

LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

THE STORY OF LA ROCHE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAP. II.

La Roche's religion was that of sentiment, not theory, and his guest was averse from disputation; their discourse, therefore, did not lead to questions concerning the belief of either; yet would the old man sometimes speak of his, from the fulness of a heart impressed with its force and wishing to spread the pleasure he enjoyed in it. The ideas of his God and his Saviour were so congenial to his mind, that every emotion of it naturally awakened them. A philosopher might have called him an enthusiast; but, if he possessed the fervour of enthusiasts, he was guiltless of their bigotry. 'Our Father which act in heaven!' might the good man say—or he felt it; and all mankind were his brethren.

'You regret, my friend,' said he to Mr. —, 'when my daughter and I talk of the exquisite pleasure derived from music, you regret your want of musical powers and musical feelings; it is a department of soul, you say, which nature has almost denied you, which from the effects you see it have on others, you are sure must be highly delightful. Why should not the same thing be said of religion? Trust me I feel it in the same way, an energy, an inspiration, which I would not lose for all the blessings of sense, or enjoyment of the world—yet, so far from lessening my relish of the pleasures of life, methinks I feel it heighten them all. The thought of receiving it from God adds the blessing of sentiment to that of sensation in every good thing I possess—and when calamities overtake me—and I have had my share—it confers a dignity on my affliction, and lifts me above the world. Man, I know, is but a worm—yet, methinks I am allied to God.' It would have been inhuman in our philosopher to have clouded, even with a doubt, the sunshine of this belief.

His discourse, indeed, was very remote from metaphysical disquisition or religious controversy. Of all men I ever knew his ordinary conversation was the least tinged with pedantry, or liable to digression. With La Roche and his daughter it was perfectly familiar. The country round them, the man-

ners of the village, the comparison of both with those of England, remarks on the works of favourite authors, on the sentiments they conveyed, and the passions they excited, with many other topics in which there was an equality, or alternate advantage, among the speakers, were the subjects they talked on. Their hours, too, of riding and walking were many, in which Mr. —, as a stranger, was shown the remarkable scenes and curiosities of the country. They would sometimes make little expeditions to contemplate, in different attitudes, those astonishing mountains, the cliffs of which, covered with eternal snow, and sometimes shooting into fantastic shapes, form the termination of most of the Swiss prospects. Our philosopher asked many questions as to their natural history and productions. La Roche observed the sublimity of the ideas which the view of their stupendous summits, inaccessible to mortal foot, was calculated to inspire, which naturally, said he, leads the mind to that Being by whom their foundations were laid.

'They are not seen in Flanders!' said Mademoiselle, with a sigh.

'That's an odd remark,' said Mr. —, smiling.

She blushed, and he inquired no farther.

'Twas with regret he left a society in which he found himself so happy. but he settled with La Roche and his daughter a plan of correspondence—and they took his promise, that if ever he came within fifty leagues of their dwelling he should travel those fifty leagues to visit them.

About three years after, our philosopher was on a visit at Geneva—the promise he made to La Roche and his daughter on his former visit was recalled to his mind, by the view of that range of mountains on a part of which they often looked together. There was a reproach, too, conveyed along with the recollection, for his having failed to write to either for several months past. The truth was that in idleness was the habit most natural to him, from which he was not easily roused by the claims of correspondence either of his friends or of his enemies when the latter drew their pens in controversy they were often unanswered as well as the former. While he was hesitating about a visit to La Roche, which he wished to make, but found the effort rather too much for him, he received a letter from