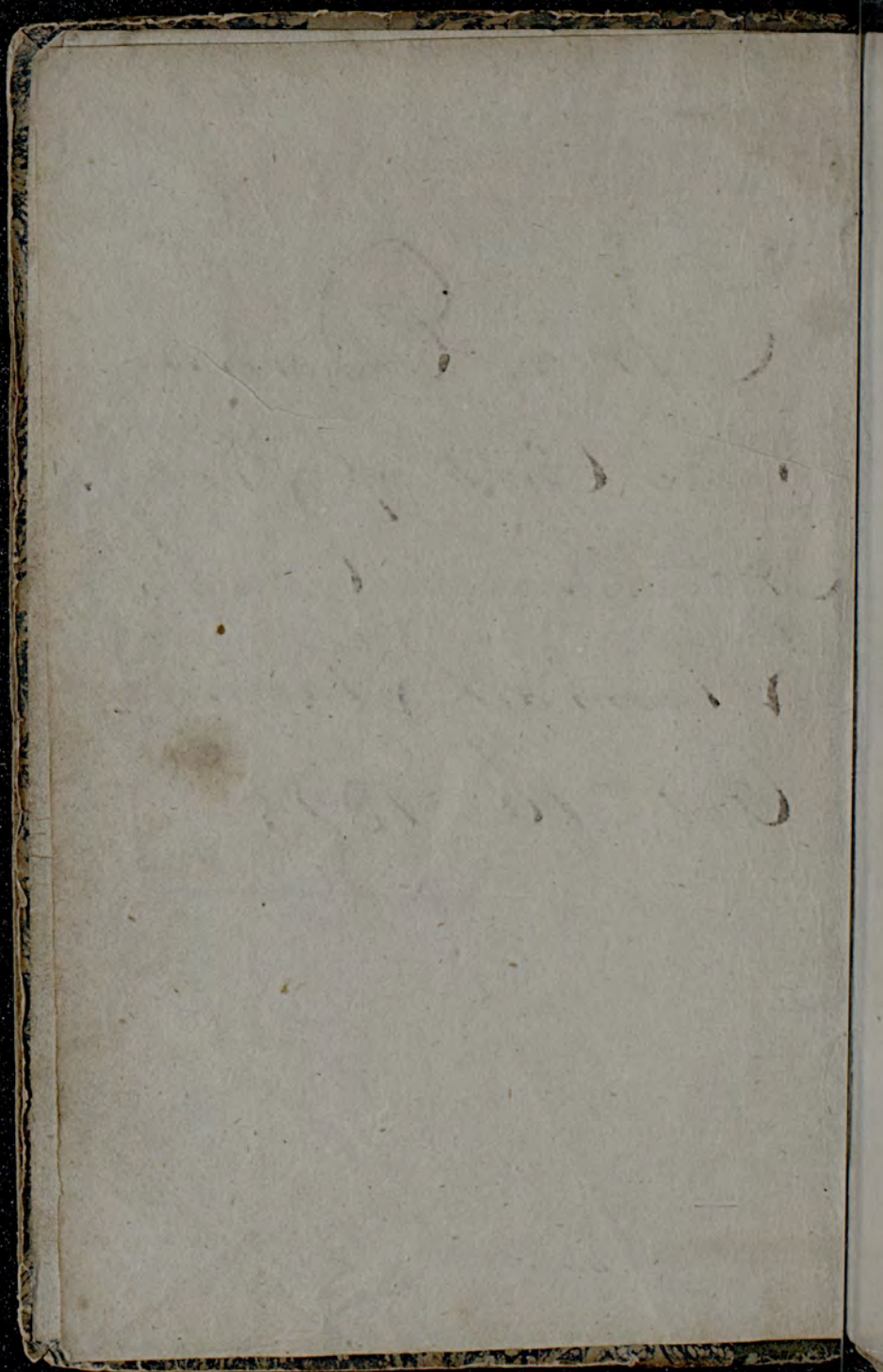
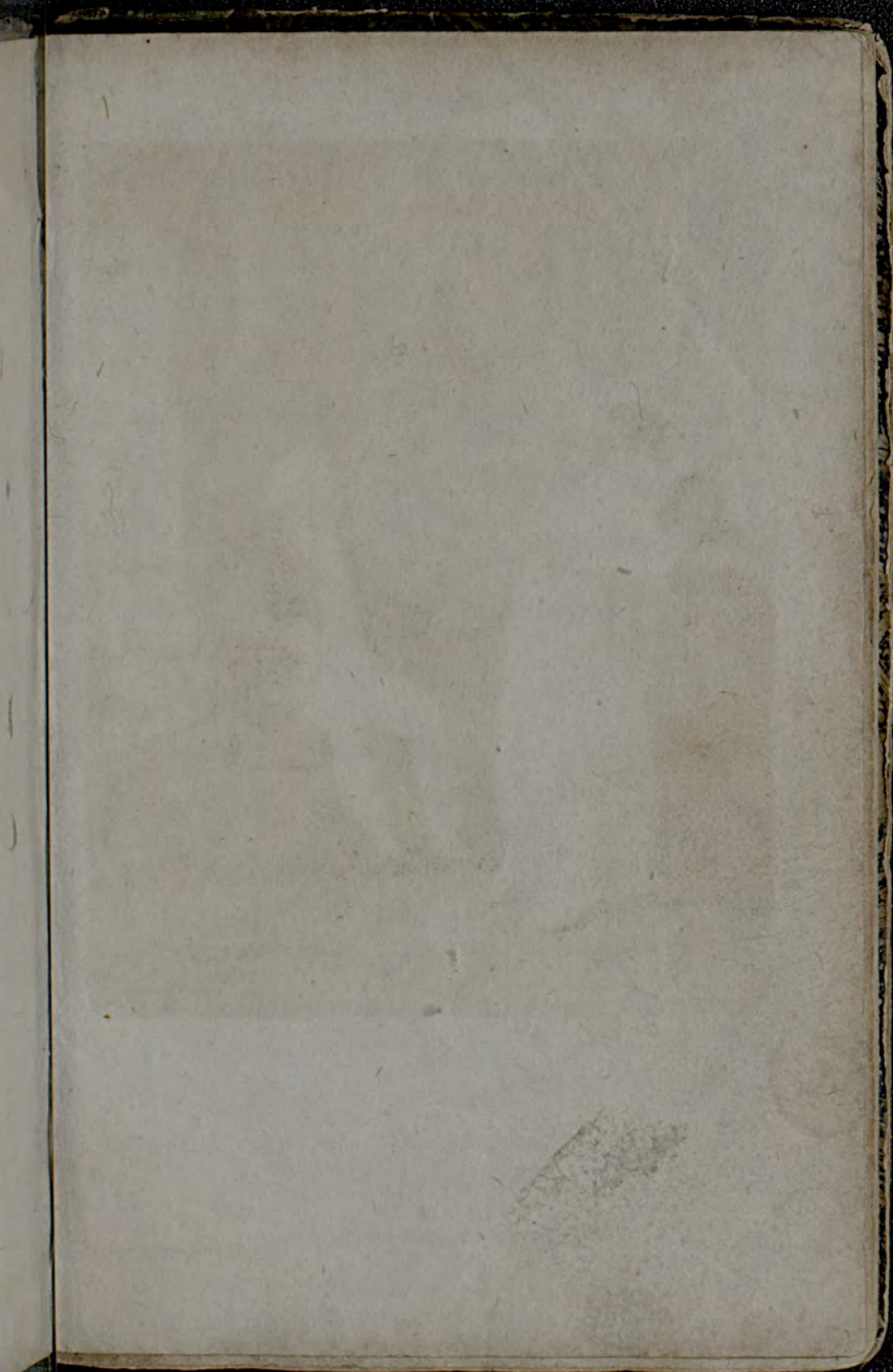


Elizabeth Warren
The Gift of Her
Affectionate Cousin
Harriett Hammond
Oct^r 16th 1825







"She rushed into the room and fell upon her neck."

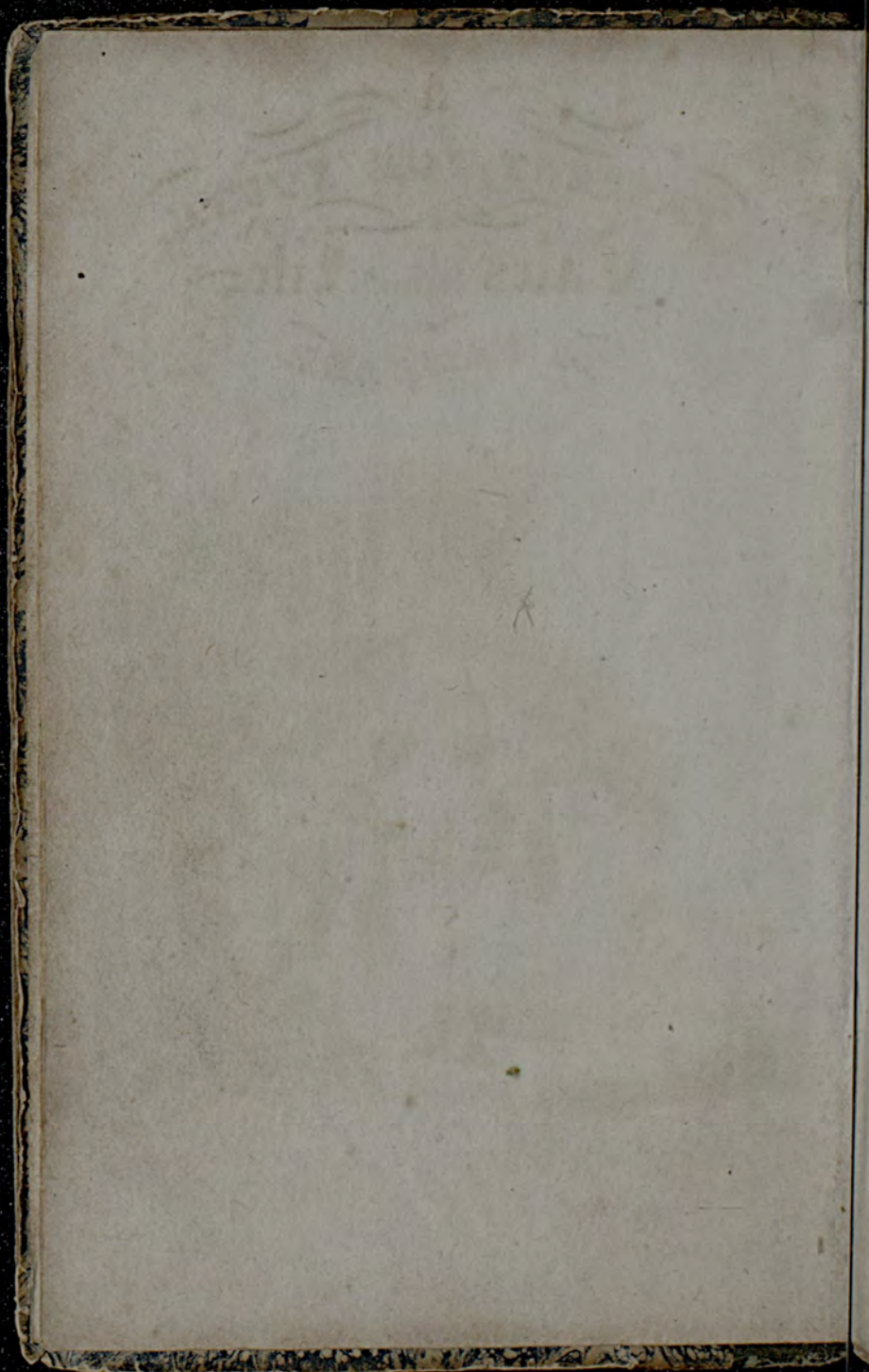
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A
PRESENT FOR YOUTH,
OR
Tales from Life
BY RAMBLER.



They and her young mistress departed early in the morning with their gallants. Page 2

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A
PRESENT FOR YOUTH,

OR,

Tales from Life.

