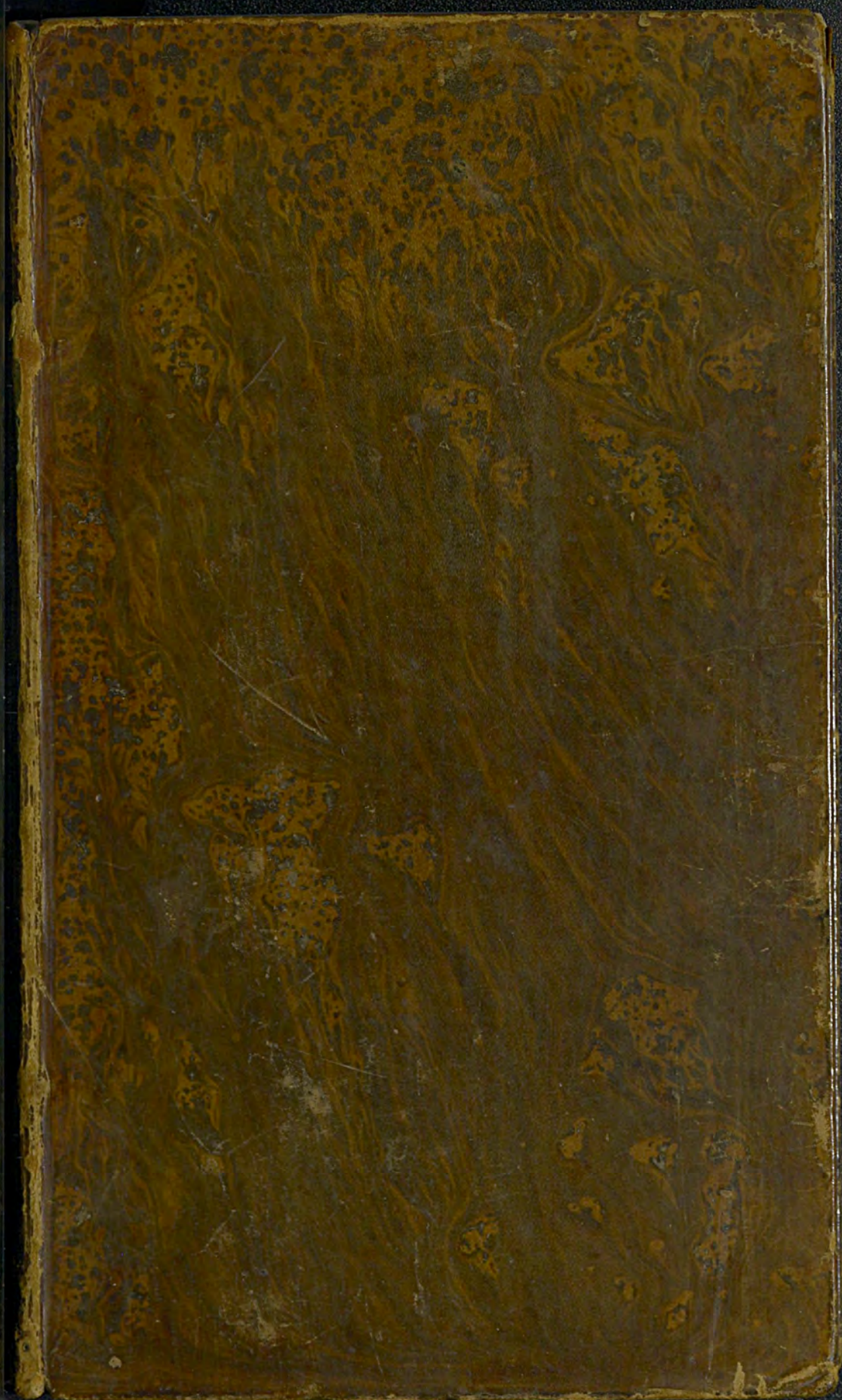


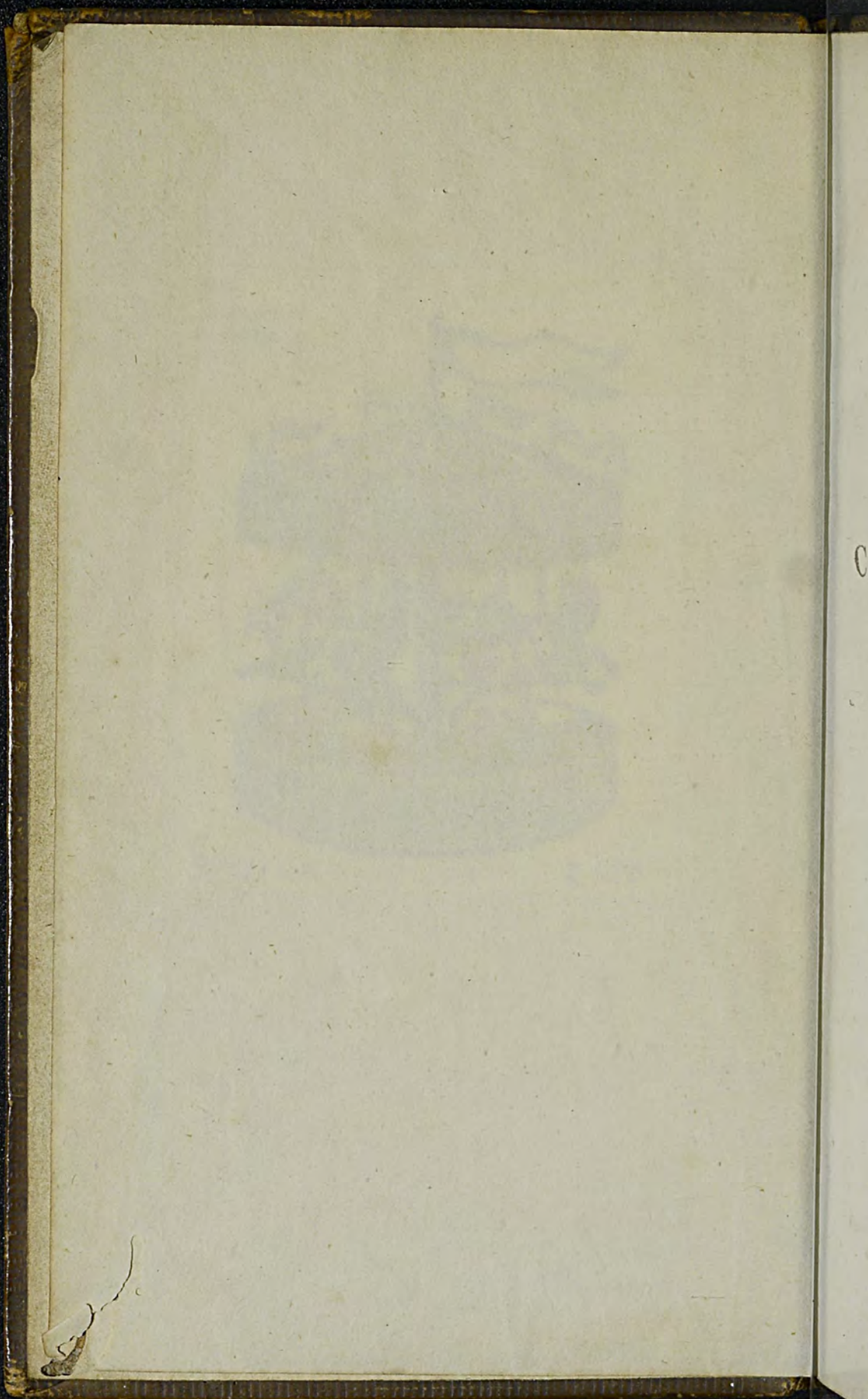


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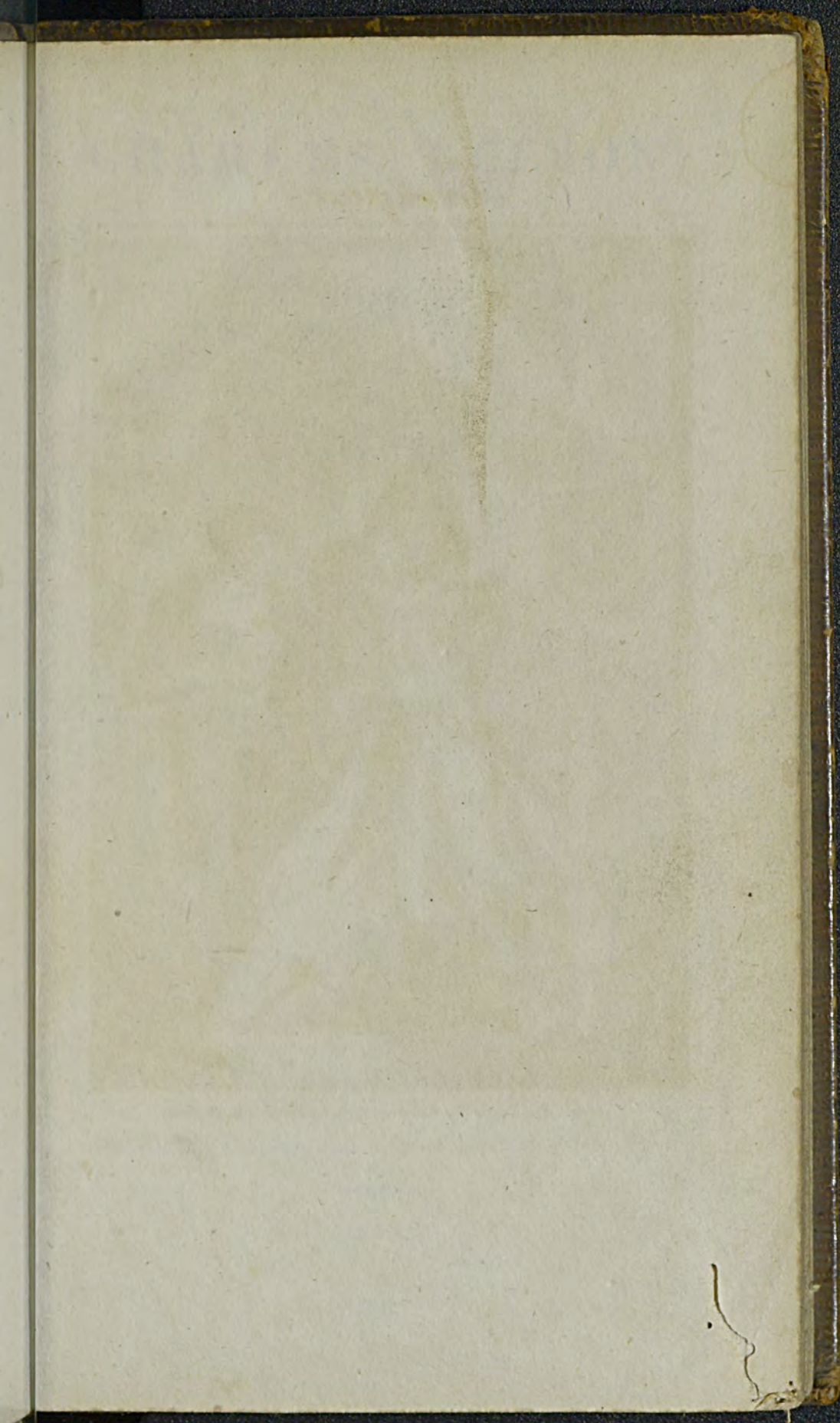
OR,

THE SOLDIER.

CHARLES LEESON

THE SOLDIER

H. Bryer, Printer, Bridge-Street, Blackfriars, London.



Frontispiece.



Pub. Aug. 1-1810, by I. Harris, Corner St Paul's Church Yard.

See Page 33.

CHARLES LEESON;

OR,

THE SOLDIER.

BY MRS. VENTUM,

AUTHOR OF MORAL TALES, INTERESTING TRAITS
OF CHARACTER IN YOUTH, &c. &c.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HARRIS, CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1810.

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CHARLES LEESON;

OR,

THE SOLDIER.

"My husband is no more, then," said Mrs. Leeson, the tears pouring down her cheeks---Leeson, my dear Leeson, is lost to me and my children for ever!" She sat still, weeping over an open letter which lay on the table before her, and which the post-man had not half an hour before delivered, when she was roused from her melancholy attitude, by the entrance of her two little sons, whom the servant had just brought in from their morning's walk. The sight of these dear fatherless ob-

jects renewed her grief, and reduced her to such a state of despair, as to render assistance necessary; time, however, and the assiduous attention of an acquaintance or two, added to the natural strength of her mind, at length convinced her of the necessity of exerting herself; her first care then was to see into her circumstances, and regulate her affairs; these she found very much involved; and when every thing came to be finally settled, it appeared she had nothing to subsist upon, but a very small annuity, which had been settled upon her by an aunt, who was since dead. The prospect before her was dreary and melancholy. Her own friends, of whom indeed she had none left but a sister and a cousin, who were unable to help her, having large families themselves, and being people quite

in middling life: to her husband's friends she knew it would be vain to apply; for he had disoblged them by marrying her, a young woman in a menial station, in open defiance of their positive commands and although she had uniformly conducted herself with virtuous prudence, their pride could never bear to acknowledge her as a relative, whom they had known a servant, nor suffer her to partake that meal with them it had been her place to eat afterward; but abilities, prudence, and general good conduct, are not engrossed entirely by the wealthy; and Mrs. Leeson soon convinced her husband, that however mean her origin had been, her mind was highly ennobled: she improved her leisure by reading; and the subjects she chose, at once fortified her mind and enlarged her

understanding : she sunk not then under the misfortunes which seemed ready to overwhelm her, but calmly and deliberately formed her future plans. “ I have nothing to expect from my husband’s friends,” said she, and mine can do nothing for me : I must endeavour to bring up my boys as well as I can, and at least make them useful and honest members of society. The friends who had flocked about Mrs. Leeson on the first accounts of her husband’s death, no sooner found that she was left nearly destitute of any provision, but they withdrew. She could not help noticing this defection : “ When I was surrounded with affluence, and basked in the sun-shine of prosperity,” said she, “ many were the proffers of friendship I received ; but no sooner has the tide of adversity rushed in upon me, but I am forsaken by every

one. Oh world! how deceiving, how unstable thy possessions! how transitory every scene of felicity thou promises us to enjoy! how short the time since these parasites of fortune were flocking around me. Now where are they to be found? The voice of misery is hateful to them; they shun it as they would contagion. How soon am I convinced of the little I have to expect from any one! But what signifies unavailing regret? I must endeavour to help myself, and shake off this supineness which hourly creeps over me. My little arrangements must be speedily made; for I shall only involve myself still deeper by continuing to reside in a house like this. Providence orders every thing aright; before I became a wife, I knew well how to perform every part of household work; a little time and

it will again be no difficulty. I thank God I have yet health and strength ; and I thank my dear departed husband, that, by his instructions to me, I can bestow a little upon his offspring. We must do as well as we can ; he that feeds and clothes the young ravens, will extend his care to us also."

