

pretended disgust and hasty departure. O villain ! villain !

'But tell me : what became of the doubly-injured Maria ? Where is she ? What did she do when she received this cruel letter ?

'O Maria ! are all our sex linked in one confederacy of villainy against thee !

Young Mason was astonished. He suspected with whom he was conversing. But he could not give the slightest information concerning the unhappy female.

At the time of his father's departure, he was only four years old ; and he was not even acquainted with the circumstances already related, till about five years ago ; when the poor aged relative, in whose care he had been left, revealed them on her death bed ; warning him, at the same time, from the untimely fate of his father, to adhere to virtue, and dread the vengeance that ever hangs over the head of dishonesty.

The ill-fated youth had been treated almost as cruelly by his unprincipled parent, as had the unfortunate Maria. A small sum only had been left in advance for his board, with the aged woman who had fostered him, and no remittance had since been made.

Courland walked backward and forward for a considerable time, in the utmost agitation.

'Merciful heaven !' exclaimed he, 'to what scenes of distress !—Where shall I find her ? Where shall I seek—

'But she is no more ! Forsaken by him she loved,—betrayed !—abandoned !—Grief ! want ! and, reproach !—Oh ! it was an accumulation too heavy for her gentle nature to sustain !

'Fruitless recollection !'

He paused for a considerable time. At length, lifting up his tearful eyes to heaven, 'Dear, departed spirit !' exclaimed he, 'attend to the poor—though sincere atonements of repentant sensibility, and, if thou canst, forgive—'

So saying, he seized the arm of Mason, and bade him conduct him to the generous Anna.

CHAPTER XI.

Good unexpected, evil unforeseen.

Appear by turns as Fortune shifts the scene.

DRYDEN.

MASON cheerfully obeyed, and conducted the benevolent penitent to the miserable apartment of—

Whom ?

Oh ! astonishment ! What were the sensations of Courland, when he beheld the

fair object of his bounty leaning, with tender solicitude, over the wrecks of that beauty which had first captivated his heart ; which time could never obliterate from his imagination ; and which recent injuries had restored to all its pristine influence. He stood fixed like a statue ; and at first could scarcely believe his senses.

'Oh ! my dear mother !' said the tender Anna, 'behold our generous benefactor !'

The mother rose, with trepidation, to thank him for his generosity. But the instant she saw his face, she shrieked out the name of Courland, and sunk again into her chair.

'Gracious heaven !' exclaimed he, springing forward, 'it is—it is my injured, sweet Maria : and the female I have relieved is my child.'

He strained them alternately to his bosom, bedewing them with the tears of affection ; while they, with equal tenderness, returned his caresses.

As for Mason, his heart was too much interested not to feel all the tenderness of the scene. He stood speechless and immoveable, gazing with generous admiration, and shedding sympathizing tears.

As soon as the first tumults of surprise and joy were abated, Maria (at the solicitation of Courland) related the various circumstances of distress through which she had passed, together with her daughter, of whom she was pregnant at the time of her lover's desertion ; and on whose praises she dwelt with all the fond loquacity of a parent. Nor did Courland listen with less delight to the pleasing theme.

From the latter part of the narrative, it appeared that young Mason and Anna had contracted a mutual affection in their dreary mansion.

Courland's first care, therefore, (after removing his Maria and his lovely daughter from their habitation of misery) was to make diligent enquiry into the story and character of the youth.

As from this enquiry it appeared that his misfortunes were by no means attributable to vice or dissipation, and as the generous father despised the idle distinctions of birth and affluence, when put in competition with virtue and understanding, he not only consented to the union of the lovers, but also gave them on the day of their marriage a very considerable part of his estate, 'that (to use his own expression) 'he might have the pleasure of seeing his children enjoy his fortune in his lifetime.'

Nor was he in the mean time inattentive to his own more immediate affairs. He neglected no means to procure a divorce from