DISTRESS ENCOURAGED TO HOPE.

THE

HISTORY OF MELISSA.

I RECEIVED, a few weeks ago, an account of the death of a lady whose name is known to many, but the "eventful history" of whose life has been communicated to few: to me it has been often related during a long and intimate acquaintance; and as there is not a single person living, upon whom the making it public can reflect unmerited dishonour, or whose delicacy or virtue can suffer by the relation, I think I owe to mankind a series of events from which the wretched may derive comfort, and the most forlorn may be encouraged to hope; as misery is alleviated by the contemplation of yet deeper

distress, and the mind fortified against despair by instances of unexpected relief.

The father of MELISSA was the younger son of a country gentleman who possessed an estate of about five hundred a year; but as this was to be the inheritance of the elder brother, and as there were three sisters to be provided for, he was at about sixteen taken from Eton school, and apprenticed to a considerable merchant at Bristol. The young gentleman, whose imagination had been fired by the exploits of heroes, the victories gained by magnanimous presumption, and the wonders discovered by daring curiosity, was not disposed to consider the acquisition of wealth as the limit of his ambition, or the repute of honest industry as the total of his fame. He regarded his situation as servile and ignominious, as the degradation of his genius and the preclusion of his hopes; and longing to go in search of adventures, he neglected his business as unworthy his attention, heard the remonstrances of his master with a kind of sullen disdain, and after serving two years of his time made his escape, and at the next town enlisted himself a soldier; not doubting but that, by his military merit and the fortune of war, he should return a general officer, to the confusion of those who would have buried him in the obscurity of a counting-house. He found means effectually to elude the inquiries of his

friends, as it was of the utmost importance to prevent their endeavours to ruin his project, and obstruct his advancement.

He was sent, with other recruits, to London, and soon after quartered with the rest of his company in a part of the country, which was so remote from all with whom he had any connection, that he no longer dreaded a discovery.

It happened that he went one day to the house of a neighbouring gentleman with his comrade, who was become acquainted with the chamber-maid, and by her interest admitted into the kitchen. This gentleman, whose age was something more than sixty, had been about two years married to a second wife, a young woman who had been well educated, and lived in the polite world, but had no fortune. By his first wife, who had been dead about ten years, he had several children; the youngest was a daughter who had just entered her seventeenth year; she was very tall for her age, had a fine complexion, good features, and was well shaped; but her father, whose affection for her was mere instinct, as much as that of a brute for its young, utterly neglected her education. It was impossible for him, he said, to live without her; and as he could not afford to have her attended by a governess and proper masters

in a place so remote from London, she was suffered to continue illiterate and unpolished; she knew no entertainment higher than a game at romps with the servants; she became their confident, and trusted them in return, nor did she think herself happy any where but in the kitchen.

As the capricious fondness of her father had never conciliated her affection, she perceived it abate upon his marriage without regret. She suffered no restraint from her new mother, who observed, with a secret satisfaction, that Miss had been used to hide herself from visitors, as neither knowing how to behave, nor being fit to be seen, and chose rather to conceal her defects by excluding her from company, than to supply them by putting her to a boarding school.

Miss, who had been told by Betty that she expected her sweetheart, and that they were to be merry, stole down stairs, and, without scruple, made one in a party at blindman's buff. The soldier of fortune was struck with her person, and discovered, or thought he discovered, in the simplicity of nature, some graces which are polished away by the labour of art. However, nothing that had the appearance of an adventure could be indifferent to him; and his vanity was flattered by the hope of carrying off a young lady, under the disguise

7
of a common soldier, without revealing his birth, or boasting of his expectations.

In this attempt he became very assiduous, and succeeded. The company being ordered to another place, Betty and her young mistress departed early in the morning with their gallants; and there being a privileged chapel in the next town, they were married.

The old gentleman, as soon as he was informed that his daughter was missing, made so diligent and scrupulous an inquiry after her, that he learned with whom and which way she was gone: he mounted his horse, and pursued her, not without curses and imprecations; discovering rather the transports of rage than the emotion of tenderness, and resenting her offence rather as the rebellion of a slave than the disobedience of a child. He did not, however, overtake them till after they were married; of which when he was informed by the husband, he turned from him with expressions of brutality and indignation, swearing never to forgive a fault which he had taken no care to prevent.

The young couple, notwithstanding their union frequently doubled their distress, still continued fond of each other. The spirit of enterprize and the hope of presumption were not yet quelled in the young soldier; and he received orders to attend king William, when

he went to the siege of Namur, with exultation and transport, believing his elevation to independance and distinction as certain as if he had been going to take possession of a title and estate. His wife, as she had no means of subsistence in his absence, procured a passage with him. When she came on shore, and mingled with the crowd that followed the camp, wretches who without compunction wade in human blood to strip the dying and the dead, to whom horror is become familiar and compassion impossible, she was terrified: the discourse of the women, rude and unpolished as she was, covered her with confusion; and the brutal behaviour of the men filled her with indignation and disgust: her maid Betty, who had also attended her husband, was the only person with whom she could converse.

In the mean time she found it difficult to subsist; but accidentally hearing the name of an officer, whom she remembered to have visited her mother soon after her marriage, she applied to him, told him her name, and requested that he would afford her his protection, and permit her to take care of his linen. With this request the captain complied; her circumstances became less distressed, and her mind more easy: but new calamity suddenly overtook her; she saw her husband march to an engagement in the morning, and saw him

brought back desperately wounded at night. The next day he was removed in a waggon, with many others who were in the same condition, to a place of greater safety, at the distance of about three leagues, where proper care might be taken of their wounds. She intreated the captain to let her go in the waggon with him; but to this he could not consent, because the waggon would be filled with those who neither were able to walk, nor could be left behind. He promised, however, that if she would stay till the next day, he would endeavour to procure her a passage; but she chose rather to follow the waggon on foot, than to be absent from her husband. She could not, however, keep pace with it, and she reached the hospital but just time enough to kneel down by him upon some clean straw, to see him sink under the last agony, and hear the groan that is repeated no more. The fatigue of the journey, and the perturbation of her mind, threw her upon a sick bed, and she lived but to give birth to Melissa, who was thus in the most helpless state, left without father, mother, or friend, in a foreign country, in circumstances which could afford no hope of reward to the tenderness that should attempt the preservation of her life, and among persons who were become obdurate and insensible, by having been long used to see every species of distress.

It happened that, among those whom accident or distress had brought together at the birth of Melissa, there was a young woman, whose husband had fallen in the late engagement, and who a few days before had lost a little boy that she suckled. This person, rather perhaps to relieve herself from an inconveniency, than in compassion to the orphan, put it to her breast: but whatever was her motive, she believed that the affording sustenance to the living, conferred a right to the apparel of the dead, of which she therefore took possession; but in searching her pocket she found only a thimble, the remains of a pocket looking-glass, about the value of a penny in Dutch money, and the certificate of her marriage. The paper, which she could not read, she gave afterwards to the captain, who was touched with pity at the relation which an inquiry after his laundress produced. He commended the woman who had preserved the infant, and put her into the place of its mother. This encouraged her to continue her care of it till the captain returned to England, with whom she also returned, and became his servant.

This gentleman, as soon as he had settled his immediate concerns, sent Melissa under the care of her nurse to her grandfather; and inclosed the certificate of her mother's marriage

in a letter containing an account of her death; and the means by which the infant had been preserved. He knew that those who have been once dear to us, by whatever offence they may have alienated our affection when living, are generally remembered with tenderness when dead; and that after the grave has sheltered them from our resentment, and rendered reconciliation impossible, we often regret as severe that conduct which before we approved as just: he, therefore, hoped, that the parental fondness which an old man had once felt for his daughter, would revive at the sight of her offspring; that the memory of her fault would be lost in the sense of her misfortunes; and that he would endeavour to atone for that inexorable resentment which produced them, by cherishing a life to which she had, as it were, transferred her own. But in these expectations, however reasonable, he was mistaken. The old man, when he was informed by the messenger that the child she held in her arms was his grand-daughter, whom she was come to put under his protection, refused to examine the contents of the letter, and dismissed her with menaces and insult. The knowledge of every uncommon event soon becomes general in a country town. An uncle of Melissa's, heard this fresh instance of his brutality with grief and indignation; he sent

immediately for the child and the letter, and assured the servant that his niece should want nothing which he could bestow: to bestow much, indeed, was not in his power, for his whole support was a little farm which he rented of the 'squire: but as he was a good economist and had no children of his own, he lived decently; nor did he throw away content, because his father had denied him affluence.

Melissa, who was compassionated for her mother's misfortunes, of which her uncle had been particularly informed by her maid Betty, who had returned a widow to her friends in the country, was not less beloved for her own good qualities; she was taught to read and write, and work at her needle, as soon as she was able to learn; and she was taken notice of by all the gentry, as the prettiest girl in the place: but her aunt died when she was about eleven years old, and before she was thirteen she lost her uncle.

She was now again thrown back upon the world, still helpless, though her wants were increased, and wretched in proportion as she had known happiness: she looked back with anguish, and forward with distraction; a fit of crying had just afforded her a momentary relief, when the 'squire, who had been informed of the death of his tenant, sent for her

to his house. This gentleman had heard her story from her uncle, and was unwilling that a life which had been preserved almost by miracle, should at last be abandoned to misery; he therefore determined to receive her into his family, not as a servant but as a companion to his daughter, a young lady finely accomplished, and now about fifteen. The old gentleman was touched with her distress, and miss received her with great tenderness and complacency: she wiped away her tears, and of the intolerable anguish of her mind, nothing remained but a tender remembrance of her uncle, whom she loved and revered as a parent. She had now courage to examine the contents of a little box which he had put into her hand just before he expired; she found in it only the certificate of her mother's marriage, inclosed in the captain's letter, and an account of the events that have been before related, which her uncle had put down as they came to his knowledge: the train of mournful ideas that now rushed upon her mind, raised emotions which, if they could not be suppressed by reason, were soon destroyed by their own violence.

In this family, which in a few weeks after returned to London, Melissa soon became a favourite: the good 'squire seemed to consider her as his child, and miss as her sister; she

was taught dancing and music, introduced to the best company, elegantly dressed, and allowed such sums as were necessary for trivial expences. Youth seldom suffers the dread of to-morrow to intrude upon the enjoyment of to-day, but rather regards present felicity as the pledge of future: Melissa was probably as happy as if she had been in the actual possession of a fortune, that, to the ease and splendor which she enjoyed already, would have added stability and independence.

She was now in her eighteenth year, and the only son of her benefactor was just come from the university to spend the winter with his father in town. He was charmed with her person, behaviour, and discourse; and what he could not but admire, he took every opportunity to commend. She soon perceived that he shewed particular marks of respect to her, when he thought they would not be perceived by others; and that he endeavoured to recommend himself by an officious assiduity, and a diligent attention to the most minute circumstances that might contribute to her pleasure. But this behaviour of the young gentleman, however it might gratify her vanity, could not fail to alarm her fear: she foresaw, that if what she had remarked in his conduct should be perceived by his father or sister, the peace of the family would be destroyed; and

that she must either be shipwrecked in the storm, or thrown overboard to appease it. She therefore affected not to perceive, that more than a general complaisance was intended by her lover; and hoped that he would thus be discouraged from making an explicit declaration: but though he was mortified at her disregard of that which he knew she could not but see, yet he determined to address her in such terms as should not leave this provoking neutrality in her power: though he revered her virtue, yet he feared too much the anger of his father, to think of making her his wife; and he was too deeply enamoured of her beauty, to relinquish his hopes of possessing her as a mistress. An opportunity for the execution of his purpose was not long wanting: she received his general professions of love with levity and merriment: but when she perceived that his view was to seduce her she burst into tears, and fell back in an agony unable to speak. He was immediately touched with grief and remorse; his tenderness was alarmed at her distress, and his esteem increased by her virtue; he caught her in his arms, and as an atonement for the insult she had received, he offered her marriage: but as her chastity would not suffer her to become his mistress, neither would her gratitude permit her to become his wife; and as soon

as she was sufficiently recollected, she intreated him never more to urge her to violate the obligation she was under either to herself or to her benefactor. "Would not," said she, "the presence of a wretch whom you had seduced from innocence and peace to remorse and guilt, perpetually upbraid you? and would you not always fear to be betrayed by a wife, whose fidelity no kindness could secure; who had broken all the bands that restrain the generous and the good; and who by an act of the most flagitious ingratitude had at once reached the pinnacle of guilt, to which others ascend by imperceptible gradations?"

