple to make such concessions, on her part, as would have been sufficiently flattering to his hopes, if they had not been accompanied by the most solemn declarations that she neither would nor could receive his particular addresses, as her heart would never consent to return, with injuries of the deepest dye, obligations of such a nature as demanded every exertion of gratitude, or to

wound the peace and destroy the happiness of the man, for whom she had the most perfect respect and the most unalterable esteem.

And, as our hero had, at present, no independent establishment of fortune, and chose not to risk a solicitation on this head to his grandfather, who, he knew, had entertained high expectations of forming a connection for him with a family equally respectable for opulence and character; and wished to suspend, as much as possible, the disappointment of his fond hopes, though he knew, in his heart, that he could never concur in the gratification of them; he forbore to press his Eliza to accept his vows, and contented himself with drawing, by degrees, from his fair correspondent, such admissions of a regard, rather more tender than that of friendship, as fully satisfied him, that a moment would arrive, when he should triumph over scruples, founded in the very passion which they were urged to suppress, and claim, without resistance, the possession of the greatest blessing which heaven could bestow or he could receive.

At the expiration of the recess, our hero and his faithful attendant returned to the seat of classical improvement, and pursued, with equal industry and success, the paths which led to knowledge; for the mind of the philanthropist was much too active to be confined to moderate acquirements, and the thirst of Jeremiah after learning was yet by no means quenched.

But, after a few months close and unwearied attention to objects so important to the one and so interesting to the other, their studies were interrupted by circumstances so totally unexpected, and of such novelty and consequences, that we think it necessary to give ourselves and our readers breathing-time, and to dedicate a new chapter to the relation of them.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Another old acquaintance introduced, with alterations  
and improvements.*

THE progress of an historian has been compared, and not unaptly, to that of a stage-coachman. At the commencement of their respective journeys they both move slowly, and are both accustomed to make frequent stops and restings, each for the convenience of picking up parcels; the former, of annotations and elucidations; the latter, of more substantial, and perhaps more valuable, contents. As they advance, the jades, who give motion to the several machines, grow dull, faint, and spiritless, and it is not without the most laborious exertions of the conductors that they can be prevailed on

————— to stir,  
Step by step, up the perpendicular:—

but, towards the conclusion of the journey, the rein becomes useful; impelled by the prospect of rest and refreshment, the cattle press forward with alacrity, and, during the last mile, or the last chapter, they are with difficulty restrained from dangerous and destructive exertions.

And, such is our predicament at this moment; our history draws to a period, at which biographers of a certain description generally make their full stop, or, to borrow a commercial expression, close their accounts; but, to continue both metaphors, before the separate balances can be fairly struck, impatience takes the bit, and hurries us with impetuosity to the conclusion of our journey.

But, lest this haste should precipitate us into the gulf of confusion, we shall pull up in time, and, proceeding softly and fairly, endeavour to bring in our vehicle uninjured and our passengers undisturbed.

One morning, as our hero returned from chapel, he was accosted by a waiter from one of the inns, who asked if his name was Fairborn; and, on his answering in the affirmative, said, he had been to his rooms with an officer's servant, who now waited to deliver a letter to him.

The philanthropist, therefore, hastened his return, and found the person the waiter had described, who put into his hands a letter, the contents of which follow.

"IN what language shall I address my hitherto beloved grandson, or how shall I describe the feelings of my fond and anxious heart, when I am compelled to charge him with a deviation from the paths of virtue, and a departure from principles, which, I flattered myself, would have guided him, unerringly, to honour, reputation, and permanent happiness?

"But Captain Melcombe, the bearer of this letter, hath, fatally for my peace, convinced me, that the virtue, which, I trusted, was so deeply rooted, could not arm you against temptation; nor the laudable pride, with which I had endeavoured to inspire you, withhold you from actions which must terminate in disgrace.

"If, as he, with too much plausibility of reason, asserts, you have betrayed to dishonour his young, amiable, and orphan, sister, what atonement can you make to God, to her, and to yourself? yet, even this crime may be aggravated by the detention of the injured object of your lawless passions from those friends, whose regard for her is still unabated, and whose wishes are yet warm to bring her back to virtue, and protect her from the torrent of evils which threaten to overwhelm her.

"Where have you concealed the unfortunate sufferer?—on my blessing I charge you to communicate to her brother the place of her retirement, and to use all your

influence with her to commit herself to his protection, who, by duty, inclination, and affection, is, and must be, her only guardian.

“By your compliance with this injunction, or your refusal, I shall judge of the degree of your guilt; if you acquiesce with readiness, you may, by suitable contrition, yet obtain the pardon of heaven, and be restored, in time, to my good opinion; if you hesitate a moment to give the information I require, I will tear you from my bosom, and retain no farther remembrance of you than in my prayers for your repentance and the amendment of your life.

Your distressed grandfather,

Eastburn-Hall,  
177—

EUGENIUS THOMPSON.”

To this letter the philanthropist immediately wrote the following answer.

“Honoured Sir,

“THAT your grandson is incapable of the crime imputed to him is the pride of his heart, and he trusts will be the comfort of your’s; and, conscious of the most perfect innocence, he dares even venture into your presence, and declare, that, not even the most powerful of all motives, his veneration, respect, duty, gratitude, and affection, all which are unbounded, for the most indulgent of parents and the best of men, shall extort from him a secret, which he has sacredly engaged to confine to his own bosom, or induce him to betray the confidence reposed in him by the most amiable, though most unfortunate, of women.

“The virtue of Miss Melcombe requires not even a brother’s protection; it is above the reach of temptation, and secured from assaults by a defence too powerful to need support. May perdition, as certain as will be his disappointment, seize the wretch who even doubts it!

“But I beseech you, sir, to pardon my warmth, and to impute it to my zeal in the cause of suspected innocence.—You have been imposed on, and I traduced; but the moment will soon arrive when the deception will be disclosed and the imputation removed.

“In the mean time, permit me to retain the same place in your heart with which you have hitherto honoured me, till I shall forfeit it by any act which may dishonour your patronage by disgracing myself: when that happens, the claim and the wish to hold it will vanish together, and the continuance of your goodness will be as little desired, as it will be deserved, by,

Honoured Sir,  
Your most grateful, dutiful,  
and affectionate, grandson,

Oxford, 177—

FRANCIS FAIRBORN.”

And, having addressed it to his grandfather, he inclosed it, unsealed, in a cover, to which he gave no direction, but wrote within the following words:

“As Mr. Fairborn apprehends the bearer of Mr. Thompson’s letter is acquainted with the contents of it, he leaves his answer open for his perusal.”

In a very few minutes after he had dispatched this letter to the inn, he received, as he expected, a visit from the principal, who, in very polite, but somewhat distant, terms, apologised for his intrusion, and still more for the occasion which compelled him to introduce a subject that must be as disagreeable to him as it was painful to himself.

Neither the person or manners of the visitor, both which were uncommonly prepossessing, bore the smallest resemblance of the portrait which Miss Melcombe had

drawn of her persecutor, her pretended brother, the associate of her stepmother,—yet this must be the person;—it could not be the fashion for different men to assume this character, yet he could not reconcile the mildness of manners and elegance of address of the gentleman, now before him, to the villainy and depravity of a libertine and a sensualist, devoted to vice and abandoned in reputation; and, to add to his embarrassment, the features of his guest were familiar to him, though he could not recal to his remembrance any circumstance of acquaintance.

But, from this embarrassment, he was relieved by a request from his visitor, that, before he opened the purport of his visit, he would indulge him with explicit answers to two questions, if he should be satisfied that they were neither improper or impertinent.

From such a proposition it was impossible to dissent; and, having received from our hero the assurances he solicited, he first asked him, as a man of honour and a gentleman, if the contents of the letter, which had been offered to his perusal, as far as they concerned Miss Melcombe, were strictly true; and he closed this question with a declaration, too solemnly delivered to be slighted, that, on her safety and the preservation of her honour, depended not only all his hopes of happiness, but all his expectations of future peace and comfort.

To this question our hero replied, that, presuming he should be permitted, in his turn, to demand of his interrogator an explanation of his right to intimate even the most distant doubt of the virtue and purity of that lady, and, tendering her honour too dearly to suffer such a doubt to exist one moment, he would assert the truth of every tittle in the letter which bore relation to Miss Melcombe, to whom he had once an opportunity of rendering some little service in a moment of misfortune, and whose honour and reputation he would maintain and support to the last moment of his existence.

To the second question, whether he recollected being at ————, about eighteen months before, and could recal to his remembrance any particular circumstance which occurred to him there in the disposal of a bank note of 50l. value? our hero seemed rather less disposed to make an immediate answer.

Nor was an answer necessary; his hesitation was conclusive, and the gallant soldier, who had excited his admiration at ————, now rushed into his arms, and, in lively strains of gratitude, interrupted by the most tender expression of sensibility, hailed him his friend, his benefactor, the guardian of his sister, and the blessed instrument of his unspeakable happiness and inexpressible joy.

An explanation now took place, whence it appeared, that the old acquaintance, and newly-acquired friend, of our hero, was that brother, whose loss the fair Eliza had so pathetically bewailed;—that, having survived the wounds which were supposed to have occasioned his death, he had returned to England, where his recovery, for some time, remained doubtful;—that his pay proving insufficient to support him, and defray the expences of his cure, in the metropolis, and his noble relations having refused to pay any regard to his applications, he had retired to ————, under a borrowed name, upon a plan of oeconomy, where the disorders, occasioned by his wounds, had returned with redoubled violence, and occasioned the distress, which had been, with such uncommon delicacy, relieved by his liberality.—That, his health improving, he had, by letter, acquainted Earl P——, the general-officer under whom he had served in America, with his situation, who, with the humanity and generosity which distinguish the noble family, whose second title he bears, kindly interested himself in his behalf, and so effectually represented his services and his case, that he was, soon after, appointed to the command of a company;—that his late father's agents had informed him of the circumstance of his retirement, and given him the melancholy account of his death, together with the time and place of his departure which they had learnt from an officer on half-pay, who resided in the same town;—that, in consequence of this information, he had immediately proceeded thither in search of his beloved sister;—that the master of the inn had communicated to him the supposed place of her retreat, and the name of the person who had appeared to interest himself in her affairs, and to have planned her removal;—that, from some hints

which dropped from the people of the house, he had reason to suppose that he might gain better information from Mr. Lowther, but that, on application to that gentleman, both he and his lady positively refused to give him any other information, than that the lady whom Sir Felix and Lady Benefold had taken under their protection was a Miss Thomson.—That, puzzled and confounded by these contradictory accounts, he had traced Mr. Fairborn's family and connexions, and had taken a journey to Eastburn-Hall in pursuit of the supposed betrayer of his unhappy sister;—that he had been received by the owner of that hospitable mansion, who had treated him with the most humane attention, and had mingled his tears with his own at the melancholy tale, and at the apprehension of his darling grand-son's delinquency;—that Mr. Thompson had acquainted him with the present residence of our hero, and furnished him with the letter, of which he had been the bearer;—that the servant, who had been his messenger to the philanthropist's rooms, was, at the time of his residence at —, a waiter at the principal inn there, and, on his return with our hero's answer to his grandfather's severe letter, had told him that he was sure the gentleman he had seen must be either his relation or intimate friend, as he recollected carrying a note from him, (about which some very particular inquiries had been afterwards made,) from the inn to Captain Melcombe's lodging;—that he found himself extremely agitated at this information, as his gratitude would not permit him to harbour suspicions injurious to the honour of the man who could be capable of such an act of benevolence as he had experienced; nor, from the combination of circumstances which he had collected concerning his sister, and those too corroborated by his refusal to give her up, could he at once give total credit to his assertions, and acquit him of every sinister design;—that he had, therefore, happily determined to make him a visit, the result of which had already been the confirmation of his conjectures on the first head, and such a removal of his doubts on the second, as, he verily believed, would terminate in his perfect satisfaction, and render his happiness as complete as his gratitude.

Our hero, with a degree of pleasure, in which minds, like his own, will participate, entered into a detail of every incident which had occurred during the whole course of his acquaintance with Miss Melcombe, from her first *hair-breadth escape* to the present moment, concealing no circumstances, but such as tended to display the benevolence of his own heart, or to heighten the obligations of the brother of the fair Eliza, whose discreet and amiable conduct, in all the horrors which surrounded her, he portrayed in such glowing tints of admiration, as called tears of proud approbation into the manly eyes of the delighted and affectionate soldier, and swelled his grateful heart with emotions, which he was totally unable to express.

A single hour before, this equally-virtuous pair had entertained of each other suspicions of so dark a cast as to produce the bitterest enmity and threaten the most destructive consequences; at this moment, their hearts, their wishes, their views, sympathised, and each flattered himself he had found in the other a brother as well as a friend.

After a pause of a few moments, in which both the brother and the lover enjoyed the most delicious sensations of heart-felt satisfaction; the soldier, in a strain of pathetic eloquence, attempted to pour out the overflowings of his gratitude to the philanthropist for the accumulated benefits, which he had, with such inimitable delicacy and such unbounded generosity, heaped on himself and his beloved sister; but he was soon interrupted by our hero, and silenced by a remark, that the actions of him, who could listen to his own praise, must have been directed by motives too interested for him to deserve it; and this observation he accompanied by an affectionate offer of his hand, and a proposition, that their mutual attention should now be turned to the means by which the gentle Eliza might be made acquainted with the happy intelligence which awaited her, in such a manner as to prevent the endangerment of her health by a sudden transition from the depth of sorrow to an excess of joy.

And this friendly office our hero offered to perform in person; a proposal, highly grateful to the young soldier, who enjoyed, by anticipation, the pleasure he should derive



from being accompanied in his journey by a friend, from whom he should not part without extreme regret, and the additional happiness which would be conferred on his sister, by receiving the joyful and unexpected tidings of his existence from her protector, her preserver, her best and kindest friend,—the man, for whose heart, he plainly perceived, she had exchanged her own;—and it was agreed, that our hero should acquaint his tutor with the necessity of his leaving college for a few days, and that preparations should be made for their departure early the next morning.

In the mean time Captain Melcombe suggested the propriety of dispatching a messenger to Mr. Thompson with a letter, explanatory of the happy *éclaircissement*; and he begged leave to be himself the writer of it, as he would avail himself of that opportunity to return the acknowledgements that were due from him to that gentleman, for the humanity and generosity with which he had interested himself in the misfortunes, not merely of a stranger, but of the disturber of his repose; and, retiring for this purpose to the inn, he was soon followed by the philanthropist, to whose perusal he offered the letter which follows.

“Sir,

“I SHOULD be lost to every sense of gratitude for your indulgent kindness to me, if I suffered you to feel, for a single moment, anxiety, which it is in my power to remove.

“Mr. Fairborn is an angel, an honour to his family, and a credit to human nature. I am indebted to him for my own preservation as well as that of my beloved sister; by him she has been rescued from the extremest distress, and, by the noblest exertions of his compassion, she is now under the protection of a family, eminent for the practice of every virtue which can adorn high rank and enoble distinction.

“Permit me, sir, to claim him as my brother, the dearest partner of my friendship, the everlasting object of my more than fraternal affection;—and, that the admission of these sacred ties will neither bring disgrace on the worthy name he bears, or the spotless character which he sustains, is my only pride and boast.

“Mr. Fairborn has kindly yielded to my intreaties, that he would accompany me on a visit to my sister. At our return, he has also obligingly promised to honour me with an introduction to you at Eastburn-Hall; and, till that happy moment, I beg leave to defer explanations as interesting to me as they are honourable to him.

“You will have the goodness to attribute his omitting to pay his duty to you by the messenger, who is the bearer of this letter, to my earnestness, that not a single instant may be lost in effacing from your parental heart every impression to the disadvantage of the most amiable and benevolent of men, and to accept the most grateful and respectful acknowledgements of,

Sir,

Your most obliged, obedient,

and humble, servant,

Oxford, 177—

H. MELCOMBE.”

Early on the succeeding morning our friends proceeded on their pleasing journey; but, as we are not so unreasonable as to expect that our readers will be disposed to re-trace the road which they have already beaten, we shall request them to meet the

travellers at Mr. Lowther's, where, we trust, they will find them safely arrived at the commencement of the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

*More journies, more events, and discoveries of still  
higher importance.*

WHEN, on great and solemn occasions, Garter, king-at-arms, the monarch of pomp and pageantry, marshals the important claims of British nobility to place and precedence, his list commences with the most noble Duke of Norfolk, and ends with the last baron who drew, from his royal creator, the electric spark which kindles hereditary dignity;—when the muster-master-general enumerates the component personages of that complicated machine, which, from the use to which it is sometimes applied, has obtained the denomination of a battalion, the name of Colonel Spitfire stands first, and that of the drum-boy last;—and, when the prompter calls to action the motley crew, who, Proteus-like, shift their characters with the scenes, he descends from kings and queens to the winder-up of the tragedy, the silent minister of the bow-string.

But, in utter contempt of forms and ceremonies, in despite of these and a thousand other great examples, we have ventured to deviate from established rules, and, claiming the British privileges of free election and choice, we have reserved our character of high rank for a *bonne bouche*, that, however coarsely the votaries of rank and title may have fared at the entertainment we have provided for them, they may at least depart from it with a relish.

Welcome was our hero to the peaceful mansion of the good apothecary, and almost equally so, for the sake of his admired sister, the brother of the fair Eliza. The philanthropist was received by this worthy couple with the most genuine marks of respectful affection; and he, who, in virtue as well as affinity, bore relation to Miss Melcombe, could not fail to share in their esteem;—they traced, in his person, the resemblance of the weeping orphan, and marked, in the dignity of his deportment and the gentleness of his manners, the elegance and complacency of that resigned and patient sufferer; but, when they heard, from himself the story of his preservation, and followed him through the labyrinth of difficulties by which he had been conducted to the knowledge of his own benefactor and the guardian of his sister, and when he attributed to that benevolent being the praise of his philanthropy, their honest hearts exulted in the pride of friendship, and they gloried in having been instruments in his hands, and contributing to rescue from distress the lovely example of female excellence.

Nor did the soldier neglect to offer to them the tribute of gratitude for the kind and active part they had taken in the melancholy affairs of his family, and, in particular, for the respect and attention with which they had performed the last offices to the remains of his honoured father, whose shrine he now visited for the second time, and poured on it the effusions of dutiful and affectionate sorrow.

