

dividual suffering in the violated reputation of the country. Humbled and abashed, I must resign the topic; indignation at the novelty of the attempt has given way to horror at the frequency of its repetition. It is now becoming almost fashionable among us; we are importing the follies and maturing the vices of other countries; scarcely a term passes in these courts, during which some unabashed adulterer or seducer does not announce himself, improving on the odiousness of his offence by the profligacy of his justification; and, as it were, struggling to record by crimes the desolating progress of our barbarous civilization. Gentlemen, if this be suffered to continue, what home shall be safe, what hearth shall be sacred? What parent can, for a moment, calculate on the possession of his child? What child shall be secure against the orphanage that springs from prostitution; what solitary right, whether of life, or of liberty, or of property, in the land, shall survive among us, if that hallowed couch, which modesty has veiled, and love endeared, and religion consecrated, is to be invaded by vulgar and promiscuous libertinism. A time there was when that couch was inviolable; when conjugal infidelity was deemed but an invention; when marriage was considered as a sacrament of the heart, and faith and affection sent a mingled flame together from the sanctuary;—are the dearest rights of man, and the holiest ordinances of religion, no more to be respected? Is the marriage vow to become but the prelude to perjury and prostitution? Shall our enjoyments debase themselves into an adulterous participation, and our children propagate an incestuous community? Hear the case which I am fated to unfold, and then tell me whether a single virtue is yet to linger among us uncontaminated; whether honor, friendship, or hospitality are to be sacred. Here the case which must go forth to the world, but which I trust in God your verdict will accompany, to tell the reader that if there was vice enough among us to commit the crime, there is virtue enough to brand it with an indignant punishment.

Of the plaintiff, Mr. Summers, it is quite impossible but you must have heard much; his misfortune has given him sad celebrity; and it does seem a peculiar incident to such misfortune, that the loss of happiness is almost invariably succeeded by the deprivation of character. As the less guilty murderer will hide the corpse that may lead to his detection, so does the adulterer, by obscuring the reputation of his victim, seek to diminish the moral responsibility he incurred. Mr. Summers undoubtedly forms no exception to this system; betrayed by his friend, and abandoned by his wife, his too generous confidence, his too tender love, has been slanderously perverted into sources of his calamity. Because he did not tyrannize over her whom he adored, because he could not suspect him in whom he