These objections, though they could neither be obviated nor evaded, had not the desired effect: he loved with greater delicacy, but with more ardour; and as he could not always forbear expostulations, neither could she always silence them in such a manner as might most effectually prevent their being repeated. Such was one morning the situation of the two lovers: he had taken her hand into his, and was speaking with great eagerness; while she regarded him with a kind of timorous complacency, and listened to him with an attention which her heart condemned: his father, in this tender moment, in which their powers of perception were mutually engrossed by each other, came near enough to hear that his heir

had made proposals of marriage, and retired without their knowledge.

As he did not dream that such a proposal could possibly be rejected by a girl in Melissa's situation, he took his measures accordingly. It was near the time in which his family had been used to remove into the country: he, therefore, gave orders, that every thing should be immediately prepared for the journey, and that the coach should be ready at six the next morning, a man and horse being dispatched in the mean time to give notice of their arrival. The young folks were a little surprised at this sudden removal; but though the 'squire was a good-natured man, yet as he governed his family with high authority, and as they perceived something had offended him, they did not inquire the reason, nor indeed did they suspect it. Melissa packed up her things as usual: and in the morning the young gentleman and his sister having by their father's orders got into the coach, he called Melissa into the parlour; where in a few words, but with great acrimony, he reproached her with having formed a design to marry his son without his consent, an act of ingratitude which he said justified him in upbraiding her with the favours which he had already conferred upon her, and in a resolution he had taken that a bank bill of fifty pounds, which he then put

into her hand, should be the last : adding, that he expected she should within one week leave his house. To this heavy charge she was not in a condition to reply : nor did he stay to see whether she would attempt it, but hastily got into the coach, which immediately drove from the door.

Thus was Melissa a third time, by a sudden and unexpected desertion, exposed to penury and distress, with this aggravation, that ease and affluence were become habitual ; and that though she was not so helpless as at the death of her uncle, she was exposed to yet greater danger ; for few that have been used to slumber upon down, and wake to festivity, can resist the allurements of vice, which still offers ease and plenty, when the alternative are a flock bed and a garret, short meals, coarse apparel, and perpetual labour.

Melissa, as soon as she had recovered from the stupor which had seized her upon so astonishing and dreadful a change of fortune, determined not to accept the bounty of a person who imagined her to be unworthy of it ; nor to attempt her justification, while it would render her veracity suspected, and appear to proceed only from the hope of being restored to a state of splendid dependance, from which jealousy or caprice might again at any time remove her, without cause and without notice :

she had not, indeed, any hope of being ever able to defend herself against her accuser upon equal terms; nor did she know how to subsist a single day, when she had returned his bill and quitted his house: yet such was the dignity of her spirit, that she immediately inclosed it in a blank cover, directed to him at his country seat, and calling up the maid who had been left to take care of the house, sent her immediately with it to the Post-office. The tears then burst out, which the agitation of her mind had before restrained; and when the servant returned, she told her all that had happened, and asked her advice what she should do. The girl, after the first emotions of wonder and pity had subsided, told her that she had a sister who lodged in a reputable house, and took in plain-work, to whom she would be welcome, as she could assist her in her business, of which she had often more than she could do; and with whom she might continue till some more eligible situation could be obtained. Melissa listened to this proposal as to the voice of Heaven; her mind was suddenly relieved from the most tormenting perplexity, and from the dread of wandering about without money or employment, she was in haste to secure her good fortune, and felt some degree of pain lest she should lose it by the earlier application of another; she there-

fore went immediately with the maid to her sister, with whom it was soon agreed that Melissa should work for her board and lodging; for she would not consent to accept as a gift, that which she could by any means deserve as a payment.

While Melissa was a journeywoman to a person, who but a few weeks before would have regarded her with envy, and approached her with confusion; it happened that a suit of linen was brought from the milliner's wrapped up in a news-paper: the linen was put into the work-basket, and the paper being thrown carelessly about, Melissa at last caught it up, and was about to read it; but perceiving that it had been published a fortnight, was just going to put it into the fire, when by an accidental glance she saw her father's name: this immediately engaged her attention, and with great perturbation of mind she read an advertisement, in which her father, said to have left his friends about eighteen years before, and to have entered either into the army or the navy, was directed to apply to a person in Staples Inn, who could inform him of something greatly to his advantage. To this person Melissa applied with all the ardor of curiosity, and all the tumult of expectation: she was informed that the elder brother of the person mentioned in the advertisement was

lately dead, unmarried; that he was possessed of fifteen hundred a year, five hundred of which had descended to him from his father, and one thousand had been left him by an uncle, which upon his death, there being no male heir, had been claimed by his sisters; but that a person who had lived with him many years, and who had been treated by the supposed heiresses with too much severity and contempt, had in the bitterness of her resentment published the advertisement, having heard in the family that there was a younger brother abroad.

The conflict of different passions that were at once excited with uncommon violence in the breast of Melissa, deprived her for a time of the power of reflection; and when she became more calm, she knew not by what method to attempt the recovery of her right: her mind was bewildered amidst a thousand possibilities, and distressed by the apprehension that all might prove ineffectual. After much thought and many projects, she recollected that the captain, whose servant brought her to England, could probably afford her more assistance than any other person: as he had been often pointed out to her in public places by the 'squire, to whom her story was well known, she was acquainted with his person, and knew that within a few months he was

alive: she soon obtained directions to his house, and being readily admitted to a conference, she told him, with as much presence of mind as she could, that she was the person whom his compassion had contributed to preserve when an infant, in confirmation of which she produced his letter, and the certificate which it inclosed; that by the death of her father's elder brother, whose family she had never known, she was become intitled to a very considerable estate; but that she knew not what evidence would be necessary to support her claim, how such evidence was to be produced, nor with whom to intrust the management of an affair in which wealth and influence would be employed against her. The old captain received her with that easy politeness which is almost peculiar to his profession, and with a warmth of benevolence that is seldom found in any: he congratulated her upon so happy and unexpected an event; and without the parade of ostentatious liberality, without extorting an explicit confession of her indigence, he gave her a letter to his lawyer, in whom he said she might with the utmost security confide, and with whom she would have nothing more to do than to tell her story; "And do not," said he, "doubt of success, for I will be ready to testify what I know of the affair, whenever I shall be called

upon; and the woman who was present at your birth, and brought you over, still lives with me, and upon this occasion may do you signal service."

Melissa departed, melted with gratitude and elated with hope. The gentleman, to whom the captain's letter was a recommendation, prosecuted her claim with so much skill and assiduity, that within a few months she was put into the possession of her estate. Her first care was to wait upon the captain, to whom she now owed not only life but a fortune: he received her acknowledgments with a pleasure, which only those who merit it can enjoy; and insisted that she should draw upon him for such sums as she should want before her rents became due. She then took very handsome ready-furnished lodgings, and determined immediately to justify her conduct to the 'squire, whose kindness she still remembered, and whose resentment she had forgiven. With this view she set out in a chariot and six, attended by two servants in livery on horseback, and proceeded to his country-seat, from whence the family was not returned: she had lain at an inn within six miles of the place, and when the chariot drove up to the door, as it was early in the morning, she could perceive the servants run to and fro in a hurry, and the young lady and her brother gazing through the

window to see if they knew the livery: she remarked every circumstance which denoted her own importance with exultation; and enjoyed the solicitude which her presence produced among those, from whose society she had so lately been driven with disdain and indignation.

She now increased their wonder, by sending in a servant to acquaint the old gentleman, that a lady desired to speak with him about urgent business, which would not however long detain him: he courteously invited the lady to honour him with her commands, hasted into his best parlour, adjusted his wig, and put himself in the best order to receive her: she alighted, and displayed a very rich undress, which corresponded with the elegance of her chariot, and the modish appearance of her servants. She contrived to hide her face as she went up the walk, that she might not be known too soon; and was immediately introduced to her old friend, to whom she soon discovered herself to his great astonishment, and before he had recovered his presence of mind, she addressed him to this effect, "You see, sir, an orphan who is under the greatest obligations to your bounty, but who has been equally injured by your suspicions. When I was a dependent upon your liberality, I would not assert my innocence, because I could not bear

to be suspected of falsehood : but I assert it now I am the possessor of a paternal estate, because I cannot bear to be suspected of ingratitude : that your son pressed me to marry him, is true ; but it is also true that I refused him, because I would not disappoint your hopes, and impoverish your posterity."

The old gentleman's confusion was increased by the wonders that crowded upon him : he first made some attempts to apologize for his suspicions with awkwardness and hesitation ; then doubting the truth of appearance, he broke off abruptly, and remained silent ; then reproaching himself, he began to congratulate her upon her good fortune, and again desisted before he had finished the compliment. Melissa perceived his perplexity, and guessed the cause ; she was, therefore, about to account more particularly for the sudden change of her circumstances, but Miss, whose maid had brought her intelligence from the servants, that the lady's name who was with her papa was Melissa, and that she was lately come to a great estate by the death of her uncle, could no longer restrain the impatience of her affection and joy : she rushed into the room, and fell upon her neck, with a transport that can only be felt by friendship, and expressed by tears. When this tender silence was past, the scruples of doubt were soon obviated ; the

reconciliation was reciprocal and sincere; the father led out his guest, and presented her to his son with an apology for his conduct to them both.

Melissa had bespoke a dinner and beds at the inn, but she was not suffered to return. Within a few weeks she became the daughter of her friend, who gave her hand to his son, with whom she shared many years that happiness which is the reward of virtue. They had several children, but none survived them: and Melissa, upon the death of her husband, which happened about seven years ago, retired wholly from town to her estate in the country, where she lived beloved, and died in peace.

THE MISCHIEFS

OF

SUPERSTITION AND INFIDELITY.

THE

HISTORY OF FIDELIA.

I SHALL make no apology for the trouble I am about to give you, since I am sure the motives that induce me to give it, will have as much weight with you as they have with me: I shall therefore, without further preface, relate to you the events of a life, which, however insignificant and unentertaining, affords a lesson of the highest importance; a lesson, the value of which I have experienced, and may, therefore, recommend.

I am the daughter of a gentleman of good family, who, as he was a younger brother, purchased with the portion that was allotted him, a genteel post under the government. My mother died when I was but twelve years old; and

my father, who was excessively fond of me, determined to be himself my preceptor, and to take care that my natural genius, which his partiality made him think above the common rank, should not want the improvements of a liberal education.