In a very short time after Mrs. Leeson took leave of the metropolis and all the herd of courtly sycophants, who knew her in prosperity : she retired with her children to a small cottage, on the confines of a large moor, within four miles of Kendal, in Westmoreland ; the moor maintained her sheep and poultry ; and every half year, upon the receipt of her annuity, she repaired to the town, to buy such a stock of necessaries as she thought would serve till her next payment be-

came due. Her days were employed in domestic matters ; her evenings were set apart for the instruction of her children, who increased in health and strength. “ You must not be idle, Charles,” said she to her eldest boy, “ you are now getting able to perform many little jobs, and be of great assistance to me. You must dig the garden, look after the pigs and sheep, and bring up the cow, morning and evening, to be milked ; in short, you must employ yourself through the day about something or other ; for idleness will bring you to want and shame : it is an offence both to God and man ; for it not only injures your pocket, but your health ; and an idle man is seldom or rarely an honest one. The little boys cheerfully obeyed their mother in every thing she said ; and it was really cu-

rious to see how busily these little fellows would employ themselves in weeding the garden, raising such stones upon the hedges as they could lift, keeping the cows' and pigs' shed clean, and gathering the dung up in heaps. Every evening was spent at their books; and as their mother still retained the most valuable part of their late father's collection, and as she explained every difficult passage to them as they read, they became tolerably good scholars; they would make all the haste they could, to complete the business they had to perform through the day, that they might have the more time for reading at night. They had, by the time Charles was eleven years of age, gone through the history of England twice, Goldsmith's Greece and Rome, with Gibbons's Decline and

Fall of the Roman Empire. They were tolerably proficient in geography, their mother having taken care to reserve for their use an excellent atlas, some dissected maps, and the best authors in geography, books which Mr. Leeson had purchased purposely for her, delighting to instruct her himself in this science.

Charles, at an early age, betrayed a fondness for martial exercises: for, happening to be sent by his mother one day to Kendal, to purchase some necessaries, he saw the volunteers of the place drawn up and exercised.—Chained by attention to the spot where he saw them performing their different manœuvres, he forgot home and his message till the drill was over. He then returned home to his mother, and, on being chidden for his delay, he ho-

nestly told her the cause of it, and added, " If you please, mother, I will be a soldier when I am big enough to enter : I should like it of all things."

" It is the finery of the dress, Charles, that attracts you," replied his mother ; " but, believe me, my dear, a showy outside frequently covers a sorrowful heart : there are few professions (I believe I may almost venture to say, not any) so laborious, so fatiguing, or so hazardous, as that of a soldier ; harassed about from town to town, and from one post to another ; marching through all weathers, whether wet or dry, hot or cold ; now drenched with rain, then covered with snow ; at other times, parched with heat, and choaking with drought, either in pursuit or retreat ; wearied and worn out by

forced marches, harrassed both in front and rear, exposed to the fire of their opposers, and frequently left more than half dead upon the field of battle; and then, Charles, some fiend, too frequently in the shape of a woman, for the sake of the little plunder the dead and dying bodies afford, will come, and, with cool, deliberate cruelty, finish what the bullet or sword of the enemy has begun: these, my dear boy, are but a very few of the ills to which the life of a soldier is exposed. I cannot enumerate them. Thank God, I know them but by hear-say: none of my connections ever entered into that profession."

"But it is a respectable one, nevertheless, mother" replied Charles, "and I have heard you many times say, that no situation in life was exempt from

trouble, and that Providence had the same care over a sailor as a landsman; and why not a soldier then? they are equally as necessary to the good of the state; they are alike the defenders of their country; and although they may be subject to fatigues and disasters of various kinds; yet if they surmount them, they return covered with glory. Dear mother, I would not wish to make you unhappy; but indeed, indeed, I had rather be a soldier than any thing."

"You are yet too young to know what you will absolutely decide upon, Charles; a few years hence and your determination must be made. I hope you will not make this choice; for I have no interest to promote you; nor money to purchase you a commission, or support you, could you even get one; and a common soldier's pay is

very trifling indeed. You must think of something else, my dear; this plan of life will not, I fear, suit you."

But Charles could think of nothing else; the wish strengthened into a desire, and the desire into a resolve.

From this hour he became a soldier: the pitchfork was his musket; and he was constantly performing his exercise. Charles, too, in hunting among some old books, found two or three upon military subjects. These he seized with the greatest avidity; and as they were for at least two years the chief object of his study, he became theoretically pretty well versed in military tactics. His ardour increased with his years; and his mother, who foresaw all the hardships he must undergo as a common man, and who knew she had it not in her power to place him in any

other situation, saw with the greatest concern his increasing enthusiasm for the service.

These two lads had attained, one his sixteenth, and the other his eighteenth year, when an occurrence, under the immediate direction of that divine Providence by whom the peasant is as much regarded as the monarch, greatly forwarded Charles's favorite wish. It was late one autumn evening, when the brothers returning from the neighbouring town, where they had been with some pigs to the fair, saw a gentleman on horseback, who followed them: they took off their hats, and wished him good night as he passed. Shortly after, in passing through a lane, they observed the horse without his rider.—“This is the horse the gentlemen who passed us just now, rode upon,” said Charles, “I

know him again by that white mark on his off gambрил."—" But where is the gentleman?" said Edward.----A groan now struck on their ears. " He has fallen!" they mutually exclaimed; " I hear a groan : let us search for him." They did so, and found him with his head dreadfully cut, leaning against a large tree.

They advanced to the stranger, and proffered their assistance.

He was bleeding profusely, and was unable to reply to the question of " Whither shall we take you, Sir?"

" Let us convey him to our cottage," said Edward; " under our mother's care, he will probably soon get well."

They bore him softly to their lowly roof; and there the assiduous care of their parent, united to their own, soon completed a cure.

“How can I repay you or my young friends here, for the trouble, fatigue, and expence I have occasioned you?” said the stranger.

“We are amply repaid by seeing the success of our endeavours, Sir,” replied Mrs. Leeson; “and if you have been contented with our humble accommodations, we are entirely satisfied.”

“That is not enough,” returned the stranger; “you must first accept the contents of this purse---nay, no denial---I will not be refused---I owe you more than that, ten times told; and now, my good lads, tell me in what I can serve you. You are, I see, both by instruction and manners, greatly above your present station: such lads as you were never designed to follow the plough. Tell me frankly,

is there any other situation you would prefer to this; perhaps I may assist you in the attainment of something desirable. Tell me, Charles," addressing himself to the elder, "what do you wish? What do you propose for your future plans?"

"I have no greater wish, Sir, in the world, than for my mother to permit me to enter into the army: I do not fear but, with diligence and attention, I shall become an officer at last. If you would, Sir, but persuade her to agree to my entering, I would immediately enlist with Serjeant Thorn, who is now recruiting in this neighbourhood."

"Are you aware, young man," said the stranger, rather sternly, "of the hazards, fatigues, and denials, the life of a soldier requires? You must ex-

pect to encounter severe hardships, and surmount innumerable difficulties ; you must be cool, firm, collected and intrepid in danger ; regular, orderly, obedient to command ; submissive to your superiors, and gentle and forbearing to your inferiors ; you must be cautious not to give way to any acts of intemperance, but, by sobriety and attention to the duties and discipline requisite in your station, strive to merit the good opinion and good will of your officers. ---Are you any thing of a mathematician?"

"The study of mathematics was as much my delight at school," replied Charles, "as that of military tactics has been at home, Sir ; and though not so highly learned as those gentlemen whose parents have the power of giving them the advantage of a very

liberal education, I yet flatter myself that I have profited by the lessons my master gave me."

"Books on military tactics!" exclaimed the stranger, in amazement: "let me see them, and the use you have made of them."

Charles produced his favourite authors, and modestly at the same time presented his own practice, and remarks upon them.

"Had you no assistant in these exercises?" said the stranger, after having accurately examined them.

"None, Sir," answered Charles.

"You are then," said the stranger, a self-taught scholar; and your progress reflects the highest credit on your abilities: but tell me what is your chief inducement to follow a soldier's life?"

“Ambition, Sir, arising from the hope of distinguishing myself in the service of my king and country. Oh, Sir, how glorious it would be to be one of a victorious army; and how proud should I feel, were I fortunate enough to signalize myself against our foes! many common men have done so, and risen by their merit to command: I may, if I am diligent and attentive, hope to do the same.”

“Certainly you may.” Here the conversation ended.

The stranger shortly after took leave of Mrs. Leeson, with many professions of gratitude, and solemn assurances, that he should never forget her interest, or her children's. He was as good as his word; for shortly after, the following letter, addressed to her, arrived.

“ I shall never forget, my good Mrs. Leeson, the obligations I lay under to you, for your hospitable kindness; nor to your good boys, for the performance of innumerable acts of humanity and good will. I am happy to have it in my power to indulge my friend Charles's wish: the inclosed commission appoints him ensign in the ———; and as several expences are necessary towards completing his appearance, and maintaining his rank, I have taken the liberty of adding to my inclosure, a bill, to satisfy those demands. After he is equipped, I must beg him to do me the favour of calling upon me in Manchester-square, where he will be sure to meet me. Had I, when indebted to you and your children's humanity, unveiled to you my rank in life, I perhaps should have laid you under a re-

strait which would have prevented my forming that judgment of your hearts which the ignorance of it disclosed ; for, however we may pretend to feel for every one, such is human nature, that rank and riches are sure to find the readiest and most willing attendants ; but, unknown, I experienced your charity ; and your exertions convinced me that merit, worth, and real feeling, dwelt in the cottage upon Kendal moor, and that no one experienced the benefit of them more than your ever ready friend

D————.

“ Tell my good Edward, I have not forgotten him, but shall be as ready to assist his interest, in any way he may point out, as his brother’s.”

The receipt of this letter threw Charles into a state of rapturous joy : he sang,

danced, and whistled, alternately : but sober Reason at length resuming her place, he began to converse with his mother upon the brilliancy of his future prospects, and anticipated, with all the enthusiastic hopes of sanguine youth, the riches and honours that awaited him. “ I shall yet see you placed, my dearest mother,” he cried, “ in a different situation to that in which I leave you. How happy it will make me, to contribute to your comfort, to take from my mother the necessity of performing any kind of laborious work, and to repay her care and attentions, by studying her ease and felicity, and supporting her declining years by dutiful attention and affection !”

“ My dearest boy,” replied his mother, whose pleasure at the opening

prospects of her child were damped by the idea of his being separated from her, "youth indulges in fallacious hopes; it sees, with too ardent eyes, only the bright side of the question: Fancy, when she places her mirror before their eyes, exhibits only such scenes as afford to the too eager mind, pleasure, riches and honour. Alas! could you view the back ground of the picture—could you see the dark shades---You would observe Vice with her various temptations, first throwing out charms to allure, and then leaving the agitated and too yielding mind involved in wretchedness: the dark shade, my child, would totally overpower the brighter; riches, fame, honours, cannot be obtained immediately; many denials must be practised; many hardships endured, and difficulties surmounted, before we can

acquire either. On our first outset in life, we are apt to believe that the world was made only for us : Pleasure invites to the dance ; and Hope leads it up ; but stop, for a moment, the thoughtless career—Sober-minded Reason follows slowly, and brings in her hand Conscience. These monitors, Charles, will be heard ; the pillow of sleep is very frequently disturbed by their reproaches ; their first admonitions are generally impressive ; but if disobeyed, will become less powerful, and a degree of unconsciousness will succeed.—The dangers attendant on such a state cannot be expressed. O ! then, my boy, attend early to their dictates ; and when once you detect yourself in an error, suffer not yourself to be deeper involved ; but, by attending to these inward monitors, arrest your course, and go no further.—

In the profession you have chosen, and which the benevolence of the good Earl of D—— has placed you in, so much superior a station to any that I could have procured for you, you will be exposed to many and various temptations ; you will probably be surrounded by a set of gentlemen, who, having large fortunes at command, can afford to indulge in expences both of dress and table, which you, who will have literally nothing to depend upon but your pay, cannot, must not, think of doing. It will require the greatest economy on your part, to make your pay answer your expences ; and your first care must be, not to involve yourself in debt ; for, my dear child, by so doing, you will not only lose your consequence in every one's opinion, but you will forfeit the independence of your mind.

Borrow money of a brother officer, and from that moment you are dependent upon him. You cannot maintain your own opinion, in opposition to the man who has obliged you. You cannot but feel something like shame, arising from a consciousness of the obligation you are under, or the fear of being reproached with your debt by him, or perhaps asked for it before the whole mess: this with mean minds is commonly done; generous ones would spurn at it.—Perhaps he might, under the circumstances to which you are reduced, expect you to perform some dishonourable service, which, as a free man, you would scorn to submit to, but which, as an obliged one, you would first hesitate at, but could not refuse to comply with.—I cannot enumerate, my dear Charles, the mortifica-

tions, insults, and self-upbraidings, a debtor exposes himself to; nor do I confine myself wholly to what you subject yourself to in borrowing of any one, but would caution you also against involving yourself with the tradesmen with whom you deal. I do not say but a little credit is sometimes absolutely necessary; but you must be punctual in your payments, and must not go beyond your ability to pay; otherwise you would not only hurt yourself, but the person with whom you deal; he must be regular; and without he can get his monies, how can he be so? Thus, my dear, from the carelessness of some, and the dishonesty of others, the tradesman becomes a bankrupt, and his family is ruined. Be careful, then, to avoid debt, and studious to confine yourself within your income. There

are many other points to be observed in the conduct of a young man, which we shall discuss at some future period ; at present, your first thought must be, to acknowledge by letter the receipt of your commission, and your sense of the obligation under which you lay for it ; meanwhile, I will do my best to get you ready."

Charles's arrangements were soon made ; and the day arrived on which he was to part with his mother and brother ; when, in spite of all his military ardour, his heart sunk.—Their adieus were long and tender.—A little before they parted, Mrs. Leeson took him aside, and, giving into his hands a miniature of herself, said, "Take this, my dear boy, and hang it round your neck—wear it as a talisman next your heart ; and think that you have still

the resemblance of your nearest and dearest friend by you : but I charge you, Charles, whenever you feel inclined to do a dishonourable or improper action, put it from you ; for the very ivory would blush with your mother's shame at your misconduct. Be mindful of your duty, both to God and man ; never be ashamed of being and appearing religious ; for how can you expect the Almighty's protection, if you do not ask it. It is no disgrace to be seen upon your knees to that Great Being who created us all. Night and day, invoke his blessing. Be temperate in the pursuit of pleasure. Be sober ; for a drunkard is an offence both to God and man ; to God, as he fails to exert the blessing of reason, with which he has been so liberally endowed ; and placing himself upon a level with

brutes, who are stimulated by no other passion than appetite : besides, the love of drink throws a man into a thousand difficulties and disagreeables : it injures his pocket, destroys his health, and ruins his reputation ; it obscures the highest genius, and blasts the most brilliant prospects : the drunkard is a foe to himself, and a disgrace to the character and name of man. Be assiduous to please, but not servile ; be diligent in the performance of the duties of your station ; observe and keep your rank ; be kind to all below you, but do not be intimate ; assist the common soldiers, when you can do it without injury to yourself ; be their friend as far as lies within the compass of your ability ; and never forget, that though Providence has placed you in a higher rank, they

too are men, and are not to be oppressed by an undue exertion of power. Be strict in discipline, but not severe ; gentleness will conciliate a friend ; harshness will make a thousand enemies. Always remember with gratitude the obligations you owe to the Earl of D—— ; and never fail to reflect, that bad conduct on your part, would bring disgrace upon him. Remember, too, Charles, how poignant would it be to my feelings, should I hear you had embroiled yourself in any trouble or quarrel : you must be cool, dispassionate, and patient : the sword, which is placed in your hand, is to be used in defence of your king and country, not for the purpose of private revenge. Study gentility of behaviour, as well as gentleness of conduct and manners, but avoid extremes. Be

neither effeminate in one, nor the other. Be always neat and clean, but not foppish; for a fop is generally regarded as a fool, or as one who takes so much care for the outside, that he has little to bestow upon his mind.—I have many, many more things to say, but time presses: the stage will not be many minutes before it passes. God Almighty, in his mercy, bless and prosper you, preserve you from every danger, and restore you again with the same virtuous dispositions you now possess, to the arms of his mother. The stage was now seen to approach.—With eyes suffused in tears Charles quitted the maternal roof, and was whirled away to the metropolis.

