

tured by the falshood of a woman, to whom its nice principles impelled me to behave with assiduous tenderness, though they could neither inspire me with affection nor happiness! Better had the sigh of sympathy never respired from this bosom than that I should have heaved it so long in vain for the injured innocent, whom parental pride forbade me to render happy!

Oh, Maria! to what purpose do these sighs execrate my former cruelty, and plead to heaven to be restored (though not to thy arms—for of that I am unworthy) to thy compassion, and to thy confidence?

'Alas! the throb of sensibility is of no avail; unless to torment the guilty, and to aggravate the sufferings of the unfortunate!'

Such were the keen reflections of Courland, and distracting his feeling mind with the painful retrospect, and the lively reproaches of repented cruelty; he wandered about, till his reason grew disturbed; and his disturbed imagination almost tottered on the verge of insanity.

CHAPTER II.

A benevolent mind, even in the midst of its own afflictions, can commiserate the misfortunes of others.

DURING the foregoing soliloquy, a young female of about eighteen years of age, thinly clad in the decent weeds of unmerited poverty, had several times approached, unobserved, toward Courland, with an intention of soliciting charity, and had as often retired, unable to frame her language to the unwonted strain of supplication. At length however, the voice of nature prevailed over her delicacy and she threw herself before him:

'Oh! Sir,' said she, with a faint voice expressive of the accumulated feeling of hunger and shame—'Oh! Sir, compassionate the sufferings of a wretch more afflicted than yourself.'

'As you hope that He who can pour the balm of peace into every wound, will alleviate your afflictions, neglect not to give that relief which the Father of Mercy enables you, to one groaning in the merciless grasp of distress!

'Pardon the intrusion, Sir, of one who never learned the beggar's part before: hunger, affection, and despair, have long struggled to rouse me to this boldness.—Hear but my story!—

But there was no need. Her countenance pleaded powerful as the tongues of angels. Every tear she shed fell like the dews of pity on the afflicted heart of Courland, and melted it to tender commiseration.

'Pain not thyself with the recital,' said he; 'But here,' (giving her his purse) 'here,' continued he, 'take this, once miserable fair one. Be wretched no more.'

'Go: buy thyself felicity; and, in thy prayers, remember to solicit eternal happiness for him to whom earthly tranquillity can come no more.'

'And thou, wronged innocent!' exclaimed he, turning round, unheeding of the graceful thanks of the wondering suppliant, and addressing himself to the fancy formed image of his Maria—'And thou, wronged innocent!' said he, falling upon his knee, 'if the falshood of thy Courland has indeed driven thee from this terrestrial scene, hover awhile, dear, mournful shade! over thy repentant lover, while he vows, never from this hour to see the tear flitting in the eye of helpless beauty, without endeavouring to wipe it away. Never shall the distresses of female indigence reach the ear of thy Courland, but while fortune enables him, he shall for thy sake relieve them.'

'Accept, dear cherub! accept this best atonement fate permits thy wretched seducer to offer at the violated shrine of thy affection.'

'Yes! thou wilt accept it. Living thou wert all sensibility and benevolence; and thy spirit shall continue to encircle all the children of misfortune in the embrace of sympathy.'

Such were the frantic ravings which the unhappy Courland, benevolent in the midst of his frenzy, poured out to the memory of the first objects of his affections.

As for the poor suppliant he had relieved; as soon as she had recovered from her astonishment, and poured forth the unheeded acknowledgments of her grateful heart, she ran, fast as her feeble limbs would permit, toward the prison, where her sick and anxious mother languished in hopeless confinement.

Nothing, indeed, but the distresses of this tender parent could have forced her timid lips (untaught to feign the beggar's practiced tale,) to appeal to the compassion of a stranger.

CHAPTER III.

Of all consolations of which affection is susceptible, the reflection of having done a benevolent action is the most efficacious.

THE resolution of active benevolence in which the melancholy sensibility of the injured Courland had terminated, gave some relief to the anguish of his mind, as it furnished employment for his imagination,