He was a man of sense, with a tolerable share of learning. In his youth he had been a free-liver, and perhaps for that reason took some pains to become what is called a free-thinker. But whatever fashionable frailties he might formerly have allowed in himself, he was now in advanced life, and had at least worldly wisdom enough to know, that it was necessary his daughter should be restrained from those liberties, which he had looked upon as trifling errors in his own conduct. He therefore laboured with great application to inculcate in me the love of order, the beauty of moral rectitude, and the happiness and self-reward of virtue; but at the same time professed it his design to free my mind from vulgar prejudices and superstition; for so he called *revealed religion*. As I was urged to chuse virtue, and reject vice, from motives which had no necessary connection with immortality, I was not led to consider a future state either with hope or fear: my father indeed, when I urged him upon that subject, always intimated that the doctrine of immortality, whether true or

false, ought not at all to influence my conduct; or interrupt my peace; because the virtue which secured happiness in the present state, would also secure it in a future: a future state, therefore, I wholly disregarded, and, to confess a truth, disbelieved: for I thought I could plainly discover that it was disbelieved by my father, though he had not thought fit explicitly to declare his sentiments. As I had no very turbulent passions, a ductile and good disposition, and the highest reverence for his understanding, as well as the tenderest affection for him, he found it an easy task to make me adopt every sentiment and opinion which he proposed to me as his own; especially, as he took care to support his principles by the authority and arguments of the best writers against Christianity. At the age of twenty I was called upon to make use of all the philosophy I had been taught, by his death; which not only deprived me of a parent I most ardently loved, but with him of all the ease and affluence to which I had been accustomed. His income was only for life, and he had rather lived beyond than within it; consequently, there was nothing left for me but the pride and helplessness of genteel life, a taste for every thing elegant, and a delicacy and sensibility that has doubled all my sufferings. In this distress a brother of my mother's, who was grown rich in trade, received me into his house;

and declared he would take the same care of me as if I had been his own child. When the first transports of my grief were abated, I found myself in an easy situation, and from the natural cheerfulness of my temper, I was beginning once more to taste of happiness. My uncle, who was a man of a narrow understanding and illiberal education, was a little disgusted with me for employing so much of my time in reading; but still more so, when happening to examine my books, he found by the titles that some of them were what he called blasphemy, and tended, as he imagined, to make me an Atheist. I endeavoured to explain my principles, which I thought beneath the dignity of virtue to disguise or disavow; but as I never could make him conceive any difference between a Deist and an Atheist, my arguments only served to confirm him in the opinion that I was a wicked wretch, who, in his own phrase, believed neither God nor Devil. As he was really a good man, and heartily zealous for the established faith, though more from habit and prejudice than reason, my errors gave him great affliction: I perceived it with the utmost concern; I perceived too, that he looked upon me with a degree of abhorrence mixed with pity, and that I was wholly indebted to his good nature for that protection, which I had flattered myself I should owe to his love. I comforted myself, how-

ever, with my own integrity, and even felt a conscious pride in suffering this persecution from ignorance and folly, only because I was superior to vulgar errors and popular superstition; and that Christianity deserved these appellations, I was not more convinced by my father's arguments than my uncle's conduct, who, as his zeal was not according to knowledge, was by no means qualified to "adorn the doctrine which he professed to believe."

I had lived a few months under the painful sensibility of receiving continual benefits from a person whose esteem and affection I had lost, when my uncle one day came into my chamber, and after preparing me for some unexpected good fortune, told me, he had just had a proposal of marriage for me from a man to whom I could not possibly have any objection. He then named a merchant, with whom I had often been in company at his table. As the man was neither old nor ugly, had a large fortune and a fair character, my uncle thought himself sufficiently authorized to pronounce as he did, that I could not possibly have any objection to him. An objection, however, I had, which I told my uncle was to me insuperable; it was, that the person whom he proposed to me as the companion, the guide, and director of my whole life, to whom I was to vow not only obedience but love, had nothing in him that could

ever engage my affection: his understanding was low, his sentiments mean and indelicate, and his manner unpolite and unpleasing.—
“What stuff is all this,” interrupted my uncle, “sentiments indelicate! unpolite! his understanding, forsooth, not equal to your own! Ah, child, if you had less romance, conceit, and arrogance, and more true discretion and prudence, it would do you more good than all the fine books you have confounded your poor head with, and what is worse, perhaps, ruined your poor soul. I own, it went a little against my conscience to accept my honest friend’s kind offer, and give him such a pagan for his wife. But how know I whether the believing husband may not convert the unbelieving wife?—As to your flighty objections, they are such nonsense, that I wonder you can suppose me fool enough to be deceived by them. No, child; wise as you are, you cannot impose upon a man who has lived as many years in the world as I have. I see your motive; you have some infidel libertine rake in your eye, with whom you would go headlong to perdition. But I shall take care not to have your soul to answer for, as well as your person. Either I shall dispose of you to an honest man, that may, by God’s blessing, convert you; or you shall dispose of yourself how you please for me; for I disclaim all further care or trouble about you: so I

leave you to consider, whether or no the kindness I have shewn you, entitles me to some little influence over you, and whether you chuse to seek protection where you can find it, or accept of the happy lot providence has cut out for you."

He left me at the close of this fine harangue, and I seriously set myself to consider as he bade me, which of the two states he had set before me I ought to chuse; to submit to a legal sort of prostitution, with the additional weight of perjury on my conscience, or to expose myself to all the distresses of friendless poverty and unprotected youth. After some hours of deliberation, I determined on the latter, and that more from principle than inclination; for though my delicacy would have suffered extremely in accepting a husband, at least indifferent to me; yet as my heart was perfectly disengaged, and my temper naturally easy, I thought I could have been less unhappy in following my uncle's advice, than I might probably be by rejecting it: but then I must have submitted to an action I could not think justifiable, in order to avoid mere external distresses. This would not have been philosophical. I had always been taught, that virtue was of itself sufficient to happiness; and that those things which are generally esteemed evils, could have no power to disturb the felicity of a mind.

governed by the eternal rule of right, and truly enamoured of the charms of moral beauty. I resolved, therefore, to run all risks, rather than depart from this glorious principle; I felt myself raised by the trial, and exulted in the opportunity of shewing my contempt of the smiles or frowns of fortune, and of proving the power of virtue to sustain the soul under all accidental circumstances of distress.

I communicated my resolution to my uncle, assuring him at the same time of my everlasting gratitude and respect, and that nothing should have induced me to offend or disobey him, but his requiring me to do what my reason and conscience disapproved; that supposing the advantages of riches to be really as great as he believed, yet still those of virtue were greater, and I could not resolve to purchase the one by a violation of the other; that a false vow was certainly criminal; and that it would be doing an act of the greatest injustice, to enter into so solemn an engagement without the power of fulfilling it; that my affections did not depend on my own will; and that no man should possess my person, who could not obtain the first place in my heart.

I was surprised that my uncle's impatience had permitted me to go on thus far; but looking in his face, I perceived that passion had kept him silent. At length the gathering storm

burst over my head in a torrent of reproaches: My reasons were condemned as romantic absurdities, which I could not myself believe; I was accused of designing to deceive, and to throw myself away on some worthless fellow, whose principles were as bad as my own. It was in vain for me to assert that I had no such design, nor any inclination to marry at all; my uncle could sooner have believed the grossest contradiction, than that a young woman could so strenuously refuse one man without being prepossessed in favour of another. As I thought myself injured by his accusations and tyranny, I gave over the attempt to mitigate his anger. He appealed to Heaven for the justice of his resentment, and against my ingratitude and rebellion; and then giving me a note of fifty pounds, which he said would keep me from immediate indigence, he bade me leave his house, and see his face no more. I bowed in sign of obedience; and collecting all my dignity and resolution, I arose, thanked him for his past benefits, and with a low court'sey left the room.

In less than an hour I departed with my little wardrobe to the house of a person who had formerly been my father's servant, and who now kept a shop and let lodgings. From hence I went the next day to visit my father's nephew, who was in possession of the family estate, and had lately married a lady of great

fortune. He was a young gentleman of good parts, his principles the same as my father's, though his practice had not been quite agreeable to the strict rules of morality: however, setting aside a few of those vices which are looked upon as genteel accomplishments in young fellows of fortune, I thought him a good sort of man; and as we had always lived in great kindness, I doubted not that I should find him my friend, and meet with approbation and encouragement at least, if not assistance from him. I told him my story, and the reasons that had determined me to the refusal that had incurred my uncle's displeasure. But how was I disappointed, when, instead of the applause I expected for my heroic virtue and unmerited persecutions, I perceived a smile of contempt on his face, when he interrupted me in the following manner: "And what, my dear cousin, could make a woman of your sense behave so like an idiot: What! forfeit all your hopes from your uncle, refuse an excellent match, and reduce yourself to beggary, because truly you were not in love? Surely, one might have expected better from you even at fifteen. Who is it, pray, that marries the person of their choice? For my own part, who have rather a better title to please myself with a good fifteen hundred a-year, than you who have not a shilling, I

found it would not do, and that there was something more to be sought after in a wife than a pretty face or a genius? Do you think I cared three farthings for the woman I married? No, faith. But he thirty thousand pounds were worth having."—I was too angry to attempt confuting his arguments; but bursting from his hold, told him I would take care not to give him a second opportunity of insulting my distress, and affronting my understanding; and so left his house with a resolution never to enter it again.

I went home mortified and disappointed. My spirits sunk into a dejection, which took from me for many days all inclination to stir out of my lodging, or to see a human face. At length I resolved to try, whether indigence and friendship were really incompatible, and whether I should meet with the same treatment from a female friend, whose affection had been the principal pleasure of my youth. Surely, thought I, the gentle Amanda, whose heart seems capable of every tender and generous sentiment; will do justice to the innocence and integrity of her unfortunate friend; her tenderness will encourage my virtue and animate my fortitude, her praises and endearments will compensate all my hardships. Amanda was a single woman of a moderate independent fortune, which I heard she was going to bestow

on a young officer, who had little or nothing besides his commission. I had no doubt of her approbation of my refusing a mercenary match, since she herself had chosen from motives so opposite to those which are called prudent. She had been in the country some months, so that my misfortunes had not reached her ear till I myself related them to her. She heard me with great attention, and answered me with politeness enough, but with a coldness that chilled my very heart. "You are sensible, my dear Fidelia," said she, "that I never pretended to set my understanding in competition with yours. I knew my own inferiority; and though many of your notions and opinions appeared to me very strange and particular, I never attempted to dispute them with you. To be sure, you know best; but it seems to me a very odd conduct for one in your situation to give offence to so good an uncle; first by maintaining doctrines which may be very true for ought I know, but which are very contrary to the received opinions we are brought up in, and therefore are apt to shock a common understanding; and secondly, to renounce his protection, and throw yourself into the wide world, rather than marry the man he chose for you; to whom, after all, I do not find you had any real objection, nor any antipathy for his person."—Antipathy, my

dear! said I; are there not many degrees between loving and honouring a man preferably to all others, and beholding him with abhorrence and aversion? The first is, in my opinion, the duty of a wife, a duty voluntarily taken upon herself, and engaged in under the most solemn contract. As to the difficulties that may attend my friendless, unprovided state, since they are the consequences of a virtuous action, they cannot really be evils, nor can they disturb that happiness which is the gift of virtue. "I am heartily glad," answered she, "that you have found the art of making yourself happy by the force of imagination! I wish your enthusiasm may continue; and that you may still be further convinced, by your own experience, of the folly of mankind, in supposing poverty and disgrace to be evils."

