

eternity) to the condition of him who, inheriting a splendid fortune, dissipates it, lives by fictitious and dishonest means, and dies dishonoured, imprisoned, exiled! In what terms of unmeasured scorn, or pretended pity, does the world assaul such an unhappy character. Like Esau, he sells his inheritance for a mess of pottage—a nothing. This was wrong, but with more than is written of the fatuity of Esau the spendthrift lives by fictitious and dishonest means, despised by the world, and eventually punished by its laws.

Well, indeed, may we conceive the anguish of such an one, when, in the prison-house, or in some wretched garret, he mourns over the departure of happier days, the forfeiture of his fair possessions, the miserable mockery of the pleasures which he so dearly purchased, the agony which accompanied his subsequent criminal career. Truly may he demand, as, in the bitterness of his soul, he takes up the chains of his bondage, "Be these thy rewards, O sinful liberty! where is my inheritance? or where were my senses when I plunged myself into this vortex of ruin." Alas, and ought not this to be the plaint of the sinner? He received from heaven a glorious patrimony; it was signed, and sealed, and delivered to him in baptism; the robes of his high and fair investiture were placed upon him, and he walked in the gardens of his innocence, and the fountains of life and beauty played around him; he mingled in the sweet communion of nature; he adored his Maker on the silent mountain, in the quiet solitude, or learned to fear Him as his name was uttered by the thunders of the tropics, or as his majesty rested on the deep. And thus did the child of innocence live, loved by the angels, and lovely even as they, until the serpent spoke and stung in Paradise, and apples rotten at the core tempted the child of heaven to disobey his Father, and to taste the fair but deathsome fruit. He did so, and, like his pangenitor, he walked the world, mourning unto death.

And for what has he bartered the bright patrimony of his innocence? Tell it, infidel—tell it, libertine,—tell it, sensualist,—tell it, ye worshippers of mammon!—tell it, but tell it honestly—what have you gained by the exchange? The infidel has gained doubt and agony during life, and perhaps it were well if he could gain what he wants hereafter—annihilation. The libertine! O, tell us what you have gained? triumphs over innocence—spiritual slaughters which cry loud as the blood of Abel—satiety, brutality, degradation, disease, and death! Sensualist! Yes, come from your couch, and let the drunkard come from his debauch, and tell us whether he has done no wrong against himself in violating the image of the God who made him. Worshippers of mammon! come from the temple and say what you carry in your

hands—the dross of earth—conventional straws. they bear you over the tide of time, but through the eye of the needle can they carry you? Say, have they compensated for your innocence, for days of agony, and months of pain, or will they bribe the angel who stands at the portals of heaven? How sad, my brethren, is the change in the character of him who has made himself the enemy of God. Where is the sunshine of the soul, where is that blessed peace which shone around him when his morning orisons mingled with the anthems of the angels, and when, after a day of innocence, he sunk to rest, blessed by the sinless spirits who held devoted watch beside him; where is that sweet joy which fell around him as he used to gaze upon the bright worlds above him, and feel seraphic influences as his spirit mounted heavenwards? Alas! those days are gone, and the sinner's altered looks too well proclaim it. In an evil hour he spurned his Father's love; he violated his commandments, and, O, the wrong he did himself! The voice of an angry God was heard in Paradise! He wandered darkly through the land of Cain, for him the lightnings of heaven, he thought, were pointed, and the utterings of the thunder were the voice of God. Poison was diffused throughout his soul. He shuddered in the midnight hour as the breath of the tempest passed; in sickness his guilty soul shrunk within itself, and, if at sea, for him the abysses of the deep did seem to open. O frightful change! O guilty wrong! Angels turn from the fallen spirit; the flower withers, and the valley darkens, and the mountain shrouds itself, and creation everywhere disowns the rebel against nature and its God. The sinner feels not this: he does though, if he thinks—and think, he sometimes must; but if he do not feel it himself, others feel it; and this is an accumulation of the sinner's wrong: society feels it.

When I speak, my brethren, of the wrong which the sinner does to society, I mean not to allude to wickedness in the high places. Instances there are, abundant, alas! enough, from Lucifer to Voltaire, of the vast amount of evil resulting to society, from the sins of the individual who has wielded his power or talents against the dominion of God. The higher the summit from which the avalanche falls, the greater its accumulation and its shock: the mountain torrent comes with more irresistible fury than the stream which gradually overtops its banks. I pass over, then, the names of those who in church and state have sinned against God and his people; I wish to take the sinner into his own society, above all, to his own home, and to consider the wrong which he inflicts there. I take first, the wrong which the sinful youth does to his parents. He was the joy of his parents' hearts, the promising staff of their old