Mrs. Leeson and Edward watched the vehicle so long as it remained in sight; and even the sound of the

wheels was listened to with fond anxiety.

“Farewell, my dear, dear boy,” said the affectionate mother, slowly returning to her cottage—“Farewell—perhaps we may never meet again—the chance of war, or the severity of the elements, conspiring against you, may call you hence, or the common debt, which we must all sooner or later pay, may remove me.”—Here her emotion choked her utterance.—She sat down, contemplating the loss she had sustained in the departure of her son, till she had no power of exertion left.—“Well, well,” said she, “thus it is : one by one, we are removed from each other ; my Edward will be the next ; and then what pleasure will life afford me, bereaved of both my children ?”

Edward had mounted the garden

ledge, to command a still longer view of the coach, when, returning again to the house, he heard his mother's plaintive voice, and saw her tears—"I will never leave you, my beloved parent," said the good youth, "you cannot do without one of us; that one shall be me; my situation in life may be more humble than my brother's; but it will afford equal happiness; nay, do not fret, my dear mother; I will strive to supply poor Charles's loss to you, and, by double attention and duty, be both children in one.

"My good, my excellent boy," replied Mrs. Leeson, still weeping, "you are the comfort and consolation of my life: a few days and this fond sorrow for poor Charles will sink into quiet resignation: it is the first time I have been called upon to part with either of

you since your birth; and the trial is a painful one."

"But Charles is not gone for ever, mother," returned Edward; we shall hear from him constantly: and perhaps we may see him again sooner than we expect. Who knows but he may be ordered to quarters this way? and then we shall see him every day: he may not be sent abroad yet."

Mrs. Leeson's former occupation, for a short time, afforded no pleasure to her in the performance: her thoughts were wholly engrossed by her absent child; and the fear of his being unable to resist the many baits that are spread to allure and destroy youth, added to the anxiety she felt upon this his first entrance into the world, filled her mind with dread.

Every post-day, for the first month,

Edward was regularly dispatched to Kendal. At length, the much-wished for letter arrived, and gladdened her heart by its contents.

“ I have been in this great, this overgrown city, three weeks; and I only now steal a little time to write to my beloved and dearest mother and brother, to assure the former, that my thoughts dwell constantly with her, that I shall never forget the obligations I lay under for her care and tenderness, nor the pleasure I anticipate in being some day able to provide handsomely for her. Yes, my dear mother, that hope will lead me on when strength and spirits fail; that hope will bear me up when fainting with fatigue, and worn down with watching. When lifting my sword against the enemy, I shall silently

breathe a prayer for my preservation, and feel my life of consequence to you. When fear shall annoy me, I will endeavour to strengthen my weak heart with the thought, 'I am fighting for my mother.' You, my tender, my excellent parent, will yet be my guide: this idea will stimulate me to virtue and to honour: never, never, shall you blush for your son; your counsels are too firmly engraven on his heart ever to be erased.

"My first week was passed rather heavily, though my aunt (your sister) did all in her power to make her home agreeable. I felt she did so; and I was, or appeared to be, happy; but the thoughts of the cottage upon Kendal moor, and its dear inhabitants, were too prevailing to permit me to enjoy complete felicity.

“ Last Monday, I waited on the Earl of D——.

“ Dear mother, when I saw the grandeur with which he was surrounded, I felt astonished that he could submit so long to our poor accommodations, and still poorer fare; but a good heart is grateful for every thing, and satisfied with what is needful, when superfluities cannot be obtained.

“ I cannot but tell you, that proud (for I certainly was at the moment proud) as I felt of my regimentals and my whole appearance, I shrunk into nothing, and felt myself as nothing, when I was presented to my patron. The air of grandeur, yet of kindness, with which he welcomed me, and of frankness and sincerity which appeared in his countenance, when,

as I advanced to pay my respects (which I am sure I did in a very clownish manner) he held out his hand to me, and said, " Welcome to town, my good Charles ; I am happy to see you here, and desire you to make my house your home. His manner, my dear mother, and the kind and repeated enquiries he made after you and Edward, soon restored me a little to myself. I am sure he pitied my rustic ignorance ; for he did all in his power to raise me into confidence with myself ; and he so far succeeded, as shortly after to get me into a little conversation. He informed me that the regiment to which I was appointed was ordered to the continent ; and that previous to my joining it, he should introduce me to some of my brother officers, and especially to the colonel,

who was his particular friend. He took me with him to an elegant seat he has about five miles from the metropolis; and there we remained till yesterday, when we returned to Manchester-square, where I was introduced to dine with the officers, who received me very politely.—But, my dear mother, they certainly thought me very rustic: I felt so, and was ashamed of myself. I told the Earl, after they left us, how much I suffered from the consciousness of my ignorance of the manners of polite life. He did all in his power to make me satisfied with my own conduct, by assuring me that he had seen many young men who had been accustomed from their cradle to the first and best company, conduct themselves with less propriety than I did.

“ As for the love of drinking, be under no fear about that ; I do not like the taste of wine ; I would rather, vulgar as it may seem, take a draught of our good butter milk, than any of the foreign wines, with which the table of the Earl is every day filled.—But how I run on.—A letter to my mother seems as if I were talking with her.—The postman rings his bell.—I must conclude with love to my dear Edward—your affectionate

London.

CHARLES LEESON.”

This letter, while it conveyed to Mrs. Leeson the sincerest pleasure, as it was so strong a proof of her son's duty and love, yet gave her the most acute pain, when she found he was going to the Continent.—“ But the Almighty,” said she, bending her knees

in pious resignation, “is yet with him : He knows where to find him, whether in the heat of battle, or in his chamber. Already have my prayers been heard by that Great Being, whose peculiar care is the widow and fatherless. He has raised up a noble friend ; and I have only now to pray that my boy’s conduct may not disgrace his patron’s recommendation ; then will he see that his kindness and benevolence have not been lavished upon a worthless ingrate.”

Edward, who rejoiced to hear of his brother’s well-doing, read and re-read the letter many times. The wish to share the good things by which Charles was surrounded, and a spark of ambition, now first kindled in his bosom, made him for a moment anxious to go into the world. The wish grew

into a desire to be placed in some situation where he might get forward ; and he frequently thought of writing to Lord D—— ; but he checked the desire as it rose—" We must not both leave our mother," said he ; " she will sink without the dutiful attention of one of her children.—No, I will never leave her. My care shall be to anticipate her wants and wishes here ; and God Almighty will bless and provide for me, if not in as high a rank of life as my brother, yet with content, the greatest of all earthly blessings.—Poor Charles ! he will be exposed to many dangers.—I shall be safe at home, working hard, it is true ; but I am running no risk from the enemy.—Perhaps he will return a captain, while I only shall remain a poor labourer."

Edward stopt.—The thought gave

him a painful sensation, such as he had never before experienced; and he felt something like envy at his brother's good fortune, at that instant rise in his heart.—“And why should not *I* endeavour to get forward?” continued Edward, still meditating, “I am sure I did as much to serve and please his Lordship, while he was here, as Charles.—Yes, and he promised to assist my plans, as well as my brother's. I will write to him, and then he will send for me too.—Ah! but to leave my poor mother—What will she do?—Who can, who will, serve her as I do?—Yet, to be a gentleman.”—Again the thought returned; and Edward, in idea, saw himself surrounded by affluence and grandeur; but again his mother became the principal object.—“Who will receive my good fortune;

or rather, who will feel it so strongly as my mother?—And she will be laid in the grave; for I am sure she will not live long, if we both quit her.—Well, well, then, I will strive to be content with my humble lot, nor envy my brother's more elevated rank."

The Earl of D——, who was as high in character as rank, never forgot a promise once made, nor failed to fulfil it: his sense of gratitude for the attentions he received while under the humble roof of Mrs. Leeson, was manifested in his care of her son, in whom he was proud to observe virtues which would have adorned any rank in life, yet at times mixed with a few faults natural to heedless and unthinking youth: these the Earl gently and kindly reproved. The time was now rapidly advancing when his protégé

was to leave him : a few days only, and the regiment would embark ; he therefore took him with him one morning to call on the general, who was of the same name.

“ Give me leave, General,” said the Earl, “ to introduce to you, and solicit you countenance for, a very worthy young man, a namesake of yours, appointed ensign in ——— regiment. I trust, and I will vouch for it, he will never disgrace my recommendation, nor your notice ; and I shall feel myself highly obliged by your patronizing him when abroad.”

General Leeson was very proud, but was, in other respects, a very good man.

“ One generally feels something like prepossession in favour of a namesake, my Lord, ” said the general ; “ this,

added to your request, will certainly induce me to comply with your desire. If Mr. Leeson conducts himself well, he shall not want a friend ; but I countenance no indifferent characters, nor careless officers. To merit my attention, young gentleman," continued he, addressing himself to Charles, " you must not only be assiduous and attentive to your duty as an officer, but prudent, guarded and circumspect in your private deportment. The colonel of your regiment is my particular friend : my favour follows his. I have no greater pleasure than in assisting merit ; but it is not because his Lordship here (for whom I have the highest respect) requests it, that I shall forward your promotion, if I see you unworthy of it : your countenance, however, speaks in your favour."

"It shall never belie itself, Sir," replied Charles manfully but respectfully, "I hope never to disgrace my patron, by any bad conduct. I know I have nothing to hope for, from him, but through my own behaviour; and I owe too many obligations to him, to bring his recommendation into disrepute."

"You speak well, young gentleman," said the General; "act so.—Shall I have the honour of your Lordship's company to dinner to-morrow?" turning to the Earl, "we embark on Thursday: I should wish to enjoy that pleasure before I leave England."

"I will certainly wait on you, General," returned his Lordship.—They then took leave.

After Lord D——'s return from the General, he told Charles that he had

promised to advance him according to his merit. "He is a good man, and a strict disciplinarian," said he ; "and I am sure he will not fail to notice you, if he sees you conduct yourself properly. You must be careful not to let any of your companions lead you astray ; you must be prudent and circumspect : for otherwise you will be led into mischief, which will at once ruin you with the general and me ; for I cannot, much as I now respect, ever again countenance you, should you, by any wilful misconduct, fall into disgrace.

"I hardly need, I see, caution you to avoid drinking : at present you dislike it. You must be careful not to gamble, which is a vice too frequently practised in a camp, and which brings certain ruin with it : at present you

are not addicted to such dangerous amusements; you naturally, and with the implicit confidence of youth, believe all that is said to you, to be true; but many, Charles, have their motives for flattery, and for praise: but it is right to doubt every one, till you have formed some judgment, either from observation or report. Endeavour to be decided in your opinion; and when you have formed a resolution, do not waver from it. To be reckoned a good-natured fellow, is little better than being thought a downright fool; for a goodnatured fellow, as they term him, will do any thing, be led into any thing, simply because he has not the power of saying *no*, and abiding by it. His over anxiety to oblige, leads him into a thousand errors: he becomes a drunkard, without caring for liquor;

a gambler, yet hating cards and dice ; and a rioter and debauchee, without having passions for either ; but bad company, operating upon a head but poorly furnished, leads him into every vice ; and he becomes a shunned and despised character among those with whom he ought to stand well. A proper negative, then, is necessary ; be firm at first ; and let your companions see that you are not to be induced to do wrong : how ever they may scoff, they cannot blame, and must ultimately praise you for the very firmness they may affect to despise ; and, believe me, they will soon cease persecuting you to be of parties for which you have no inclination, and in which you have too much good sense to join. Be civil, polite, and attentive to every one ; oblige where you can ; but never

lose sight of the obligations you owe to yourself; a momentary caution may save you from utter ruin. The thoughtless career is difficult to stop when it is once entered upon. You must then be prudent not to advance too far. Many young men fall into vices for which they have naturally no relish, from the love of company; but, Charles, your own company, a book, a walk, any thing is better than joining the idle and dissipated; and among so many, you will, or it is very hard, find some one of similar taste with your own, some prudent, good man, with whom you may safely associate, and who will delight to inform and instruct you. You have yet much to learn. Colonel —— is my friend; he will be your's. His son, as good and prudent a young man as any I know, goes out with him.

He bears an ensign's commission, as well as yourself; probably you may become intimate: he will at once be a companion and friend, and one (or I am very much deceived in him) from whom you may benefit, not only by good example, but by general intelligence also; for I have ever heard him spoken of, as a good scholar, as well as a prudent young man."

When Charles took leave of the Earl, previous to his embarkation, he gave him a bank note, telling him that he did not wish him to anticipate his pay, and that that sum, used with prudence, would be sufficient for him till he could with propriety draw upon his agent.

"To you, Charles," said the Earl, "I particularly recommend the useful virtues of prudence and economy."

Your mother has nothing to spare for you, to help you out, or redeem your name from dishonour, should you, by an unfortunate oversight or thoughtlessness, get yourself into trouble.—As the good and dutiful child you appeared to me at Kendal moor, you will feel it your duty and delight to add to, not to take from, her little store. I believe,” he continued, smiling, “that while you hold no higher rank than that of ensign, she can neither expect, nor will it be in your power to do, any thing for her; but as merit and proper attention may raise you, and as the great stimulative to action is the hope of preferment, you must never relinquish the expectation of being able to make some provision for her wants. A dutiful child, my young friend, draws a blessing upon himself.

Nature speaks, gratitude demands, he should strive to make some amends for the many watchful days and nights he has occasioned her who gave him birth ; her tender care of his helpless infancy, should always be remembered ; and by anxious tenderness her maternal cares should be repaid by exact duty, tender affections, and unwearied assiduity, to administer to, and prevent her wants. The tear, Charles, which dims the eye of a parent, for the misconduct of a child, is the tear of anguish drawn from the heart. Recollect your mother upon all occasions ; and never fail to reflect that your good behaviour will gladden her heart, renew her years, and draw down a blessing upon your own head, while a contrary conduct would destroy her fondest hopes, and drag her, blushing with shame, to a premature grave."

Charles's full heart could make no reply to the Earl. His tongue had lost the power of utterance: the mention of his mother brought her picture fresh to his imagination: he saw her sitting disconsolately, weeping his absence, and forming to herself a thousand dangers, by which her fond fears led her to imagine him surrounded. At present she was the first object with him; and he thought, and at that moment felt, the Earl need not have admonished him to remember her; "for I," said he, mentally, "can never, never forget her, or what I owe to her."

