

thoughtless girl that has but ill repaid your solicitude."

"Dear lady, it is for your charity in having rescued the helpless infancy of that wilful girl from penury, it is for your goodness in having extended to her your protection and maternal care, in having lavished upon her your generous affection. It is for all this, that friar Jerome would repay with his life's blood the debt of gratitude incurred by the unhappy Hielderman, the husband of the ill fated Mariamne—the condemned culprit—the escaped convict—yes, lady, I am the father of that girl you have so tenderly cherished. Judge, then, on which side remains the debt of gratitude."

"The father of Zillah!" slowly repeated the Countess. "It is an extraordinary disclosure, yet I confess it does not surprise me; your unchanging affection, your unceasing watchfulness, have often excited my wonder—a father's love has so strongly marked your intercourse with her since your first meeting, that it now stands forth in strong relief, and brings conviction to my mind—but the garb you wear, the religion you profess, is at variance with your early life."

"True it is lady," meekly answered the friar, "but God is all-powerful and all-good. A few words would acquaint you with the events that appear to have directed my destiny; but it would occupy days to recount the workings of the mind, and the various merciful influences that have changed a hardened, proud and rebellious spirit, to an humble and sincere worshipper of the meek and suffering Messiah. He that has given to the children of earth a more boundless and glorious dominion than the wildest conceptions of my forefathers, ever pictured in their thirst for an earthly inheritance. He who has bequeathed to us, the inexhaustible treasure of peace on earth and good will to all men, and has granted, through the influence of his divine spirit, a rich and ever increasing store of happiness, in proportion to the zeal with which we dispense the divine bequest. Language fails me in attempting to relate the numerous manifestations of his mercy; but my heart glows with humble gratitude, when I compare my past wretchedness with my present state—when memory presents me again, with the hell that raged within my breast, the writhings of hatred and despair that worked there for years—the evil spell that made life a curse and the promise of eternity a mockery—and now to feel with all my imperfections, there is diffused within this bosom, peace and hope and love. It is, believe me, a joyful transition."

For some minutes he bowed his head in meditation, his auditors observing a respectful silence; then resuming his discourse, he said in an altered tone.

"I shall as briefly as possible relate the events that befel me, from that day of agony, when I left St. Petersburg, a convict in chains. I was con-

ducted with many others to the mines of Nerozinch, where we worked in subterranean regions for nearly seven years. Amongst those condemned to this sepulchral existence were some accused of state offences. The person with whom I happened to be manacled was one of those? He was advanced in years, of a mild and beneficent aspect; his bearing, through our tedious and weary journey, was resigned and even cheerful. The impatience I betrayed, and the thirst for vengeance I too often expressed, appeared to incite his benevolent nature to exertion; he endeavoured to soothe the cankered irritation that reduced me to the last state of human wretchedness. I have since learned that when the heart is free from the malignant passions of hatred and revenge, happiness may be tasted in the lowliest and most abject state to which man may be reduced. His generous efforts to lead my thoughts from dwelling on my own trials, to the contemplation of other and higher objects, was not wholly without effect. When arrived at our destination our forced companionship was only changed to voluntary association. At once eloquent and erudite, he obtained an influence over me, I could not resist. Opening to my wondering vision, the volume of life, he expatiated on the rich promises it held forth; he led me on from page to page, painting with a force that brought conviction to my soul, the beauty and the truth of the Christian's faith. But it was yet more his example than his words that wrought a change upon my heart. An instance in his own person of the erring judgment of his fellow men, he never murmured or uttered a complaint against the unjust sentence that consigned him to a state of degradation with the worst criminals—possessing a soul deeply imbued with the love of his species, in the indulgence of this divine attribute, he forsook his friends and country in early life, to carry the doctrine of peace and charity to those yet ignorant of its purifying precepts. He had travelled far from the path of civilized life—over the burning sands of Africa, through the trackless forests of America, leaving in each efficient proofs of his philanthropic exertions. As age advanced, finding his physical energies decline, he confined himself to a little colony he had formed amidst the wildest scenes of the Caucasian mountains. Many of the halfcivilized beings in this region were won by him from their predatory habits, and instructed by him in the useful arts of life. At once their spiritual and temporal guide, their law giver and administrator, he acquired an influence that excited the jealousy of the Russian superintendent. In support of the accusation of treason made against him, his enemies could only add as evidence, the benefits he had conferred upon his fellow creatures. His accusers attributed to a dangerous ambition, the performance of the toilsome duties for which there was no remuneration; they could not appreciate the reward