

did much good in the country, yet his abstracted philosophical and sedentary situation made him *personally* but little acquainted with even his own tenants, who were generally turned over to the steward for the conversation and business of quarter-day. A man of the Contented Cottager's disposition was, however, too important an object not to excite the curiosity of a philosopher; and accordingly he set apart an evening for his entertainment. Adrastus arrived at the farm about half an hour after sun-set; when

————— twilight grey
Had in her sober livery all things clad.

The farmer, whose name (if you please, reader) shall be Matthew Mendland, was sitting at the door of his little cottage, smoking his pipe, and surrounded by his children.—His wife was leaning over the fire, preparing a decent and wholesome supper. The tenant knew his landlord personally; and rose as to a superior, offering him the best seat in his homely cottage. 'Here your honour finds me (said the farmer) in a small but happy place. I have liv'd upon your ground these many days; and if you think good to renew my lease, which expires at Michaelmas, I shall most likely end my life in your service. If your honour likes me, I like you; your dues are always ready to the hour; and I have no more reason to complain of my landlord than, I trust, he has of his tenant. And so —' Adrastus interrupted him by desiring to see the lease, and to have a pen and ink for the purpose of renewing it upon the spot. 'As to pen and ink, Sir, (replied the farmer) I have no use for them; and so I never keep any by me: I never write, and I cannot read; and so such things are of no service; but if your honour wants to write, I can send to the shop for paper and ink, and one of my boys can go to the green to pick up a quill; or if your honour is in a hurry, Tom shall borrow a feather from the old gander, who is, I see, just waddling to his bed.' 'It don't signify at present, farmer (said Adrastus); I'll sign it at another time.—But I actually thought you was a scholar; that you gathered your notions of œconomy, industry, and paternal propriety from historic examples, or traditional annals.—' No, really, Sir, not I (said the farmer); I am a very illiterate man, and no scholar at all. My father could not afford to give me an education, and I have had neither time nor opportunity since. Nature and my eyes have been my only instructors; and if I have been able to live reputably to the age of three-

score, and even to rear up my children soberly, cleanly and virtuously, I owe it merely to them. Indeed, to say the truth, my business as a farmer throw in my way a thousand instructive objects. My yard is stocked with improvement. At the end of that small slip of a garden, I have a bit of a bee hive, filled with little industrious animals, who tell me what a shame it would be to live the life of a drone. My maxim upon this is, Sir, that he who don't make some honey, ought to eat none; and so this made me indefatigable to earn any meal before I sat down to eat it.—Nay, in this part of my duty, I was farther instructed by the little creatures who inhabit the mole-hill: I have rested upon my spade, Sir, on purpose to look at their labours; and then I have gone to work again, lest they should have the sense to chide me for minding other people's business more than my own.—I have an old house-dog, your honour—Here—Honesty!—Honesty!—Where are you, Honesty?—There, Sir, that aged animal has kept my clothes by day and my cottage by night; till he has not got a tooth in his head; and he does for me what I would do for one Thomas Truly, whom I have loved since I was brat no higher than my hand: he once did me a piece of service when it was most wanted, and while I have breath I shall never forget it. He, Sir, who has no gratitude has no nature; and an unnatural man is better dead than alive, you know; because, when a person does no good to his neighbour, he has no farther business here. We are all born to do something; and he who does a kindness deserves to be well remembered. To this dear old dame I have been lawfully married forty-six years, and I can't think what great folks are about: I find a pleasure in my constancy, that I am sure I could not receive from its reverse; and the smiles of a good woman are a rich reward. With regard to the love I bear to these little ones, I am taught the duty, which as a father I owe to them, by every living thing around me; the wren that builds her nests under my hovel, the very hog that litters in my sight, and the mare that foals in my pastures, teach me to be affectionate to their persons, and anxious for their preservation.—Here the good man paused, and directed his eldest daughter to draw some of his best harvest home beer.—

Adrastus was astonished at his simplicity of manner, and at the soundness of his sense, as well as the propriety of his remarks.—Farmer. (said he), you have distressed me as well as delighted me: I came prepared to offer you assistance, and you have left me nothing to bestow. I have