The voyage to the continent was short and pleasant.

Charles soon threw off the damp which had clogged his spirits, and joined in the mess with as much hilarity as any of his brother officers.

Their landing was performed with much difficulty, and no little danger ; and our hero soon began to taste the fatigues of actual service ; but it was too late to retract : his choice in life was made, and by it he must abide. His military enthusiasm, to do him justice, still continued ; and the unabated ardour with which he performed every part of his duty, was silently noticed by several of the officers.

The march through an enemy's country, where every foot of land was to be disputed, was an arduous undertaking ; yet our brave troops performed it without murmur or complaint, following their officers with all that chearful readiness which characterizes the British soldier, at the same time observing the strictest discipline and good order.

After a fortnight's incessant marching, they formed a junction with the power they were destined to assist. It was now that Charles was mixing with the world. The language and manners of his new associates differed widely from those to which he had been accustomed. Every thing wore a different face. Their encampment was on an extensive plain; and the united armies together covered a space of near ten English miles. Mutual civilities passed between the confederates; and reciprocal visits to each other's camps and quarters, became very frequent.

Among the number of those to whom our young hero had been introduced, was an ensign of the name of Du Lasnes. He was a young man of very high birth, engaging appearance, and fascinating manners. It was easily per-

ceived that he was particularly struck with Charles Leeson, to whom he attached himself with an apparently great warmth of friendship. Charles was flattered by his notice; their intimacy hourly increased; where one was seen, the other was known not to be far off; "Where is your satellite," said one of the officers, ironically, to Du Lasnes.

"Satellite!" exclaimed the latter, "whom do you mean? Is it Ensign Leeson?"

"To be sure: he is your shadow."

Du Lasnes smiled. "True," said he, "he is always with me; he is a convenient kind of fellow; but he is poor."

"You can make him rich, Du Lasnes," replied the officer: "you have enough and to spare."

"What! to a fellow without a soul!"

He is so wrapt up in his mother's maxims, that I can make nothing of him."

It will be easily perceived by this speech, what kind of a heart Du Lasnes possessed. Vitiated by continued prosperity, uncontrouled in childhood, and debauched by bad example, as he advanced to manhood, he became a dangerous companion, and a destructive associate to all those who followed his example.

Charles Leeson, unsuspecting that such a character could be concealed under such apparent sweetness and elegance of manners, really felt for Du Lasnes a friendship superior to any he had before experienced for any stranger; and this friendship hourly subjected him more and more to the influence of his companion.

At first, their visitings were confined to the enjoyment of a sober walk, or partaking any little amusement their circumscribed situation would admit; but the bottle was soon introduced in Du Lasnes' tent.

Charles declined the invitation to drink, from natural dislike of liquor; but his friend ridiculed him with such poignant asperity, that, in defence of himself, he took his glass.—Another and another succeeded; and, for the first time in his life, Charles Leeson became disguised with liquor, which not only made him perfectly ridiculous, but more than half mad.

Du Lasnes was fearful of his being seen in such a state, and with some difficulty succeeded in persuading him to lie down.

No sooner had his intoxication sub-

sided, than Conscience, that never-failing monitor, visited his pillow.—Unable to bear her reproofs, Charles started up.—“I will return to my own camp,” said he, “nor will I ever again visit Du Lasnes, who has caused me to break the commands of a parent.—To what a level have I reduced myself!—Who knows what absurdities I may have committed, or how I may have exposed myself!—Oh! my head!” said he, reclining his disordered temples against the back of a chair—“how it aches! how it throbs! and how dreadfully sick I feel!—Well, well, if this be drunkenness, I am sure the pain it causes, considerably overbalances the pleasure of drinking. Indeed, drinking affords no pleasure to me; for I did not drink because I liked the wine, but because I could not stand Du Lasnes’

ridicule.—Fool that I was, not to be decisive!—Ah! I see the Earl was right when he said that the good-natured man is next to a downright fool.”—Here he was interrupted by the entrance of Du Lasnes himself, who laughed at him for being, as he termed it, “completely in for it.”

“I was, indeed,” returned Charles, gravely; “and I fear I made myself completely ridiculous; perhaps I was seen by some of my brother officers, who may report my imprudence to the Colonel.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” said Du Lasnes, laughing heartily, “what, art thou afraid of the rod, Leeson?—But be in no fear, however foolish you were; and what man is not a fool when he is drunk? however, for your satisfaction, no one saw you but myself and

Lockeville; and with him it is safe enough; for he so frequently does the same thing, that he can have nothing to say of another.—But if the Colonel or Major, or even the General himself had, do you think they were never drunk themselves?”

“That would be no excuse for me,” replied Charles; “it is a vice against which I was particularly cautioned by my mother.”

“Your mother again, Leeson! for pity’s sake, do not shew your leading-strings, even if you chuse to wear them—Why, man, you will be scoffed at and ridiculed by the whole army, if you are continually quoting the old-fashioned sayings of an old woman. We know very well, all mothers tell us not to do this bad thing, nor the other bad thing; but who minds what

they say ; they cannot see us ; and it is very hard if we, who are exposed to a thousand dangers, and are fighting their battles, may not enjoy a drunken frolic now and then."

"Enjoy !" reiterated Leeson, "upon my word, I find no enjoyment in it, unless suffering a violent pain in the head, and a sick stomach, may be termed so ; and as to frolics, I think to make a fool of one's self, and occasion disorders both of body and mind, are events sufficiently serious to deserve a different epithet."

"Thou art a poor thing at the bottle, I see," said Du Lasnes ; "however, since you are tolerably recovered, and can make shift to stagger to quarters, I advise you to lose no time ; for the roll has been called this hour, and it is time you were on parade."

This was another shock to Charles. Hitherto he had never been absent from parade a minute behind his time ; for the first time, then, he had to sneak upon it with shame : he knew it would be a full one, as they were supposed to be on the eve of a general action, and particular orders were expected to be issued, which he, from negligence, might fail to hear read. He felt he deserved, and he was sure he should receive, a severe reprimand from his Colonel, for being absent at such a juncture. He dreaded to appear, yet it was indispensably necessary he should.

Upon his arrival, Charles found the roll had indeed been called, and that every officer was upon parade : he hastened to join them ; but his countenance indicated that something was not right.

“Where have you been, Mr. Leeson,” said the Major, meeting him as he advanced; “do you not know that particular orders have been issued, and your absence noticed by the Colonel?”

“Then I am undone,” said Charles; “what may not my intemperate folly have caused me!”

The Major seemed struck with this involuntary exclamation.—“Why, what have you done?” said he, “something, I see, is the matter: your countenance speaks it.”

At this moment the Colonel advanced, and, desiring the Major to give some orders to his company, said very gravely to Charles, “How is it, Sir, that you were absent from parade this morning, at such a crisis as this, when we are almost hourly in expectation of a battle?—You should be

on the spot, and not, by negligence and absence, give cause for reproof."

Charles had nothing to say—He felt ashamed at being suspected of negligence; yet he was sensible he merited the reproof he met.

"I think, Colonel," said the Major kindly, "Mr. Leeson's looks speak regret for this little lapse from duty to-day. I believe it is the first time he was ever seen a minute beyond his time. I dare say his delay was involuntary."

"I hope so; and I am willing to believe it," returned the Colonel, eyeing Charles's disordered appearance; "and as it is the first fault, we must overlook it.—Major, will you have the goodness to make Mr. Leeson acquainted with the orders issued for to-morrow."

Having thus escaped the reprimand

he expected, Charles resolved to be more careful for the future.—“ To-morrow,” said he, “ to-morrow we give battle to the enemy ; even now the ranks and divisions are arranging ; preparations of every sort are making ; and who knows how we may fare, which of us may be numbered with the dead, or how many hundreds, perhaps thousands, among this brave company, may not this day partake their last meal upon earth. I am just as likely to be among the number as any other.—Oh, my mother ! my dear mother ! what will your maternal heart feel, when you hear your son is numbered with the dead !—Ah ! did you at this moment know how I am to be employed to-morrow, what would you not endure !—But away with such thoughts : every ball has its direction,”

said Charles, endeavouring to rouse himself from the train of thought with which his mind was occupied—"Who knows but to-morrow I may be promoted?—Perhaps I may be a captain before the day closes.—Away, then, with melancholy.—I am yet, I hope, the care of Heaven."

In the battle of the following day, Charles signalized himself by his coolness and activity : so much so, that the General promoted him to a lieutenancy on the field of action.

The event of the day proved favourable to the English ; and Charles, upon his return to his tent, wrote off, in high spirits, to his mother and his patron, informing them of his good fortune.

From this time he was noticed by the General, who shortly after made

made him one of his aids du camp. His promotion now seemed rapidly advancing ; and he had every prospect of rising to a considerable rank in the army—when he was again thrown in the company of Du Lasnes.

“ I wish you joy of your promotion, Mr. Leeson,” said Du Lasnes, advancing to him, no one participates the good fortune of his friends more sincerely than myself. Give me leave to introduce you to my friend Captain Hautsberg.”

Charles bowed, acknowledged Du Lasnes' friend, as his, and joined them in their walk. Hautsberg was as fascinating a companion as Du Lasnes. He possessed wit and cunning, was attached to the pleasures of the bottle, and was strongly addicted to the gaming table ; he was, in fact, more dangerous than the other,

Charles was now upon his guard against the encroachments of liquor, which he stedfastly resolved not to touch: but when it came to the test, he was not proof against the witty sarcasms and irony of Hautsberg; for a length of time, however, he resisted their invitations to visit them in their camps, alledging that his new duties engrossed all his time.

“What do you think to make of this prig, Du Lasnes?” said Hautsberg, one day, after they had left his tent; “what can be your motive for signaling him as your prey? you say, and indeed he owns himself, he has nothing to depend upon but his pay; he is not, then, a pigeon worth plucking. I can see no reason for your conduct: besides, he is really averse to us, and seems to consider us as dangerous companions.”

“ My motive is this,” said Du Lasnes :
“ he stands between me and the good
graces of the English Earl D——, to
whom I have the honour, though un-
known to this young chap, to stand in
no less degree of relationship than
that of nephew, my mother being his
lordship’s own sister ; but, by marrying
a man of her own choice, instead of one
selected for her by her relations, which
one was the intimate friend of the
Earl. Her unalterable choice gave
offence to all her relations, and particu-
larly to the Earl of D—— ; and she
has never been owned by any of them
since. I believe, they would have
acknowledged me ; but when the
Earl was in H——, where he attended
in a diplomatic character, some of my
irregularities met his ear ; and having
found out that I was what he is pleased

to term a vicious character, he utterly disregarded me, and, to complete his kindness, passed a fine upon his estate, so that he has cut off my right of succession, and can leave it where and to whom he pleases. Now this Leeson is his protegé; he has come out under his immediate auspices, and is so very great a favourite, that there is no doubt but he will have the major part of his fortune. My views, then, in attaching myself to him, are plain enough. Let but the Duke once hear that his protegé drinks, swears, games, and, in short, runs the race of one of us, and he is done for with him; for such is his tenaciousness of virtue, as he calls it, that he would not pardon a trifling deviation; and you may be sure I will take care Leeson's irregularities shall soon reach him. I do not mean to be

seen myself to have any hand in his ruin : I must leave that to abler hands," looking archly at Hautsberg.

" And what will abler hands, as you term them," returned Hautsberg, " get by ruining this young man, who is, in reality, a fine young fellow ? or, to be plain, Du Lasnes, where will you find an abler hand at most of the modern vices than yourself ? You can drink, intrigue, game ; in short, to which of the fashionable follies of the day are you unequal ?"

" Well, well, granting I am, as you say, highly polished this way, you see clearly, it is not my game to be seen acting a part with Leeson ; I must be shy of him. What do you say, Hautsberg ? shall I make him over to you, with a stamped obligation to pay you a thousand guineas, if you succeed in

ousting him, and effecting the Duke's reconciliation to me?"

"For two thousand I will do my best for you," replied Hautsberg; "but one thousand is not sufficient: he is such a stubborn prig, that I shall have more trouble to bend him, than the money would pay me for."

"Well, well, let it be two thousand," said Du Lasnes; and thus these two *virtuous* companions parted.

From that hour, Hautsberg attached himself to Charles. At first he was the entertaining companion, the judicious observer, the sentimental friend.

Charles fell into the snare; he imagined Hautsberg to possess, in reality, all those virtues of which he wore the semblance. By degrees he obtained the esteem of Charles, and, without difficulty, drew him into his snare. By

slow degrees, he engaged in scenes to which he had before been an utter stranger. The bottle soon became pleasant to him ; and he was frequently intoxicated.

“ Be cautious, Leeson,” said Du Lasnes, artfully, “ the Colonel or General may see you ; and then your game will be up. Du Lasnes took care they should see him. Charles, unfortunately, was in a deplorable state of inebriation, roaring, hallooing, and singing like a madman, when Du Lasnes and the Colonel passed. The latter stopped to enquire the cause of such disorder, when Charles, with his hair untied, his waistcoat entirely unbuttoned, his face the colour of scarlet from the effect of the liquor, with a bottle in one hand, and a glass in the other, rushed from the tent.

"That can never be Mr. Leeson," said the Colonel, all astonishment—"I hope not."

"No, Colonel, it cannot be him," said Du Lasnes; and he affected to turn him from the path Charles was pursuing, but which led him, in reality, to a still closer view; "Lieutenant Leeson is a very sober young man."

"He was so," replied the Colonel; "but—or my eyes deceive me—he is not now that character.—Mr. Leeson," said he, sternly advancing to Charles; "go to your tent; you are exposing yourself, and bringing disgrace upon your profession."

Flushed with liquor, careless of himself, and without sense to distinguish who was speaking, he hiccupped out his refusal to comply with this officer's command; and, swearing defiance to

authority, committed a thousand absurdities.

“Call the Serjeant,” said the Colonel.

The Serjeant attended.

“Conduct Lieutenant Leeson to his tent, and place a guard over him till further orders.”

The Colonel was instantly obeyed; but Charles still resisted, till the guard, opposing violence to his violence, overpowered him.

It was not till the following morning that he became sensible of what had passed; nor then, till he had dressed himself, and was leaving his tent, was he made acquainted with his being under arrest.

All his folly now flushed in his face.—“I am ruined for ever,” said he; “I have ruined myself by my in-

temperance—I have disgraced my patron—I have for ever quashed every prospect of preferment—I have, in short, ruined not only myself, but my mother.—Fool, idiot that I am, where, where was my self-command? where my strength of mind?—To what have I not exposed myself?—My name, my folly, my beastliness (I can call it nothing better) will be in every man's mouth. I shall be disgraced from my rank, pointed at, and shamed as a drunkard.—O Charles, Charles! thou hast ruined thyself, and blasted thy fond mother's hopes!"

The whole of this day, Charles Lee-son was left to his own melancholy meditations. At the conclusion of it, letters from England were delivered to him. At any other time, they would have been a source of the greatest

pleasure; but now he dreaded opening them, imagining they would contain some reproaches for his first breach of duty in consequence of his intoxication with Du Lasnes. They were from his mother, his brother, and the Earl: they were filled with the kindest enquiries, interspersed with expressions of the most friendly solicitude for his welfare, proudly exulting in his advancement, congratulating him on his being in such high favour with the commanding officers, and rejoicing to hear such flattering accounts of his good conduct.