I was cut to the soul by the unkind manner which accompanied this sarcasm, and was going to remonstrate against her unfriendly treatment, when her lover came in with another gentleman, who, in spite of my full heart, engaged my attention, and for a while made me forget the stings of unkindness. The beauty and gracefulness of his person caught my eye, and the politeness of his address and the elegance of his compliments soon prejudiced me in favour of his understanding. He was introduced by the Captain to Amanda as his

most intimate friend, and seemed desirous to give credit to his friend's judgment by making himself as agreeable as possible. He succeeded so well, that Amanda was wholly engrossed by the pleasure of his conversation, and the care of entertaining her lover and her new guest; her face brightened, and her good humour returned. When I rose to leave her, she pressed me so earnestly to stay dinner, that I could not, without discovering how much I resented her behaviour, refuse. This, however, I should probably have done, as I was naturally disposed to show every sentiment of my heart, had not a secret wish arose there to know a little more of this agreeable stranger. This inclined me to think it prudent to conceal my resentment, and to accept the civilities of Amanda. The conversation grew more and more pleasing; I took my share in it, and had more than my share of the charming stranger's notice and attention. As we all grew more and more unreserved, Amanda dropt hints in the course of the conversation relating to my story, my sentiments, and unhappy situation. Sir George Freelove, for that was the young gentleman's name, listened greedily to all that was said of me, and seemed to eye me with earnest curiosity as well as admiration. We did not part till it was late, and Sir George insisted on attending me to my lodgings: I

strongly refused it, not without a sensation which more properly belonged to the female than the philosopher, and which I condemned in myself as arising from dishonest pride. I could not without pain suffer the polite Sir George, upon so short an acquaintance, to discover the meanness of my abode. To avoid this, I sent for a chair; but was confused to find, that Sir George and his servants prepared to attend it on foot by way of guard; it was in vain to dispute; he himself walked before, and his servants followed it. I was covered with blushes, when, after all this parade, he banded me in at the little shop door, and took leave with as profound respect as if he had guarded me to a palace. A thousand different thoughts kept me from closing my eyes that night. The behaviour of Amanda wounded me to the soul: I found that I must look on her as no more than a common acquaintance; and that the world did not contain one person whom I could call my friend. My heart felt desolate and forlorn; I knew not what course to take for my future subsistence; the pain which my pride had just given me, convinced me that I was far from having conquered the passions of humanity, and that I should feel too sensibly all the mortifications which attend on poverty. I determined, however, to subdue this pride, and called to my assistance the examples of

antient sages and philosophers, who despised riches and honours, and felt no inconveniences from the malice of fortune. I had almost reasoned myself into a contempt for the world, and fancied myself superior to its smiles or frowns; when the idea of Sir George Freelove rushed upon my mind, and destroyed at once the whole force of my reasoning. I found that however I might disregard the rest of the world, I could not be indifferent to his opinion; and the thought of being despised by him was insupportable. I recollected that my condition was extremely different from that of an old philosopher, whose rags perhaps were the means of gratifying his pride, by attracting the notice and respect of mankind: at least, the philosopher's schemes and wishes were very different from those which at that time were taking possession of my heart. The looks and behaviour of Sir George left me no doubt that I had made as deep an impression in his favour, as he had done in mine. I could not bear to lose the ground I had gained, and to throw myself into a state below his notice. I scorned the thought of imposing on him with regard to my circumstances, in case he should really have had favourable intentions for me; yet to disgrace myself for ever in his eye, by submitting to servitude, or any low way of

supporting myself, was what I could not bring myself to resolve on.

In the midst of these reflections I was surprised the next morning by a visit from Sir George. He made respectful apologies for the liberty he took; told me he had learnt from my friend, that the unkindness and tyranny of an uncle had cast me into uneasy circumstances; and that he could not know, that so much beauty and merit were so unworthily treated by fortune, without earnestly wishing to be the instrument of doing me more justice. He entreated me to add dignity and value to his life, by making it conducive to the happiness of mine; and was going on with the most fervent offers of service, when I interrupted him by saying, that there was nothing in his power that I could with honour accept, by which my life could be made happier, but that respect which was due to me as a woman and a gentlewoman, and which ought to have prevented such offers of service from a stranger, as could only be justified by a long experienced friendship; that I was not in a situation to receive visits, and must decline his acquaintance, which nevertheless in a happier part of my life would have given me pleasure.

He now had recourse to all the arts of his sex, imputing his too great freedom to the force of his passion, protesting the most invio-

lable respect, and imploring on his knees, and even with tears, that I would not punish him so severely as to deny him the liberty of seeing me, and making himself more and more worthy of my esteem. My weak heart was but too much touched by his artifices, and I had only just fortitude enough to persevere in refusing his visits, and to insist on his leaving me, which at last he did; but it was after such a profusion of tenderness, prayers, and protestations, that it was some time before I could recal my reason enough to reflect on the whole of his behaviour, and on my own situation, which compared, left me but little doubt of his dishonourable views.

I determined never more to admit him to my presence, and accordingly gave orders to be denied if he came again. My reason applauded, but my heart reproached me, and heavily repined at the rigid determination of prudence. I knew that I acted rightly, and I expected that that consciousness would make me happy, but I found it otherwise; I was wretched beyond what I had ever felt or formed any idea of; I discovered that my heart was entangled in a passion which must for ever be combated, or indulged at the expence of virtue. I now considered riches as truly desirable, since they would have placed me above disgraceful attempts, and given me reasonable

hopes of becoming the wife of Sir George. Frelove. I was discontented and unhappy, but surprised and disappointed to find myself so, since hitherto I had no one criminal action to reproach myself with; on the contrary, my difficulties were all owing to my regard for virtue.

I resolved, however, to try still father the power of virtue to confer happiness, to go on in my obedience to her laws, and patiently wait for the good effects of it. But I had stronger difficulties to go through than any I had yet experienced. Sir George was too much practised in the arts of seduction, to be discouraged by a first repulse: every day produced either some new attempt to see me, or a letter full of the most passionate protestations and entreaties for pardon and favour. It was in vain I gave orders that no more letters should be taken in from him; he had so many different contrivances to convey them, and directed them in hand so unlike, that I was surprised into reading them contrary to my real intentions. Every time I stirred out he was sure to be in my way, and to employ the most artful tongue that ever ensnared the heart of woman, in blinding my reason and awakening my passions.

My virtue, however, did not yet give way, but my peace of mind was utterly destroyed. Whenever I was with him, I summoned all my

fortitude, and constantly repeated my commands that he should avoid me. His disobedience called for my resentment, and, in spite of my melting heart, I armed my eyes with anger, and treated him with as much disdain as I thought his unworthy designs deserved. But the moment he left me, all my resolution forsook me. I repined at my fate: I even murmured against the Sovereign Ruler of all things, for making me subject to passions which I could not subdue, yet must not indulge: I compared my own situation with that of my libertine cousin, whose pernicious arguments I had heard with horror and detestation, who gave the reins to every desire, whose house was the seat of plenty, mirth, and delight, whose face was ever covered with smiles, and whose heart seemed free from sorrow and care. Is not this man, said I, happier than I am? And if so, where is the worth of virtue? Have I not sacrificed to her my fortune and my friends? Do I not daily sacrifice to her my darling inclination? Yet what is the compensation she offers me? What are my prospects in this world but poverty, mortification, disappointment and grief? Every wish of my heart denied, every passion of humanity combated and hurt, though never conquered! Are these the blessings with which Heaven distinguishes its favourites?

Can the King of Heaven want power or will to distinguish them? Or does he leave his wretched creatures to be the sport of chance, the prey of wickedness and malice? Surely, no. Yet is not the condition of the virtuous often more miserable than that of the vicious! I myself have experienced that it is. I am very unhappy, and see no likelihood of my being otherwise in this world—and all beyond the grave is eternal darkness. Yet why do I say, that I have no prospect of happiness? Does not the most engaging of men offer me all the joys that love and fortune can bestow? Will not he protect me from every insult of the proud world that scoffs at indigence? Will not his liberal hand pour forth the means of every pleasure, even of that highest and truest of all pleasures, the power of relieving the sufferings of my fellow-creatures, of changing the tears of distress into tears of joy and gratitude, of communicating my own happiness to all around me? Is not this a state far preferable to that in which virtue has placed me? But what is virtue? Is not happiness the laudable pursuit of reason? Is it not then laudable to pursue it by the most probable means? Have I not been accusing Providence of unkindness, whilst I myself only am in fault for rejecting its offered favours? Surely, I have mistaken the path of virtue: it must be

that which leads to happiness. The path which I am in, is full of thorns and briars, and terminates in impenetrable darkness; but I see another that is strewed with flowers, and bright with the sunshine of prosperity: this, surely, is the path of virtue, and the road to happiness. Hither then let me turn my weary steps, nor let vain and idle prejudices fright me from felicity. It is surely impossible that I should offend God, by yielding to a temptation which he has given me no motive to resist. He has allotted me a short and precarious existence, and has placed before me good and evil.—What is good but pleasure? What is evil but pain? Reason and nature direct me to chuse the first, and avoid the last. I sought for happiness in what is called virtue, but I found it not: shall I not try the other experiment, since I think I can hardly be more unhappy by following inclination, than I am by denying it?

Thus had my frail thoughts wandered into a wilderness of error, and thus had I almost reasoned myself out of every principle of morality, by pursuing through all their consequences the doctrines which had been taught me as rules of life and prescriptions for felicity, the talismans of Truth, by which I should be secured in the storms of adversity, and listen without danger to the syrens of temptation; when in the fatal hour of my presumption,

sitting alone in my chamber, collecting arguments on the side of passion, almost distracted with doubts, and plunging deeper and deeper into falsehood, I saw Sir George Freelove at my feet, who had gained admittance, contrary to my orders, by corrupting my landlady. It is not necessary to describe to you his arts, or the weak efforts of that virtue which had been graciously implanted in my heart, but which I had taken impious pains to undermine by false reasoning, and which now tottered from the foundation: suffice it that I submit to the humiliation I have so well deserved, and tell you, that, in all the pride of human reason, I dared to condemn, as the effect of weakness and prejudice, the still voice of conscience which would yet have warned me from ruin; that my innocence, my honour, was the sacrifice to passion and sophistry; that my boasted philosophy, and too much flattered understanding, preserved me not from the lowest depth of infamy, which the weakest of my sex with humility and religion would have avoided.

I now experienced a new kind of wretchedness. My vile seducer tried in vain to reconcile me to the shameful life to which he had reduced me, by loading me with finery, and lavishing his fortune in procuring me pleasures which I could not taste, and pomp which

seemed an insult on my disgrace. In vain did I recollect the arguments which had convinced me of the lawfulness of accepting offered pleasures, and following the dictates of inclination: the light of my understanding was darkened, but the sense of guilt was not lost. My pride and my delicacy, if, criminal as I was, I may dare to call it so, suffered the most intolerable mortification and disgust, every time I reflected on my infamous situation. Every eye seemed to upbraid me, even that of my triumphant seducer. O depth of misery! to be conscious of deserving the contempt of him I loved, and for whose sake I was become contemptible to myself.

This was the state of my mind during a year which I passed in Sir George's house. His fondness was unabated for eight months of the time; and as I had no other object to share my attention, neither friend nor relation to call off any part of my tenderness, all the love of a heart naturally affectionate centered in him. The first dawnings of unkindness were but too visible to my watchful eyes. I had now all the torments of jealousy to endure, till a cruel certainty put an end to them. I learnt at length, that my false lover was on the brink of marriage with a lady of great fortune. I immediately resolved to leave him; but could not do it without first venting my full heart in

complaints and reproaches. This provoked his rage, and drew on me insolence, which though I had deserved, I had not learnt to bear. I returned with scorn, which no longer became me, all the wages of my sin, and the trappings of my shame, and left his house in the bitterest anguish of resentment and despair.

I returned to my old lodgings: but unable to bear a scene which recalled every circumstance of my undoing, ashamed to look in the face of any creature who had seen me innocent, wretched in myself, and hoping from change of place some abatement of my misery, I put myself into a post-chaise at two in the morning, with orders to the driver to carry me as far from town as he could before the return of night, leaving it to him to chuse the road.

My reason and my senses seemed benumbed and stupefied during my journey. I made no reflections on what I was about, nor formed any design for my future life. When night came, my conductor would have stopt at a large town, but I bid him go on to the next village. There I alighted at a paltry inn, and dismissed my vehicle, without once considering what I was to do with myself, or why I chose that place for my abode. To say truth, I can give no account of my thoughts at this period of time: they were all confused

and distracted. A short frenzy must have filled up those hours, of which my memory retains such imperfect traces. I remember only, that without having pulled off my clothes, I left the inn as soon as I saw the day, and wandered out of the village.

My unguided feet carried me to a range of willows by a river's side, where after having walked some time, the freshness of the air revived my senses, and awakened my reason. My reason, my memory, my anguish and despair, returned together! Every circumstance of my past life was present to my mind; but most the idea of my faithless lover and my criminal love tortured my imagination, and rent my bleeding heart, which, in spite of all its guilt and all its wrongs, retained the tenderest and most ardent affection for its undoer. This unguarded affection, which was the effect of a gentle and kind nature, heightened the anguish of resentment, and completed my misery. In vain did I call off my thoughts from this gloomy retrospect, and hope to find a gleam of comfort in my future prospects. They were still more dreadful: poverty, attended by infamy and want, groaning under the cruel hand of oppression and the taunts of insolence, was before my eyes. I, who had once been the darling and the pride of indulgent parents, who had once been beloved, respected, and

admired, was now the outcast of human nature, despised and avoided by all who had ever loved me, by all whom I had most loved! hateful to myself, belonging to no one, exposed to wrongs and insults from all!