This solemn office performed, the friends set out for the seat of Sir Felix Benefold, accompanied by Mr. Lowther, it having been agreed that Captain Melcombe should leave the carriage at the entrance of the park, and remain at the lodge till the tender mind of the gentle Eliza should be prepared, by previous communication, for his reception.

It was the desire of our hero that he might have an interview with the good baronet and his lady before he should be announced to Miss Melcombe; and, to this end, he forwarded Captain Melcombe's servant to the house with a billet to Sir Felix, expressive of this wish, which he had written for the purpose before he left ——; and, in consequence of this intimation, he was received by this excellent couple in the baronet's dressing-room, with the most cordial expressions of friendly satisfaction at this agreeable, but unexpected, visit.

But, if they rejoiced at this renewal of their acquaintance with our hero, what pleasure did they feel when he communicated the occasion of his journey! As a deserted

orphan, they had loaded the dejected Eliza with kindnesses; but, during her residence with them, her virtues and accomplishments, the purity of her mind and the perfect propriety of her manners, her unaffected humility and her grateful sense of obligation, had endeared her to them with such ties of affection, that they considered her as their sister, and tenderly took part in her every painful or pleasing sensation. To see the brother restored to her, whom she had long resigned to the grave, was a feast for benevolence, and they were impatient to partake of the banquet.

After some little deliberation, Lady Benefold proposed to acquaint Miss Melcombe with the arrival of our hero, and to introduce her to her old friend and protector; and it was determined that the philanthropist should disclose the important secret in the manner which will be seen hereafter.

In a very few minutes the lady of the mansion returned, leading the agitated, trembling, Eliza, whom she presented to our hero with the most affectionate expressions of regard.

The beauties of Eliza, obscured by grief and clouded by dejection, had made an impression on the heart of the philanthropist, which had not, in the smallest degree, yielded to time or absence; but the full blaze of her charms now burst on him with such splendour, that he was dazzled by their perfections, and lost in astonishment and admiration; and it was some moments before he was sufficiently recovered to observe, that, on his offering to impress his lips on her lovely hand, she had tendered her cheek to his salute, and to avail himself of that sisterly indulgence.

It was with the extremest difficulty the triumvirate of friends could restrain the grateful heart of the fair Eliza from overflowing in acknowledgements to her kind and generous benefactors; her gratitude, she said, was her only possession, and she should accuse her best friends of cruelty, if they denied her the enjoyment of it;—it was hard that they, who oppressed her with accumulated and unsolicited favours, should refuse to her the single one which she was anxious to obtain; yet she would resign, to their commands, the only wish of her heart, and endeavour to prove, by her obedience, what she was not permitted to express.

Our hero, having now seated himself by the fair Eliza, and tenderly apologised for the introduction of a painful subject, informed her, that he had been induced to visit her, at this time, by an accidental discovery of some circumstances relating to her father's family, in which she was interested, and which he thought it his duty to communicate to her; but that he must first intreat her to inform him, under what authority she had received the account of the death of her only brother?

At this question the blood forsook her cheek, yet this impulse arose not from presage, but sad recollection; she dropt a tear of affection in remembrance of her loss, and answered, that the fatal intelligence was communicated by an officer, who had been a witness to his fall, and who, having been made a prisoner at the same time, had been exchanged, and arrived to re-join his regiment on that part of the continent where her father was then on service.

Our philanthropist then hinted the possibility that the wounds which the young officer had received might occasion his fall, and yet not prove mortal; and, observing a beam of distant hope in the inquisitive eye of the gentle mourner, he proceeded to state the probability of his having survived, as his name still remained on the list of the army, which had been published upwards of a twelvemonth after his supposed death.

In a generous and humane mind, the suppression of a pleasing secret occasions a struggle which soon becomes visible in the countenance;—and this was the case with our hero; his heart-felt emotions of pleasure which he was unable to conceal, and a smile of satisfaction, in spite of his endeavours, broke through the gloom which he affected, and excited unaccustomed perturbation in the bosom of the fair Eliza.

The circumstance he had just mentioned was too important also to escape her attention; a croud of confused ideas rushed on her at once; she started from her seat, and, addressing herself to Mr. Fairborn in the most emphatic tone of intreaty, besought him to

keep her no longer in suspense, but, if Providence had wrought a miracle in her favour, to declare it before her heart should burst with anxious and uncertain expectation.

The agitated appearance of the lovely fair, and the flutter which convulsed her delicate frame, threatening consequences even more alarming than would be produced by a complete discovery, our hero seized the trembling and unreluctant hand of the distressed Eliza, pressed it to his lips, and, in a voice of tenderest felicitation, called on heaven to make him ever the bearer of joyful news to the most amiable of women; and added, in the same pathetic strain, “your brother lives, Miss Melcombe, and, at this instant, waits your permission to take you to his fond, affectionate, longing bosom.”

Her spirits, before wrought up to their highest pitch of exertion, were now wholly overpowered; the words, “where! oh! where is my brother!” died on her lips, and nature, for a few minutes, kindly suspended the operation of sense, lest reason should suffer too severe a shock;—she fainted, but was soon restored to tears, and consequent composure.

In the mean time a servant had been dispatched to summon the impatient soldier, who arrived at the house the moment of his sister’s recovery; nor, contrary to the apprehensions of her friends, did the meeting occasion a relapse; with the most fervent and grateful devotion she offered up her thanksgivings and praise to the great Dispenser of mercies, and, in reward of her piety, the tumult of her mind subsided, and she supported the conflict of joyful passions with fortitude and calmness.

And, to divert her attention from being too deeply engaged in the contemplation of such extraordinary events, the sensible and affectionate soldier introduced a little narrative of his own escape and subsequent sufferings; and, as in this relation he forbore not to notice his obligations to the philanthropist, though earnestly intreated by him to suppress that part of his story, the lovely eyes of the attentive Eliza emitted two brilliant drops, and a sigh breathed from her gentle bosom, both which our readers may, if they please, attribute to her gratitude, though her penetrating and observing brother ascribed her emotions to another cause.

The first transports over, Captain Melcombe received the congratulations of the kind protectors of his sister on this auspicious event, and a pressing invitation to pass some days at the park, which, much to the satisfaction of our hero, he accepted, with due acknowledgements for this addition to favours of such magnitude, that, being master of no language in which he could express his thankfulness, he was compelled to involuntary silence.

Never was there a happier company than that now assembled at Felix-Park,—a rejoicing sister, a delighted brother, a lover full of sanguine, though distant, hope, and their kind and beneficent entertainers participating in the general felicity, and deriving pleasure from the happiness of each individual of their guests.

Nor did our hero lose this opportunity of breathing the softest vows of eternal love to the gentle Eliza, who, sincere as truth itself, scrupled not to avow reciprocal regard, but accompanied this admission with the most solemn declarations, that no arguments should ever induce her to sacrifice his welfare to her own happiness, or ungratefully to repay the load of obligations she had incurred to him, by basely yielding to those impressions which her heart had received from such exalted merit.

Thus repulsed by the just and virtuous Eliza, he applied himself to her brother, and, stating his undoubted hopes that he should prevail on his indulgent grandfather to favour his pretensions, he solicited his friend to exert his fraternal influence in the promotion of his suit, on the success of which, he protested, all his hopes of happiness rested; nor, in case of failure, would he remain in that country which contained a blessing, from the attainment of which he was fatally prohibited, but would for ever abandon a spot in which he had no hope of comfort, and, in the active scenes of war or commerce, endeavour to drown the remembrance of his misfortune.

And, to his infinite satisfaction, he discovered no marks of disapprobation either in the countenance or the answer of his grateful and affectionate friend, who candidly told him, he was intitled to every effort of his that could contribute to the attainment of

his wish; nor could he suppose his sister could be so insensible of the benefits she had derived from his benevolence, or so blind to the prospect of her own happiness, as obstinately to persist in declining an offer so replete with generosity, and which, from the nature of her situation, must be founded in the purest and most disinterested affection.

But, lest our readers should suspect the honest soldier of being influenced by the very motives which he disclaimed for his friend, lest they should entertain apprehensions that he affected to admire those virtues which he wanted resolution to practice, lest they should attribute to him mean and pitiful designs of advancing the fortune of his sister at the expense of his friend and benefactor, we beg leave to declare, that, in no one action of his life had he ever been actuated by any sordid or dishonourable views; nor would the wealth of the Indies, or the offers of all that ambition could aspire to, or monarchs bestow, have swayed his steady soul from every noble, every honest, purpose.

Yet, with the actual approbation of Captain Melcombe, did the philanthropist renew his suit, and, reinforced by arguments drawn from this encouragement, did he assail a heart too well disposed to compliance, but which, armed with virtue, dared maintain a conflict with itself, and unbendingly struggle against the united powers of gratitude, love, and fraternal influence.

In the evening, preceding the day on which the soldier had declared it was necessary for him to leave the park, our hero besought the gentle Eliza to indulge him with an opportunity of once more addressing her on a subject, which, however painful it might be to her, he was urged to resume by considerations of no less weight than the prospect of insufferable misery on the one hand, and undoubted happiness on the other; and, having prevailed on her to accompany him into the plantations, he seated himself by her on the margin of a canal, and, in the softest accents that love could inspire, he repeated his vows and renewed his solicitations with such energy of supplication, that the equally distressed, but still determined, mistress of his heart, could only resist by her tears his tender, affectionate, and delicate, importunity, that she would only indulge him with permission to hope.

The lovers had left the house but a very few minutes before Captain Melcombe, whose spirits appeared to be just now uncommonly lively, solicited the baronet and his lady to walk in pursuit of the pair of turtle doves, whom, he was persuaded, they should find cooing out their tales of love under the shade of some arbour,—he all despair, and she all obduracy.

But they were soon discovered in a somewhat less retired situation; and, as there was a considerable elevation of ground behind the lovers seat, the soldier, whose disposition seemed at this time peculiarly mischievous, proposed that they should pursue such of the walks as would conduct them to a little clump of evergreens immediately behind their backs, where, he said, they might probably overhear the pathetic dialogue, which would tend considerably to his improvement against he should become a dying swain.

This little *badinage* was immediately executed, and Sir Felix, his lady, and their guest, arrived at their post, wholly undiscovered by the lovers, whose faculties were absorbed in ideas too abstracted to admit of attention to exterior objects.

But the scene, to which they were witnesses, was too painful to the actors to afford pleasure to the humane and interested spectators;—a sigh from the amiable Lady Benefold betrayed them, and the lovers, disconcerted, and one of them, perhaps both, disappointed, arose from their seats, and moved to join their friends.

At this moment the soldier rushed from his ambuscade, and, seizing the hand of his sister, addressed himself to the astonished philanthropist, and intreated his acceptance, not of the forlorn and unportioned Eliza Melcombe, but the sister of the Earl of M——, who courted his alliance as the greatest honour he could receive, and who only rejoiced in the acquisition of immense wealth as it enabled him to endow the most amiable of women with such a fortune, as would render her, in that respect, worthy of the most exalted merit and excellence.

Perfectly unintelligible as this speech was to the whole company, the philanthropist understood the value of the proffered gift too well to slight it; he pressed the yet unyielding hand of his Eliza to his lips, and, vowing on it everlasting fidelity, protested, that he would, henceforth, retain the treasure, which his friend had, in sportive gaiety, conferred on him, as his undoubted right, and as the choicest blessing heaven could bestow, or man receive.

“And, may your possession of happiness long remain as uninterrupted as it is secure!” rejoined the brother of Eliza; “for know, my dear friend, that I have for upwards of two months unworthily borne the titles and possessed the fortunes of that kinsman of my father, who, cruelly neglecting him and his family, left them without protection to struggle with difficulty and distress, till having been deprived of his only son, who lost his life in a quarrel as disgraceful as it was fatal, his health gave way to the shock; and the succession devolving to me, as the heir of the family, I received a summons to attend him, and, finding him fully disposed to atone for past disregard by every mark of esteem and every act of liberality, I remained with him during the whole progress of his disease; in the course of which my wishes for his recovery were as sincere as they were fruitless, and endeavoured, by every act of tenderness and affection, to soften the rigours of pain, and lessen the horrors of approaching dissolution. Nor did the performance of these duties pass unrewarded; my noble relation, at his death, bestowed on me his whole possessions, both in estates and money, excepting the sum of 50,000l. which he has directed to be paid to my sweet sister, whenever she shall marry with my approbation; and, on that happy day, I shall beg leave to add to it a testimony of fraternal affection.”

New felicitations now took place, and the philanthropist, who, incapable of change himself, disdained to suspect it in the object of his admiration, approached the trembling Eliza, and, on lips unpolluted by falsehood and untainted by deceit, sealed the purest contract that was ever made on earth or ratified in heaven; a contract, to unite, in sacred and indissoluble bands, love, honour, truth, and everlasting fidelity.

The friends, now more than ever endeared to each other, left Felix-Park in the afternoon of the following day, not to return to Oxford, but to proceed immediately into Dorsetshire, the noble brother of Eliza desiring to solicit in person the sanction of Sir William and Lady Fairborn, and more particularly of the fond and indulgent Mr. Thompson, to the proposed union.

## CHAPTER XV.

*A practical essay on disappointments, and the art of making the best of a bad matter.—The author and the reader delayed by an unexpected encounter, and long stories in consequence.*

TWO friends, Mr. Bellcour and Mr. Grumpall, engaged in a continental tour together.—“Let’s go to the Spa for a few weeks,” says Bellcour.—“To the Spa!” replied Grumpall; “no, hang it, I hate every thing that borders on the German,—so filthy, and so frouzy, and so stupid:—to Paris for a few weeks, if you will.”—“To Paris be it then,” returned Bellcour; and they prepared for their journey.

They agreed to meet and take chaise on the Surry-side of Westminster-bridge the next Sunday morning at eight—Bellcour arrived at his time, with six shirts and some linen waistcoats and breeches, in a *petite caissette*; in an hour and forty minutes Grumpall reached the inn, with trunk, portmanteaus, and hat-boxes.—“Oh! the curse of packing,” cried Grumpall;—“nothing ready, nothing to be found;—I have been at it since six this morning, and at last waited a full hour for my new perriwig!”—

“Packing is by no means troublesome to me,” replied Bellcour; “you see my baggage,—it is easily arranged; I shall make a new coat at Paris,—and, if I wore a wig, I should hardly carry one from England;—the French, you know, are born *peruquiers*.”

The chaise was now ready, Grumpall’s servant was not yet come.—“Plague take these rascals,” cried Grumpall, “they make their masters wait without ceremony;—I’ll discharge the scoundrel in the instant.”—“I had rather be delayed a few minutes than part with a good servant,” said Bellcour.—The servant was at the chaise-door; he received a thousand curses from his master, who continued to execrate the whole way to Dartford, where he was seized with a fit of heart-burn.

He entered an apothecary’s shop, and asked for a lump of Glasse’s magnesia, dissolved in water.—He had no magnesia of Glasse’s preparation, he replied, but he had excellent in powder from Apothecaries Hall.—“None of Glasse’s magnesia!” exclaimed Grumpall,—“you have nothing in your shop, I suppose!”—“Plenty of salt of worm-wood and lemon-juice,” replied the apothecary, “and you seem to want cooling medicines.”—Stung with this sarcasm, he flung out of the shop, and complained to his fellow-traveller of his ill success.—“I had rather have magnesia in powder than the heart-burn,” said Bellcour;—but Grumpall carried his heart-burn and his ill humour to Rochester.

The horses moved too slowly;—“can’t ye get on, postillion?”—“Stiff hill, your honour.”—“Aye, and weak cattle;—we had better get out and walk;—here, open the door, driver!” and he quitted the carriage.—“Won’t you walk, Mr. Bellcour?—we shall never reach Rochester, if you don’t ease the miserable horses;—there is a curse annexed to travelling this road.”—“I had rather travel slowly and coolly,” replied Bellcour, “than hasten my journey at the expence of greater inconvenience.”—He remained in the carriage.

After labouring a mile up-hill, in a burning sunshine, Grumpall resumed his seat in the chaise, tired, breathless, dusty, and in a violent perspiration. Impatient of the heat into which he had wantonly thrown himself, he flung open his waistcoat;—“you had better submit to temporary warmth, than expose yourself to the danger of disease by attempting to cool too suddenly,” cried Mr. Bellcour;—but Grumpall persisted, and the consequence was a violent cold, attended by a cough, which accompanied him to Paris.—Mr. Bellcour preserved his patience and his health.

The pavement of the three towns shook Grumpall to atoms, and he was faint for want of refreshment.—“You had better eat a biscuit and drink a glass of white wine,” said Bellcour;—it was ordered;—but Grumpall found the biscuit tough and the wine sour, and proceeded with an empty stomach. “I have tasted better wine and more newly-baked



biscuits, but they may serve to prevent sickness," said Bellcour.—He ate, drank, and went on.

At Canterbury they dined, but the steaks were hard, the pease dry, and the chickens tasteless. Grumpall had sacrificed appetite to heart-burn, wind, and obstinacy.—“You may find better things in your own house,” said Bellcour, “but if you had followed my advice you would have been content with these.”—He dined plentifully, and Grumpall grumbled and fasted.

At Dover the beds were wretched, the house dirty, and the bill extravagant;—“but it is the last extortion we shall be exposed to in England,” says Bellcour, and let us part with our country, as we do with our friends, in good humour.

They embarked,—but Grumpall discovered that the vessel was crazy,—that she was top-heavy, by being crowded with passengers,—and that the mariners were all drunk; and he spent the three hours of the passage in peevish enquiries, groundless lamentations of danger, and fruitless wishes for a cork-jacket.—“You might have spared yourself three hours uneasiness,” said Bellcour, as he stepped upon the quay at Calais, “if you had permitted yourself to be governed by reason; I have not suffered one unpleasant sensation since we set sail, and you see I am arrived in safety as well as yourself.”

The licensed porters of the town now seized their baggage to convey it to the custom-house.—“Villains!” cried Grumpall, “desist!”—He drew his *couteau*, the town-guard attended in an instant, and conveyed him and his trunks to examination;—he was detained three hours, and dismissed with a caution, not to fly in the face of national establishments.

“*Prenez garde de cette caissette, s’il vous plait, mes enfans,*” said Bellcour:—he was dispatched in less than three minutes.