The Earl's letter contained a draft upon the Commissary, for Charles's use, in consequence of the excellent character he had heard of him from the the Colonel, as well as the General.—He concluded by warmly recommend-

ing to Charles a steady perseverance in the same line of conduct which had gained him so much approbation and esteem, and which, while continued, would ensure his invariable friendship.

“ Oh ! what a fool have I been ! ” exclaimed Charles, “ What have I not lost !—What has not my intemperance done !—My mother will despise and hate me, for falling into a vice against which she so particularly warned me ; the Earl will renounce me for ever ; his good opinion will be utterly lost ; his patronage will be no more.—Oh, mercy ! could they but see me under arrest, confined to my tent, a serjeant’s guard at my door—And for what ?—For indulging in a vice which reduces man below a beast, and rendering myself, for a time, incapable of my duty as a soldier, and becoming not only ridi-

culous, but insulting.—They will, they must, hear all this, and perhaps hear the truth greatly exaggerated—Exaggerated, it is impossible — Nothing could exceed my folly, my obstinacy, in doing wrong—My crime is the cause of my punishment, and constitutes a part, though not the whole of it. Beside disordering my body, and distressing my mind, I have forfeited the good opinion of all my brother officers, and exposed myself to the secret contempt of the subalterns.—Mortification enough !—But this is not all I have to regret : I have forfeited my mother's confidence, and have rendered her unhappy.—My dear brother Edward, too, will be grieved when he hears of my misconduct ; but I hope he will never be exposed to the temptations I have experienced, or that he

will have more wisdom and prudence to resist them.”—Here his meditations were interrupted by the entrance of the Major, with whom he had ever been a favourite, and who was truly grieved to hear of his disgrace.

“Why, Leeson,” said he, upon entering, “what is this story I hear?—How came you in this plight?—You will certainly ruin yourself, if you continue this course—Let me advise you to be more careful—Who were your companions, that they could suffer you to be seen in such a state? They had no regard for you, or they would have endeavoured to conceal the disorder of your brain, and would not have suffered you to be thus exposed. Whose company were you in?”

“Captain Hautsberg’s only,” replied Charles; and, when I come to reflect,

I am astonished at being so soon overcome : we did not drink much.—But what, Major, what shall I do ?—Could I but express the shame with which I am overwhelmed, or the grief I feel for my intemperate folly, you would pity me.—Had I avoided this unfortunate event, I should have been happy indeed ; for I have just received letters from my patron and friends, congratulating me upon my promotion, and ascribing it entirely to my good conduct. Had my present situation been foreseen by them, and the duty of an Officer been laid down as the criterion of their decision, how different would their accounts have been !—What have I to expect ?—They will soon hear of my present degraded situation !—Confined to my tent, under a Serjeant's guard, for drunkenness ; and that, too,

at a crisis when we know not how soon we may be summoned to the field again.—Oh ! I was bewitched !—I shall never cease to condemn myself.”

“ I would advise you, Leeson, to be cautious of Hautsberg : he is a dangerous character for a young man to associate with.—But I think you have no cause to be so much dejected. You are not without friends ; and I shall use all my influence with the Colonel, who is a good man, and will overlook a fault, if it be not too often repeated. I hope you have not been habitually addicted to this vice. You are a young man of good sense, have every prospect of rising in the army, and have already been so fortunate as to be advanced to an aid de camp. You should therefore be very circumspect in your

conduct: a detail like that which I have this day heard, coming to the General's ear, would ruin you; and it is possible that the report of such a circumstance might be heard at the War-Office. To be degraded as a character unworthy of your rank, and unfit to be confided in, are consequences too serious to be hazarded for the sake of any transient gratification. Believe me, Leeson, I am your friend; but, much as I esteem you, I could not countenance you, if you lived in the habit of drinking to excess: it is disgraceful to associate with such a person."

"My dear Major, I know, I feel all this, and much more.—O that I could recal the past!—Never, never again will I be seen to commit such folly.—To subject myself a second time to

such disgrace, I acknowledge, indicates a want of resolution; but I trust nothing will ever again reduce me to a situation which I so much detest.— But indeed I cannot blame Hautsberg: he appears to be a very honest fellow.”

“Very honest fellows,” said the Major, superciliously, “are frequently very worthless ones; and I wish you may not find him so.”

“As to drinking, which I believe is his greatest fault, I renounce that for ever,” said Charles.

“Keep your resolution,” replied the Major, “and all will be well, though you may expect a reprimand from the Colonel.”

“I know I shall look like a fool,” said Charles; “but I have acted like one; and I deserve the reproof I shall meet.”

The Major so far befriended Charles, that a reprimand was all he had ; and that was couched in terms of friendly admonition.

From this time, our young soldier steadily adhered to his resolution to abstain from the pleasures of the bottle.

The army was soon ordered to march into winter quarters, where Charles received the following letter :—

“ It is not long since letters to Charles Leeson were written by his mother and brother, in the highest exultation of their hearts, rejoicing at his promotion, yet more delighted that that promotion owed its birth to his good conduct. The pride of his parent, and the affection of his brother, felt all that such conduct, in one so dearly beloved, could inspire.

The hopes they had fondly cherished were apparently confirmed. The accounts they had received at once flattered and rejoiced them. The good Earl of D—— also manifested his satisfaction in his protégé's conduct, by kindly enclosing to him a present, to enable him to appear like his brother officers.—But all is reversed: the once sober and respectable Charles Leeson has become an associate with professed rakes, and has given himself up to every species of debauchery.—Oh, Charles, Charles! how have the accounts I have lately heard, wrung my heart with the most acute anguish!—I now see that all my anxious care to form your mind to virtue, are lost: you have forgot those important lessons which I so studiously endeavoured to impress upon your mind. No sooner

are you free from what I have no doubt you term "mamma's schooling," than you commence your career of folly and vice, and, by frequent inebriation, expose yourself to the ridicule and contempt of the whole army.—How is it, Charles, that you, who once promised every thing desirable, should so soon forget what is due to your character, as an officer, and as a man.—You are now no longer to be termed a child.—Think what disgrace you are bringing, not only upon yourself, but upon your patron, who is ready to sink with shame, at having introduced into the British army, a young man who brings its character into contempt.—Is it soldier-like to be a drunkard?—No ; a good soldier, and a good officer, must always detest the name : they are proudly anxious to support the dignity

of their country, and, by conducting themselves virtuously and discreetly, bring its name into repute; but debauchery of any kind, and drunkenness in particular, must stain it with dishonour.—And what end does this abominable vice answer?—Does it preserve health, increase your reputation, or add to your pocket?—No; all the reverse; and I am persuaded your own conscience, at this moment, acknowledges the fact.

“As for your health, that must fall a certain victim. Your fevered pulse, like caustic on the skin, will destroy your constitution by degrees; and your palled appetite will refuse the plain and wholesome food which nature destined for its use. Disorders of various kinds will ensue; and you must feel all the infirmities of old age before you attain

the years at which life, health, and all the rational faculties, are frequently in their highest state of perfection.

“ Consider your reputation.—What have you to depend upon but your name? that once forfeited, all is forever lost with you. Upon my interest you can have no dependance; for, if I had any, I should think it my duty to withhold it from a drunkard, to whom it could be of no real service.

“ The benevolence of the Earl of D—— raised you to what you are: he has placed you in the rank of a gentleman, equipped you as such, and introduced you into the company of gentlemen.—Are you expressing the obligations you are under?—No; you are bringing his recommendation into contempt, and disgrace upon the rank you hold.—It was from him I first

heard the mortifying accounts to which this letter owes its origin ; no doubt he has been informed of it by some of your brother officers.—Charles, Charles, reflect before it is too late ; hundreds would be glad to stand in your stead, and to have the Earl of D—— for their patron and friend.—Why should you, then, by indulging yourself in the commission of a destructive vice, forfeit such a valuable acquaintance ?—Rouse yourself from the apathy into which you have fallen ; be upon your guard ; and let no inducement again lead you to intemperance, which I am sure your pocket cannot afford, and which must consequently soon involve you in debt.—Avoid it, my child, as you would a plague or famine : it will, if continued, reduce you to wretchedness, and will soon bring the grey hairs of your mother to the grave.

“ I have, nevertheless, the pleasure to inform you that the Earl is still your friend, as well as mine and your brother Edward's. He has placed us in a very eligible farm, which was occupied by Mr. Benson, whom you must remember, but who is since dead. Our patron stocked it completely and liberally. We have taken possession of it; but I confess I was grieved to leave my humble cottage, endeared to me by a thousand circumstances, the chief of which was, that in it I had reared my children to virtue.—O Charles, my still beloved child, disappoint not the hopes which I have so fondly entertained, of having laid the foundation of your future happiness, in a virtuous education. By attending to my advice, you will again restore comfort to the heart of your yet affectionate mother,

“ CHARLOTTE LEESON.”

“How richly have I deserved this reproof!” said Charles, blushing with shame, as he perused the letter; “and what must not my dear mother have suffered on account of my imprudence, ere she could bring herself to write such an epistle to me.—But never, no, never again, my respected, my venerable parent, shall you have cause for such reproof.—Ah! what can I say to convince you, my parent, that I will never again commit the same fault?—Who will believe the word of a drunkard? or who will credit his most solemn asseverations?”

Thus did Charles Leeson meditate upon his folly: he wished, yet feared to write to the Earl. He could not vindicate himself, nor deny the accusations contained in his mother's letter. He took, however, the best method of

restoring himself to his former respectability in the army, and regaining the approbation of his particular friends. He was critically exact in the performance of his military duty; he was sober and discreet; and his whole deportment was such as reflected honour on his character, both as an officer and a gentleman.

The army had no sooner resumed its operations, than Charles was again invited to the tent of his General, from which he had, on account of his former irregularities, been dismissed. Unfortunately for him, both Hautsberg and Du Lasnes were not far distant from him.

But Charles was now proof against the incroachments of liquor: he positively and stedfastly refused to take more than a glass or two; and Hauts-

berg was convinced of the necessity of having recourse to another stratagem ; and cards, those useless amusers of the idle and the dissipated, were introduced. To these our young Lieutenant was a perfect stranger ; but Hautsberg undertook to teach him several games, at which he became, or thought he became, an adept, and in which he took great delight.

Among the few valuables which Mrs. Leeson had reserved from the wreck of her fortune, was a valuable gold repeater, which had belonged to her husband. This she had carefully treasured up, till her son's unexpected call to the army, made her think a watch necessary for him. At parting, she put it into his hand, telling him to whom it had belonged, and charging him on no account to part with it, but

to guard and preserve it, with pious care, as a memento of his father. This watch the Earl of D—— had noticed and admired for its excellent workmanship, and had also particularly cautioned his young friend to take care of it; a caution he had hitherto studiously observed.—But his growing inclination for cards, soon caused him to neglect, and almost forget, every thing else. All his leisure hours were spent with Captain Hautsberg, in this idle amusement.

For some time, his winnings and losings were nearly equal; and he was not solicited to play for any sum that could materially affect his pocket; but the more he conceived he knew of the different games, the more anxious he became to play for larger sums. Hautsberg by degrees encouraged him to bet,

and suffered him, sometimes, to be a considerable winner.

Elevated by his apparent success, and growing more and more attached to this pernicious amusement, he devoted many hours in the day to it; and, in a short time, all his military duties became tedious and disagreeable; he lost all that enthusiasm for the service, which he had before felt, and of which he had given the most decisive proofs. In short, he regretted every minute, as lost, which was not spent at cards.

Hautsberg was ever ready to attend the summons of Charles to this amusement.

Du Lasnes artfully pretended to caution Charles against gaming, but, by some indirect means, took care to get him and Hautsberg seated together at the card-table, where he left them,

as if he preferred some more rational employment. He appeared now to be what Charles had been ; and Charles seemed to have fallen into the disgraceful track which Du Lasnes had forsaken. The latter appeared to be so completely reformed, and his correspondence with Hautsberg so secretly maintained, that the most respectable officers were not ashamed to become his associates.

He soon attracted the notice of the General ; and, as he was known to be a young man of respectable family, he was honoured with some distinguishing marks of approbation.

Meanwhile the spirit of gambling was ruining Charles Leeson.—But he was obliged to relinquish his folly on their advance to meet the enemy.

Another engagement took place, in

which he displayed all his former valour and intrepidity.

The Captain of the battalion was killed in the action; and Charles was promoted to his rank.

The British arms were every where victorious; a truce was concluded; and the regiment to which Charles belonged was ordered to England.

On his arrival, his heart glowed at the thought of seeing his mother, his brother, and his patron, though he was ashamed of his past conduct.

He went with a beating heart to Manchester-square. He was introduced to the Earl of D——, who received him politely, but coolly; congratulated him upon his preferment, but expressed much disapprobation of his attachment to liquor.

Charles felt too much consciousness

of the fact with which he was charged, and too much reverence for the character of his patron, to attempt to deny the accusation, or to palliate his fault.

“ I confess,” said Charles, “ that I have been very faulty in committing a vice which brought an immediate punishment, and produced effects which I can never forget. However, since the hour that I received the Colonel’s admonition (for it was too mild to be termed a reprimand), I have utterly abjured drinking ; and I believe every officer in the regiment would bear testimony to the truth of this assertion.”

“ Captain Leeson,” returned the Earl, gravely, yet kindly, “ your own word is sufficient. I confess I was grieved to find my confidence in you deceived ; but youth and inexperience

are apt to err. I can forgive involuntary errors; but the constant commission of the vice of drinking cannot be termed so. However, the best proof of a strong mind and virtuous heart, is to detach itself from a favourite vice. —I am informed you were very intimate with a nephew of mine, in the Hanoverian service. Nearly as he is related to me, I am very sorry you formed any connection with him; for he is, I am sorry to say, a young man of very indifferent principles, and certainly a very dangerous companion for an unvitiated youth."

"Whom do you mean, my Lord?"

"Lieutenant Du Lasnes," answered the Earl.

"I am happy," said Charles, "to have an opportunity of vindicating his character, and removing any ill im-

pression your mind may have received respecting him. He is, my Lord, the most reformed and steady young man imaginable; he is in great favour with General Leeson, and has exchanged for a commission under him."

"You astonish me," said the Earl, "I wish this may be true; he is my sister's son, and the apparent heir to my title and fortune. I should be glad to own my nephew, if he be really a reformed character; but, pray how long has he refrained from the bottle and the dice?"

"Ever since I, my Lord," said Charles, blushing, "took them up.—Vices which he saw hateful and destructive in me, he wisely relinquished. I was the mirror in which he saw his own follies reflected: the view became hateful to him; he recoiled at the like-

ness, and abandoned them with disgust. He has seen his faults, and is worthy of being acknowledged as your nephew."

"You speak so favourably of him, Captain Leeson, that I almost wish to see him."

"Will you, then, my Lord, give me leave to tell him so?"

"Yes, bring him with you to dinner on Monday.—When do you visit the north?"

"I have leave of absence from the regiment," said Charles, "for a month; and I hope to see my mother the latter end of next week."

Charles Leeson and the Earl parted good friends; the former proud of his commission to introduce Du Lasnes to his uncle.—"O, had I before known him as the nephew of my benefactor,"

thought Charles, "what much greater friendship I should have felt for him! —I will seek for him, and acquaint him with my message."

