

now?" and the tears of the cripple ran down his cheeks as he spoke.

Maria wept also, partly for the fate of the noble animal that had died in her deliverance, and partly from the sorrow of her companion, for there is a sympathy in tears.

"Ha! you weep!" cried the cripple, "you weep for poor Friend and for me. Bless thee! bless thee fair one!—they are the first that were ever shed for my sake—I thought not there was a tear on earth for me."

He accompanied her to the lodge of the mansion where she was then residing, and there he left her, though she invited him to accompany her, that he might also receive the congratulations of her friends.

She related to them, her deliverance. "Ha! little Ebenezer turned a hero," cried one—"Ebenezer the cripple become a knight-errant," said another. But they resolved to visit him in a body and return him their thanks.

But the soul of the deformed was now changed, and his countenance, though still melancholy, had lost its asperity. His days became a dream, his existence a wish. For the first time he entertained the hope of happiness—it was vain, romantic, perhaps we might say absurd, but he cherished it.

Maria spoke much of the courage, the humanity, the seeming loneliness, and the knowledge of the deformed, to her friends; and their entertainer, with his entire party of visitors, with but one exception, a few days afterwards proceeded to the cottage of Ebenezer, to thank him, for his intripidity. The exception, we have alluded to was a lady Helen Dorrington, a woman of a proud and haughty temper, and whose personal attractions, if she ever possessed any, were now disfigured by the attacks of a violent temper, and the *crow-feet* and the *wrinkles*, which threescore years imprint on the fairest countenance. She excused herself by saying that the sight of deformed people affected her. Amongst the party who visited the cripple was her son Francis Dorrington a youth of two and twenty, who was haughty, fiery, and impetuous as his mother. He sought the hand of Maria Bradbury, and he now walked by her side.

Ebenezer received them coldly—amongst them were many who were wont to mock him as they passed, and he now believed that they had come to gratify curiosity, by gazing on his person as on a wild animal.—But when he saw the smile upon Maria's lips, the benign expression of her glance, and

her hand held forth to greet him, his coldness vanished, and joy like a flash of sunshine lighted up, his features. Yet he liked not the impatient scowl with which Francis Dorrington regarded her attention towards him, nor the contempt which moved visibly on his lip when she listened delighted to the words of the despised cripple. He seemed to act as though her eyes should be fixed on him alone,—her words addressed only to him. Jealousy entered the soul of the deformed and shall we say that the same feeling was entertained by the gay and the haughty Dorrington. It was. He felt that, insignificant as the outward appearance of the cripple was, his soul was that of an intellectual giant, before the exuberance of whose power the party were awed, and Maria lost in admiration. His tones were musical as his figure was unsightly, and his knowledge was universal as his person was diminutive. He discoursed with a poet's tongue on the beauties of the surrounding scenery; he defined the botany and geology of the mountains. He traced effect to cause, and both to their Creator. The party marvelled while the deformed spoke, and he repelled the scowl and contempt of his rival with sarcasm that scathed like a passing lightning. These things produced feelings of jealousy also in the breast of Francis Dorrington; though from Maria Bradbury he had never received one smile of encouragement. On their taking leave the entertainer of the party invited Ebenezer to his house, but the latter refused; he feared to mingle with society, for oft as he had associated with man, he had been rendered their sport,—the thing they persecuted,—the butt of their irony.

For many days the cripple met, or rather sought Maria, in solitary rambles; for she too, loved the solitude of the mountains, the silence of the woods, which is broken only by the plaintive note of the wood pigeon, the *chirm* of the linnet, the song of the thrush, the twitter of the chaffinch, or the distant stroke of the woodman, lending silence a charm. She had become familiar with the deformity, and as it grew less singular to her eyes, his voice became sweeter to her ears. Their conversation turned on many things, there was wisdom in his words, and she listened to him as a pupil to a preceptor. His feelings deepened with their interviews, his hopes brightened, and felicity seemed drawing before him. As hope kindled, he acquired confidence. They were walking together he had pointed out the beauties and explained