Monsieur Dessein received them with his usual courtesy;—“your old apartments in the garden are always ready for you, Monsieur Bellcour.”—“I am glad we can have them,” replied Bellcour, “they are airy and pleasant.”—“I hate the apartments in the garden,” cried Grumpall, “they are too remote from the house, and one is always forgotten.”—“You may be more at your ease, perhaps, in the second quadrangle,” replied Dessein, and they were conducted to the back of the house.—“This is still more remote from attendance,” said Grumpall.—“But it is quiet and uninterrupted,” said Bellcour.—Dessein disappeared.—Grumpall desired to be in the garden.—Dessein returned;—he had just disposed of those apartments, as Monsieur Grumpall had declined taking them.—There was no remedy.—Grumpall abused the accommodations, and swore the house was fallen to nothing.—“Yet we may console ourselves with the consideration that it is the best inn in France,” said Bellcour.—“Bad then is the best,” replied Grumpall.—“You may find it otherwise, if you please,” returned Bellcour; and he ordered a bottle of Burgundy, a fricassee, a brace of partridges, and an *omelette*.

They purchased their *voiture*, and set off for Paris.—“What a wretched heavy machine!” cried Grumpall.—“It is adapted to the road,” replied Bellcour.—“What an eternal rattle in one’s ears from the pavement!” said Grumpall.—“If the roads were unpaved they would be impassable in the winter,” returned Bellcour.—“What a pace the miscreant drives!” cried Grumpall.—“*Dépêchez vous!*—*Mais les chevaux ne comprennent pas,*” replied the postillion.—“*Allez un peu plus vite, je vous en prie, mon ami,*” cried Bellcour.—“*Volontiers,*” replied the postillion, and they were at the end of the stage in a moment.

They arrived at Boulogne.—“Let us leave this place in an instant,” says Grumpall, “it is the sanctuary of all the villains in Europe.”—“But let us not forget that it is also an asylum for the unfortunate,” replied Bellcour, “and then we shall leave it with regret.”

They slept at Montreuil-sur-mer.—“This is an excellent house,” said Bellcour, and little inferior to Dessein’s.—“It is too English,” replied Grumpall.—“The *vin de grave* is French,” returned Bellcour, “and we shall only pay thirty *sols* a bottle, and forty *par tête* for this *levereau*, the *fricandeau*, and the cutlets *à la Maintenon*.”—“Made dishes

are destructive to my cough," said Grumpall—"You may have an excellent *bouillon*," returned Bellcour,—“in Varenne's house you need want for nothing.”

“This country,” remarked Grumpall, as they proceeded the next day, “is wild and uncomfortable, it bears not the face of cultivation or population.”—“Every thing is on a larger scale on the continent than in our little island,” replied Bellcour; “and, if you extend your ideas to a quarter of the globe, the extent of the fields and woods, and the height of the hills, will cease to occasion astonishment or dislike; order and proportion prevail throughout the whole face of nature; and it is not that the width of the prospect is offensive, but that our minds are too narrow to comprehend the designs of the great Creator.”

“What a dull and uncomfortable town is this of Abbeville!” cried Grumpall — “Yet it boasts of great antiquity,” replied Bellcour, “and is rather venerable than disagreeable.”—“The house stinks of punch,” said Grumpall.—“It is an attempt to gratify the English,” returned Bellcour, “and one should always receive with pleasure the efforts of attention;—a glass of warm punch will prove an excellent medicine for your cold, and I am myself vastly fond of it.”

On the succeeding day they intended to journey no farther than Amiens. Mr. Grumpall therefore indulged his indisposition, and Bellcour his curiosity;—he visited churches, and convents, and hospitals, in each of which he found something to approve.—Towards noon they ordered their chaise, and, at Flixcourt, Mr. Grumpall wished for a dinner, but it was a miserable village, he said, where it was impossible to find any thing to eat; the post-houses in France afforded no accommodation; according to the wretched management of this country, the horses were to be found in one place and the food in another, and, whilst the hungry traveller was in pursuit of one, he ran the risk of having his journey retarded by missing the other.

Mr. Bellcour, with his accustomed readiness to accept and communicate happiness, entered the house, whilst his companion ordered the horses, and soon returned with the pleasing intelligence, that a meal might be procured. Mr. Grumpall accordingly quitted the carriage, and examined the larder, which contained the remains of a piece of meat which had been already dressed, and some beef which had been reserved for the next day's *bouilli*. On the former Mr. Bellcour declared his determination to dine, but all hope of refreshment seemed to have deserted the unhappy Grumpall, till his friend suggested to him the facility of getting a bason of beef-tea in ten minutes.—The cook was summoned, and appeared with a soup-pot and onions.—Grumpall demanded a saucepan and fair water.—The cook demurred; he said, no man could make soup without onions.—Grumpall persisted,—it was beef-tea, and not soup, that he desired.—The cook rejoined,—tea could only be procured at the apothecary's shop, and there was no apothecary nearer than Amiens.—Grumpall grew outrageous, the cook maintained his knowledge of soup-making, and the dispute might have continued during the remainder of the day, if Mr. Bellcour had not ended it, by asserting roundly, that “*Monsieur étoit cuisinier de profession, et un des plus célèbres de l'Angleterre.*”

The cook now demanded pardon, and yielded his knife to Grumpall, who, thus compelled to prepare his own meal, bestowed a thousand curses on French stupidity and pertinacity, and, exhausting his appetite in resentment, swallowed a few spoonfuls only of the subject of contention, and declared his readiness to depart.

In the mean time Bellcour, who had cheerfully dispatched a coarse, but not unsavoury, dinner, and drunk a few glasses of thin and ordinary wine, desired to know what they had to pay; and, as from the earnestness of his zeal to gratify his companion, and the squabble which ensued, he had totally omitted to mention the terms on which they were to dine, (a precaution absolutely necessary to be taken by every English traveller with the paltry *aubergise* of a country town,) the conscientious landlady had the modesty to demand only nine *livres* (about seven shillings and sixpence sterling) for half a pound of cold meat, a bason of beef-tea, and a bottle of wine of ten *sols*.

Mr. Grumpall, already dissatisfied with his entertainment, fell into an agony of passion at this unwarrantable extortion;—he told her as the truth was, that she would not have ventured to charge a native of France more than thirty *sols* for the whole entertainment; and he uttered innumerable imprecations and vows against complying with this extraordinary requisition.

But his hostess knew too well her own situation to abate a *denier* of her demand; as his passion heightened, her countenance appeared more composed; when he swore he would depart without paying a *sol*, she bid him find horses, for her husband was postmaster; and, when he threatened to search the village for the syndic, bailly, or intendant, she coolly replied, “*Vas chercher, bête! mon mari est le premier officier de la police du village; vas essayer quelle redresse tu obtiendra de lui!*”

Mr. Bellcour now threw down the nine *livres*, and hurried his companion, by this time almost inarticulate with rage, into the carriage, endeavouring to calm his turbulence by this sensible observation, that they might think themselves extremely fortunate to escape so cheaply, as the lady might have demanded eighteen *livres*, instead of nine, with equal impunity.

The remainder of the journey to Amiens, Mr. Grumpall was engaged in sarcastic encomiums on French honesty, and pointed animadversions on the partiality and maladministration of their boasted police; whilst his fellow-traveller satisfied himself, and offered consolation to his companion, by remarking, that, though they had been obliged, through a defect in the police, to submit to a petty invasion of their purses, yet they were indebted to the same police for the protection of their persons and properties from the terrors of attack on the road and contributions enforced by violence.

“You will allow this to be a fine and flourishing city,” said Bellcour, as they entered Amiens.—“I will give you my opinion of it after I have seen it,” replied Grumpall.—They visited the *grand place*, the convents, and the new church.—“*Grands places* and convents are alike dull and gloomy in every town we have passed,” cried Grumpall.—“But the new church is a building of elegance, and the altarpiece of admirable workmanship,” returned Bellcour.—“The church,” said Grumpall, “is too large and the altar-piece too small;—the lamb looks as if it had been just curled and frizzled by one of those *peruquiers* that you admire.”

“We have an admirable supper, however,” said Bellcour, finding the table served at their return.—I had rather see an English beef-steak and horse-radish than this eternal succession of greasy stews and garlicky *ragouts*,” returned Grumpall.—“You despised *English* punch at Abbeville,” cried Bellcour.—“I despised it because it was *not* English,” replied Grumpall.—“Let me recommend some of this duck-pie to you,” said Bellcour, “Amiens is remarkable for its duck pies.—I had rather taste a Yorkshire goose-pie,” returned Grumpall.

They passed the *chateau* of the Duc de Fitzjames at Clermont.—“Unhappy descendant of an infatuated monarch!” exclaimed Bellcour, “the folly of thine original ancestor hath entailed on thee slavery and beggary!”—“And on the English nation,” returned Grumpall, “a funded debt and corruption.”—“But we are freed from the shackles of enthusiasm,” said Bellcour.—“We have exchanged them for the strait waistcoat of fanaticism,” replied Grumpall.

They dedicated a day to Chantilly.—Bellcour admired,—Grumpall abused.—“So magnificent!” exclaimed Bellcour.—“So gloomy!” cried Grumpall.—“What a superb pile of buildings the stables!” said Bellcour.—“What a huge and useless structure!” returned Grumpall.—“How delightful the English gardens!” said Bellcour.—“How unlike what they are intended to imitate!” replied Grumpall.—“How accessible the house!” observed Bellcour.—“How rapacious the servants!” returned Grumpall.—“I could stay here for ever!” cried Bellcour.—“I had rather spend a summer at Hampton Court,” muttered Grumpall.

They arrived at Paris, and the next morning settled the accounts of their journey.—The expenditure was equal, but Mr. Grumpall added to the charge on his

part—plague of packing,—curse of waiting for a new wig,—impatience of being delayed by his servant,—heart-burn and insult at Dartford,—a laborious walk and a violent cold in the way to Rochester,—disappointment and faintness there,—discontent and fasting at Canterbury,—bad accommodations and heavy charges at Dover,—pangs and apprehensions in the passage,—custom-house incivility at landing,—a wretched apartment, of his own choice, at Calais,—a disagreeable pavement and a saucy postillion on the road,—dissatisfaction at Boulogne,—dislike at Montreuil,—unpleasantness of the country from thence to Abbeville,—a gloomy town and a stinking punch-house there,—extortion and contempt at Flixcourt,—an uncomfortable supper and ungratified expectations at Amiens,—and, at Chantilly, disapprobation and degradatory comparison.—These *items* swelled his account,—and the total produced sickness, mortification, and ill humour.

From Mr. Bellcour's account of expences, he had to deduct—the joys of novelty,—the amusements of variety,—general satisfaction and general civility,—improvement derived from little disappointments,—curiosity gratified,—plentiful meals,—easy digestion,—universal approbation,—pleasures augmented and difficulties despised.—The total,—health heightened,—new and agreeable sensations excited,—cheerfulness and good humour increased.—*Mr. Bellcour knew how to make the best of a bad matter.*

And his example we mean to adopt ourselves, and recommend to thee, gentle reader.—We have travelled together through many a page, and, we trust, with less fatigue to thee than to the author; for, peradventure, thou hast approved where he has doubted, and, unquestionably, hast perused in a minute what has proved to him the labour of hours; and now, when we thought to have brought thy toil and our labour to a period, an unexpected meeting of old friends retards our progress, and we are compelled to trespass on thy patience and exert our own.

But we have taught thee how to make the best of a bad matter, nor shall we,

“—————as some ungracious pastors do,  
Shew *you* the steep and thorny way to heav'n,  
—————and reckon not our own read.”

In the afternoon of the second day after our travellers left Felix-Park, they arrived at S——, and were preparing to pursue their journey, when Lord M—— was accosted by an officer of the regiment in which he had served in America, and who had returned from that continent on being appointed to command a company in another corps at home.

In compliance with the earnest intreaty of this gentleman, who, being on horseback, had completed his day's journey, the friends agreed to spend the evening with him at S——, to which they were the more readily induced by the desire of Lord M—— to receive intelligence of the many friends he left behind him in America, and by the joint inclination of himself and his friends to be present at the representation of a tragedy, which was to be performed by a company of strollers, whose benevolence intitled them to every mark of favour, as their present performance was announced to be for the benefit of a young lady in extreme distress, and whose motives could not fail to inspire the hearts of some of the most compassionate of human beings.

As the travellers were anxious to learn some particulars of the object of such humanity, they determined to repair to the scene of action some time before the play should commence, naturally concluding that the occasion of this eleemosynary exhibition would be the general subject of conversation among the audience.

Nor were they deceived in their conjectures; for, having seated themselves behind two well-dressed matrons, who entered the house at the same time, they had an opportunity of over-hearing a conversation, which, whilst it tended to satisfy their curiosity in some points, served, on the whole, to excite it in a still higher degree.

One of the ladies was the present mayoress of the corporation, the wife of Mr. Dipwick, an eminent tallow-chandler and grocer, who had been elected to the high office of mayor as one of the richest members of the body from which he was selected, and one of the best town-hall orators in the western counties. The other was the daughter of a country gentleman, with whom Mr. Dipwick had formerly lived in the capacity of butler, and laid the foundation of that fortune which had produced his elevation. She had been married to a worthy clergyman, who had left her with two children, a son and daughter, and a provision which his liberality and philanthropy had rendered rather scanty.

The ladies had no sooner taken their places, about which no dispute could arise, as Mrs. Estcourt, with due respect, gave way to the rank of Mrs. Mayoress, than the latter accosted the former with a distant enquiry after her health, and a still more familiar question, whether she had been frequently to see these miserable creatures perform?—"for my part, ma'am," continues this lady of condition, "I likes stage-plays of all things except the oprer; but I wonders people, who has been used to see plays in London, can bear to follow such runabout crews; for my particular part I should not have come to night, but for the sake of my cousin here, who, poor soul! never saw any thing of life."

To these questions and communications Mrs. Estcourt very politely replied, that she very seldom afforded to visit public places, though she sometimes strained a point to indulge her daughter, whose chearful and dutiful submission, to a life of great confinement, demanded the gratification of every wish which it was in her mother's power to grant. On the present occasion, indeed, she said, she was actuated by another motive, which, she had no doubt, influenced Mrs. Mayoress also, though she had been self-denying enough to attribute her being an auditress that evening to her complaisance for a relation.

"Lord, ma'am!" replied the corporation-queen, "I hope you don't think I comes here out of charity!—no, ma'am, I'd have you to know I have seen more of the world than that comes to;—a fine piece of work, truly, for a lady of fashion, who spent half the last winter in town, and kept the best company in High-Holborn and Fetter-lane, to come to a play for charity!—Ma'am, I saw the Critic five times, and I hope I have too much sense and too much politeness to be taken in by puffs, as Mr. What-d'ye-call-'em says;—thank God I knows what's what now; and I shall never hear of *a gentleman in distress and a lady in distress* again, as long as I live, without bursting my sides with laughing.—Go to a play for charity, indeed!—hoh! hoh! hoh!"

As Mrs. Estcourt was not much disposed to continue a conversation which must be so unequally supported, she turned to Lord M—— and inquired the hour; an advance, which was received with great pleasure by the friends, who availed themselves of the opportunity to enter into conversation with a lady, of whose sense, manners, and disposition, they had formed the most favourable opinion, and who, they hoped, might be acquainted with some interesting particulars relating to the unfortunate person, to whose relief she had so kindly contributed.

But they could gain very little information from Mrs. Estcourt, whose knowledge of her history and circumstances went no farther, than that she had arrived at S——, about three weeks or a month before, in a stage-coach, from the west, in which she was travelling towards the metropolis;—that she had been taken ill there, and was unable to pursue her journey;—that a lodging had been procured for her by the mistress of the inn where the coach had set her down, and a nurse provided to attend her;—that she continued to grow worse;—that, at the end of a week, her money had been exhausted, and she had desired that a supply might be raised by the sale of some of her clothes;—that her health had still continued to alter for the worse, and that, for the last week, she had been totally inattentive to her concerns, and even to those about her;—that, in this distressful situation, the manager of the little company of players, who were then about to entertain them, had, with the most uncommon and laudable benevolence, proposed to give this play for her benefit, though she was totally incapable of acknowledging, or even of apprehending, the favour;—that this exertion of the manager was the more praise-worthy,

and the more extraordinary, as he was burdened with a very numerous family, and his circumstances were known to be extremely straitened. And, to this account, Mrs. Estcourt added, that her daughter had once visited the sick person, with some other young women of the town, who went to carry her some jellies and other little refreshments, as she had obstinately refused all pecuniary assistance as long as she retained her faculties; and that they had represented her as beautiful in person and elegant in manners, and had returned from her convinced that she was of family, fashion, and education; though she politely avoided all conversation, lamenting that the state of her health would not permit her to engage in it.

Whilst Lord M—— and Mr. Fairborn were expressing their anxiety for the unfortunate sufferer, and their admiration of the noble-minded monarch of this little stage, the curtain drew up, and the manager himself appeared; and, after offering an apology for his temerity, and intreating the permission of his audience to pronounce a few lines, of his own composition, by way of prologue to the occasional entertainments of the evening, he repeated the following verses, with a degree of elegance, propriety, and feeling, equally unexpected and pleasing.

#### PROLOGUE.

“’Tis not to shed the sympathetic tear  
For fancy’d woes, which brings our audience here;  
’Tis not to weep for kings or heroes slain,  
Or mourn the fate of heaps that strew the plain;  
’Tis not to feel ambition’s ardent flame,  
Which burns for pow’r, or blazes for a name;  
’Tis not to sigh for lovers in despair,  
Their sorrows to partake, or joys to share;  
’Tis not the tyrant’s stern decree to dread,  
When virtue sinks, whilst vice erects her head;  
’Tis not the faithless husband to despise,  
Or the fond suff’ring wife to sympathise;  
’Tis not the widow’d matron to deplore,  
Or pour on orphan’d infants pity’s lore;  
’Tis more than these, ’tis godlike Mercy calls,  
And guides her vot’ries to these favour’d walls;  
Me she appoints her herald, to proclaim  
Her honour’d titles and sacred name,  
Bids me, by these, the good and fair invite  
To taste of dainties cater’d for this night;  
Bids me present a virtuous, suffering, fair,  
*“Heav’n’s last best gift,”* and man’s peculiar care.  
By grief o’erpower’d, by sickness, want, oppressed,  
Bereft of reason, and with friends unblest’d,  
By you protected, foster’d, heal’d, restor’d  
To health and comfort; but your smiles allur’d,  
Her scatter’d sense recall’d,—recall’d to bless  
You, who have minister’d to such distress;  
Who, her sad tale untold, have believ’d her pure,  
And pour’d the balm which cannot fail to cure.