In going through Bond-street, he met Hautsberg, who invited Charles to spend the evening with him. This he readily agreed to, and then hastened to the lodgings of Du Lasnes, to communicate his message.

"Faith, Leeson," said Du Lasnes, when he had received the Duke's invitation, "I am much obliged to you. I am a little out of elbows at present; and if I can get in with the Earl, who knows what he may do for me?"

"He will be your friend, as he has been mine," said Charles, gratefully, "if he sees you deserve his kindness. But how comes it, Du Lasnes, that, in all our conversations about the Earl,

you never informed me that he was your uncle?"

"To say truth, Leeson, I have been such an arrant wildster, that my uncle disowned me; and I was too proud to acknowledge him, after he had discarded me.—But tell me, is he as formal, grave, and sententious as he was a few years ago?"

"I never saw him either one or the other," replied Charles, warmly, "to me, he has ever been all gentleness and kindness, making allowance for the errors of youth, and warning me, as a good parent would caution his son, against the commission of them."

"Well, well, I must strive to please the old gentleman. I see it will be my interest so to do."

"It is very easily done. I know no one whom I would wish to live with

sooner than the Earl : he is beloved and revered by his servants, and esteemed by all who have the honour of his acquaintance."

After Charles had quitted him, he reflected upon what had passed, and clearly perceived that Du Lasnes had not spoken of the Earl with that respect which he was justly entitled to ; however, Charles indulged a hope that all prejudice would be removed when the two parties met.

In the evening he met Hautsberg, agreeably to appointment. They proposed going to the play-house ; and as Charles had been at his agent's, and had received his pay, he took the opportunity of ordering some new clothes, and purchasing several necessary articles.

After the play was over, they ad-

journed to a tavern, where they supped, and then walked towards their respective lodgings, which, however, lay in the same direction.

As they passed through St. James's street, they observed several gaming-houses open.

Hautsberg stopped at the door of one of them, and said, "Let us step in here, and see what they are doing."

"Not to-night," replied Charles; "I have some business to get through to-morrow, which will cause me to rise early; and if we once set our feet in here, we shall be so chained, that there will be no getting away, and every thing else will be forgotten."

"Psha! psha!" returned Hautsberg, "what business can you have to get through now? you have a furlough, and you must use it for your pleasure;

we will not stay ten minutes; only let us see 'who and who's together;' who wins and who loses."

Charles suffered himself to be overruled—They entered—Business was, indeed, soon forgot—The dice-box superseded every other thought; and Captain Leeson was soon persuaded to make one of a party at hazard.

At first he was successful; but fortune soon turned against him; and not only lost all the money he had received from the agent, but pawned his watch and sword for the payment of more. It was upon one cast of the dice these were set.—"Let me win now," said Charles, "and I shall yet do well: if I lose, I am undone."

The card was turned—He lost—He started up in a phrenzy—"Madness! distraction!" said he; "what

have I been doing?—What am I about?—I have ruined myself irretrievably.”

Heated by passion, anxiety, the company, and the lights, he opened his waistcoat to cool himself. At that moment, his mother's picture, which he had ever worn suspended by a ribbon from his neck, fell to the ground. He took it up, looked at it, and said, “I have but this!—This is all that is left!—I will venture it!—Yes, it is my mother's resemblance!—I know it will be fortunate,” said he, placing it on the card, “go, and bring me luck.”

He waited the result with breathless anxiety, glancing his eye at the picture, which lay uppermost, and which, he thought, seemed to frown upon him.—At that moment her words, which she uttered when she gave it into his hands,

recurred to his remembrance — “ I charge you, Charles, whenever you feel inclined to do a dishonourable or improper action, put it from you ; for the very ivory would blush with your mother’s shame at your misconduct.”

“ I have put it from me,” said he aloud, without regarding the company ; “ I have put it from me—For what ?—To assist me in gaining a stake at hazard !”

“ Leeson,” said Hautsberg, “ are you mad ?—What are you talking of ?—Mind your game, man—None of your sentimentals at the gaming-table.”

“ At the destruction-table !” exclaimed Charles, passionately ; “ but I am a fool, a cursed, infatuated, credulous, yielding fool. I err against my better judgment, and against my inclination.”

The dice-box was given to him—His hands trembled with eagerness, with fear, with anxiety, and with dread—"I dare not throw," said he, putting the box aside—"I dare not throw; for if I lose it, ——"

"Nobody," interrupted Hautsberg, "will be anxious to keep it: pay the money, and the miniature will be returned.—Come, come, don't be so childish; throw; you don't know your luck; it may turn again; throw; we can't be waiting all night."

Charles threw, and lost.—He started up, and ran out of the house like a madman; he reached his lodgings, without being conscious he was going there, knocked furiously at the door, and was admitted.—He flung himself upon his bed, and cried out, "What shall I do?—Whither shall I go?—I

am now ruined past redemption!—To whom can I apply?—My mother's picture is pledged for fifty guineas!—My watch is gone!—O! I am the greatest fool, idiot, villain, that ever breathed!" After raving thus for some time, he started up, in an agony of mind that baffles all attempts to describe, and exclaimed, "A hundred and fifty pounds will not pay my losses this night!—My sword, which ought to have been sacred, is pledged!—My watch, the only memorial of my father, is gone; and the portrait of my mother, which, with her own hands, she placed about my neck, is deposited for more than I am able to pay!—What, what shall I do?—How shall I ever see her without them?—She will miss them directly, and upbraid me with my weakness.—Perhaps Du Lasnes will assist me—But

he confessed he was poor.—Ah, where shall I find a friend?—I dare not apply to the Earl: he would be the first to reprobate my weakness, and would reproach himself for his confidence in one so unworthy of it.”

The succeeding day was Sunday; but he had no inclination to enter the temple of his Maker. He had hitherto, on that day, attended to those duties which religion enjoins; but he now found it impossible to engage his mind in any other subject than the ruin in which he was apparently involved.

The next day he called upon his agent, and, to his great mortification, found he had but twenty-five pounds left in his hands.—How was he to extricate himself from the dilemma into which he had imprudently plunged himself. He thought only how to re-

cover the sword, watch, and picture : they were in the hands of different persons, to each of whom he was indebted more than all the money he now possessed.

“ I once hoped,” said he, going to his desk, and taking out a note, “ to have carried this down to my mother : it is a little present I had reserved for my mother ; now it must go to redeem those valuables which at parting she entrusted to my care.—Fool that I am, to suffer myself to be led astray ! O, my dear mother ! how little attention have I paid to your advice !—What a poor compliment have I paid you !—I will, however, redeem your picture ; and, to avoid further shame, I will endeavour to get out of the way of temptation.—I will endeavour to change into one of the regiments now ordered

to the West Indies.—I must then soon leave England, perhaps for ever. My imprudence, as well as myself, will be forgotten; and I shall avoid all those painful sensations which a meeting with my mother would occasion.”

Full of these ideas, he again repaired to his agent, to enquire after an exchange; but he could hear of no one willing to accept the proposal without an advance of money, as there was a greater probability of speedy promotion in the West Indies, than in any other part of the globe.

Dispirited at this disappointment, he measured his steps back to his lodgings, where he found Du Lasnes waiting his return.

“I am come, Charles,” said he, “to see how you are, and to offer you any assistance you may want. Hautsberg

has told me of your loss the other evening. I have a hundred at your service, the Earl having this morning complimented me with a brace; and, upon such an emergency, I can do no less than serve you."

Leeson would have thanked him; but he declined receiving any acknowledgment.

"But how shall I pay you?" said Charles.

"When you can; give me your note of hand, for twelve, fifteen, or eighteen months, and I shall be satisfied."

Grateful for this unexpected supply, Charles gave him a note at a short date, and, without stopping to make a formal apology for his departure, left him, eager to recover those deposits he had made.

He went in search of Hautsberg, and

requested him to inform his fortunate adversaries, that he waited to redeem the deposits they held.

Eight, nine, and ten o'clock in the evening came, and neither Hautsberg, nor any of the others, appeared.

“What shall I do?” thought Charles, “I know they are now at the gaming-house.—Shall I venture there?—Have I strength of mind sufficient to resist the fascination of the dice?—What shall I do?—To-morrow I must set off for Westmorland; and I cannot go without my sword, watch, and miniature.—I must venture, though I am afraid to trust myself again in such a dangerous place.”

He took his hat, and set off to the gaming-house.—As he ascended the steps, the Earl of D—— passed by.

Charles saw him, and bowed.—He

would have spoken ; but his tongue was not at liberty.

“ Is that Captain Leeson ? ” said the Earl.

Charles turned aside, and, in faltering accents, replied, “ Yes—yes, my Lord.”

“ I am sorry to see you entering such a house as this, at such an hour,” said his Lordship ; I fear what I have heard is too true, and that my own suspicions are not without foundation.”

“ I am not going to gamble, my Lord, but to—to—.”

He hesitated—He was going to declare the cause of his appearance there ; but shame withheld him.

“ Respect for your mother,” said the Earl, “ and a desire to prevent the misery which I know your miscon-

duct would occasion, yet prompt me to endeavour to save you from ruin.—I charge you, by every thing dear and respectable, not to enter that house.—Certain destruction awaits you there.—You will be surrounded by a set of sharpers, who, taking advantage of your youth and inexperience, will fleece you of every farthing you have, besides involving you in debts which you can never pay, and bringing disgrace upon your character.”

“ I know it—I know it,” replied Charles; “ believe me, my Lord, my folly stares me full in the face.—I know my weakness—Necessity alone brings me here this evening—I do not mean to touch either cards or dice—O that I had never seen them!—How happy might I now have been!”

“ Have you lost any thing consi-

derable, Captain Leeson?" said the Earl.

"More than I ought, my Lord," said Charles; "I go now only to redeem a few deposits."

"I fear, I fear," returned the Earl, "that you are more deeply involved than I imagined.—I have heard of your visiting the gaming-houses; but my confidence in your integrity and morality was such, that I could not give full credit to the report.—But I wish you to redeem your deposits immediately, for the sake of your poor mother.—I will wait for you, though I hate these places.—I owe your parent a vast debt of gratitude; and I can never pay her in a more acceptable way, than by snatching her son from ruin."

They both entered the house.—

Hautsberg was there, with the same party who had despoiled Charles of his property on the former evening.

“Oh, you are come among us again, Captain Leeson,” said Hautsberg; “you will try your luck once more.—How stands the cash, Charles?—Can you redeem the baubles you gave us the other night; for, faith, I have discharged your obligations to these gentlemen, by taking your pawns, and am now very low in cash; so low, indeed, that, without your assistance, I cannot set another stake.”

“I came for this purpose,” replied Leeson, and gave the hundred-pounds note, which he had received from Du Lasnes, into his hand.”

“Why, where, in the name of wonder, did you get this note?—You told me, on Saturday night, you were a

bankrupt.—I am happy to see, that, in so short a time, you are able to raise seventeen shillings in the pound.—Have you got any more ?”

“ Enough to pay the remaining twenty pounds,” replied Charles, giving him the other note ; “ and now for my valuables.”

“ This is right,” said Hautsberg, pocketing the money, “ just the thing—Gregson, you have the pawns.”

They were immediately delivered into the hands of Charles.

“ Never, never, will I again part with you,” said Charles, looking alternately at his sword, his watch, and his mother’s portrait—“ Never more shall you be the gamester’s pledges.”

“ Psha !—What, at your old tricks, Leeson ?” said Hautsberg ; “ none of your harangues—Come, I’m sure you

have a few guineas yet in your pocket—Take a throw or two.”

“No, never,” said Charles; “I have lost too much already; besides, I have a friend waiting for me.”

“Shew him up,” said one of the party; “the more the merrier; there are cards enough for us all—“He,” said Charles, “has more prudence than to join your party.”

“Oh, you cannot tell that—Where is he?—Let us have the pleasure of seeing him.”

At that moment the Earl entered.—He surveyed the party with cool contempt, till, fixing his eyes particularly on Gregson, he turned round to Charles, and said, “Was this the party, Captain Leeson, in whose company you lost your money?”

“Yes, my Lord.”

“Then I do not hesitate to say, you have certainly been cheated — That fellow,” pointing to Gregson, “I know to be a rogue; and I shall immediately cause him to be apprehended.”

At this speech the gamesters unanimously rose, and, bidding the Earl defiance, began to hustle him.

High words arose, and several blows were given and received on both sides. But Charles, having the advantage of his sword, soon placed himself in such a position, that he was able to defend both himself and his patron till the peace officers arrived, when Gregson, Hautsberg, and two others, were taken to the watch-house.

Charles accompanied the Earl home, where Du Lasnes was waiting to see his uncle, from whom he soon learned the whole of the evening's adventure.

“It is a bad business,” said Du Lasnes to Charles, when they were together, what could possess the Earl to go in?—I am afraid all your doings, as well as Hautsberg’s, will come to light now.—He will tell the whole, out of revenge.”

“What doings?” said Charles—“I don’t understand you.”

“No?—Why, the business in Germany.”

“I am still in the dark—What do you mean?—My intemperance?—If that is all, it is known already.”

“I allude to that, and your learning of Hautsberg to cheat at cards.”

“I cheat!—I learn to cheat!” exclaimed Charles, overpowered with amazement and passion at the accusation; “if you were not protected by the house you are in, as well as by

being nephew to my patron, I should demand instant satisfaction for this insult."

"You are mighty warm and high," replied Du Lasnes, very contemptuously; "you may wave the protection either this house or my relationship in it affords, and demand the satisfaction you wish for.—I am not afraid to repeat, that you did learn the art of cheating.—Were not the cards eternally in your hands?—Was not every leisure moment spent with Hautsberg, either at his tent or your own, in the study and practice of gaming?—And did you not obstinately persist in this conduct, though I frequently warned you, not only against gaming, but against Hautsberg and his tricks."

"Oh, give me patience, Heaven!" exclaimed Charles; "I cannot bear

this!—Pray, Mr. Du Lasnes, say no more!—I wish to command my passions, and to retain a sense of the obligations I owe both your uncle and yourself.”

“Oh, you are mighty forbearing indeed,” said Du Lasnes; “but I tell you, Captain Leeson, that you have brought Hautsberg into a scrape, and that you deserve to be the sufferer.—I wish my uncle knew you in your proper colours.—But you verify the well-known adage, ‘Set a beggar on horseback, &c.’”

“I can hold no longer,” said Leeson; “to be tame now, would be cowardice in the extreme.—Either give me instant satisfaction, or your name shall be exposed.—You are a contemptible villain, or you would not have asserted such a falsehood.”

“ I will prove you to be a cheat,” said Du Lasnes.

“ I defy you,” answered Charles, advancing towards his accuser.

At this instant, the servant of Du Lasnes entered—“ For honour’s sake, gentlemen,” said he, “ be peaceable while you are here.—What will the Earl think of being disturbed, at this hour of the night, by your quarrels?—Consider where you are.”

“ You are very right, Megson,” said Charles, putting up his sword, “ we can decide this difference to-morrow.”

“ By the cane, then,” said Du Lasnes, with the greatest contempt; “ my sword must be drawn, if it be drawn at all, against a more honourable adversary than the son of a cottager.”

