

the little inn before which we stood was not such as to promise even its mediocrity of entertainment to above the one half of our party ; and I felt with the langour of one who had just wrestled with disease, that the calm and repose of a private house were temptations irresistible. I accordingly thanked the old gentleman, with warmth inspired and merited by his conduct, and told him that I would avail myself of his friendly proposal, in the spirit in which it was made, with the proviso, however, that my intrusion should continue only until I could select a lodging among the houses of the village. He replied, with a smile, that we should do as we pleased ; but that he hoped to induce us not to shorten the gratification he should derive from our presence. There was in our detachment an officer, who had joined the corps from another regiment previous to our embarkation for the Scheldt ; a man between five-and-thirty and forty years of age, with nothing remarkable in his person or address, but apparently of inoffensive gentlemanlike demeanor. We had hitherto seen little of him ; for shortly after we sat down before Flushing, he had been seized with fever, and remained utterly incapacitated for duty during the bombardment, and our subsequent continuance on that service. He was still an invalid ; and, as the stranger insisted upon extending his hospitality to a second of our party, I introduced Mr. Danville to him for the purpose. He was, excepting myself, more advanced in life than the rest of his companions ; and it was my object to choose the most sedate among them. I knew him only as an acquaintance ; but the state of his health gave him a claim to the preference. Little did I imagine, as we entered the tranquil dwelling of the kind-hearted old man, that I was the harbinger of despair and death to its innocent inmates ; little did I then know the ungrateful, the merciless villain, whom I ushered beneath the roof where all

was harmony and peace. Twelve years have now mingled with the current of time, since our entrance into the vale of E—— brought desolation upon the happiest little circle within its limits ; and many a changing scene of toil, privation, and bloodshed have since passed before me ; yet neither the deadning influence of these twelve years of existence, at a period of life when every hour takes from the acuteness of recollection, and every feeling gradually loses its intensity ; not all the hardening effects of a profession of danger, and familiarity with the horrors of warfare, have been able, in any degree, to soften the keenness, the bitterness of regret, which fills my heart at the reflection that I was the unfortunate instrument of ruin to the hapless family of Milburne. It is a black tale of perfidy, and I shall pass with a rapid hand over its disgusting details.

Our host, Mr. Milburne, was the son of a London merchant of substance, who would have engrafted the spirit of mercantile enterprize upon the classical education which he had bestowed upon the youth : but the young man found business incompatible with his habits and tastes, and resigned both his place in the firm and the prospect of his father's accumulated wealth to a younger brother. A relation had fortunately made him the heir to a decent independence, of which the displeasure of his parent could not deprive him ; and upon this was Milburne contented to rest his hopes for the future, his wants and desires. He married ; and, at an age when others are most eager in pursuing their career of ambition or avarice, retired to his books, and the tranquil possession of domestic pleasures. He knew little of the world ; and for many years was happily even ignorant that a bitter drop was to be found in the cup of existence. The loss of the partner of his enjoyments was almost the first of his sorrows ; and if he afterwards found aught to alleviate the stroke, and to throw a gleam of sun-