Such are the prospects Mercy has in view,  
Such the rewards she bids me offer you;  
And ev’n on humbler us some joy shall fall,  
Who give our poor attempts,—our little all.”

The language of compassion, cloathed in whatever dress, was always grateful to the ear of the philanthropist; it will not therefore appear extraordinary, that he should attribute to the manager a greater degree of poetical merit than our readers may probably be disposed to allow him; not that we mean to insinuate an apprehension that his humanity will be disregarded; but we are of opinion, that the degree of approbation and admiration is always found to be in a *ratio* of increase proportioned to the numbers of the approvers and admirers, and that the very production, which hath excited the universal applause of a numerous audience, hath been received with indifference by a thin house, and read with contempt at a tea-table: impressions, we are inclined to think, are violently contagious, and that the utterance of the first plaudit or hiss hath determined the fate of many more dramatic efforts than cool judgement and critical discrimination.

The impatience of our philanthropist and his noble fellow-traveller to make an acquaintance with the beneficent manager, would hardly permit them to perform an office of common politeness to the amiable Mrs. Estcourt and her fair daughter; they did, however, so far get the better of it as to insist on attending these ladies to their house, but, declining the invitations of the grateful matron to take some refreshment there, they returned to the inn, and instantly dispatched a note, with the compliments of Lord M——, Mr. Fairborn, and Captain Edwin, to the manager, and a request that he would oblige them with his company to supper; an invitation which was accepted with due respect, and, in a very few minutes, he made his appearance, and was received by the triumvirate of friends with the regard due to his urbanity.

The conversation, during supper, turning on general subjects, our travellers could only remark the modesty, diffidence, and humble, though unsubmissive, manners of their guest; but, before the cloth was removed, they were all highly prepossessed in his favour, and fully convinced that his present situation was neither suited to his birth, education, or merit.

As soon as the servants were withdrawn, our philanthropist, addressing himself to the manager, congratulated him on the success of his endeavours in the cause of humanity; a cause, which had inspired his pen as well as his heart, and had drawn on both deserved and universal applause; and Lord M——, observing that he had a very numerous audience, took occasion to enquire the amount of the profits of the night, the receipts of which, the manager informed him, were 39l. and 15s. and, after paying two or three of the performers, whose circumstances were almost as distressed as those of the unfortunate stranger on whose behalf they had exerted their efforts, would leave a clear sum of 36l. to be applied to the purposes of procuring proper medical assistance, attendance, and some future provision, for her, in case she should get the better of her malady, hopes of which had been entertained by those about her, from the strength of a constitution which appeared to be rather shattered than exhausted.

Possessed of this information, Lord M—— apologised for an absence of a few minutes, whilst he should dispatch a letter, the purport of which will appear hereafter; and our hero took the opportunity of drawing the manager to the window, and putting into his hands a bank note, which he requested him to apply in the manner to which he had so judiciously destined the disposal of the fruits of his benevolence.

When Lord M—— returned to the company, a general enquiry commenced as to the story of the young person, whose affecting situation had impressed their guest with such sentiments of generous compassion; but he could only add to the intelligence they had derived from Mrs. Estcourt, that, having lodged in the same house with her, during the first week after her being left at S——, Mrs. Melworth (his wife) had, from motives of pity, paid her several visits, as well to observe if she was properly taken care of, as to offer her any such accommodation as a table like their's could afford, and, since they had left the house, had looked in upon her, at least once a day, from the same motives; and it was her representation of the elegance of her person and manners, and her gentle, resigned, humble, and yet dignified, deportment, which had determined him to call on a

liberal and benevolent public to contribute to the alleviation of that distress, which his own confined circumstances would not permit him to relieve.

He said, Mrs. Melworth had frequently solicited her permission to acquaint her friends with her situation; but her constant reply had been, "Alas! madam, I have no friends;—who, but yourself, would befriend an unfortunate being, overwhelmed with indigence, sickness, and misfortune?" yet she had, though with expressions of the extremest gratitude and sensibility, declined all offers of a pecuniary nature, asserting, that the disposition of her wardrobe would be a sufficient provision for her during the short duration of a life hastening to its period, and, she trusted, the same fund would be found ample enough to defray the expences of her internment.

An idea now presented itself to the philanthropist, which he immediately communicated to Lord M—— and Mr. Melworth, who was already enrolled on the list of his confidential friends, that, as the young lady appeared to be of some condition, it might be extremely proper to attempt a discovery of her name; and that, as the keys of her trunks had been committed to Mrs. Melworth, for the melancholy purpose which we have just mentioned, it would not be a criminal breach of confidence if that lady should, in consequence of a request in writing, signed by Lord M——, Mr. Fairborn, and Captain Edwin, and, in the presence of those gentlemen, endeavour to find some letter, from the superscription of which they might acquire information so necessary to her interests; and, as Mr. Melworth promised to acquaint his wife with the plan, and prepare her for carrying it into execution in the morning, our travellers determined to suspend their journey till the noon of the succeeding day, and to employ the morning in attempts to render service to this unfortunate lady.

Mr. Melworth now took his leave of his new friends for the night, engaging himself to breakfast with them at an early hour in the morning, and returned to his lodgings, not a little delighted with the honour which had been conferred on him by men, whose characters he held in much higher reverence than the exalted rank they bore in the world.

As he did not get home till a very late hour, he was somewhat surprised that Mrs. Melworth was not yet retired to rest, as, after the fatigue of acting in the double capacity of parent and servant to six children during the day, she was generally disposed to indulge herself with a cessation of toil some hours before that of his return; nor was his astonishment lessened by her accosting him with, "I know my dear Charles is kind hearted to every human being, but, in the name of wonder, when did you confer the benefits which are acknowledged in this letter?" putting into his hands the following.

"To Mrs. MELWORTH.

"Madam,

"Mr. Melworth has conferred on me obligations which I wish to acknowledge, but I am, at the same time, anxious to return them in such a way as may neither wound his delicacy or carry the appearance of re-payment.—Will you have the goodness to distribute the inclosed, in ribands, fans, and toys, among your little family? and will you add, to this favour, that of concealing this letter and its contents from Mr. Melworth for at least forty-eight hours? Your compliance will greatly oblige,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

M."



Now, though it will not be necessary to inform our readers, that this was the very letter which Lord M—— retired to write, soon after the arrival of Mr. Melworth at the inn, yet, as they may never have an opportunity of hearing this circumstance related by Mrs. Melworth herself, (a satisfaction which we have ourselves enjoyed, with this additional particular, that, at the time it came to her hands, the payment of a week's lodging, and the little bills of the family for the same time, being the extent of their credit, had left her in possession of cash to the amount of 3s. and 7d.) we think it requisite to inform them, that this letter covered bank bills to the exact amount of 5 s. more than the receipt of the night's benefit for the sick and distressed lady.

"My dear Maria," says the manager, as soon as he had read the letter and examined its contents, "this Lord M—— and his friend are angels from heaven; for, from the latter, have I received a bill of the same value to add to the profits of the benefit of your sick friend, and this present of his lordship to you is to re-imburse us for the appropriation of our theatre to-night; he gave me hints that he was not unacquainted with the state of our finances, and took occasion from thence to enlarge on, what he was pleased to term, my liberality and generosity."

"I have no doubt of his intention," replied Mrs. Melworth, "yet, you see, he has offered his noble present with so much delicacy that it would be the most impertinent presumption to decline accepting it; and yet"——

"I perfectly comprehend your scruples, my dear," says the manager, "and I feel a certain degree of repugnance to receive his lordship's bounty on this occasion, though, of all the men I ever met with, the friend by whom he is accompanied only excepted, he is the person to whom I would wish to be obliged.—Suppose, my dear," continues Mr. Melworth, "suppose I were to reinclose the bills to his lordship, and at once solicit his interest to procure me some little employment that might rescue us from this mendicant life! he is, unquestionably, the most benevolent of human beings, and the condescending kindness with which he treated me almost emboldens me to make this desperate attempt.—What says my Maria? shall I write a letter to this purport?"

"My dear Charles," replied this amiable wife, "you are bewildered by the profusion of favours which are heaped on you, and my dear love has been so long unused to kindness or condescending treatment from his superiors, that he seems to have lost the power of recollection; consider, my dear, that, by refusing his first favour, you incapacitate yourself for soliciting another; and that the very letter, by which you request his lordship's interest, must explicitly disclose your want of that benefit, which you will then appear superciliously to decline."

"It is too true, my dear life," says the manager, "but I am involved in a labyrinth of difficulties, from which I know not how to extricate myself:—what would you advise?"

"That we immediately retire to bed, to rest, if the perturbation of our spirits will permit, and that you attend our benefactor in the morning, without forming any particular plan, leaving your conduct, as to the contents of this letter, to be guided by circumstances."

"I believe my dear Maria is perfectly right," replied the manager, "she has ever been my best counsellor." He now opened to her the proposition of his friends with respect to the discovery of the sick lady's name, and received her perfect acquiescence:—and we shall now leave this worthy and happy couple to a repose, which neither power can command, wealth purchase, or wisdom procure;—that sweet and balmy repose, which flies the bed of state, but, unreluctantly, attends the lowly couch of virtue, the cell of suffering innocence, and the pallet of unmerited poverty.

But, though undisturbed by the turbulent reflections of vice, a gentler passion interrupted the slumbers of our hero;—the fair Eliza presented herself to his imagination, in all the horrors of that forlorn state in which heaven had first directed him to her preservation;—he awoke, and drew an analogy between her situation and that of the unfortunate sufferer, whose distresses now engaged the endeavours of himself and his

noble friend.—“Perhaps,” says the philanthropist, “some parent mourns her absence, some brother regrets her loss, some lover’s heart is torn with anguish to recover the dearest objects of his tenderest affections, whilst her noblest faculties have fallen a sacrifice to tyranny, outrage, or apprehended infidelity!—perhaps the soothing care of even a stranger-friend, in the first attack of despair, might have re-conducted her wandering reason to its abdicated seat, have calmed the perturbation of her agitated mind, and pointed out some path to happiness yet in store for her!—Gracious heaven! what were my pretensions to be thy favoured instrument in administering comfort to the gentle Eliza, the fairest, sweetest, flower of thy creation? or, what merit of mine hath intitled me to the glorious reward in my view?—never, my Eliza, never, shall my eye turn from affliction, or my hand close against necessity; for, wert not thou the child of sorrow? and, am I not in thee supremely blest?”

Reflections like these occupied the mind of the philanthropist, till Jeremiah, entering his room, asked pardon for disturbing him so early, but imputed his intrusion to an apprehension that both Lord M—— and himself had omitted to engage a doctor to attend the young woman, whom he had mentioned to him last night as he undressed; “and who knows,” continues this faithful partisan of his master’s virtues, “but the young woman may die for want of help with her pockets full!”

Our hero, in terms of self-accusation, acknowledged the sagacity of his worthy dependent, and, hastening on his clothes, summoned the master of the house, and demanded the names and residences of the ablest physician and apothecary in S——.

But he was informed, by his host, that the town and neighbourhood were too healthy to support a physician, but that they were overstocked with surgeons and apothecaries, some of whom contrived to live, though, he believed, all but one deserved to starve.

After that one therefore our hero directed his inquiries, and was informed that he lived in the next street, that he was a man of ample fortune, approved abilities, and unquestioned integrity;—that he attended rich and poor with equal solicitude and attention, though, from the latter he never accepted any gratification, contenting himself with calling on them for the first price of the drugs he administered; a payment, which he exacted with scrupulous punctuality, though he supplied them with food from his table and wine from his cellars to the amount of ten times the cost of the medicines; pleasantly, and perhaps truly, accounting for this demand by declaring, that his medicines would fail of their efficacy, for want of faith in the patient, if they were to be had for nothing.

To this gentleman our philanthropist made immediate application, and, acquainting him with all the circumstances which he had been able to collect of his intended patient’s history and present situation, he intreated him to visit her immediately, and to afford her every assistance in his power, pledging himself to be answerable for every expence, and offering his purse as an anticipation of payment.

“My good young gentleman,” replied this disinterested son of Esculapius, “I honour the fervor of your humanity, but let me intreat you to return your purse to the pocket whence you took it,—the hand, which is guided by a heart like your’s, will find many fit and laudable opportunities to employ it: I am, it is true, an apothecary, but I am also a Christian, and I hope the discharge of my duties in one character will always remind me of my duties in the other: I shall with infinite pleasure avail myself of the intimation you have given me, and am sorry my absence from home, for some time past, on a journey of business, from which I only returned late last night, prevented my being made acquainted earlier with a case so pitiable and urgent.

It was now settled, between our hero and the good apothecary, that, after visiting his new patient, he should join him and Lord M—— at breakfast; a proposition of the philanthropist’s which was readily accepted by the humane dispenser of medicine, who was equally anxious to strengthen his acquaintance with Mr. Fairborn and obtain an introduction to Lord M——, who had been represented to him, by our hero, as alike interested in the fate of the unfortunate stranger, and alike forward in the appropriation of

his purse to her service.—“Be so good as to order a shirt for me immediately,” said the delighted apothecary to his wife, “I am just going to visit a patient, and thence to the Tuns to breakfast with some of the most exalted characters of the age, two young men of rank, family, and fortune, who, in these days of luxury, ease, and dissipation, keep virtue in countenance, by examples which they are neither induced by false shame to conceal, nor prompted by baser ostentation to expose.”

“God be with you wherever you go,” replied the wife, “but cannot you contrive to let me have a peep at these prodigies?”

During the absence of Mr. Fairborn the manager had attended his appointment, and acquainted Lord M—— with the readiness of his wife to concur in the measure which had been suggested by Mr. Fairborn, and approved by his lordship and Captain Edwin, for discovering the name, and, if possible, the story of the unhappy object of their general concern.

“But, my lord,” continues Mr. Melworth, “how shall I look up to your lordship, or in what language shall I express——?”—“Mr. Melworth,” interrupted the peer, “your wife is a very unfashionable woman, and, I am sorry to say, totally unfit to be trusted with a secret; she is almost the only married lady with whom I ever attempted to commence a correspondence, and I find she has betrayed me in the very first instance; I shall have an opportunity of being introduced to her in the course of our morning’s engagement, and I shall then advise her to conduct herself, on any future occasion of the like kind, with more modern and wifelike prudence and propriety.”

“Yet, my lord,” rejoined the manager—— “Mr. Melworth,” again interrupted his lordship, “I am in excellent spirits to-day, and my mind presages favourable accounts of our general charge; I cannot hear a formal speech this morning; but, if a speech must be pronounced, let me be the orator.—I am rich, you are generous; I have desired to adventure a little portion of my wealth with your liberality, and so to join stocks with you.—This is the fair state of the case, and the extent of the obligation you wish to acknowledge. But I am to be the gainer; your’s is an improving trade, and I shall be sure to draw my full share of the profits in heart-felt satisfaction:—and so much, and not a word more, as to all that has passed.—But I have much to say to you before we part;—I must know your little history;—you have not always been a strolling-player.”—

“My lord,” replied the manager, “it is your undoubted privilege to be my superior in every thing but in gratitude; nor need you enjoin me to be silent, I have no words, my lord,—accept the feelings of my heart:’——and, at this instant, Mr. Fairborn entered, and gave the pleasing account of his negotiation with the benevolent apothecary.

By that gentleman they were soon after joined, and received additional satisfaction from the hopes he expressed, with considerable confidence, of the restoration and recovery of his patient; he said, her disorder was of that kind which is usually termed a nervous fever, but might, in most cases, be more properly described as an oppression of the spirits;—that she had been injudiciously treated, and brought too low by confinement and the exclusion of fresh air, but that he had ordered a medicine for her, and directed that she should be taken out of bed, and had no doubt of a favourable alteration in a very few hours. And, to this account of her health, he added such a description of the beauty and elegance of her person as confirmed the opinion which our travellers had already entertained, that her condition in life intitled her to a better situation than that from which they were exerting their endeavours to relieve her.

To avoid, therefore, giving her any immediate disturbance, which the pursuance of the intended plan would have rendered unavoidable, as her trunks were in the same room, our travellers agreed to suspend their intended operations till the effect of the prescriptions could be in some measure known, and accepted the pressing invitations of the apothecary to take an early dinner at his house, which he instantly departed to order, assuring his intended guests, that he would, in the mean time, pay strict attention to his patient, and acquaint them from time to time with any appearance of change.

It may have been remarked by our readers, that, in recounting the little bustle of this humane business, which had so worthily occupied the attentions of our philanthropist and his noble friend, we have been almost totally silent as to the interference of Captain Edwin; the truth is, that he seemed to take very little part, except by liberal offers of pecuniary contribution, in the concerns of this victim of misfortune; he appeared melancholy, thoughtful, and disturbed, seldom joined in conversation, nor seemed to enjoy the company of his old friend, though he had solicited his stay at S—— with the most particular ardor.

As Lord M—— had, for some years, lived on a footing of the closest intimacy with him, and as his present situation in life enabled him to offer his friendship if it should be wanted, he took an opportunity of drawing Captain Edwin aside, and, taking him by the hand, “my dear Tom,” said he, “you will excuse the freedom of an old, and still constant, friend, who wishes to be re-admitted to that confidence which he once enjoyed.—You are not happy, Edwin; your brow is clouded by some disappointment, or your spirits depressed by some misfortune. Is it in the power of friendship, fortune, or interest, to relieve your mind from the anxiety which too apparently oppresses you, and to restore you to that gaiety and cheerfulness, for which, in our days of acquaintance, you were so pleasingly remarkable?”