I tried to find out the cause of this dismal change, and how far I was myself the occasion of it. My conduct with respect to Sir George, though I spontaneously condemned, yet, upon recollection, I thought the arguments which produced it would justify. But as my principles could not preserve me from vice, neither could they sustain me in adversity, conscience was not to be prevented by the sophistry which had beclouded my reason. And if any, by imputing my conduct to error, should acquit me of guilt, let them remember, it is yet true, that in this uttermost distress, I was neither sustained by the consciousness of innocence, the exultation of virtue, nor the hope of reward: whether I looked backward or forward, all was confusion and anguish, distraction and despair. I accused the Supreme Being of cruelty and injustice, who, though he gave me not sufficient encouragement to resist desire, yet punished me with the consequences of indulgence. If there is a God, cried I, he must be either tyrannical and cruel, or regardless of his creatures. I will no longer endure a being which is undeservedly miserable either from

chance or design, but fly to that annihilation in which all my prospects terminate. Take back, said I, lifting my eyes to Heaven, the hateful gift of existence, and let my dust no more be animated to suffering, and exalted to misery.

So saying, I ran to the brink of the river, and was going to plunge in, when the cry of some person very near me made me turn my eyes to see whence it came. I was accosted by an elderly clergyman, who with looks of terror, pity, and benevolence, asked what I was about to do? At first I was sullen, and refused to answer him; but by degrees the compassion he showed, and the tenderness with which he treated me, softened my heart, and gave vent to my tears.

“O! Madam,” said he, “these are gracious signs, and unlike those which first drew my attention, and made me watch you unobserved, fearing some fatal purpose in your mind. What must be the thoughts which could make a face like your’s appear the picture of horror? I was taking my morning walk, and have seen you a considerable time: sometimes stopping and wringing your hands, sometimes quickening your pace, and sometimes walking slow with your eyes fixed on the ground, till you raised them to heaven, with looks not of supplication and piety, but rather

of accusation and defiance. For pity tell me how is it that you have quarrelled with yourself, with life, nay even with Heaven? Recal your reason and your hope, and let this seasonable prevention of your fatal purpose be an earnest to you of good things to come, of God's mercy not yet alienated from you, and stooping from his throne to save your soul from perdition."

The tears which flowed in rivers from my eyes while he talked, gave me so much relief, that I found myself able to speak, and desirous to express my gratitude for the good man's concern for me. It was so long since I had known the joys of confidence, that I felt surprising pleasure and comfort from unburthening my heart, and telling my kind deliverer every circumstance of my story, and every thought of my distracted mind. He shuddered to hear me upbraid the Divine Providence; and stopping me short, told me, he would lead me to one who should preach patience to me, whilst she gave me the example of it.

As we talked he led me to his own house, and there introduced me to his wife, a middle-aged woman, pale and emaciated, but of a chearful placid countenance, who received me with the greatest tenderness and humanity. She saw I was distressed, and her compassion was beforehand with my complaints. Her tears stood ready to accompany mine! her

looks and her voice expressed the kindest concern; and her assiduous cares demonstrated the true politeness and hospitality, which is not the effect of art but of inward benevolence. While she obliged me to take some refreshment, her husband gave her a short account of my story, and of the state in which he had found me. "This poor lady," said he, "from the fault of her education and principles, sees every thing through a gloomy medium: she accuses Providence, and hates her existence for those evils, which are the common lot of mankind in this short state of trial. You, my dear, who are one of the greatest sufferers I have known, are best qualified to cure her of her faulty impatience: and to convince her, by your own example, that this world is not the place in which virtue is to find its reward. She thinks no one so unhappy as herself; but if she knew all that you have gone through, she would surely be sensible, that if you are happier than she, it is only because your principles are better."

"Indeed, my dear madam," said she, "that is the only advantage I have over you; but that, indeed, outweighs every thing else. It is now but ten days since I followed to the grave my only son, the survivor of eight children, who were all equally the objects of my fondest love. My heart is no less tender than your

own, nor my affections less warm. For a whole year before the death of my last darling, I watched the fatal progress of his disease, and saw him suffer the most amazing pains. Nor was poverty, that dreaded evil to which you could not submit, wanting to my trials. Though my husband is by his profession a gentleman, his income is so small, that I and my children have often wanted necessaries: and though I had always a weakly constitution, I have helped to support my family by the labour of my own hands. At this time I am consuming, by daily tortures, with a cancer which must shortly be my death. My pains, perhaps, might be mitigated by proper assistance, though nothing could preserve my life, but I have not the means to obtain that assistance."—O hold, interrupted I, my soul is shocked at the enumeration of such intolerable sufferings. How is it that you support them? Why do I not see you in despair like mine, renounce your existence, and put yourself out of the reach of torment? But above all, tell me how it is possible for you to preserve, amidst such complicated misery, that appearance of cheerfulness and serene complacency which shines so remarkably in your countenance, and animates every look and motion?

"That cheerfulness and complacency," answered the good woman, "I feel in my heart.

My mind is not only serene, but often experiences the highest emotions of joy and exultation, that the brightest hopes can give." And whence, said I, do you derive this astonishing art of extracting joy from misery, and of smiling amidst all the terrors of pain, sorrow, poverty and death? She was silent a moment; then stepping to her closet, reached a Bible, which she put into my hands. "See there," said she, "the volume in which I learn this art. Here I am taught, that everlasting glory is in store for all who will accept it upon the terms which Infinite Perfection has prescribed: here I am promised consolation, assistance and support from the Lord of Life; and here I am assured that my transient afflictions are only meant to fit me for eternal and unspeakable happiness. This happiness is at hand. The short remainder of my life seems but a point, beyond which opens the glorious prospect of immortality. Thus encouraged, how should I be dejected? Thus supported, how should I sink? With such prospects, such assured hopes, how can I be otherwise than happy?"

While she spoke, her eyes sparkled, and her whole face seemed animated with joy. I was struck with her manner, as well as her words. Every syllable she uttered seemed to sink into my soul, so that I never can forget it. I resolved to examine a religion, which was ca-

pable of producing such effects as I could not attribute either to chance or error. The good couple pressed me with so much unaffected kindness, to make their little parsonage my asylum till I could better dispose of myself, that I accepted their offer. Here, with the assistance of the clergyman, who is a plain, sensible, and truly pious man, I have studied the Holy Scriptures, and the evidences of their authority. But after reading them with candour and attention, I found all the extrinsic arguments of their truth superfluous. The excellency of their precepts, the consistency of their doctrines, and the glorious motives and encouragements to virtue which they propose, together with the striking example I had before my eyes of their salutary effects, left me no doubt of their divine authority.

During the time of my abode here, I have been witness to the more than heroic, the joyful, the triumphant death of the dear good woman. With as much softness and tenderness as ever I saw in a female character, she shewed more dauntless intepidity than the sternest philosopher or the proudest hero. No torment could shake the constancy of her soul, or length of pain wear out the strength of her patience. Death was to her an object not of horror but of hope. When I heard her pour forth her last breath in thanksgiving, and saw the smile

of extacy remain on her pale face when life was fled, I could not help crying out, in the beautiful language I had lately learned from the Sacred Writings, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

I am now preparing to leave my excellent benefactor, and get my bread in a service, to which he has recommended me in a neighbouring family. A state of servitude, to which once I could not resolve to yield, appears no longer dreadful to me; that pride, which would have made it galling, Christianity has subdued, though philosophy attempted it in vain. As a penitent, I should gratefully submit to mortification; but as a Christian, I find myself superior to every mortification, except the sense of guilt. This has humbled me to the dust: but the full assurances that are given me by the Saviour of the World, of the Divine pardon and favour upon sincere repentance, have calmed my troubled spirit, and filled my mind with peace and joy, which the world can neither give nor take away. Thus, without any change for the better in my outward circumstances, I find myself changed from a distracted, poor, despairing wretch, to a contented, happy, grateful being; thankful for, and pleased with my present state of existence, yet exulting in the hope of quitting it for endless glory and happiness.

O! Sir, tell the unthinking mortals, who will not take the pains of inquiring into those truths which most concern them, and who are led by fashion, and the pride of human reason, into a contempt for the Sacred Oracles of God; tell them these amazing effects of the power of Christianity: tell them this truth which experience has taught me, that, "Though Vice is constantly attended by misery, Virtue itself cannot confer happiness in this world, except it is animated with the hopes of eternal bliss in the world to come."

who sell the unthinking people, who
will not take the pains of separating into those
truths which most concern them, and who are
led by passion for the sake of a few
into a contempt for the sacred Oracles of
God: tell them the manner of life of the
people of this family; tell them the truth
which is constantly attended by every thing
which cannot confer honour in this world, ex-
cept it is attended with the hope of eternal

ILL EFFECTS

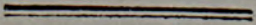
OF

GENERAL FAMILIARITY

AND

WANTON RUDENESS.

A Tale.



TO be courteous to all, but familiar with few, is a maxim which I once despised, as originally proceeding from a mean and contracted mind, the frigid caution of weakness and timidity. A tame and indiscriminate civility I imputed to a dread of the contempt or the petulance of others, to fears from which the wit and the gentleman are exempted by a consciousness of their own dignity, by their power to repress insolence and silence ridicule; and a general shyness and reserve I considered as the reproach of our country, as the effect of an illiberal education, by which neither a polite

address, an easy confidence, or a general acquaintance with public life, is to be acquired. This opinion, which continued to flatter the levity and pride that produced it, was strengthened by the example of those whose manner in the diffidence of youth I wished to imitate, who entered a mixed company with an air of serene familiarity, accosted every man like an old acquaintance, and thought only of making sport for the rest of any with whom their caprice should happen to be offended, without regard to their age, character, or condition.

But I now wish, that I had regulated my conduct by the maxim which I despised, for I should then have escaped a misfortune which I can never retrieve; and the sense of which I am now endeavouring to suspend, by relating it to you as a lesson to others, and considering my loss of happiness as an acquisition of wisdom.

While I was in France with a travelling tutor, I received a letter which acquainted me, that my father, who had been long declining, was dead; and that it was necessary I should immediately return to England to take possession of his estate, which was not inconsiderable, though there were mortgages upon it to near half its value.

When I arrived, I found a letter which the old gentleman had written and directed to me

with his own hand. It contained some general rules for my conduct, and some animadversions upon his own: he took notice of the incumbrance under which he left me the paternal inheritance, which had descended through many generations, and expressed the most earnest desire, that it might yet be transmitted intire to posterity: with this view, he said, he had negociated a marriage between me and the only daughter of his old friend, Sir George Homestead of the North, an amiable young lady, whose alliance would be an honour to my family, and whose fortune would much more than redeem my estate.

He had given the knight a faithful account of his affairs, who, after having taken some time to consider the proposal and consult his friends, had consented to the match, upon condition that his daughter and I should be agreeable to each other, and my behaviour should confirm the character which had been given of me. My father added, that he hoped to have lived till this alliance had taken place; but as Providence had otherwise determined, he intreated, at his last request, that as soon as my affairs should be settled and decency would permit, I would make Sir George a visit, and neglect nothing to accomplish his purpose.

I was touched with the zeal and tenderness of parental affection, which was then directing

me to happiness, after the heart that felt it had ceased to beat, and the hand that expressed it was mouldering in the dust. I had also seen the lady, not indeed since we were children; but I remembered that her person was agreeable, and her temper sweet: I did not, therefore, hesitate a moment, whether my father's injunction should be obeyed. I proceeded to settle his affairs; I took an account of his debts and credits, visited the tenants, recovered my usual gaiety, and at the end of about nine months set out for Sir George's seat in the North; having before opened an epistolary correspondence, and expressed my impatience to possess the happinesses which my father had so kindly secured.

