

had been taught to free himself from the chain that had bound him to the footstool of one great potentate, by whom he had hitherto been regarded as the mere instrument of his pleasures, and although, at present the iron weight of power had fallen within the grasp of the monarch, men knew they were justified in resisting the intolerable burthen.

Mrs. Gaunt was imbued with something of this spirit, which dictated the course she had adopted; and neither the fate of Lady Lisle, who had suffered death for the protection she had afforded to two of her nearest kinsmen, nor other prudential motives could make her swerve.

"You are welcome to such protection as my roof affords," she said, in answer to his appeal. "Life is a precious gift, and heaven forbid that I should withhold my humble means of preserving yours. Rest here," she continued, after a pause, placing before him a flask of wine and a drinking cup; "and in the mean time try if you can keep yourself warm by the aid of this."

There was one part of the building in which Mrs. Gaunt resided, only partially connected with the main pile, and being seldom made use of, seemed well calculated for a place of concealment. Into this she determined upon introducing her guest; and having with her own hands fitted up a room there with every despatch, and having provided him with every thing that could conduce to his comfort—having, in fact, anticipated his every want, she returned to where she had left him, and giving him the key, directed him to his apartment.

What a contrast was this to the sufferings he had lately endured;—a pig sty, a sheep-house, a hay stack, or at best, a miserable shanty, with the accompaniment of cold, rain, and hunger, on one side of the picture: on the other, a table spread with every luxury, stood before a blaze that went gambolling up the old fireplace that had not for years echoed to its cheerful roar, as if delighted at triumphing over the rich stores of cobwebs that choked its orifice; what a type was this of the spontaneous and fearless beneficence of her who had caused it. Base indeed must have been the heart that would not glow with intense and interminable gratitude!—Cold the blood that would not fire at goodness such as her's, rooted on the broad ground of principle, and called into exercise by no incentive of love, friendship, or ties of kindred.

What the precise nature of his reflections were we are at a loss to determine; that they

were not what they should have been, may be safely inferred from the manner of their requital.

Weeks passed on, and none knew, except themselves and the crickets, chirping merrily by the snug fireside, that the house contained more than its ordinary occupants; although many surmises began to circulate as to the sudden change perceptible in the widow's conduct, and the interest she seemed to take of late in all that pertained to the fate of the fugitives from Sedgemoor. A story had indeed been told among the household in an undertone, "that Roderick, the coachman, on coming home late one night from his mother's cottage, had seen something going into the old deserted wing," but this was treated as one of Roderick's vagaries.

Roderick was a young man of good principles and observing habits, he was brave too and generous—and with such qualities, he had gained much of his mistress' confidence.—From his situation he had been necessarily a witness to many charitable deeds performed by her, which, together with her uniform kindness to himself, secured his firm attachment. He had been annoyed at first at the reception his story met with, but after a little consideration, he became pleased that it had taken the turn it had. It was evident to him that his mistress had at least connived at the entrance of the stranger, but why or wherefore he remained in doubt. Her anxiety that he should remain concealed was also plain. Roderick had determined at first to know more about the matter, because he wished to clear his character from the suspicion of cowardice that rested on it, and because, moreover, he felt a strong desire to satisfy the cravings of his curiosity; but after much deliberation he was contented to forego the satisfaction resulting from an ability to effect these purposes, on the very correct conclusion that as his mistress wished to preserve the secret, it could be no affair of his; and that any attempt to investigate the matter without her knowledge and consent, would render him unworthy of her esteem, and that he prized above every other object.

With this feeling the worthy fellow determined to lighten as much as possible, the load that weighed upon her spirits; and his attention and unremitting exertions to please, contributed in no slight degree to soothe her troubled mind; and this conduct resulted in his obtaining a more complete and satisfactory knowledge of the affair than could have been obtained by pursuing his first inclination. In