“ The son of a cottager,” replied Leeson, “ may be possessed of as worthy

sentiments, as much innate virtue, and as just a sense of honour, as can dignify the heir of a dukedom, and may be as able to defend himself, and to resent an insult, as the richest or proudest man in Europe."

"You had better part, gentlemen," said Megson; "my Lord's bell has been rung—I suppose he is alarmed at the noise."

"Will you meet me to-morrow morning, at four o'clock, in the park, Mr. Du Lasnes?"

"Yes, with my cane."

"I will bring mine, then," answered Charles.

"You had better bring your flail—You understand that weapon best."

"If I do, you shall have a good threshing; indeed your insults are not to be borne."

Megson again interfered, and parted them, but not without some difficulty.

In the morning, Charles dressed himself, put on his sword, took his pistols, and hurried to the park, expecting to meet his adversary.

Du Lasnes, however, had a different object in view.—He caused Megson, who was a servile creature, to awake the Earl, and inform him privately, as if without his master's knowledge, of the intended duel, and taught him to represent the conduct of Leeson in the blackest light.

Megson executed his commission, to the entire satisfaction of his master.

The Earl arose, charged his nephew not to leave the house, and went immediately to the park.

He saw Leeson at a distance, walking backward and forward, and advanced toward him.

Leeson, who had been revolving the probable consequences of the duel in his mind—the distress in which it would plunge his mother and his brother—the appearance of ingratitude it would wear to his best friend, the Earl—besides his recent obligation to Du Lasnes, for his friendship in assisting him to redeem the very sword which he was now going to employ for his punishment.—All these considerations had their weight upon his mind. He determined therefore to give his antagonist the first fire, and then to discharge his own pistols in the air.—Such were his meditations when the Earl advanced, unseen, towards him, and addressed him thus :—

“ I am come, Captain Leeson, in the place of my nephew, whom I have prevented attending your summons. I

came also to thank you for your gratitude in attempting to take away the life of my nephew.—I am sorry to be so deceived in you; but your real character is at length unveiled; your associates, the gamesters, are not greater deceivers. I am sorry our acquaintance ends here.—Good morning to you, Sir.”

“Stop, stop, my Lord—Give me leave to explain this business—Let me convince you of my innocence.”

The Earl was gone.

Leeson was so shocked, that it was some time before he could recollect himself.

“I have, then,” said he, “lost the Earl’s patronage; and, what is worse, he supposes me to be unprincipled and ungrateful.—O that I had never seen, never known, either Du Lasnes or

Hautsberg—Till the commencement of my fatal acquaintance with them, I lived free from vice, and was universally respected.—Well,” continued he, looking at his watch, “it is now near six—I will just call at my lodgings, and then set off for Westmorland, where I am sure of finding real and unchanging friends—Yet how am I to account to them for the Earl’s discarding me?—I must think again—Oh, no; madness dwells with thought—I wish I were past reflection of every kind.—I will repair to General Leeson: he was once my friend.—I will reveal the whole affair—the provocations I received—my own determinations—every circumstance will I disclose faithfully to him—perhaps he may be able to convince the Earl that I am not ungrateful.—To be cleared from the accu-

sation of ingratitude, is the principal desire of my heart.—Oh! how remote is this from my real character!—My heart despises and detests such an imputation!—Oh! how freely would I sacrifice my dearest interests to the happiness of the Earl!—I cannot bear the idea of being thought ungrateful to him.”

Full of the expectation that General Leeson would act the part of a mediator, he repaired to his house.

Unfortunately the General was not at home; and Charles was compelled to commence his journey to Westmorland, without making any attempt to exculpate his character from the misrepresentations to which it was exposed.

When the mail approached to the place where his happy infant years had

been spent, his heart exclaimed, and he could hardly restrain his tongue from repeating the language of his mind—
“ Oh, happy days ! when, free from care, and a stranger to vice, I passed my days and years in useful labours and innocent amusements ! then all my little concerns were securely deposited with an indulgent mother, whose gentleness and affection always found means to procure whatever was necessary to comfort my mind in affliction, or to render me chearful and happy when in health. But, alas ! she cannot now be expected to pay the same attention to one whose folly has justly forfeited every claim to her favour !—I dare not even disclose to her my griefs, nor the causes of them.”

While Charles's mind was thus engaged, the coach reached Kendal.

At the door of the inn stood his brother Edward, waiting the arrival of the coach.

In a moment, every sorrow was obliterated from the breast of Charles Leeson. The joy he felt at the sight of his brother, could only be exceeded by that which he experienced when his mother, clasping him in her arms, dropt on her knees, and exclaimed, " God Almighty, I thank thee, that thou hast again permitted me to see and embrace my child."

Edward, who was always affectionately attached to his brother, was in an extacy of joy. He conducted Charles home to his farm, shewed him all the particulars of it, and introduced him to a discreet and beautiful young woman, to whom he had been married about four months.

Scarcely any thing could exceed the simple and rational happiness enjoyed by the inhabitants of Rose Farm.

Mrs. Leeson appeared renovated in health and spirits at the sight of her children ; and she was frequently heard to exclaim, “ The Almighty has graciously made my declining years happy ! The goodness of my children causes me to live anew ! ”

Nor was the Earl, to whom they owed every thing, forgotten. His praises were the incessant theme of Mrs. Leeson ; and Edward frequently expressed the obligation he was under to his kind and generous benefactor.

The short time Charles could stay at Rose Farm, was spent in the enjoyment of those rational and innocent pleasures which the country affords ; but a letter from his agent, inclosing

an order from the War Office to join his regiment, which was expected to embark, in a short time, for Naples, threw a damp over every delight; but it was a summons not to be disputed; and Charles was obliged to obey.

He took leave of his friends with reluctance. He dreaded the thought of again visiting the metropolis; and the nearer he approached it, the more his spirits were depressed by the recollection of what had already occurred there, as well as by unpleasant apprehensions of the effects that might hereafter arise from his having a number of enemies, and not a single friend.

His first care, on his arrival, was to visit the War Office, where he was informed, that he must join his regiment in less than a week.

When he had finished all his prepa-

rations, and sent off his baggage, he resolved to pay a visit to General Leeson, previous to his departure, as he could not be satisfied until he had put his former design in execution.

He had taken his hat, and was just going out, when he heard his name pronounced, with an inquiry, "Is he at home?"

Being answered in the affirmative, and conducted up stairs, the stranger entered—"Captain Charles Leeson, I presume,"

"At your service, Sir," replied Charles—"Have you any commands with me?"

"A little piece of paper, Sir," replied the stranger, "from Sigismund Du Lasnes, Esq. by whose order I now arrest you for the sum of one hundred pounds."

Charles turned pale and gasped for breath.—“ Oh! how unfortunate am I!” said he—“ What shall I do ?”

“ Bail the action, Sir—You can get bail.”

“ Where? Whom?—I have no connections in London, to whom I dare apply; I am therefore your prisoner, and am ready to go with you.”

“ We have very good accommodations,” replied the bailiff; “ but I think, Sir, if you can bail the action, it will be your best way.”

“ I cannot do it, Sir—I have no friend to whom I can apply.”

“ You have an agent, Captain; doubtless he will do it.”

“ No; I must not mention it to him. I am sure I am in his debt already—Lead the way, Sir—I will follow you.”

“ Shall your servant call a coach ?— Perhaps you would prefer it to walking—I live in Brook-street.”

“ Yes ; I prefer a coach.”

Charles accompanied the bailiff to his house, where he found several gentlemen in the same situation. They tried their utmost to raise our hero's spirits, but in vain ; they also pointed out to him several methods to procure his enlargement ; but Charles could not adopt any of them : his thoughts were too much deranged to fix upon any plan ; and indeed none seemed likely to answer, but that of writing to his mother and brother, who, he was convinced, would strain every nerve to extricate him from his gloomy situation ; but his heart revolted at the idea of afflicting them, or depriving them of any of the comforts which they en-

joyed. These considerations prevailed; and he resolved not to write.

It was necessary that he should see his agent, as he was prevented from joining his regiment. This was to Charles a most unpleasant business, as he wished to keep his situation a secret. To his great surprise, he found his agent already acquainted with it; and after a short consultation on the subject, it was agreed, that Charles should be exchanged into a regiment stationed at home.

The greatest fear our hero now felt, was, that his mother and brother would hear of his confinement, which he well knew would render them miserable.

His pocket would not long support the expences of a spunging-house; he therefore caused himself to be removed to the Fleet. Here he found a variety

of associates, who, in general, were ever ready to prey upon each other. In this melancholy abode, our hero spent six months, sometimes scarcely existing.

Among the number of those with whom he became acquainted here, was an elderly gentleman, who was the father of a large family, and who, from a too implicit confidence in another, had been reduced from opulent circumstances to the gloomy confines of a prison.

Fortunately for our hero, this gentleman perceived something in him which attracted his admiration.—A particular intimacy ensued; and Charles experienced a considerable mitigation of his misfortunes, by the acquisition of an agreeable companion, a prudent adviser, and a steady friend.

From the papers, which he regularly

read, Charles learned that his late good friend, the Earl of D——, lay under the displeasure of his Sovereign, and was accused of misdemeanors and speculation in his office, which Charles well knew the Earl was innocent of.

Captain Leeson, despairing of liberty, and having no expectation of being visited by any of his former friends, became negligent of his appearance ; he had formerly been remarkably neat in his dress ; but he at length assumed the appearance of a negligent sloven. His clothes were shabby and dirty ; his beard was frequently long ; his linen, for want of cash to pay his washerwoman, was extremely soiled ; and the want of air and exercise had given a squalid and unhealthy hue to his countenance.

Late one evening, while he was

sitting over a few dying embers, mournfully ruminating upon his unhappy situation, he was roused from his melancholy reverie by a gentle rap at the door.

“Come in,” said Charles, supposing it to be one of his fellow prisoners.

Megson, the servant of Du Lasnes, was introduced by Mr. Edwards, the friend and fellow prisoner of Charles.

Astonishment sat on every feature of our hero's countenance.

“What is your business, Mr. Megson?” said he.

“I am come to see you, Captain—I am sorry in my heart for your misfortunes.”

“I thank you, Megson—“ Do you still live with the Earl?”

“No; I live with Lord——. The Earl is in disgrace.”

"I am sorry for the Earl," replied Charles.

"Mr. Du Lasnes, I believe, Sir, was the cause of your confinement."

"Yes; I am here at his suit."

"You would, doubtless, wish to be set at liberty."

"That admits of no question."

"Then I shall put you in the way of obtaining what you desire; but I am commanded not to make any proposals before a third person."

Mr. Edwards attempted to withdraw.

"By no means," said Charles; "you need not be afraid, Mr. Megson, to speak before this gentleman: he is my friend; and I keep no secrets from him."

Megson hesitated for a short time, and then proceeded;

“ I am come, Sir, to inform you, that if you will agree to a little request, you shall not only have your liberty, but two hundred pounds in your pocket, and preferment in the army.”

“ But what am I to do for all this ? What is the ‘ little request ’ you allude to, Mr. Megson ? ”

“ The Earl of D——, you know, is in disgrace—Many circumstances have occurred to induce a belief that he has acted foully—His successors in office have bought over Du Lasnes at a high price—They know that you are acquainted with the Earl’s concerns ; and if you will make a second witness with Du Lasnes, in confirmation of certain charges brought against the Earl, here is a very small part of your reward,” counting notes to the amount of four hundred pounds.—“ This,” added

he, " would set you at liberty, and make you respectable ; and you may be sure ——."

Charles's patience was exhausted—He started up — " Mr. Megson," said he, " tell your employers, whoever they are, that, though pennyless and in prison, I have honour sufficient to reject their proposal, and am not to be bought at any price.—And now, Mr. Megson, pray walk out, or I shall take the liberty of kicking you out. — Begone, you villain."

Megson was off in a moment.

" Did you ever hear such a rascally proposition ?" said Charles to his friend.

" It would be criminal in us," replied Mr. Edwards, " to suffer the Earl to remain ignorant of such villainous proceedings.—I will write to him myself."

“Then I desire, Sir, you will not mention my name, that he may have no reason to suppose that I am endeavouring to excite his compassion; for I would rather perish here, than intrude myself upon his notice.”

The following day, Mr. Edwards wrote to the Earl, but without signing any name, telling him only, that if he wished for further confirmation, he had only to send to No. 9, upon the second floor in the Fleet prison, and there were two gentlemen ready, at any time, to come forward, upon oath, to attest the truth of the information.

In a few days, a counsellor waited upon them. He was surprised at seeing Captain Leeson, whom he recollected to have sometimes met at the Earl's table. After some conversation, he took their depositions, obtained from them a

description of Megson, and learned also the name of his employer, which he had unwarily dropped. He then thanked them, in the Earl's name, and departed.

At the expiration of the following week, Charles was surprised by the entrance of his mother and brother, who had but lately heard the history of his confinement, and had hastened to liberate him; the former by the sale of half her annuity, and the latter by the mortgage of his estate.

They threw themselves, weeping, into the arms of their beloved Charles; told him they had come to release him, and only accused him of that want of confidence in their affection, which they imagined had been the cause of his neglecting to send them an account of his troubles.

“ Oh, my dear, dear Charles,” said his fond mother, “ how often have I blamed you for not writing!—Oh! you cannot tell what I have suffered on your account!”

“ I would not, could not, write to wound you, my beloved, my dearest mother,” replied Charles; “ for, though you say I wanted confidence in your affection, believe me, it was not the want of it, but the full confidence I felt, that you would injure yourselves to serve me; and I would rather die in a prison, as a just punishment for my folly and thoughtlessness, than be the means of reducing you to a level with myself.”

“ You have seen your folly, my child,” said his mother, “ and you have suffered severely for it—But let us forget the past—I hope to see you re-

leased from this disagreeable place to-morrow."

"Never, never, my dear mother, if you are to make any sacrifice of your comforts to accomplish my liberation."

"I will take care of that," replied Edward; leave the settlement of your debt to me—I can do it, my dear brother, with very little trouble."

"By what means, Edward?—You are a young beginner in the world; you have a wife, and the prospect of a family to support—Think not so meanly of me, as to suppose that I would be accessory to the robbery of your family.—I know you cannot do it without inconvenience: probably you would feel the effects of this proof of brotherly affection for some years—I can never consent to have the fruits of your honest industry sacrificed to restore to me the

happiness which I have justly forfeited by my own imprudence."

"By refusing my offer," said Edward, "you would deny me a pleasure which I should esteem more than all the riches and honours in the world.—Think, Charles, how could I taste of happiness, while I knew you were destitute of the means of procuring the common comforts of life? or how could I enjoy the sweets of my own liberty, while I recollected that my beloved brother was confined in a prison?—Suffer me, my dear Charles, to emancipate you from this dreadful abode.—My mother and I came from Westmorland on purpose—See," said he, opening a little canvas bag, "I have brought up all this money; and if that is not sufficient, I have Peggy's to add to it.—Ah, my dear brother, you

know not how tenderly we love you, nor the pleasure it would give us to see you at liberty.—This purse contains the whole of Peggy's ——."

" Noble, amiable Peggy !" interrupted Charles, in a rapture of joy—
" Yes, I will accept your benefaction—
Yes, I will owe my liberty to you."