I was better pleased to be well mounted, than to loll in a chariot, or be jumbled in a postchaise; and I knew that Sir George was an old sportsman, a plain hearty blade, who would like me better in a pair of buckskin breeches on the back of a good hunter, than in a trimmed suit and a gaudy equipage: I, therefore, set out on horseback with only one servant, and reached Stilton the first night.

In the morning, as I was mounting, a gentleman, who had just got on horseback before me, ordered his servant to make some inquiry about the road, which I happened to overhear, and told him with great familiarity, that I was

going the same way, and if he pleased we would travel together: to this he consented, with as much frankness, and as little ceremony; and I set forward, greatly delighted that chance had afforded me a companion.

We immediately entered into conversation, and I soon found that he had been abroad: we extolled the roads and the policy of France, the cities, the palaces, and the villas; entered into a critical examination of the most celebrated seats in England, the peculiarities of the building and situation, cross ways, market towns, the imposition of innkeepers, and the sports of the field; topics by which we mutually recommended ourselves to each other, as we had both opportunities to discover equal knowledge, and to display truth with such evidence as prevented diversity of opinion.

After we had rode about two hours, we overtook another gentleman, whom we accosted with the same familiarity that we had used to each other; we asked him how far he was going and which way, at what rate he travelled, where he put up, and many other questions of the same kind. The gentleman, who appeared to be near fifty, received our address with great coolness, returned short and indirect answers to our inquiries, and, often looking with great attention on us both, sometimes put forward that he might get before us,

and sometimes checked his horse that he might remain behind. But we were resolved to disappoint him; and, finding that his reserve increased, and he was visibly displeased, we winked at each other, and determined the old put should afford us some sport. After we had rode together upon very ill terms more than half an hour, my companion with an air of ceremonious gravity asked him, if he knew any house upon the road where he might be accommodated with some punch. The gentleman, who was, I believe, afraid of giving us a pretence to quarrel, did not resent this insult any otherwise than by making no reply. I then began to talk to my companion as if we had been old acquaintance, reminding him that the gentleman extremely resembled a person, from whom we had taken a girl that he was carrying to the bagnio, and, indeed, that his present reserve made me suspect him to be the same; but that as we were willing to ask his pardon, we hoped it would be forgot, and that we should still have the pleasure of dining together at the next inn. The gentleman was still silent; but as his perplexity and resentment visibly increased, he proportionably increased our entertainment, which did not, however, last long, for he suddenly turned down a lane; upon which we set up a horse laugh, that continued till he was out of hearing, and then

persuing our journey, we talked of the adventure, which afforded us conversation and merriment for the rest of the day.

The next morning we parted, and in the evening I arrived at Homestead Hall. The old knight received me with great affection, and immediately introduced me to his daughter, whom I now thought the finest woman, I had ever seen. I could easily discover, that I was not welcome to her merely upon her father's recommendation, and I enjoyed by anticipation the felicity which I considered as within my grasp. But the pleasing scene, in which I had suffered my imagination to wander, suddenly disappeared as by the power of enchantment: without any visible motive, the behaviour of the whole family was changed, my assiduities to the lady were repressed, she was never to be found alone, the knight treated me with a cold civility, I was no longer a party in their visits, nor was I willingly attended even by the servants. I made many attempts to discover the cause of this misfortune, but without success; and one morning, when I had drawn Sir George into the garden by himself, and was about to urge him upon the subject, he prevented me by saying, that his promise to my father, for whom he had the highest regard, as I well knew, was conditional; that he had always resolved to leave his daughter a free

choice, and that she had requested him to acquaint me, that her affections were otherwise engaged, and to intreat that I would, therefore, discontinue my addresses. My surprise and concern at this declaration were such as left me no power to reply; and I saw Sir George turn from me and go into the house, without making my attempt to stop him, or to obtain a further explanation. Afterwards, indeed, I frequently expostulated, intreated, and complained; but, perceiving that all was ineffectual, I took my leave, and determined that I would still solicit by letter; for the lady had taken such possession of my heart, that I would joyfully have married her, though I had been sure that her father would immediately have left all his fortune to a stranger.

I meditated on my epistolary project all the way to London, and before I had been three days in town I wrote a long letter to Sir George, in which I conjured him, in the strongest terms, to account for the change in his behaviour; and insisted, that, on this occasion, to conceal the truth, was in the highest degree dishonourable to himself, and injurious to me.

To this letter, after about ten days, I received the following answer :

“ SIR,

It is with great reluctance that I reveal the

motives of my conduct, because they are much to your disadvantage. The inclosed is a letter which I received from a worthy gentleman in this county, and contains a full answer to your inquiries, which I had rather you should receive in any hand than in mine.

“ I am your humble servant,

“ GEO. HOMESTEAD.”

I immediately opened the paper inclosed, in which, with the utmost impatience, I read as follows :

“ SIR,

I saw a person with your family yesterday at the races, to whom, as I was soon after informed, you intend to give your daughter. Upon this occasion, it is my indispensable duty to acquaint you, that if his character is to be determined by his company, he will inevitably entail disgrace and beggary upon his posterity, whatever be the merit of his wife, or the affluence of his fortune. He overtook me on the road from London a few weeks ago, in company with a wretch, who by their discourse appeared to be his old and familiar acquaintance and whom I well remember to have been brought before my friend Justice Worthy, when I was accidentally at his house, in London. He has since won a considerable sum with

false dice at the masquerade, for which he was obliged to leave the kingdom, and is still liable to a prosecution. Be assured that I have perfect knowledge of both; for some incidents, which it is not necessary to mention, kept me near them so long on the road, that it is impossible I should be mistaken.

“ I am, SIR, your’s, &c.

“ JAMES TRUEMAN.”

The moment I had read this letter, the riddle was solved. I knew Mr. Trueman to be the gentleman, whom I had concurred with a stranger, picked up by accident, to insult without provocation on the road. I was in a moment covered with confusion; and though I was alone, could not help hiding my face with my hands. I abhorred my folly, which appeared yet more enormous every time it was reviewed.

I courted the society of a stranger, and a stranger I persecuted with insult: thus I associated with infamy, and thus my associate became known. I hoped, however, to convince Sir George, that I had no knowledge of the wretch whose infamy I had shared, except that which I acquired from the letter of his friend. But before I had taken proper measures for my justification, I had the mortification to hear, that the lady was married to a neighbour-

ing gentleman, who had long paid his addresses, and whom Sir George had before rejected in the ardour of his friendship for my father.

How narrow is the path of rectitude, and how much may be lost by the slightest deviation!

BENEVOLENCE

URGED FROM

THE MISERY OF SOLITUDE.

An Eastern Story.

CARAZAN, the merchant of Bagdat, was eminent throughout all the East for his avarice and his wealth: his origin was obscure, and the patient labour of persevering diligence alone had made him rich. It was remembered, that when he was indigent he was thought to be generous; and he was still acknowledged to be inexorably just. But whether, in his dealings with men, he discovered a perfidy which tempted him to put his trust in gold, or whether in proportion as he accumulated wealth he discovered his own importance to increase, Carazan prized it more as he used it less; he gradually lost the inclination to do good, as he acquired the power; and as the hand of time scattered snow upon his head, the freezing influence extended to his bosom.

But though the door of Carazan was neve

opened by hospitality; nor his hand by compassion, yet fear led him constantly to the mosque at the stated hours of prayer; he performed all the rites of devotion with the most scrupulous punctuality, and had thrice paid his vows at the temple of the Prophet. That devotion which arises from the Love of God, and necessarily includes the Love of Man, as it connects gratitude with beneficence, and exalts that which was moral to divine, confers new dignity upon goodness, and is the object not only of affection but reverence. On the contrary, the devotion of the selfish, whether it be thought to avert the punishment which every one wishes to be inflicted, or to insure it by the complication of hypocrisy with guilt, never fails to excite indignation and abhorrence. Carazan, therefore, when he had locked his door, and turning round with a look of circum-spective suspicion proceeded to the mosque, was followed by every eye with silent malignity; the poor suspended their supplication when he passed by; and though he was known by every man, no man saluted him.

Such had long been the life of Carazan, and such was the character which he had acquired, when notice was given by proclamation, that he was removed to a magnificent building in the centre of the city, that his table should be spread for the public, and that the stranger should be welcome to his bed, the multitude

soon rushed like a torrent to his door, where they beheld him distributing bread to the hungry and apparel to the naked, his eye softened with compassion, and his cheek glowing with delight. Every one gazed with astonishment at the prodigy; and the murmur of innumerable voices increasing like the sound of approaching thunder, Carazan beckoned with his hand; attention suspended the tumult in a moment, and he thus gratified the curiosity which had procured him audience.

To Him who touches the mountains and the smoke, The Almighty and The Most Merciful, be everlasting honour! he has ordained sleep to be the minister of instruction, and his visions have reproved me in the night. As I was sitting alone in my Haram, with my lamp burning before me, computing the product of my merchandise, and exulting in the increase of my wealth, I fell into a deep sleep, and the hand of Him who dwells in the third heaven was upon me. I beheld the Angel of death coming forward like a whirlwind, and he smote me before I could deprecate the blow. At the same moment I felt myself lifted from the ground, and transported with astonishing rapidity through the regions of the air. The earth was contracted to an atom beneath; and the stars glowed round me with a lustre that obscured the sun. The gate of Paradise was now in sight; and I was intercepted by a

sudden brightness which no human eye could behold: the irrevocable sentence was now to be pronounced; my day of probation was past; and from the evil of my life nothing could be taken away nor could any thing be added to the good. When I reflected that my lot for eternity was cast, which not all the powers of nature could reverse, my confidence totally forsook me; and while I stood trembling and silent, covered with confusion and chilled with horror, I was thus addressed by the radiance that flamed before me.

“Carazan, thy worship has not been accepted, because it was not prompted by Love of God: neither can thy righteousness be rewarded, because it was not produced by Love of Man: for thy own sake only hast thou rendered to every man his due; and thou hast approached the Almighty only for thyself. Thou hast not looked up with gratitude, nor round thee with kindness. Around thee, thou hast, indeed, beheld vice and folly; but if vice and folly could justify thy parsimony, would they not condemn the bounty of Heaven? If not upon the foolish and the vicious, where shall the sun diffuse his light, or the clouds distil their dew? Where shall the lips of the spring breathe fragrance, or the hand of autumn diffuse plenty? Remember, Carazan, that thou hast shut compassion from thine heart, and grasped thy treasures with a hand of iron:

thou hast lived for thyself; and, therefore, henceforth for ever thou shalt subsist alone. From the light of heaven, and from the society of all beings, shalt thou be driven; solitude shall protract the lingering hours of eternity, and darkness aggravate the horrors of despair." At this moment I was driven by some secret and irresistible power through the glowing system of creation, and passed innumerable worlds in a moment. As I approached the verge of nature, I perceived the shadows of total and boundless vacuity deepen before me, a dreadful region of eternal silence, solitude, and darkness! Unutterable horror seized me at the prospect, and this exclamation burst from me with all the vehemence of desire: "O! that I had been doomed for ever to the common receptacle of impenitence and guilt? there society would have alleviated the torment of despair, and the rage of fire could not have excluded the comfort of light. Or if I had been condemned to reside in a comet, that would return but once in a thousand years to the regions of light and life; the hope of these periods, however distant, would cheer me in the dreary interval of cold and darkness, and the vicissitude would divide eternity into time." While this thought passed over my mind, I lost sight of the remotest star, and the last glimmering of light was quenched in utter darkness. The agonies of despair every

moment increased, as every moment augmented my distance from the last habitable world. I reflected with intolerable anguish, that when ten thousand thousand years had carried me beyond the reach of all but that Power who fills infinitude, I should still look forward into an immense abyss of darkness, through which I should still drive without succour and without society, farther and farther still, for ever and for ever. I then stretched out my hand towards the regions of existence, with an emotion that awaked me. Thus have I been taught to estimate society, like every other blessing, by its loss. My heart is warmed to liberality; and I am zealous to communicate the happiness which I feel, to those from whom it is derived; for the society of one wretch, whom in the pride of prosperity I would have spurned from my door, would, in the dreadful solitude to which I was condemned, have been more highly prized, than the gold of Africa, or the gems of Golconda.