“My dear Lord,” replied Captain Edwin, “I do, indeed, labour under the severest pressure of misfortune; misfortune, which neither wealth or interest can lessen, nor even the balm of friendship alleviate.—You may remember one of our parading light-infantry excursions, in which I had been detached with a party to intercept a member of congress and his family, who were supposed to be on the road to the place where that assembly was then held, and that, though I missed the prize after which I had been dispatched, the crafty American having secured himself from capture by the assistance of darkness and disguise, I came up with his equipage, containing his wife and daughter, and brought them with me to the camp.—Your lordship may also recollect, that, upon my representation to the commander in chief, that the detention of these ladies was a measure unworthy of the cause in which we were engaged, and would not only draw on us the increased aversion of our American enemies, but the contempt of that gallant, though faithless, nation, by whom they were assisted in arms, permission was given that they should be set at liberty to pursue their journey.—But it is hitherto a secret to you and the world, that, captivated by the beauty and merit of Miss Middleton, I accompanied them, in the dress of a servant, to the very seat of the congress, where I restored my precious charge to the husband and father; and, having received from him the most grateful acknowledgements of the services I had rendered him, and the most flattering testimonies of approbation and applause, I ventured, with the permission of my beloved Anna, to solicit the only reward which he could bestow, or I accept, the hand of his amiable daughter; and I offered to lay before him a state of my fortune, which, by the then recent death of my uncle, was by no means despicable.

“Though he appeared not to be offended at this application, yet he desired time to consult his wife and daughter, and to consider of my proposal, and directed me to call the next morning for his determination; and, in the mean time, he advised me, as I tendered my own safety, to keep aloof from his house, as every eye was open to scrutiny, and every ear to suspicion.

“Deceived by these precious pretences, I contented myself with conveying a billet to my dearest Anna, acquainting her with my hopes, and accounting for my not attending her; and I retired to pass the night at a single public house, at some distance from the town, where I avoided all inquiry by mingling with soldiers and labourers, and conversing, without the appearance of restraint, on the affairs of the newly-established republic.

“But my mind was too anxious and my situation too precarious to afford me much rest; I arose with the earliest dawn, and, discharging my debt to the house, I wandered about the fields till the hour when I might expect the decision of my fate.

“As the father of my Anna had given orders for my admission, I was immediately conducted to him, and, having desired me to be seated, he offered me refreshments, which I declined; and, the servant who introduced me having retired, I waited in silent expectation of my doom, which was soon pronounced in the following address.

‘Mr. Edwin, I have obligations to you which I shall always be ready to acknowledge, and which I should be happy to return at the expence of half my fortune; but I will not insult your honour and gallantry by any offer of pecuniary remuneration: from your behaviour to your captives, and your restoration of them to me, I have justly entertained the highest opinion of your character, and earnestly wish that you would put it in my power to accept you as a son-in-law. In the particular relation which I bear to my country, to bestow my daughter on you would be to abandon her, and deprive myself of the greatest comfort of my life: you are an avowed, an active, enemy to the republic which has entrusted to me a share in the administration of her affairs; and it is your duty, in the discharge of your present engagement, to destroy that government, which it is mine, by every principle of patriotism, to support; a connection, therefore, between us would be monstrous, unnatural, and, on both parts, dishonourable. But there is a material difference between your situation and mine; I have embarked my fortune as well as my person in the service of my country, you have only let your person to hire for your’s, and you may certainly withdraw from the service without imputation, as you relinquish, at the same moment, the pay for which you have performed it.—

‘If you see this matter in the same light I do,’ continued this American senator, ‘you will instantly renounce the British service: I will procure for you an establishment in our’s, superior in rank and advantages to that you now hold; I will most willingly bestow on you my daughter, and with her such a fortune as shall indemnify you for all the losses you may sustain in relinquishing your possessions, whatever they may be, in Europe; and you will have the glorious satisfaction of contributing to the formation of an empire of freedom, where virtue, bravery, and abilities, can alone lead to honour, fortune, and command. But, if you are unconvinced by my arguments; if neither love, ambition, or the desire of honest fame, can prevail on you to exchange the banners of tyranny for the trophies of liberty; if you will still remain the purchased slave of monarchy, the mercenary hireling of oppressive despotism,—adieu.—My daughter is, at this instant, twenty miles from this place, on her way to a still greater distance, nor will you ever see her more but on the terms I have prescribed.

‘One word more, sir,’ for he saw me prepared to answer, ‘and I have done.—If ever you should have a friend, who needs the protection of this country, your recommendation shall procure it; if you should ever form a wish, which, consistent with my honour, I can gratify, it is your’s to command: for, individually, you have my respect, my love, my admiration; though, as an instrument of oppression, I despise, detest, and condemn, you.

‘I was now at liberty to reply; and, though it was impossible for me to yield to arguments which had not, in my opinion, the smallest weight, yet I chose to avoid, as much as possible, such expressions of contradiction, as, by inflaming a zealous partizan, might, without the most distant prospect of conviction, effectually cut me off from hope: I therefore only urged the impossibility of my complying with the terms he had proposed, on both the grounds from which he had endeavoured to draw his inducements. I told him, that, in point of honour, I should be a sufferer, not only in the estimation of those I should detest, but even of those with whom I should join;—that tenacity of principle was the first characteristic of honour and integrity, and that he whose opinions, either in religion or politics, sat loose on him, was always deemed a bad, and generally a weak, man; and that, in private life, no confidence could be placed on the former, in public, none on the latter, character.—That, in point of interest, I had a considerable permanent stake in Great Britain, and a sure line of advance in the profession to which I had been bred, which, if I could become a proselyte to his doctrines, I should abandon for shadowy prospects and uncertain expectations: yet, though my honour, my principles, and my interest, (the latter

of which had but little weight in the scale,) would combine in restraining me from accepting the supreme happiness to which I aspired, on conditions which would prevent my enjoyment of the blessing I had attained; yet I flattered myself all the seeming difficulties might be obviated by my solemn assurance, that, as soon as the present animosity between the two countries had subsided, (and, I trusted, the storm would be but of short continuance,) I would accompany his daughter, not only in visits to him, but even permit her to exercise her own choice as to her place of residence, even though she should fix it on the continent of America.—That, in the mean time, I had not the most distant view to a fortune with Miss Middleton;—that my own was fully competent to support her, not only in comfort, but in elegance; and that it should be the study of my life to render her's happy, till the moment when we might all meet as public friends, and rejoice in the re-establishment of a national union, which mutual interest would drive us to hope might prove indissoluble.

“But vain were my solicitations; in vain did I represent, in vain expostulate; deaf to every plea I could offer, and hardened against every emotion which I expressed, this rigid republican persisted in his resolution, and at length urged my departure from motives which concerned his safety as well as my own.

“My application thus repulsed, and my hopes depressed, I returned to the camp, but not till I had bribed one of Mr. Middleton's servants to convey a letter to his young mistress, in which I acquainted her with the refusal of her father, but, at the same time, vowed eternal constancy, and pointed out the means by which her letters might be conveyed to me.

“In consequence of this intimation, we maintained a correspondence for upwards of a year, but at length several of my letters remained unanswered; and I had the mortification to have this neglect accounted for, by receiving intelligence from an American officer, who was made a prisoner and conducted to our head-quarters, that Miss Middleton had, some time before, eloped from her father's house with the master of a merchant-ship, who commanded a vessel of Mr. Middleton's.

“Soon after I received this information, my friends having purchased a company for me in a regiment at home, I returned to England, where I have now passed several disagreeable months, equally unable to conquer this first impression, and to regain the tranquillity of which I have been robbed by the infidelity of her, on whom I had fixed my fondest hopes and wishes; nay, the very circumstance which ought to drive her from my memory serves only to increase my chagrin.”

Very soon after Captain Edwin had thus accounted for the appearances which had alarmed the friendship of Lord M——, the good apothecary arrived with intelligence, that his fair patient, having, by his direction, been removed from her bed to an armed-chair, had fallen into a sweet and unbroken sleep, and that he doubted not but she would awake to calmer spirits, and probably to some return of reason; and as, in that case, it would be necessary to keep her perfectly quiet for some time, he recommended the immediate execution of the plan which had been formed to attempt discoveries.

In pursuance of this advice, the whole party set forward towards the lodgings of the sick lady, calling in their way on Mrs. Melworth, a compliment which Lord M—— insisted on paying that worthy woman, for the purpose, as he assured her husband, of making his complaint of the little regard she had paid to his intreaties and injunctions, but, in truth, to comply with that condescending and gracious spirit, which ever inclined him to regard, with favour, even the connections of virtuous benevolence.

Lord M—— found Mrs. Melworth in the act of giving her little family their morning lessons of instruction. Never had this young nobleman had such an opportunity of being an admiring witness of the exercise of maternal duty and tenderness:—“Mr. Fairborn,” said he to the philanthropist as he entered the room, regarding with alternate looks of satisfaction the children and their mother, “behold the rewards of virtue and the charms of innocence!” The exclamation did not escape the amiable instructress; a blush, not of disclaim, spread her cheek, while her happy husband announced the names of their

benefactor, Lord M——, and his friends, Mr. Fairborn and Captain Edwin; and she arose to receive them with an elegant timidity, which neither marked confusion at being improperly surprised, or apprehension from the superiority of her guests; it denoted only consciousness of worth on their parts, and of obligation on her own.

“It would be cruel,” replied the philanthropist to Lord M——, “to interrupt Mrs. Melworth in her present delightful employment, if her desire of conferring benefit was confined to the circle of her own family; but we are not unacquainted with the extent of her benevolence, and may congratulate ourselves that we are no longer strangers to her person.”

Lord M—— now took Mrs. Melworth’s hand, and, for himself and friends, politely apologised for having ventured to engage her in the execution of their little scheme, thanking her for her ready compliance with their wishes, and assuring her that she must place to the account of her own goodness of heart the trouble which was now obtruded on her.

As they proceeded to the habitation of the object of their care and protection, Mrs. Melworth made an effort to acknowledge her obligation to Lord M——, but, unused to receive favours, and oppressed with the weight of her gratitude, she strove in vain to give it utterance, and, after a struggle of some minutes, could only collect power enough to pronounce, in broken periods, her wishes for words—to express—to convey—sentiments—before she was kindly interrupted by her noble friend, who, in the most soothing and flattering expressions of encouraging kindness, intreated her to believe, that the only return he would ever consent to receive, for any little act of friendship it might be in his power to offer to herself, her husband, or their family, should be their joint promises to apply to him on every occasion when it might be useful to them; “for, my good Mrs. Melworth,” continued this excellent man, “I claim kindred with your virtues, nor shall you avail yourselves of the distinctions of rank and title to dispossess me of the place I wish to hold in your regards.”

Being arrived at the house, they were informed by the apothecary that his patient still continued asleep, and were urged by him to complete their business with all possible dispatch, as she had now rested near two hours, and it was probable that her slumbers would soon be interrupted.

Mrs. Melworth, therefore, proceeded to the room, accompanied by the apothecary and the three travellers, who were to be witnesses of the search, and, for the justification of Mrs. Melworth, to testify in writing that it was made at their request.

The trunks were placed just within the door; between that and the window stood the bed; on the opposite side of which, near the foot, sat the lady in a large easy-chair, her head reclining on the shoulder of her nurse, who was seated on a low stool by her side.

While Mrs. Melworth was unlocking the trunks, and removing clothes and papers which covered their contents, Lord M—— and the philanthropist expressed to the apothecary their wishes that they might look at his patient, and, receiving his assurances, that no inconvenience could arise from the gratification of their curiosities, as, on her least motion, they could instantly retreat behind the bed, they advanced a few steps, and surveyed an exact representation of loveliness in death, of mortality unattended with horror.

Pale, emaciated, and apparently languid, her face afforded no apprehension of life, except when, once or twice in a minute, her lip trembled with suspiration; her right arm, which rivalled alabaster in whiteness, hung over the nurse’s shoulder, her left had fallen by her own side, so that the profile of her countenance was completely open to their view, and exhibited a regularity and symmetry of features, unaltered by the injuries of grief or the ravages of disease.

They saw and pitied; but their pity was now accompanied by admiration; they mentally blessed the occurrence which had retarded their journey, and returning to Captain Edwin, who, unconcerned, and almost unconscious of what passed, had betrayed

no symptoms of curiosity, endeavoured, in whispers, to excite it by rapturous encomiums on the person of the fair and suffering *incognita*.

Thus roused and stimulated, he drew towards the chair, and, casting his incurious eye on the subject of their praise, his hat dropped, he fell on his knees, and, lifting his hands towards heaven, in frantic extacy exclaimed, "it is, it is, gracious heaven! it is my own beloved, lost, unhappy, Anna Middleton!"

Awakened by this exclamation, she opened her eyes, and, fixing them for a moment on the company, who had all advanced to raise and support the astonished, and almost distracted, Edwin, and then turning them on him, "where am I?" she cried, "I thought I heard my Edwin's voice, and see his beloved shade! Blessed, blessed, spirit! art thou here to welcome my arrival in the regions of innocence and bliss?—thou wert always my protector:—shall we never, never, part again?"—And then, raising her hand to her forehead,—“but this is all illusion;—phantoms, avaunt!—I feel, I feel, the incumbrances of mortal life! and, oh! my brain,—my reason!—yet stay,—shadow of my Edwin, illusion as thou art, oh! stay, and bless, if but in imagination bless, thy fond, faithful, and, for thee, suffering, Anna!”—

If prudence had suggested a restraint on the heart-pierced Edwin, it had been madness to have attempted it; he rushed forward, threw himself on his knees before the lovely and pathetic sufferer, and, seizing her hands, pressed them to his lips, and, in sorrow which only silence could have expressed, bathed them with tears, wrung from his heart by the most excruciating and inexpressible anguish.

This was not a scene to be interrupted; the silence was universal; every heart accorded to his grief, every eye was meltingly responsive:—she gazed at him with a face of calm and composed wonder;—"My Edwin," says she, "art thou, indeed, my Edwin? and dost thou still remember thy Anna? Ah! no:—my Edwin died,—my Edwin was cruelly slain;—war, bloody, pitiless, war, destroyed my Edwin, and left his Anna a prey to woe, want, and wretchedness:—yet, why dost thou mock me? why visit me to inflict torments inexpressible? for, if thou art the shade of my Edwin, thou knowest my love, my faith, my everlasting affection!"

The sorrows of the unhappy Edwin now found words;—he addressed her in the tenderest strains of affectionate ardour;—he besought her to convince herself that he too was clothed with the most certain tokens of mortal existence;—he assured her, that he had been preserved from the dangers of war by the care of his person which her presence alone could have inspired;—he raised her drooping head, and pressed it gently to his bosom;—he vowed eternal constancy, and professed undoubting faith in her protestations of unaltered fidelity. Thus soothed, and thus assured, she once more surveyed his countenance with the most scrutinizing attention, and then, giving a sudden shriek, fell into violent convulsions.

By the directions and with the assistance of her medical attendant she was immediately placed on the bed; and, as he strictly forbade every attempt to shorten the paroxysm, it was suffered to take its course, and, as he had foreseen, ended in a few minutes in a violent fit of hysterics, which was, in like manner, succeeded by a plentiful effusion of tears. The room was now cleared, and the gentlemen retired below, the nurse having received orders to call Mrs. Melworth, who waited in the adjoining chamber, the moment the patient should recover the faculty of speech.

During an interval of ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, every mind, but most especially that of the distressed and interested Edwin, was filled with the most anxious expectation, the worthy and sagacious apothecary having flattered his friends with a hope that the various agitations she had so lately undergone would terminate in the return of her reason.

Nor did his judgement prove fallacious; the nurse gave the signal that she attempted to speak, and as Mrs. Melworth entered the room she had the pleasure to hear her address herself to her attendant, in terms which fully justified the opinion of the skilful apothecary.—“I have been very ill, nurse,” says she, “delirious, I believe—Pray,



how long have I continued in that state? I have had strange dreams, or visions, or fancies, I know not which.—I thought I was visited by an old and dear friend; one, who, alas! has been long numbered among those happy beings, to whose society I am hastening.—Has my deprivation of reason been marked by outrages or melancholy symptoms?—have I raved, or called on any particular person by name?”

Mrs. Melworth now approached the bed, and she held out her hand to welcome her;—“my kind, my benevolent, friend,” says she, “have you had the goodness to visit me whilst I have been unconscious of your humanity?—have you too discovered the source of my sorrow?”

“My dear creature,” replied Mrs. Melworth, “you are yet extremely weak, and must not exhaust yourself by inquiries;—the name of Edwin is familiar to those about you, and it is deservedly dear to you.”——

“It is,—it *was*, my tender benefactress; alas! there is now no Edwin! I have no longer any secrets to withhold from you; he was my protector, the friend of my heart, the delight of my soul; but he fell in America, and my only wish is to follow him to those regions, where we shall meet to part no more!”

She now took some refreshment; and, the perturbation of her spirits appearing to be quieted into tolerable composure, at the request of the apothecary, who justly conceiving that, as the appearance of Captain Edwin had produced this favourable change, a relapse might be the consequence of her ruminating upon it as a delusion, Mrs. Melworth undertook to open to her the reality of the interview, and to prepare her for another which might effectually undeceive her.

For this purpose she returned to the patient, and, finding her still perfectly sensible, and tolerably chearful, she led, as if by accident, to what she had mentioned of Mr. Edwin; and, without giving her time to recur to the ideas she wished to obviate, she asked her by what means she was made acquainted with the event of Captain Edwin’s death.

The question was too direct not to call for an immediate answer, and Miss Middleton, without hesitation, replied, that the intelligence of Mr. Edwin’s death was communicated to her by a villain, whose name she could not recollect without horror, as, under pretence of the most friendly intentions to serve her, he had betrayed her to the brink of ruin, and exposed her to a train of misfortunes, which, she trusted, were now drawing to their final period.

“And might not the villain, you have described, invent the tale of Mr. Edwin’s death to further those base designs, of who you know him capable?” returned Mrs. Melworth.

It was a suggestion which reason as well as inclination might cherish;—it gave birth to hope, and expectation and belief followed in momentary succession.—“Mrs. Melworth,” cried the almost breathless sufferer, “do I now dream, or am I just awakened to sense and recollection? Does Edwin live?—has he this day pressed me to his bosom, and wept over the unhappy Anna Middleton?—are these the remembrances of reason or the impressions of phrensy?—speak at once, my good Mrs. Melworth, nor leave me in a suspense, which, if I do not at this moment labour under a deprivation of sense, will instantly occasion it.”