" To none but myself, Captain Leeson," said a voice, which they knew to be that of the Earl of D——, who had entered, accompanied by Mr. Edwards and the Counsellor, unnoticed by our little party, who had been too much occupied by affectionate contention, to hear or see them as they entered—
" I must release you from this place," said the Earl, affectionately taking Charles by the hand ; " my Counsellor has, with this Gentleman, recounted all your conduct respecting me ; and I am

the debtor here, not you—You are already clear—Let us all adjourn to my house—Your conduct has been the means of my acquittal from the imputation of crimes, which my heart would disdain the commission of; but my obligations to you, and to this gentleman, can never be repaid by merely procuring your liberty—I must manifest my sense of them in a more particular manner.”

“ There can be none so grateful, so acceptable to the prisoner, as liberty, my Lord,” said Mr. Edwards; “ for, without that, neither riches, honours, nor luxuries, can be properly enjoyed. We must therefore ever remember, and gratefully pray for, him who has procured it for us.”

Charles was highly pleased to find that he had released his friend Ed-

wards ; and the whole party proceeded to Manchester-square.

After dinner, the Earl informed his happy companions, that, in consequence of Mr. Edwards's letter, he had sent to the warden of the Fleet, to inquire who was confined in No. 9, on the second floor.

“ The answer that I received,” said the Earl, “ was, that Captain Charles Leeson, and John Edwards, Esquire, were the unfortunate tenants.

“ I next enquired, how long Captain Leeson had been confined, at whose suit, and what character he, and his companion, bore in the prison.

“ Having received answers to these enquiries, together with the most satisfactory information, from other persons as well as the warden, respecting the good conduct of Captain Leeson and

his companion, I sent my Counsellor to receive their depositions.

“ These were laid before the privy council, Megson was apprehended, and I was released from my arrest.

“ My first care then, Captain Leeson, was to set you, and your friend at liberty.

“ I am not surprised to find that you owed your confinement to Du Lasnes; a base and dishonourable action is consistent with his character.— He had formed a plan to bring my head to the block of the executioner, and to secure my title and estate to himself.

“ He had misrepresented the whole of my official conduct with so much plausibility, that several profound politicians, high in office, have been deceived; and there seemed to want

little more than a judicial sentence to finish the business.

“ I am happy to conclude by remarking, that he has been totally disconcerted by the honesty of the very man whom he has, for several years, considered as his dupe.

“ And now, give me leave to introduce General Leeson, your father's brother, to you—He is ready and willing to acknowledge you as his nephew, and, if you please him by your conduct, as his heir.”

Mrs. Leeson felt almost sinking at the idea of meeting any of her husband's relations; but the General, kindly advancing, saluted her, and wished her joy of her sons—He applauded her for the pains she had bestowed upon their minds, and congratulated her on the success of her labours.

“My nephew Charles,” said he, “has fought under me ; and I know him to be a good officer.”

The Earl employed Mr. Edwards, in the capacity of Steward.

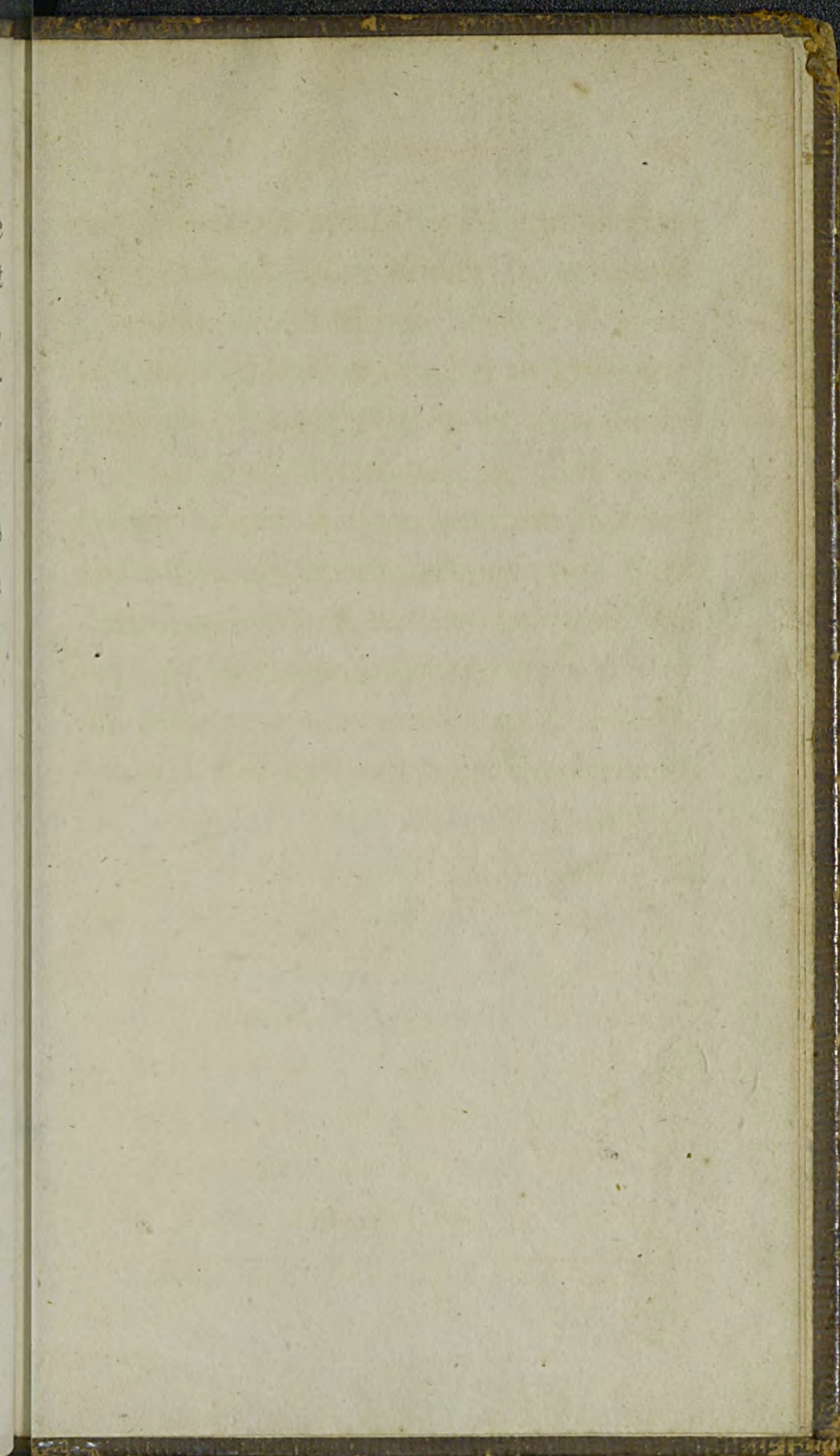
Du Lasnes retreated to the Continent, where he finished an ill-spent life, by an awful death, at which humanity shudders.

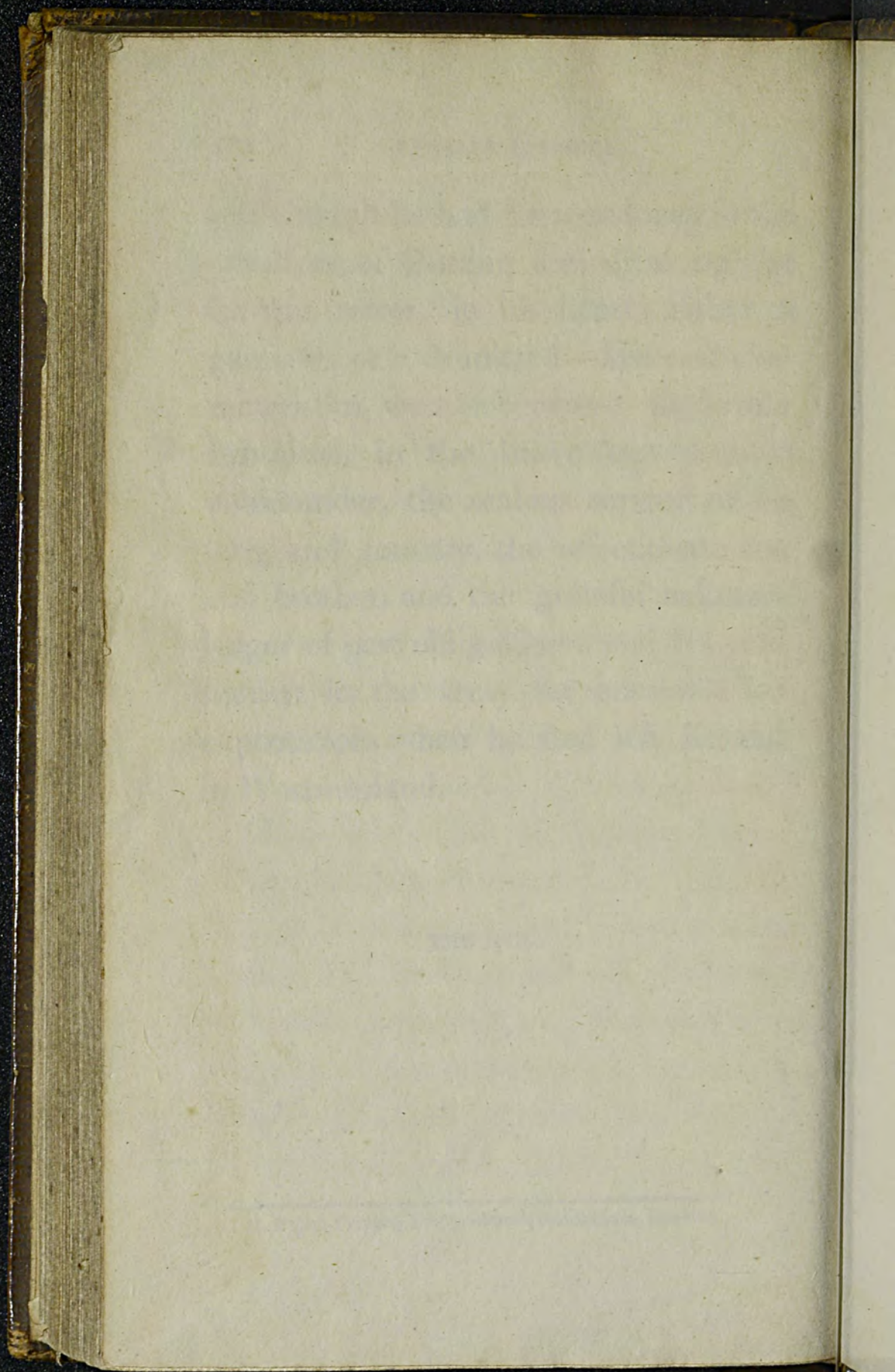
Mrs. Leeson and Edward returned to their farm in Westmorland, rejoicing at the events they had witnessed by their journey.

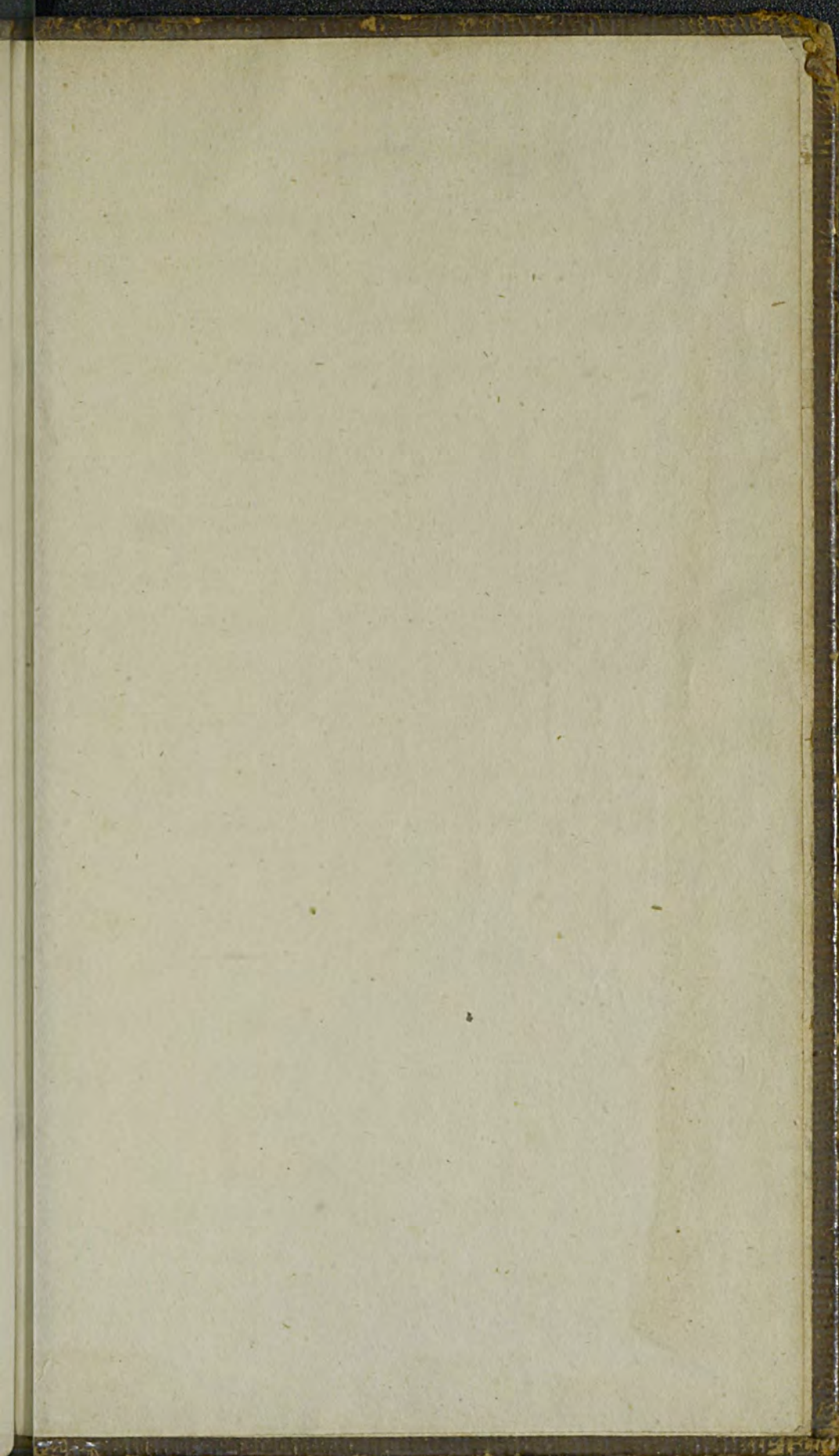
Restored to the full confidence of his Patron and his General, Captain Leeson evinced, by his future conduct, that the irregularities he had before committed, were but transient deviations from the line of conduct which his own disposition, as well as the education he had received, directed him to pursue ;

and though he had been seduced to the practices of gaming and drinking, yet he was never, in his heart, either a gamester or a drunkard—His real characteristics were afterwards uniformly exhibited, in the brave and prudent commander, the zealous servant of his king and country, the affectionate son and brother, and the grateful acknowledger of past obligations ; and his promotion in the army far exceeded his expectations when he first left Kendal in Westmorland.

THE END.







of Frederick L. Burghman

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