

## LITERARY DEPARTMENT.

## THE STORY OF LA ROCHE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

## CHAP. I.

More than forty years ago an English philosopher, whose works have since been read and admired by all Europe, resided at a little town in France. Some disappointments in his native country had first driven him abroad, and he was afterwards induced to remain there from having found, in this retreat, where the connections even of nation and language were avoided, a perfect seclusion and retirement highly favourable to the development of abstract subjects, in which he excelled all the writers of his time.

Perhaps in the structure of such a mind as Mr ——'s, the finer and more delicate sensibilities are seldom known to have place, or if originally implanted there, are in a great measure extinguished by the exertions of intense study and profound investigation. Hence the idea of philosophy and unfeelingness being united has become proverbial, and in common language the former word is often used to express the latter. Our philosopher has been censured by some, as deficient in warmth and feeling, but the mildness of his manner has been allowed by all; and it is certain that, if he was not easily melted into compassion, it was, at least, not difficult to awaken his benevolence.

One morning, while he sat busied in those speculations which afterwards astonished the world, an old female domestic, who served him for a housekeeper, brought him word that an elderly gentleman and his daughter had arrived in the village the preceding evening, on their way to some distant country; and that the father had been seized in the night with a dangerous disorder which the people of the inn where they lodged feared would prove mortal: that she had been sent for, as having some knowledge in medicine the village surgeon being then absent; and that it was truly piteous to see the good old man, who seemed not so much afflicted by his own distress as by that which it caused to his daughter. Her master laid aside the volume in his hand, and broke off the chain of ideas it had

His in his own was exchanged

for a coat, and he followed his governant to the sick man's apartment.

'Twas the best in the little inn where they lay, but a paltry one notwithstanding. Mr. —— was obliged to stoop as he entered it. It was floored with earth and above were the joists not plastered and hung with cobwebs. On a flock-bed, at one end, lay the old man he came to visit; at the foot of it sat his daughter. She was dressed in a clean white bed gown: her dark locks hung loosely over it as she bent forward, watching the languid looks of her father. Mr. —— and his housekeeper had stood some moments in the room without the young lady's being sensible of their entering it.

'Mademoiselle!' said the old woman at last, in a soft tone.

She turned and showed one of the finest faces in the world. It was touched, not spoiled with sorrow; and when she perceived a stranger, whom the old woman now introduced to her a blush at first, and then the gentle ceremonial of native politeness, which the affliction of the time tempered but did not extinguish, crossed it for a moment, and changed its expression. 'Twas sweetness all, however, and our philosopher felt it strongly. It was not a time for words; he offered his services in a few sincere ones.

'Monsieur lies miserably ill here,' said the governant, 'if he could be moved anywhere.'

'If he could possibly be moved to our house,' said her master.

He had a spare bed for a friend, and there was a garret room unoccupied, next to the governant's. It was contrived accordingly. The scruples of the stranger, who could look scruples, though he could not speak them, were overcome, and the bashful reluctance of his daughter gave way to her belief of its use to her father. The sick man was wrapt in blankets, and carried across the street to the English gentleman's. The old woman helped his daughter to nurse him there. The surgeon, who arrived soon after, prescribed a little, and nature did much for him; in a week he was able to thank his benefactor.

By that time his host had learned the name and character of his guest. He was a protestant clergyman of Switzerland, called La Roche, a widower, who had lately buried his wife, after a long and lingering illness, for which travelling had been prescribed, and was