This was the crisis for discovery; unsatisfied anxiety could alone prove dangerous.—“I believe you,” replied Mrs. Melworth, “as perfectly in your senses as I am—Mr. Edwin lives; he has been within these two hours at your feet, and behold where he returns to demand from you vows of reciprocal love, constancy, and everlasting affection!”

For, Captain Edwin, who had listened within the door whilst the tender and amiable Mrs. Melworth performed her mission, too impatient to suffer a moment to be lost in confirming the certainty of the avowal, drew immediately towards the bed, and imprinted a kiss on the trembling lips of the enraptured, undoubting, but still astonished, Anna Middleton.

But, lest the tumult of joy should produce the same effects which had before resulted from grief and unhappiness, the kind and attentive apothecary had previously enjoined Captain Edwin to restrain his patient from entering into much conversation with him; and, as all apprehensions on her side were removed, he, however unwillingly, repressed his earnest inclination to learn the particulars of misfortunes, which appeared to have been so severe as to have occasioned sickness, poverty, and total desertion, though, from her narrative, he well knew he must deduce all the happiness or misery of his future life.

But his faithful Anna, conscious of the state of his mind, and earnest to afford him the satisfaction which it was so amply in her power to give, had recourse to an expedient which at once removed his anxiety, without breaking through the injunctions he had received, not to suffer her so-lately-agitated spirits to be exhausted, by an effort which the apothecary naturally judged she would be anxious to make.

She intreated her friend, Mrs. Melworth, to take from a particular part of one of her trunks a packet addressed to her father, on the cover of which was inscribed a request, that, to whose hands soever it might come, it might be forwarded, according to the direction, as soon as convenient after her death; and, delivering it to Captain Edwin, she desired him to peruse the contents, whilst she would endeavour to compose herself, according to the directions of those who were so kindly solicitous for the recovery of her health; an object now equally desirable by herself, as the blessings which had been bestowed on her that day had stamped a value on a life, which, for many months before, she had fervently wished to surrender.

The letter to her father, which this packet contained, appeared to have been written at different times, and the latter part of it almost at the moment in which she had been seized with that melancholy, which deprived her of all future attention to herself. And we shall give it to our readers to fill up the chasm in her story.

“Honoured Sir,

“LONG before this reaches you, your once-beloved Anna will cease to recollect and to repent the pain her folly and want of duty have inflicted on the heart of the best of fathers, who, when he opposed his commands to the wishes of his favoured daughter, consulted not his interest, but her’s; and when judgement and his principles directed him to interpose, and to prevent an union which his conscience could not sanctify, had yet the humanity to join to her’s his personal approbation of her choice, and to bid her look forward to a change of circumstances which might yet allow it to take place.

“But, as that recollection and that repentance have, from the hour of my folly and undutifulness to the present, embittered every moment of my life, and been accompanied with such scenes of misfortune, misery, and wretchedness, as have induced me to regard my approaching dissolution as a relief from sorrow; so, I trust, the punishment I have, though justly, received, will atone to heaven and you for crimes and indiscretions, which were rather the result of innocent affection, derived from gratitude and founded in acknowledged merit, than of vicious inclination, or want of the keenest sensibility of your paternal and affectionate regard.

“Yet, lest I should appear more undeserving the pardon I solicit, and the blessing which, with my latest breath, I invoke, than in justice to you as well as myself I ought to admit, permit me to lay before you, at a moment when anger will be absorbed in pity, and resentment in regret, a narrative, which, if it cannot be received as an excuse, may, at least, be acknowledged as a palliation.

“Though I guessed at the motive which induced you to remove my mother and myself from ———, almost in the moment of our restoration to you, and though my fears anticipated a determination subversive of all my wishes, yet, till I received Mr. Edwin’s account of his rejection, I had ventured to nourish a spark of hope; hope, which took its rise in your avowed approbation of the object of my regards.

“But though, with that letter, my hopes vanished, as I knew too well that you never formed your resolutions without first consulting your reason and judgement, and, having once formed them, were little apt to recede; and though your own letter, whilst it soothed my disappointment, confirmed your determination; yet, urged by him to whom I had fondly surrendered my heart, my disobedience commenced in the correspondence which you had solemnly commanded me to avoid. I wrote one letter to inform my unhappy Edwin of that command; this letter produced an answer, which drew from me a second, and the sweet communications of separated lovers involved me in a continued breach of the duty I owed to my indulgent father.

“At this critical juncture we lost my excellent mother; ah! what a loss to your Anna!—Your immediate absence in the public service added to my grief, as did the tenderness of Edwin, on this melancholy occasion, to my love. He solicited me to fly to him; he offered me the protection of a husband, the consolation of a friend; he courted me to rest my sorrows in his bosom, and to derive comfort from his grateful affection. Softened by accumulated trouble, parentless, uncounselled, and unguided, I yielded to his solicitations, and promised to listen to any plan which he might suggest to effect a meeting

In the mean time that villain, Mortimer, (accursed be the name of the treacherous miscreant!) who then commanded one of your vessels, accidentally mentioned his being under orders to proceed with a flag of truce to the port of ———, in the vicinity of the British army, to exchange some wounded officers and soldiers, who had fallen into the hands of the continental troops, for others, who had been made prisoners by the royal army; and with this man, who was advanced in years, and of whose honesty and fidelity I had often heard you express yourself in favourable terms, I determined to intrust my secret, and avail myself of this opportunity of a safe and speedy conveyance to my beloved Edwin.

“As he was neither unacquainted with the services which had been rendered to us by Mr. Edwin, nor, from being very frequently in the family, a total stranger to the mutual regard which subsisted between him and me, I felt the less repugnance at communicating to him my intention, though I thought it a necessary precaution previously to bind him to secrecy by the most solemn and sacred engagements; and, after desiring some time to consider of a proposition which might be productive of danger to himself, and advising me, though, as I even then observed, but slightly, against a step, by which I must not only forfeit the affection of my father, but must, in consequence of it, submit to an eternal separation from him, he consented to comply with my request; and, by the assistance of a female black servant, on whose attachment and fidelity I knew I might confide, I conveyed my clothes and necessaries on-board the ship, which then lay in ——— creek, not a mile from our house; and, in the night preceding the morning on which he had assured me he should be ready to sail, in a dark, ill fated, and unhappy, hour, I renounced the protection which God and nature had provided for me, and committed myself to that of a crafty and designing villain.

“Mortimer himself waited for me at the water-side, and conveyed me on-board in the ship’s boat. I found a bed prepared for me in the cabin, to which I immediately retired, my faithful attendant, who accompanied me in my flight, desiring, for this first night, to sit by my bed-side: but I was somewhat surprised to find no appearance of officers or soldiers in the ship; and, noticing my observation to the captain, he told me he should sail at break of day, and was to receive his passengers on-board from a neighbouring port, off which he was to anchor for that purpose.

“In the present disturbed state of my mind I was little disposed to rest, but, towards the approach of the morning, worn out with restlessness, and my spirits exhausted by perturbation, I fell into a profound sleep; nor did I awake, or my tender and attentive guard think it prudent to disturb me, till the ship had actually proceeded to sea, and had gained a considerable distance from the land.

"I now arose, and, soon after I was dressed, received a message from the captain that he would attend me to breakfast whenever I should be disposed to take it. As I was now ready to receive him, I desired it might be immediately served, and, in a few moments, he entered the cabin, accompanied, to my utter astonishment, by my old persecutor, the hated, detested, infamous, Major Singleton.

"Not deigning to bestow a look on the wretch I despised, I turned to Mortimer, and sternly demanded how he could dare to introduce this man to my presence without acquainting me with his intention and asking my permission.

"But, alas! my authority was gone, and my influence at an end; a smile of familiar contempt accompanied his answer; 'if you are inclined to be your own enemy, madam,' he replied, 'I am disposed to be your friend: Mr. Edwin is in the service of the king of Great-Britain, Major Singleton bears arms for the United States; in favouring his pretensions to you I acquit myself of my duty to my country, your father, and yourself.'

'Are you not bound then to the neighbourhood of the British army?' replied I.—'The destination of my voyage is changed,' returned Mortimer, 'in six days I hope to reach Boston, when the major will confer on you the title of his lawful wife.'

'Never! never!' I replied; 'though I am betrayed and insulted, you dare not, base as you are, compel me to a marriage with the man I abhor.'

'Nor shall you be compelled to such a marriage, madam,' cried the villainous Singleton; 'perhaps you dislike marriage; on terms less offensive you may probably choose to be mine!'

"I now gave myself up for lost; the contemptuous solicitations of Singleton, and the broad hints of Mortimer that resistance would be vain, drove me to distraction; I wept, and pleaded, and besought time to consider; but, deaf to my intreaties, and hardened against my prayers, they demanded my solemn assent to unite myself to the wretch who was my aversion, and, in case of denial, uttered threats, at the bare recollection of which my soul shudders with horror.

"But Providence now interfered.—On the second day after we had sailed, a chase was announced. The vessel we were in was unarmed, but light: every effort was used to effect an escape, and it was not till after a pursuit of twenty-four hours that we were captured by a British man of war.

"The captain was sedate, polite, humane: he examined the prisoners and his prize: he found her of little value, and seemed disposed to destroy her. Mortimer intreated him to restore her. 'If the lady should join her solicitations,' said the captain. I begged a few minutes conversation with him, and disclosed my situation without reserve. He gave me most friendly assurances of protection, but told me he was bound immediately for England with dispatches. I had no alternative; I intreated him to carry me to Europe. He destroyed his prize, and gave Mortimer and Singleton a fishing shallop, which had fallen into his hands, to carry back them and the crew to the continent of America. At the moment of their departure, a request was made by Singleton that he might be admitted to take his leave of me. By the captain's advice and permission he was indulged with this interview, but he solicited it only to render me completely wretched: 'Miss Middleton,' said the villain as he entered the cabin, 'you prefer a voyage to England to the comfort of your father and the happiness of your friends; you may find new lovers among the enemies of your country; your old-one, Mr. Edwin, has long been numbered with the dead; I saw him fall, and rejoice in this opportunity of communicating to you the pleasing intelligence! Of what followed I was wholly unconscious; immediate faintings, a succeeding fever, and a delirium which out-lived the disease, rescued me from mental anguish, from the bitter pangs of reflection, till within a very few days before our arrival in this island; I then awoke to all the horrors of my situation;—remote from my country,—renounced by my parent,—unprotected by a single friend, except him from whom I must separate the moment I should put my foot on a strange land;—wholly unaccompanied, except by my affectionate negro, whose unwearied solicitude and

unremitted attention had preserved a life which seemed prolonged only for inquietude and wretchedness, how hopeless my expectations! how dreary my prospects!

“Severe had been the conflict between youth and my disease, and equally severe was the struggle between the vigour of my constitution and the violence of my affliction; yet, in spite of my wishes, my recovery did not long remain doubtful, and, at the hour of our arrival, my health, though not my strength, was restored.

“We landed at Portsmouth, and Captain Allanson presented me to his lady, and endeavoured to recommend me to her protection by prevailing on her to listen to my story; but she was proud, vain, dissipated, and jealous; she affected to treat my tale as a fiction, and myself as an adventurer.

“The purser of the ship was advanced in years: he was present at my introduction to Mrs. Allanson, and, pitying my situation, conducted me to his wife, who, though in circumstances by no means affluent, received me with kind compassion, and humanely offered to share with me the accommodations of her family.

“But, as I brought with me the little savings of my indulgent father’s bountiful allowance, I was not compelled to run so deeply in debt to her compassion: I acknowledged, in terms of sincerest gratitude, my sense of her benevolent intentions, but informed her that I was not destitute of the means to avoid being burdensome to her, till I could put myself in some way of procuring a certain provision.

“Various plans were now suggested for the disposition of your unfortunate Anna, and objections and difficulties, without number, started to oppose most of them. Among these schemes, the least exceptionable seemed to be the waiting on a lady, getting admitted as teacher to a boarding-school, or as private governess to young ladies in some family of condition; and each of these have been tried equally without success.

“As I never had been a servant, it was thought prudent by my only adviser to seek a place with some person who had never before been, in this way, a mistress; and, a report prevailing that the only daughter of Mr. Bloatham, an eminent cheesemonger in Thames-street, was soon to give her hand to Sir Abraham Abingdon, a Yorkshire baronet, whose title had increased in value from its antiquity, and whose estate time and progressive profusion had mouldered into ruin; my good friend procured me a recommendation from the mantua-maker of this aspiring citizen, and, as she was informed that I was well born, and from the humility of my manners, conceived me to be well bred, she condescended to engage me, and to encourage me by an assurance that she could not bear to have any vulgar creature about her person.

“The first month all was well; dressing, public places, and visits, occupied her whole time; but, at the expiration of the honey-moon, the family retired into the country, and the lady soon discovered that her husband was a mere beau, his person disagreeable, his understanding contemptible, and his principles abominable; and the baronet, that the qualifications of his wife were better adapted to the kitchen than the drawing-room;—that her manners approximated to those of her old neighbours at Billingsgate, and exhibited a happy and pleasing composition of craft and ferocity;—that she was only restrained, from excess of vanity, by the extreme of avarice, and, from the commission of the grossest vice, by the apprehension of detection.

“Fatigued with the unceasing disputes, and still grosser outrages, of this fashionable couple, and worn out with toil in the various employments of house-keeper, laundry-woman, house-maid, and even cook, to each of which I was occasionally destined, whenever my gracious employer apprehended I could have a moment of leisure from the avocations of my own department, I determined to solicit my discharge; but she spared me the trouble of this request, by turning me out of doors for declining to assist in the dairy, a task to which I was wholly incompetent.

“I now returned to town, my finances considerably lessened by this first attempt, and my mortification augmented by finding my faithful Phillis, who had been provided with a service, again disengaged, and upon my hands. But an opportunity soon offered to make an experiment of the second expedient: my acquaintance with music, fine

needleworks, and the French language, recommended me to a boarding-school; and, as I offered Phillis to assist in the work of the house without wages, we were both received as servants, with this difference only, that her labours were gratuitous, and mine were to be rewarded with a salary of twenty pounds a year.

“But here I found myself still less likely to succeed: the mistress of the school was overbearing, uncivil, and tyrannical; the misses, captious, insolent, and impertinent; and the offices which I was expected to perform, besides those of my stipulated duty, menial and degrading. I remained in this humiliating station exactly two months, and was then given to understand that pride and laziness were incompatible with the duties of the station to which I had been preferred.

“Again I returned to the metropolis, and, under the auspices of my still unwearied protectress, I again looked out for employment: every news-paper was scrutinized for advertisements, and every millener’s shop applied to for information. The wished for intelligence was at length announced, and I had the good fortune to be admitted governess to the three daughters of Lord W——, and to an apartment in Grosvenor-square.

“Lady W—— possessed but a moderate share of understanding, and that had been but indifferently cultivated; yet, to a fine person she added cheerfulness, good-humour, and a general inoffensiveness of manners, which procured her universal respect. She received me with civility and treated me with kindness. The young ladies, the eldest of whom was about thirteen, the second eleven, and the youngest about eight, resembled, in dispositions as well as persons, their mother, and were pleased, satisfied, and happy, under my care.

“In a state of comparative comfort I passed this winter. My pupils improved under my instructions, and my endeavours were rewarded with universal approbation. The employment in which I was now engaged admitted neither of leisure or solitude, and activity and company prevented, in some measure, the intrusion of corroding reflections, and reconciled me to the hardships of my fate.

“But I was born to misfortune, and it ceased not to pursue me. Early in the spring Lord W—— sent his lady and family to his seat in Somersetshire, and, about two months after, followed them himself, with his two sons and their tutor from Eaton-school to spend their holidays.

“From the moment of his lordship’s arrival at Wenville-castle I may date the declension of my happiness. By treating his wife with common civility and his children with a degree of mild inattention, which passed upon the world for paternal fondness, he had obtained the character of a good husband and tender father; but he was devoid of regard for the one and of affection for the other;—he was vicious, debauched, and unprincipled.

“In town he had seen but little of me; in the country, as the whole family dined at one hour, and I was admitted to the table, he had a better opportunity of observing my person, which happening, unfortunately, to suit his taste. he used but little ceremony in explaining to me his inclination to avail himself of my situation, which he conceived to be too humble for me to resist his importunities or withstand his offers.

“But, finding me deaf to his solicitations, and studious to avoid him, (as I had too sincere a respect for his lady to embitter her life by complaints of his conduct, and had no alternative but to keep out of his way or disclose to her his iniquitous pursuit,) he suddenly changed his mode of attack; and, having observed some little assiduities of the tutor, who, acquainted with my story, was disposed, from humanity and compassion, to treat me with tenderness and respect, he basely threw out hints of improper familiarities between us, and, having raised suspicions of my character, equally injurious and unjust, he offered me his protection as my only shelter from open shame and disgrace.

“But his pretence was unavailing; I could not be at a loss to discover the author of the calumnies which had been circulated, and I rejected his proposals with indignation and scorn.

“Stung to the quick by my contemptuous treatment of him, and determined, as he had failed in his purposes, to effect my immediate ruin, he suborned his *valet de chambre*, the pander to his base desires, to bear testimony to the most false and groundless charges, and by Lord W——’s express direction I received my dismissal from his lady, though in a manner which impressed me with the flattering conviction, that she gave less credit to the charges which had been brought against me than to my solemn assertions that they were false, groundless, and malicious.

“Immediately on my discharge I prevailed on one of the servants to order a post-chaise to convey me to B——, where I had placed my poor black attendant on such an allowance as my slender finances would permit, and from thence I proposed that we should both take the stage for London; but the domestic, who had undertaken this friendly office for me, having communicated to me a conversation which he had overheard between his lordship and his associate, in which the former had declared his intention to follow me, I changed my route after I left Wenville-castle, and crossed the country to W——, where I found the stage on the point of setting out.

