

tence which he had pronounced on Jesus, put in execution. This Officer had frequently witnessed the death of malefactors, and often put the law in force, but never was he affected as on this occasion.

The scene before him, was indeed awful ; it was a scene in which he was infinitely more interested, than his feelings, strong as they were, intimated him to be. It was the most momentous spectacle that ever was exhibited on earth,—a spectacle in which the whole of the human race, from the creation to the destruction of the world, are most nearly concerned. For at that moment, the deadly malignity of sin was collected into one stream, and poured on the devoted head of our blessed Redeemer.

These things were neither known nor foreseen by his savage executioners ; and many of them were so far deluded, as to suppose that they were delivering their nation from an enemy, and putting a wicked man to death. Why then was the Centurion so greatly agitated ? Matters not immediately connected with ourselves or friends are seldom interesting. The Centurion was a man of blood, and not easily melted by scenes of calamity and woe. The condemned Prisoner whom he saw before him, belonged to a nation which he despised, and was persecuted by the most eminent men among the Jews. He was execrated by the people, who reproached him with savage joy, and delighted in his sufferings.

It was natural for a stranger to infer, that a man apparently so hateful to the whole community, must be worthy of death, and must have been guilty of the greatest enormities, before he could have made himself so generally odious, and instead of deserving his compassion and respect, was entitled to his hatred and scorn.

But the Centurion was convinced of the innocence of our Saviour, by his astonishing conduct on this terrible occasion. The Roman beheld his steady resignation, his patience and meekness under the most excruciating torments. Standing near, and led by the strength of his feelings, to remark with peculiar attention all that Jesus said and did, the Centurion became more and more interested. He beheld him promising, amidst his sufferings, a place in paradise to a repentant malefactor, with all the calm dignity of conscious power. He heard him praying most fervently for his murderers,—recommending his aged Mother to his beloved friend, with the noble simplicity and warmth of filial affection ; and at length surrendering his Spirit into the hands of