At this reflection upon his dream, Carazan became suddenly silent, and looked upward in an ecstasy of gratitude and devotion. The multitude were struck at once with the precept and example; and the Caliph, to whom the event was related, that he might be liberal beyond the power of gold, commanded it to be recorded for the benefit of posterity.

RELIGION
AND
SUPERSTITION.

A Vision.

I HAD lately a very remarkable dream, which made so strong an impression on me, that I remember it every word; and if you are not better employed, you may read the relation of it as follows:

Methought I was in the midst of a very entertaining set of company, and extremely delighted in attending to a lively conversation, when on a sudden I perceived one of the most shocking figures imagination can frame, advancing towards me. She was drest in black, her skin was contracted into a thousand wrinkles, her eyes sunk deep in her head, and her complexion pale and livid as the countenance of death. Her looks were filled with terror and unrelenting severity, and her hands

armed with whips and scorpions. As soon as she came near, with a horrid frown, and a voice that chilled my very blood, she bid me follow her. I obeyed, and she led me through rugged paths, beset with briars and thorns, into a deep solitary valley. Wherever she passed, the fading verdure withered beneath her steps; her pestilential breath infected the air with malignant vapours, obscured the lustre of the sun, and involved the fair face of heaven in universal gloom. Dismal howlings resounded through the forest, from every baleful tree the night raven uttered his dreadful note; and the prospect was filled with desolation and horror. In the midst of this tremendous scene my execrable guide addressed me in the following manner :

“ Retire with me, O rash unthinking mortal, from the vain allurements of a deceitful world, and learn that pleasure was not designed the portion of human life. Man was born to mourn and to be wretched; this is the condition of all below the stars, and whoever endeavours to oppose it, acts in contradiction to the will of heaven. Fly then from the fatal enchantments of youth, and social delight, and here consecrate the solitary hours to lamentation and woe. Misery is the duty of all sublunary beings, and every enjoyment is an offence to the Deity, who is to be worshipped.

only by the mortification of every sense of pleasure, and the everlasting exercise of sighs and tears."

This melancholy picture of life quite sunk my spirits, and seemed to annihilate every principle of joy within me. I threw myself beneath a blasted yew, where the winds blew cold and dismal round my head, and dreadful apprehensions chilled my heart. Here I resolved to lie till the hand of death, which I impatiently invoked, should put an end to the miseries of a life so deplorably wretched. In this sad situation I espied on one hand of me a deep muddy river, whose heavy waves rolled on in slow sullen murmurs. Here I determined to plunge, and was just upon the brink, when I found myself suddenly drawn back. I turned about, and was surprised by the sight of the loveliest object I had ever beheld. The most engaging charms of youth and beauty appeared in all her form; effulgent glories sparkled in her eyes, and their awful splendours were softened by the gentlest looks of compassion and peace. At her approach the frighful spectre who had before tormented me, vanished away, and with her all the horrors she had caused. The gloomy clouds brightened into cheerful sunshine, the groves recovered their verdure, and the whole region looked gay and blooming as the garden of Eden. I was quite

transported at this unexpected change, and reviving pleasure began to glad my thoughts, when, with a look of inexpressible sweetness, my beauteous deliverer thus uttered her divine instructions:

“ My name is Religion. I am the offspring of Truth and Love, and the parent of Benevolence, Hope, and Joy. That monster from whose power I have freed you is called Superstition, she is the child of Discontent, and her followers are Fear and Sorrow. Thus different as we are, she has often the insolence to assume my name and character, and seduces unhappy mortals to think us the same, till she, at length, drives them to the borders of Despair, that dreadful abyss into which you were just going to sink.

“ Look round and survey the various beauties of the globe, which Heaven has destined for the seat of the human race, and consider whether a world thus exquisitely framed could be meant for the abode of misery and pain. For what end has the lavish hand of Providence diffused such innumerable objects of delight, but that all might rejoice in the privilege of existence, and be filled with gratitude to the beneficent Author of it? Thus to enjoy the blessings he has sent, is virtue and obedience; and to reject them merely as means of pleasure, is pitiable ignorance or absurd perverseness.

Infinite goodness is the source of created existence; the proper tendency of every rational being, from the highest order of raptured seraphs, to the meanest rank of men, is to rise incessantly from lower degrees of happiness to higher. They have each faculties assigned them for various orders of delights."

"What," cried I, "is this the language of Religion? Does she lead her votaries through flowery paths, and bid them pass an un-laborious life? Where are the painful toils of virtue, the mortifications of penitence, the self-denying exercises of saints and heroes?"

"The true enjoyments of a reasonable being," answered she mildly, "do not consist in unbounded indulgence, or luxurious ease, in the tumult of passions, the languor of indolence, or the flutterer of light amusements. Yielding to immoral pleasure corrupts the mind, living to animal trifling ones debases it; both in their degree disqualify it for its genuine good, and consign it over to wretchedness. Whoever would be really happy, must make the diligent and regular exercise of his superior powers his chief attention, adoring the perfections of his Maker, expressing good-will to his fellow-creatures, cultivating inward rectitude. To his lower faculties he must allow such gratifications as will, by refreshing him, invigorate his nobler pursuits. In the regions inhabited

by angelic natures, unmingled felicity for ever blooms, joy flows there with a perpetual and abundant stream, nor needs there any mound to check its course. Beings conscious of a frame of mind originally diseased, as all the human race has cause to be, must use the regimen of a stricter self-government. Whoever has been guilty of voluntary excesses must patiently submit both to the painful workings of nature, and needful severities of medicine, in order to his cure. Still he is entitled to a moderate share of whatever alleviating accommodations this fair mansion of his merciful Parent affords, consistent with his recovery. And in proportion as this recovery advances, the liveliest joy will spring from his secret sense of an amended and improved heart.— So far from the horrors of despair is the condition even of the guilty.—Shudder, poor mortal, at the thought of the gulf into which thou wast but now going to plunge.

“ While the most faulty have every encouragement to amend, the more innocent soul will be supported with still sweeter consolations under all its experience of human infirmities; supported by the gladdening assurances that every sincere endeavour to outgrow them shall be assisted, accepted, and rewarded. To such a one the lowliest self-abasement is but a deep-laid foundation for the most elevated hopes;

since they who faithfully examine and acknowledge what they are, shall be enabled under my conduct to become what they desire. The christian and the hero are inseparable; and to aspirings of unassuming trust, and filial confidence, are set no bounds. To him who is animated with a view of obtaining approbation from the Sovereign of the universe, no difficulty is insurmountable. Secure in this pursuit of every needful aid, his conflict with the severest pains and trials, is little more than the vigorous exercises of a mind in health. His patient dependance on that Providence which looks through all eternity, his silent resignation, his ready accommodation of his thoughts and behaviour to its inscrutable ways, is at once the most excellent sort of self-denial, and a source of the most exalted transports. Society is the true sphere of human virtue. In social, active life, difficulties will perpetually be met with; restraints of many kinds will be necessary; and studying to behave right in respect of these is a discipline of the human heart, useful to others, and improving to itself. Suffering is no duty, but where it is necessary to avoid guilt, or to do good; nor pleasure a crime, but where it strengthens the influence of bad inclinations, or lessens the generous activity of virtue. The happiness allotted to man in his present state, is indeed faint and

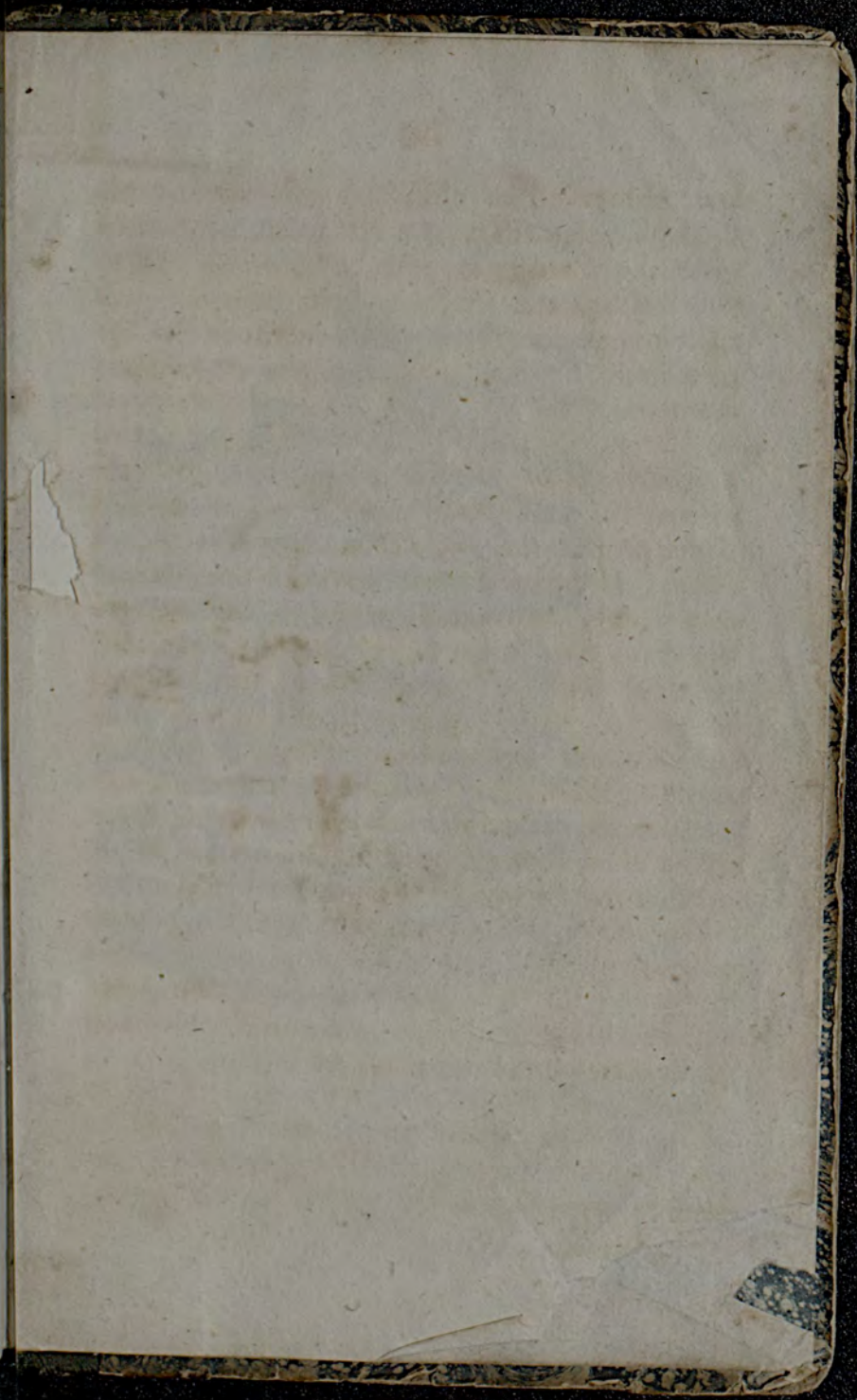
low, compared with his immortal prospects, and noble capacities ; but yet whatever portion of it the distributing hand of heaven offers to each individual, is a needful support and refreshment for the present moment, so far as it may not hinder the attaining of his final destination.

“ Return then with me from continual misery to moderate enjoyment and grateful alacrity. Return from the contracted views of solitude to the proper duties of a relative and dependent being. Religion is not confined to cells and closets, nor restrained to sullen retirement. These are the gloomy doctrines of Superstition, by which she endeavours to break those chains of benevolence and social affection, that link the welfare of every particular with that of the whole. Remember that the greatest honour you can pay to the Author of your being is by such a cheerful behaviour, as discovers a mind satisfied with his dispensations.”

Here my preceptress paused, and I was going to express my acknowledgments for her discourse, when a ring of bells from the neighbouring village, and a new-risen sun darting his beams through my windows, awaked me.

THE END.

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