“And in that stage I have travelled thus far; but the accumulated weight of misfortunes, indignities, and persecutions, has fallen so heavily on me that I can proceed no farther either in my journey or in this letter.—I am sick, and I hope unto death;—I am weary; Oh! that I may lie down in eternal peace! My poor Phillis!—charitable reader of this my last request, whoever thou mayest be, if aught remain after the humblest performance of the last offices to my unfortunate remains, reserve it for the most affectionate, the most faithful, of dependants!—I burn,---I shiver,---I grow giddy!--- Father, beloved Father, pardon and bless your disobedient, repentant, suffering, daughter!---Father of heaven and mercy! forgive, pity, and receive”—

Various were the emotions of Captain Edwin as he read the melancholy tale --- Whilst the fidelity, the fortitude, and the patience, of his beloved Anna filled his bosom with love, gratitude, and admiration, her distresses drew from him tears of pity, and the villainy of her betrayers and her calumniators excited his warmest indignation: he wished to wreak his vengeance on the base Mortimer and the unmanly Singleton; but the vicious and malevolent Lord W—— was an object more worthy his resentment; he would have vindicated her honour at the expence of his life; but he was himself convinced of her purity, and to assert it by the sword would be an admission that a doubt had existed. He determined, therefore, to leave the wretch to contempt and self-condemnation, to watch over the returning health of his beloved Anna, to raise her drooping spirits by prospects of uninterrupted happiness, and cheer her too susceptible heart by soothing profusions of unaffected and unalterable love.

Thus satisfied, and thus resolved, Captain Edwin joined the company now assembled at the worthy apothecary’s, who had extended his invitation to the manager and his wife, not more in complaisance to his other guests than in compliance with his own inclinations to form an acquaintance with this amiable and benevolent couple; and, having communicated to him the story of his Anna’s woes, he received the sincerest congratulations on her restoration to him, and the fair prospect of her recovery to health and happiness.

Never, perhaps, did a human heart swell with more laudable exultation than did that of the good apothecary on this happy occasion; never, perhaps, did a more benevolent and happy circle grace any table than that with which his was at this moment honoured;—the easy, condescending, and encouraging, familiarity of those who had conferred favours, — the grateful, yet undepressed, sensibility of the obliged,—and the honest pride of the liberal host,—conspired to confer sympathetic content, satisfaction, and joy.

Immediately after dinner Captain Edwin withdrew to satisfy his still anxious heart, that his Anna’s apparent amendment was not the mere effort of pleasure at the restoration of her long-lost lover; and, at his return, gave additional happiness to his friends by informing them that, after sleeping two hours, she awoke in perfect calmness,

and with the full use of her sense and recollection;—that she had taken some refreshment, and was again fallen into a sweet and undisturbed slumber; and that he had dispatched a messenger to B—— for her affectionate negro, whose care and attention, he was persuaded, would contribute to hasten her perfect recovery.

During the absence of Captain Edwin, the ladies having withdrawn, and the apothecary being called to his shop, Mr. Melworth, addressing himself to Lord M—— and Mr. Fairborn, begged leave to return the several marks of their beneficence which had been committed to his disposal, and which could no longer be destined to the purposes for which they were intended, as the lady was now under the protection of a friend, equally able and willing to afford her every assistance; and at the same time he offered the notes to the respective donors: but it was in vain that he solicited their acceptance of them; Mr. Fairborn, with his usual vehemence of generosity, refused having any thing to do with them; whilst the peer, with the most dignified liberality, assured the manager, that if he found his delicacy wounded, or his sensibility in the smallest degree offended, by being requested to keep them in his own hands, he would certainly take them back; “but if,” continued this truly generous nobleman, “you will have the goodness to reserve them as a little present for our future god-son or god-daughter, which ever the burden which Mrs. Melworth carries may produce, you will confer an obligation on Mr. Fairborn and myself, by convincing us that you regard with esteem the friendship we both profess for you.”

Confounded, oppressed, and overpowered, by this new and valuable token of kindness, and still more affected by the manner in which it was conferred, the grateful manager could only reply, “My Lord M——, Mr. Fairborn, you have determined to ruin me at once! I tremble for myself, who, within twenty-four hours, have exchanged poverty and humility for riches and pride; yet, O God, let not my riches prove a temptation to me, nor the pride of being noticed by such exalted characters induce me not to forget my own unworthiness!”

As Lord M—— had agreed to gratify the impatience of the philanthropist by pursuing their journey the same evening, and continuing it during the night, the friends desired they might be admitted to drink tea with the ladies before their departure; and, as the apothecary and the manager had by this time entered into a solemn compact and league of friendship, which, from the similarity of their dispositions, promised long and uninterrupted endurance, Lord M—— and the philanthropist scrupled not to call on Mr. Melworth for the particulars of a life, great part of which they were convinced had been passed in situations very different from that in which they had discovered him: which, without hesitation, he communicated in the following narrative.

“Few circumstances in the life of a person, undistinguished either by rank or abilities, can afford much novelty, or be strikingly interesting; the vicissitudes of one such life are those of a thousand, and consist rather of sudden transitions from riches to poverty, and from poverty to riches, the one generally the child of imprudence, and the other the offspring of accident, than of progressive system, or the regular effect of particular causes.

“I was the youngest of six children, and my father, who was also a younger brother of a respectable family, had been called to the bar, and practised with reputation and success; dying during my infancy, the care of my education devolved on my mother, whose tenderness, affection, and indulgence, to every one of her children, could only be equalled by the prudence and œconomy, with which she contrived to make a scanty income answer the purposes of preserving respect to herself and procuring every reasonable gratification for her family.

“As I had passed through the several classes of a grammar-school at an age rather too early to place me in a line of business, my mother was advised to send me to an university, and I spent three years at Oxford, in very close attention to my studies, to which I was particularly incited, by receiving public and private testimonies of approbation both of my application and improvement.



“But, as my elder brother was already in the church, and it was judged imprudent to put us both in the same line, I was articled to a wine-merchant of reputation for five years, and served my clerkship to him with fidelity and attention.

“Before the expiration of my clerkship, I had the misfortune to lose my mother, and the management of her affairs falling into the hands of my brother, who, being fifteen years older than myself, thought himself intitled to exercise the authority of a father over me, I never received any account of her affairs, or any other share of what she left than a single hundred pounds, and a pretended continuance of the allowance she had been accustomed to make me, though, after her death, it was frequently abridged, and always irregularly paid.

“At the expiration of my clerkship I engaged myself to assist in the office of a merchant, whose dealings were so extensive, that my improvement was more valuable than my pecuniary emoluments, though these were as liberal as I could expect; and here I continued about two years, when, meeting accidentally with Miss Warner, the only child of a widow lady, whose husband, a naval officer, had been long dead, my heart soon paid the tribute which was due to her virtues, accomplishments, and personal charms; nor did my beloved Maria refuse to receive as a lover, or her mother as a son, one who had little to recommend him but a character unblemished, and the purest, the most disinterested, affection; our fortunes were alike inconsiderable, but hope, determined industry, and moderate desires, gave us an expectation, which we flattered ourselves was not unreasonable, of competence and content.

“Immediately after our marriage I took a house at the west end of the town, where my few connections lay, and commenced a small, but, at first, promising, business: my capital was trifling, and my returns, of course, produced but little advantage; yet we proportioned our expenditure to our income, and, happy in ourselves, we were neither disturbed by envy or ambition.

“Accident at length threw me in the way of a man of high rank and distinguished abilities; splendid in his appearance, specious in his manners and elegant in his address, the most pleasing of companions, but the most dangerous, because the most unprincipled, of men. It was in a mixed company that I first met him, but he singled me out, and addressed his conversation to me particularly. Flattered by his notice, and charmed by his talents, I separated from him with regret; and I felt myself equally honoured and gratified when he desired my address, and gave me reason to expect that he meant to favour me with a visit.

“In a few days he left his name at my door, with a message, that he should be happy to see me; and when, thus invited, I returned his visit, he received me with the most condescending civility, gave me a considerable order, and named a day when he desired I would dine with him.

“From this time I was a constant guest at his table; scarce a day passed in which I did not receive the most pressing solicitations either to dine with him, to make up a card-party, to accompany him in excursions to the country, or to attend him to public places; he frequently took a family dinner at my house, procured tickets of admission for my wife to select and expensive entertainments, and publicly professed the most particular regard for me, and an intention to interest himself in behalf of myself and my now-increasing family.

“My connections were now extended and my business increased; the recommendation of my patron procured me large orders and very profitable commissions; but as, in the list of his acquaintance, there were many whose fortunes bore no proportion to their expences and the figures they chose to support, my books were also filled with the names and debts of numbers who were as unable as they were unwilling to cancel these obligations.

“Yet the large sums which I occasionally received of others supported me in a degree of credit, which would eventually have led to fortune if I had been guided by prudence or governed by discretion. I set up an equipage, an expence, which, though

warranted by my income, I chose to account for, by declaring that the calls of my business rendered it absolutely necessary to afford myself a conveyance to different parts of the town, and that my children required air and exercise for the preservation of their healths. I took a little country-house, that I might retire from fatigue for at least a night or two in the week; and I dropped the first set that had dealt with me, because their orders were too trifling to be attended to, and I could no longer dedicate to them the time necessary to preserve their good will.

“Imprudent as were these steps, had I stopt here, all might have been well: I had property enough, of undoubted security, to answer every demand that could be made on me, and I enjoyed the confidence of those, to whom I was indebted, to such a degree, as to set all apprehension of calls at such a distance as would have placed me largely above the world.

“But, giddy with success, and infatuated by being distinguished from others in the same rank of life, I formed intimacies with men of fashion, became proud of being intrusted with their secrets; and consulted in their difficulties; and, vainly professing myself their friend, I rescued them from distresses, needlessly and wantonly incurred, at the expense of those who had claims on my utmost exertions; and, when I had exhausted my ready-money in such acts of unjustifiable indiscretion, I accepted bills, and gave securities for those to whom the payment of them, or my ruin, were totally indifferent.

“The storm, which I had thus suffered to gather, at length burst over my head; my effects were seized by the ministers of the law to pay the debts of those from whom I had never received obligation, my credit was blasted, my business destroyed, my person threatened with imprisonment, and my unfortunate wife and infant family exposed to want and wretchedness.

“In this moment of distress I applied to my original patron with undoubting confidence; alas! how misplaced!—I could no longer minister to his amusement;—my conversation had happened to please him,—he was gratified by my attentions,—and, as I gave him my time for expenceless promises, he treated me with more regard than any other of his acquaintance;—but his soul was incapable of friendship; wholly devoted to pleasure, his mind was insensible of my nobler impressions, and it was not on me, but on himself, that he had lavished his civilities.—I discovered my mistake in a moment;—he turned from me with cold and cutting neglect, refused me assistance, and meanly disputed payment of the sums which he was actually indebted to me.

“With equal success I solicited the friends and companions of my prosperity; the great, the powerful, the affluent, the real, and the pretended, man of fashion,—they were alike unmoved by my applications; and I now discovered the folly of attempting to bind together, by any other ties than those of interest, men of different conditions in life.

“My own reflections were sufficient to bar any expectations from those who moved in the sphere which I had so imprudently quitted; they were universally offended by the consequence I had assumed, and regarded my distresses as the just consequences of pride, insolence, and impertinence.

“Thus deserted, I retired with my unfortunate family to an obscure quarter of the town, where I remained near two years in a kind of desponding apathy, brooding over my misfortunes, without exerting myself to shake off the burden of them, and barely existing on the trifles which had escaped the general wreck, and some few receipts of small, and almost hopeless, debts.

“Rouzed at length from this lethargy, by the approach of actual want, I made several fruitless efforts to re-establish myself in business; but, without capital or credit, it was impossible to succeed. I then offered my assistance in the regulation of trading concerns to those who had been used to consider me as the fountain of mercantile knowledge, and to solicit my opinion with the most earnest and submissive deference; but I had made myself too obnoxious to the envy of my equals to expect favour from them; and the few who gave me employment were actuated by a desire to retort on me, by

personal insults, the mortification they had suffered from my former superiority of figure and difference of appearance.

“From the education I had received in my early life I had frequently derived comfort; books and my pen had been resources in the bitterest moments of sorrow. It now occurred to me that my literary acquirements, moderate as they were, might be turned to some advantage. I had met with some men, and heard and read of many more, who, with a very small share of abilities, commenced authors with success, and sent their works and their names into the world together without the dread of censure, and in defiance of the terrors of criticism;—I recollected, that, among the numbers who read, few can judge;—I weighed my own talents, and deemed them equal to the task; and, taking advantage of a moment of popular commotion, I finished a political pamphlet, and offered the manuscript for sale to a considerable dealer in those inflammatory commodities; but, though he paid me many compliments on the production, yet he declined being a purchaser, and advised me to publish it on my own account, offering, if I chose not to incur expence, to bring it out himself, at his own risk, and accept half the clear profits as an indemnification.—With a proposition so apparently candid I closed without hesitation; and, whilst the work was in the press, my hopes were wrought up to the highest pitch of expectation by repeated messages, representing the anxiety and impatience of the public to peruse the labours of my pen.—The publisher’s shop, I was told, was full, from morning to night, of persons, who either came to inquire when it would be published, or to solicit the first copies that could be got ready for sale; and I had already prepared some additions and improvements for the second edition.

“The important moment at length arrived; the pamphlet was universally read, approved by reviewers, and extolled in the news-papers; and, at the end of three weeks, (for, from motives of delicacy, I forbore to apply sooner,) I asked my publisher for his accounts, which he produced with alacrity, and congratulated me on my success, the sale having been so uncommonly rapid, that a balance of five shillings and sixpence was actually due to me.

“Repeated attempts of the same kind were productive of like disappointments; and, tired of adventuring on my own bottom, I determined to apply to some periodical publisher for employment; and, resorting to the common mart of literature, I proposed to furnish a miscellaneous cargo, either for home and foreign consumption.

“My offers were immediately accepted, as were several essays, poems, tales, and anecdotes, by way of specimens of my abilities; all which appeared in their several departments, and, receiving general approbation, gave me flattering presages of profit and reputation.

“But here too I had the mortification to find that the expectations I had formed were by far too sanguine: when I desired that some terms might be settled, this retailer of science opened the doors of a large case, in which were several drawers, labelled with the names of different persons, and containing severally a variety of manuscripts in verse and prose, each of which was folded, and marked with a price from half-a-crown to half-a-guinea, which the author was to receive as soon as the work was converted to use; and he kindly offered me a drawer, which happened to be vacant by the secession of its late occupier, who had quitted the literary line on being elected to the more lucrative employment of a parish-beadle; assuring me that he took care to conduct himself with the utmost impartiality towards the several writers, and that, if I chose to engage, scarce a week would pass but one or other of my productions would come in turn for publication.

“As I found this proposition by no means encouraging, I extended my enquiries for employment, and was at length recommended to a PRIZE-FIGHTER; but, as this company is probably unacquainted with the term, I shall endeavour to explain it.

“That wisdom may be purchased with a penny, and that folly frequently costs a pound, is an observation so trite, that it has long since become proverbial; but, in no case has this maxim been more advantageously applied than in that of publishing, or, as it is now more usually and emphatically styled, book-making. The publishers of the present

day offer wisdom for a penny,—who then will be so absurd as to give a pound for the purchase of it?—They kindly propose to give you a *most excellent History of England at only sixpence a number, the whole to be completed in only one hundred numbers.*—‘I must give two guineas for a History of England,’ says inclination, ‘and I can have this for only sixpence a number.’—‘But you will be eight shillings out of pocket in the event,’ replies prudence.—‘True,’ returns inclination; ‘but I don’t like to part with two guineas;—as to sixpence ’tis just nothing.’

“So much in favour of the weekly publication.—But week succeeds week; the purchaser finds but little pleasure in perusing a *complete history* in scraps, he grows tired in a month or two, gives an order to his newsman to bring it no more, and to his cook to employ the numbers, already paid for, to the best advantage.

“And, in this case, the remaining numbers of the set are a dead burden on the publisher, and must be disposed of *ad valorem* for waste paper.

“To obviate inconveniences so subversive to their interests, certain munificent and ingenious members of the society of book-makers have adopted a plan, calculated to prevent such an undue fluctuation in the sale of their publications, and, with a degree of liberality peculiar to themselves, to assist in the promulgation of knowledge by acts of the most splendid generosity.

“To this end, a new periodical publication is now generally accompanied with a note of hand from the publisher, purporting an engagement to present to each of the subscribers of the work, who shall produce to him a note for each distinct number of it, a medal, a case of instruments, a pair of spectacles, or some other article of use or convenience, of at least the value of the whole subscription; and this mode of procuring subscriptions hath obtained the ludicrous appellation of PRIZE-FIGHTING, being by no means inferior to the now obsolete practice of those itinerant venders of medicine, who, from the antient places of their exhibition, have obtained the title of mountebanks, and with whom it was, a few years ago, usual to collect the populace together, by offering prizes to those who should eat the largest quantity of scalding hasty-pudding, as well as to those who should purchase the greatest number of their packets.

“To one of this respectable body of *prize-fighters* I procured an introduction, and was engaged in preparing a paraphrase and commentary on the Psalms of David, which was to be contained in seventy weekly numbers, with the last of which was to be delivered a bible in quarto, admirably printed.

“As the terms of my engagement were rather more advantageous than any which had hitherto offered, I pursued my work with alacrity; but, at the end of the fifteenth week, I was informed by my employer that I must strike off two-thirds of my present emoluments, or he must put the affair into other hands. Thunderstruck with this declaration, I attempted to remonstrate; but, without condescending to explain, he referred me to other *gentlemen* who were labouring in the same mine, and from them I received the mortifying intelligence, that, in order to conduct the business of *prize-fighting* with advantage, it was necessary that a certain proportion of the publication should be decently executed, after which it was totally indifferent to the publisher whether the matter was new or borrowed, applicable or extraneous, so the quantity was made up, the prize being now a sufficient inducement to subscribers to purchase the remaining numbers.

“Shocked at a species of imposition so degradatory to the republic of letters, I renounced my engagement with the PRIZE-FIGHTER; and, meeting with the manager of a strolling company of comedians, who had made an excursion to the metropolis for the purpose of recruiting, I listened to the praise which he bestowed on my manner of repeating accidentally a speech from Shakespeare, and inlisted under his banners; and, setting aside his total want of dramatic knowledge and theatrical abilities, it was hardly possible to have served under a more agreeable commander, for he was, in truth, the patriarch of his family, and the protector as well as lawgiver of his little community.

