

sion of love and maternal solicitude which had been pronounced by her faltering lips. Poor Charlotte had indeed lost a treasure which earth could never supply, and she felt that loss in a tenfold degree whenever she sought the presence of her father, who often chid her severely for the constancy of her grief.

Two years stole heavily away, and Miss Stainer returned from a fashionable boarding school, to pay her compliments and offer her dutiful submission to a new mother. Yes, the colonel was again a benedict! But oh, how different had been his choice on the present occasion! The lady whom he now presented to his daughter was neither young nor handsome; and though she brought him an accession of fortune, this had not been the inducement which prompted him to make Miss Montague his wife. A long illness, which had brought the colonel nearly to the grave, had effected in his mind a great religious change. He had felt and acknowledged himself to be a great sinner, and his repentance had been marked by all the bitter humiliation which a proud, sullen mind, feels when it suddenly finds itself in the wrong, trembles at its danger, and is willing to make any and every sacrifice to escape from the punishment it anticipates.

With strong groans and cries he had wrestled with the accusing spirit. His prayers had been heard—his tears accepted—and he became a new creature. His repentance was deep and sincere; but it affected by its intensity the sanity of the convert. Instead of going on his way in peace, rejoicing in the salvation he had sought and found, he thought, by severe mortification of the flesh, and constant religious exercises, to atone for the past, and keep alive the mental excitement, which now influenced all his words and actions. To enjoy more privacy and to exclude himself entirely from the world, he spent the two years of his daughter's absence in building the Lodge, which was gloomy and retired enough to have satisfied the mono-mania of St. Anthony himself.

The little village of B——, with its fine old gothic church, was two miles distant from the lodge; but it was not to this ancient shrine that our stern Neophyte carried his vows, and before which he bent his knee. The large, scattered parish, with its few inhabitants, only commanded the services of the Episcopalian minister once in three weeks; besides Mr. Mason was an easy going man, who cared little for his own salvation, and still less for the salvation of the souls which had been entrusted by a negligent vicar to his care. If he could fish and shoot, during the season, and play at whist and backgammon of an evening with the village schoolmaster, and a knot of favourite cronies, it was a matter of perfect

indifference to him whether he was regarded by his flock as a man of God or not. He received the magnificent stipend of fifty pounds a year for preaching at three churches, some five miles distant from each other, once every Sunday, and he thought, and many others were of the same opinion, that the poor parson performed a great deal for a very small remuneration. The poor people would say with a significant shake of the head that Parson Mason was a fine man, but nobody could hear what he said, for he preached like a bee in a warning-pan. It was hardly possible that such a pastor as the one I have just described, could satisfy the spiritual cravings of an awakened sinner like Colonel Stainer. He had confided to him while upon his sick bed the distracted state of his mind; and had sought comfort and assistance of one who was more ignorant and benighted than himself. In order to conceal his own gross blindness and indifference, the curate turned his rich friend's conversion into ridicule, and pronounced him a fit inmate for T—— mad-house. This insult the colonel bore with the fortitude of a martyr. He gloried in persecution, and courted the title, which the worldly priest had flattered himself would, by operating upon his pride, cure him of his folly.

If the gallant officer was mad, there certainly was method in his madness; for, having decided that whatever others did, he and his house would serve the Lord, he separated himself abruptly from all his former friends and associates; discharged his old domestics, and hired in their room people deeply imbued with the fanatical evangelicism of that day, which condemned as light and profane all who did not wear the same gloomy livery, and adopt the same austere creed with themselves. To do the colonel justice, if he erred, he did so in the full conviction that he was right—that the sacrifices he made were serious duties which conscience demanded at his hands, and which as a consistent Christian he was bound to perform. The Roman patriot, when he sacrificed his sons for the good of his country, was not more firm in the stern grandeur of his purpose, than our awakened sinner was in his; and he endeavoured to prove his consistency by the austere manner in which he strove to bend to his will the unresisting but equally firm spirit of his daughter.

Before his conversion to his new creed, Colonel Stainer had encouraged an attachment which had been growing up from childhood, between Charlotte and the nephew of his first wife, a young man of good family, high principles, and independent fortune. So great a favourite was Lewis Chatworth, at one time with the colonel, that he seldom was suffered to absent himself