

Francis, grasping the hand of the vicar, while his quivering lip and faltering voice proclaimed the perturbation of his feelings.

"And you seek me, to heal its wounds?"

"If you will deign to give me your advice—."

"When did I ever refuse it to my friend? but I fear I shall tax your temper and patience to the utmost; for as I perceive the disease is violent, the remedy must unavoidably be severe.—Francis," he continued in a sterner voice, "a faulty character I ever knew you to be; but if your disposition was hasty, your heart was good; and the promise of your early youth made me fondly anticipate, that I should, one day, behold in you a good and amiable man. You are greatly altered since we parted. I can scarcely recognise my pupil in the gloomy misanthrope before me. Lay your heart open to my inspection, and tell me what has effected this change in your once generous disposition."

Francis became greatly agitated as he replied, "The world."

"It is a school," returned the vicar, "in which both good and evil are to be acquired; presenting a varied picture of virtue and vice. The choice rests with ourselves, and if directed by religion, you will not fail to prefer the right path. If you have yielded to the temptations which too often