“At the end of two years, during which the utmost indulgence and private kindness of the friendly manager could hardly enable me to provide sustenance for my family, he was called from this employment to take care of a little estate, which had been bequeathed to him by a relation, who had refused even to acknowledge him in his lifetime; and he proposed to the company that I should succeed to his department, as, on their consenting to keep together, he was inclined to invest me with the stage-property, and to take my security for it, payable by distant instalments; and, this proposition meeting the general concurrence of the performers, I was saluted manager in form, and entered upon the duties of my new office, which I have now executed near three years; in the course of which I have encountered difficulty and disgrace, poverty and oppression, a thousand heart-aches for distresses which I have been unable to relieve, and a thousand reproaches for breaches of engagements which it was impossible for me to perform;—I have been persecuted by unfeeling magistrates, and insulted by dissatisfied audiences;—I have distributed my whole profits among my band, and, at the same moment, have been charged with peculation by those whose fair advantages bore no proportion to their necessities, and who murmured rather for want of bread than of principle; and, at the moment that my amiable, patient, wife, and her little suffering family, were almost without the means of existence, I have been accused of appropriating to their use the earnings of those who had already been doubly paid.

“But the recapitulation of my misfortunes grows tiresome:—that I have hitherto had but few friends, I attribute to my want of desert; and, for those I have now so unexpectedly found, I am most truly and gratefully thankful.”

The esteem which our travellers had entertained for the benevolent manager was heightened by a recital, modest, candid, and ingenuous; they both expressed the warmest inclinations to serve him, in terms which fell so little short of promises, that the happy Melworth was once more encouraged to look forward with hope to a situation of respect and independence.

The chaise was now at the door; and, as neither Lord M—— or Mr. Fairborn could, without offence to Captain Edwin, offer any pecuniary gratification to the worthy apothecary, they were obliged to content themselves with expressions of esteem, as sincere as they were acceptable; nor did they leave him, till, in compliance with requests, which he handsomely declared required not to be enforced by solicitations, he had engaged himself to spend some time with each of them, as soon as they should be settled in their respective habitations.

To Captain Edwin no invitation was necessary; among old friends forms are useless; he promised frequent accounts of Miss Middleton, and of his future proceedings; and he bespoke the peer for the performance of an office which should put him in possession of the blessing now within his reach.

They now took leave of the ladies, and left them and the susceptible manager in tears, the overflowings of affection, regret, and gratitude: nor did the chearful countenance of the good apothecary escape a cloud, or the generous heart of the manly Edwin a pang, which suspended for a moment the joy which so justly filled his grateful bosom.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*In which the curtain drops, with a bow from all the persons of the drama.*

IN the earliest æra of dramatic representations, it was customary for the hero and heroine of the buskin to bespeak the favour of their audience by some prefatory address, the form as well as the matter of which differed as times and circumstances directed: sometimes they endeavoured to tickle them into good-humour with some merry story or diverting fable; at others, they attempted to secure their approbation by flattering comparisons between the mimic characters they were about to represent, and the most eminent personages of the community to which they belonged; and, not unfrequently, they pointed out some striking event in the piece before them, that criticism might be absorbed in expectation.

On the Roman stage, these introductory perorations were reduced to a regular system, and the prologue was considered as an essential article of the performance; but the epilogue, or grace-cup, to wash down the meal, which, savoury or unpalatable, the auditor was compelled to swallow or forfeit the price of his ordinary, had not yet exceeded the *vos valete & plaudite*, or, “gentlemen and ladies, we heartily wish you good night; and, in return for the entertainment we have given you, only modestly request that you will indulge us with some tokens of your approbation.”

But modern play-wrights, either conscious of the inferiority of their productions, or doubting the discernment and taste of those before whom they are to be represented, not only pre-dispose the audience to receive their works with favour, by appeals to their passions, prejudices, and feelings, by a few touches of the times, and some sacrifices to the idle humours and fantastic fashions of the day, but, like skilful physicians, having administered an emetic, they prescribe an epilogue as a quieting-draught; and, kindly condescending to give their auditors such information as should direct them in forming their opinions, save them the trouble of exercising their judgements by very generously offering to substitute their own.

And, as we venture to assert, though not without some apprehensions of contradiction, that a history may, and ought to be, considered as a drama, and is, or ought to be, subject to the same rules of time, place, and probability; and, as neither Mr. A. or Mr. B. or Mr. C. or any other author of modern “tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, scene undividable, or poem unlimited,” can be more desirous of applause than ourselves, or more anxious for the fate of his literary offspring; and, as we are now arrived at the last scene, and must soon be consigned to the critical purgatory, “*with all our imperfections on our head*,” we feel ourselves impelled, by the strongest of all passions, to make an epilogatory effort for the salvation of so much of our incorporeal and immaterial part as has been transfused into the foregoing sheets.

But, as we acknowledge ourselves to be so extremely unfashionable as to have no interest, or even acquaintance, with that great furnisher of theatric heel-pieces, Captain T——, and so inapprehensive and absurd as never to have discovered the spirit or elegance of those compositions which have lifted him to the pinnacle of secondary fame; and, as we are equally unable to derive assistance from “that little hero, with a mighty soul,” whose genius pervades the whole dramatic system, and whose productions, of this kind, bear such praise,

“Such worthy praise, that Garrick scarce had more;”

we must e’en summon our own forces to our aid, and offer one short story more as an apology for all the rest.

But stories, like misfortunes, seldom come alone; in both cases one is apt to beget another; and, as two stories now suggest themselves at the same moment, we are tempted to relate one by way of prologue to the other.

A nobleman, equally distinguished by his moral character and his talents, happening to be at his seat in a distant country when one of his tenants died, either from religious motives, or from respect to the memory of the deceased, honoured the funeral with his attendance. A sermon was preached on the occasion, the text to which, he had been informed, was pointed out, as is usual in some parts of England, by the friends of him, whose virtues it was intended to commemorate. The rector was a man of genius; and, as he returned from performing the service, he asked the nobleman, who was his patron and his friend, how he liked his sermon:—"Why," replied his lordship, "the sermon was, like all your's, an exceeding good one; but I apprehended the text was chosen by the relations of the deceased."—"It was, my lord," answered the doctor.—"But the sermon bore not the least analogy to the text."—"True, my lord; they chose the text, and I the sermon."

Now, we must beg leave to avail ourselves of this privilege; and, as the story, which we are to offer by way of epilogue, must be of our own choice, we shall not be anxious that it may apply in any respect to our history, or even to ourselves.

And, besides the example above-cited, we beg leave to offer that of the great captain before-mentioned, and to refer our readers to his numerous works in this way; and if, in one instance, he shall appear to have made his deductions from the text, we promise to do the like, if it happens to be in our power, on any future occasion.

A yeoman of Kent, rich and moderately wise, but unlearned and unacquainted with the world, determined to seek improvement where men and manners might be studied, in the great school of experience:—he journeyed to the metropolis, and applied himself to his consequential neighbour in the country, who received him courteously, and engaged to give him countenance and introduction.

Nor did he fail to perform his promise; he recommended him to his coach-maker, his tailor, and his wine-merchant, and he taught him the use of an equipage, the advantages of dress, and the credit and comfort of giving entertainments; his wife permitted him to escort her to the play, his daughters were squired by him to the phantheon, and, to finish the system of obligation, Sir John borrowed a thousand pounds of him to complete the purchase of—a new service of plate.

Disgusted with high life, he retired into the city, and, putting himself under the care of the factor to whom he had usually consigned his wool, he sought initiation into the mysteries of commerce and the arts of trade; but his instructors taught him commerce and trade only, reserving to themselves the mysteries by which the former is promoted, and the art necessary to insure success in the latter.—He engaged in a most promising speculation, and, owing to the kind assistance of his faithful friends, escaped with the loss of only twelve hundred guineas.

Equally unfortunate in his dissipation and application, he resolved to saunter through the middle walks, and pick up improvement from those who depended on their talents for subsistence; he accordingly took lodgings in the neighbourhood of Temple-bar, and frequented those coffee-houses which are the resort of authors, players, and critics.

But here his humanity became the prey of sharp-sighted necessity, and his singularity the object of ungrateful buffoonery; the author, whom he had rescued from a prison, lampooned him as a dupe; the player, for whose debts he had given security, *took him off* upon the stage; and the critic, after being protected by him from the vengeance of both, reviled him as an associate with ignorance and impertinence.

The virtuoso and the natural philosopher next engaged his attention:—"their studies," says he, "are at least innocent and inoffensive; the order of nature is beautiful, her sports wonderful, and both improving." But this pursuit, like the others, terminated in mortification; he was imposed on by those in whom he placed confidence, and deceived

by adepts in a science calculated to favour their frauds; his fossils were factitious, his gems compositions, and his *lusus naturæ* the contrivances of artful mechanics;—his cabinet was condemned by the connoisseur, and the labours of months and the expence of hundreds sold by public auction for a tenth part of their original cost.

Galled, though not materially injured, by those repeated attacks on his fortune as well as his patience, he meditated indemnification and revenge; and, yielding to the long-resisted importunities of a sprightly, accomplished, and agreeable, young man, with whom he had formed a kind of coffee-house acquaintance, he accompanied him to a gaming-table, was admitted a member of a fashionable club, and welcomed as a pigeon whose plumage was worth a division.

But as, in order to make an effectual stroke, the crisis is to be wrought up with the most wary caution and circumspection, he was permitted to win small sums, and flattered with encomiums on his knowledge of the games, till he was sufficiently inflamed for the purposes of his new friends, who stripped him of three thousand pounds in one evening, and convinced him that the *luck* of his companions was superior to his *judgement*.

On the succeeding morning he set about casting up his accompts and inquiring into the state of his finances; the result of the investigation was, the vexatious conviction, that, out of twelve thousand pounds, bequeathed to him in cash by his grey-coated grandfather, the better half had been squandered in a fruitless search after unnecessary improvement.

His equipage had been long since disposed of, his gay wardrobe now shared the same fate, and he retired once more to Russet-Farm, determined to pursue that species of cultivation, for which his birth, education, and talents, had qualified him.

But the fame of his exploits had anticipated his return, and he found the parson of the parish prepared with shrewd hints and sarcastic remarks on those ignorant adventurers, who, committing themselves to the world without a guide, are sure to be misled by the mischievous, misinformed by fools, and plundered by knaves; who sally forth without a well-founded hope, and return without the possibility of advantage.

The yeoman, who felt the justice, though he disliked the freedom, of these observations, bore them, for a while, with christian patience; but the frequent repetition of them became painful; and, the parson having at length taken upon him to indulge his satirical talent at the public club, the yeoman thought it necessary to reply.

“That my excursion has been expensive, I am ready to confess; but that it has been wholly unprofitable, I deny: I have read the book of the world with pain, trouble, and mortification; but I have gleaned from it knowledge enough to be convinced of those truths which you seem so desirous to inculcate;—I have exhausted half my ready-money, but I have still more than I want; and I have learnt that neither the fashions of high life or the arts of accumulation are to be acquired by him, whose early youth has been dedicated to innocent simplicity, and his manhood to honest industry;—that the indulgence of human feelings will be repaid by ingratitude, and the gratification of its passions attended by remorse. If you, doctor, who have ranged through the works of the learned, and fathomed the depths of science, had not pursued knowledge through the barren waste as well as the cultivated garden, and extracted sweets from the weed as well as the flower, the stock, which is your boast, would have been tasteless to yourself and useless to others:

“For nought so vile, that on the earth doth live,  
But to the earth some special good doth give;  
Nor ought so good, but, strain’d from that fair use,  
Revolts to vice, and stumbles on abuse;  
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,  
And vice sometimes by action’s dignified.”



Reader, if thou hast discretion enough to profit by the acknowledgement and inference of the yeoman of Kent, thou wilt not be at a loss to apply our epilogue.

As the friends persevered in their intentions to travel the whole night, and as no accident intervened to interrupt their journey, they arrived at the seat of Mr. Thompson in the morning of the succeeding day, and preferred to that venerable gentleman their joint and acceptable petition, which was also the next morning communicated by Mr. Thompson in person, accompanied by his grandson and his noble friend, to Sir William and Lady Fairborn; and, as no possible objection could be offered but the youth of the philanthropist, and that was obviated by the maturity of his virtues and the solidity of his understanding, no difficulty remained, but in the restraining Lord M—— and Mr. Thompson from excess of generosity in their provision for the beloved pair; and, to this end, our hero was obliged to call in the aid of Sir Felix Benefold, and to insist on his being permitted to set bounds to their liberality.

The marriage ceremony was, at the earnest request of Mr. Thompson, performed by his worthy old chaplain, in Eastburn church, Sir Felix and Lady Benefold having kindly consented to conduct their fair and highly-esteemed charge into Dorsetshire, and to assist at the celebration of the nuptials; and, Lord M—— having two houses completely furnished, and one of them being within a very short day's journey of Eastburn-hall, he requested his brother and sister to make it the place of their immediate residence, suggesting the convenience of its situation for affording a speedy and frequent intercourse between his brother and sister and the different branches of his family; and, in particular, for the visits of Mr. Thompson, who had conceived such an affection for his new grand-daughter, as could only be exceeded by that which he had ever felt for his darling and adopted child, and which had continued to increase from his first dawn of reason to the present moment of felicity.

But we may perhaps be hereafter justified if we should venture to assign another reason for the solicitude of Lord M—— that his offer might be accepted;—the personal charms and merit of Miss Fairborn had made no slight impression on his heart, and, as he proposed to spend a considerable portion of his time with his dearest sister, and his benefactor, friend, and brother of his heart, all his wishes might be favoured by their yielding to his friendly solicitations.

Nor, by this tide of joy, was our hero borne away from the remembrance of any of those who were intitled to his friendship, his gratitude, or his esteem. To the companion of his studies and his travels, honest Jeremiah, our hero offered a liberal and independent provision; but this faithful domestic positively refused to accept this proof of his affection, declaring his existence would be no longer valuable to him than he should be permitted to derive it from the bounty of his old and ever-honoured patron and benefactor; he was, therefore, at his own request, and by the willing cession of his friendly substitutes, re-instated in his several employments at Eastburn hall, reserving a claim on the philanthropist to be admitted to the office of tutor, in the first rudiments of literature, to such of his sons as should be capable of attaining the knowledge of letters, whilst he remained in possession of his faculties.

One alteration only appeared likely to take place in the domestic system of Jeremiah.—He demurred to the removal of his deputy in the poultry-yard; and, when Mr. Thompson proposed to establish the worthy and industrious widow in some little business, Jerry Twister hinted an inclination to take her under his own protection for life; a proposition, which, though it affected his patron with a degree of astonishment, as he had never been remarkable for his assiduities to the fair sex, yet it by no means met his disapprobation; on the contrary, he signified his intention to provide for the children of the former marriage, and to fit up and furnish a neat little cottage at the skirts of the park as a residence for him and his future spouse.

The good old clergyman, whose heart was fully gratified by the distinguished honour of uniting the hero of our tale with the virtuous Eliza, received, on the wedding-day, from the hands of Sir William Fairborn, a presentation to a valuable rectory, tenable

with the living he then enjoyed; and, from the philanthropist, a bank note to discharge the first-fruits.

By the interest of Lord M—— the worthy Mr. Lowther was very soon removed from his present obscure situation to one of the most lucrative and respectable public employments in his own line; and, from the generosity of his first and best benefactors, Sir Felix and Lady Benefold, the removal of him, his excellent lady, and their numerous offspring, was effected without present inconvenience to them, and their entrance into this new department marked with an appearance suited to their own merits, and to the professional rank which he had obtained.

Within a year after the marriage of the philanthropist, the office of collector of the customs at the port of D——, in the neighbourhood of Lord M——'s principal seat, falling vacant, his lordship, and the philanthropist, who had by this time obtained a seat in parliament, by their joint interests, procured the appointment for honest Melworth, and settled him at once in ease, affluence, and content.

Nor, in the list of our philanthropist's humble friends and benefited dependents, must we omit the honest and faithful Irishman —Our hero having related his interesting story to Lord M——, that excellent nobleman, to whom (having himself bled in the service of his country) a wounded soldier was a sacred character, proposed to establish him, as his porter, in the lodge at his park-gates; and, as the philanthropist had acquainted himself, when he parted from him, with the place of his intended residence, he took upon himself the care of calling him to his new office, and, in less than a month after his appointment, Terry Connel and his Sukey, with the young Hibernian, were all happily settled, on a plan of such ease and comfort as not to leave them an unsatisfied wish, but for expressions of gratitude to their kind and liberal benefactors.

On the fate of the base Captain S——, and of his villainous associate, we wish to be totally silent; but historical truth obliges us to mention the horrid exit of the one, and the miserable situation of the other. The mercenary instrument of iniquity having accompanied his master in a violent attempt on the daughter of a tradesman of reputation, a few miles from the metropolis; and the father, who had been apprized of his design, having prepared for the defence of his child against the brutality of this lawless invader of her peace and honour; a scuffle ensued, in which the wretched minister of vice received the contents of his employer's pistol in his body, and died upon the spot, and the murderer, having been apprehended, was tried for his life; and, though the circumstances of his connection with the deceased produced an acquittal, yet his intellects suffered so rude a shock, from fear, shame, and, let us hope, contrition, that he remains in a state too pitiable to be any longer obnoxious to the resentment even of those who have received from him the most grievous injuries.

It only remains to inform our readers, that, as soon as Miss Middleton's recovery was completed, she gave her hand to her faithful Edwin, Lord M—— having been summoned to Bath to represent her father on that occasion; and, as the regiment, in which Captain Edwin served, was reduced upon the cessation of hostilities, he kindly and affectionately complied with her wishes to attempt a reconciliation with her father, and accompanied her in a voyage to America for that purpose; and Lord M—— has had the pleasure to hear from him, that they have not only completely succeeded in the object of their voyage, but that the old gentleman and his son-in-law are now engaged in a friendly contest, whether the captain should dispose of his estates in England, or Mr. Middleton of his American property, that the father and daughter may no more be separated.

Readers, farewell!——If you have been innocently amused by our labours, we are content;—if they have contributed to the improvement of your hearts, we are pleased;—and, if they have called your virtues into action, we are rejoiced. From scenes of real life we have endeavoured to impress your minds with a contempt of danger, difficulty, and even disgrace, in the cause of virtue; and to remind you, that, though disappointments should intervene, or the gloom of obloquy interpose, to darken your prospects and suppress your hopes, yet rectitude of intention, and perseverance in well-

doing, will unfailingly conduct you to honour and happiness; and, if we have in any degree succeeded, we have received our reward.

FINIS.

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