

“Like a friend—” returned the good vicar, interrupting and gently detaining his impatient companion.—“What I advance is the truth, however unwelcome to your ears. The surgeon must lay bare the wound before he can attempt to heal it; and though the exposure must be painful to himself and his patient, a cure cannot be effected without such disagreeable circumstances. Francis, I answered for you at the font; I have loved you as a son, and that sullen frown and impatient gesture will neither terrify nor deter me from doing my duty.”

Francis looked up, his heart in his eyes; stammered—coloured, and remained silent.

Mr. Irvin perceived his advantage, and continued—

“I wish I could infuse into your bosom a little more of the sunshine of content.—Why, my dear Francis, suffer the contrary feeling to throw an everlasting cloud over the natural benevolence of your heart? Banish from your mind this false sensibility, which destroys all its energies, and renders your life a burthen to yourself and useless to others.”

“Would you wish me to become a mere animal, a living machine? confining my ideas to the dull circle of worldly avocations, without suffer-