

gazed on him for a few moments severely, his countenance gradually relaxed into an expression of the utmost benignity, as he accepted the offered chair, and said :

“ Do not imagine that I come to you in the spirit of anger and reproach, Captain Forester, but as the minister of my Divine Master, whose duty it is to remind you of what you appear to have forgotten, that you are a responsible being, and will have to answer for each trespass against the laws he has given us for our truest happiness, our unerring guides while on earth. My words sound strangely in your ears, young man, (as he marked the gesture of impatience with which they were received,) yet would it not be well to give heed to them now, ere they are repeated to you as the sentence of a judge, when the hour of retribution draws nigh. Why should we so earnestly and so constantly address ourselves to the consciences of the young, did we not feel the deep importance of the mission with which we are intrusted, and the most earnest desire to save them from eternal misery. Why, oh why, will you turn away from all that is good and holy, to follow after those things which you know must end in wasted health, and death—what real happiness do you receive, in return for the costly price you are giving.”

He paused, when Captain Forester, with a flushed cheek, replied :

“ Mr. Neville, you must really be more explicit—I assure you, I do not comprehend the purport of your words, which appear to me irrelative to the cause which I must suppose has favoured me with your presence. You accepted my apology last evening for my inadvertent offence, and I cannot conceive your object in seeking this interview, unless the champion of Miss Neville requires further satisfaction, in which case I am quite ready to offer it on my own terms.” This was uttered in a tone of suppressed anger and defiance.

“ Captain Forester, do not add to your heavy faults, by insulting one of my sacred calling,” returned Mr. Neville, whose noble and commanding mein none could behold without respect. “ You dare not for a moment, suppose me the hostile messenger of another, or the abettor of a crime so hateful in the eyes of God, as duelling. But you are young—ungovernable—without reflection, therefore, I excuse you.” he continued, more mildly ; “ and earnestly would I warn you from the brink of the precipice on which you now stand, and where a powerful enemy awaits to hurl you down the dark abyss. You consider all this a fable, a metaphor—but believe me it is truth, engraven by the finger of God, as surely as the awful sentence stood out from the wall before the Eastern Monarch, in the moment of his unhallowed mirth, and will as certainly be fulfilled (if you repent not,) as was the doom of the guilty tyrant Balshazzar. Have you ever paused to

inquire where the road leads which you have chosen, and whether the guides who accompany you are faithful. Do so ere it is too late, my young friend, and turn to Him who will abundantly pardon—who only waits to be gracious. I well know that I have no power, of myself, to convince you—yet, I address you as a reasonable being, and implore you in the words of a faithful minister of God, ‘ not to spend your life as though you thought you were sent into the world only to eat, sleep and play, and after a course of years be extinguished like the snuff of a candle.’ But to stand at your post with the fidelity of yonder sentinel, and be prepared, since you know neither the day nor the hour when you may be summoned to appear before your Maker.”

Captain Forester remained silent a brief space, leaning his face down upon the back of the chair ; he then suddenly started up, and abruptly asked :

“ Do you allude to any part of my conduct in particular—or are your remarks levelled at me generally ?”

“ Your own conscience will give the best response to that inquiry, Captain Forester. I allude to nothing in particular, though I might do so ; I merely would ask how you can reconcile living without God in the world—never mentioning His name but to profane it—never entering His temple when you can avoid it—delighting only in those haunts where folly holds her revels, and where His divine image cannot enter ? Is this a preparation, think you, for another world ?” And he pressed the arm of the young man emphatically as he spoke, adding in a kind tone ; “ what can I say to convince you ?”

But the heart of Captain Forester was wholly unprepared to respond to such counsellings ; he looked perplexed and impatient, but he spoke not.

“ And this is the being who would have become the guardian of the simple hearted Rosetta,” said Mr. Neville, mentally, as he watched the cold and indifferent manner of his companion, who had now risen, while a suppressed yawn indicated his weariness. The rector also rose, and hearing in the same moment a rush of feet, and the sound of voices along the passage leading to Forester’s room, he felt how vain would be the attempt to say more since the opportunity which in his zeal for the welfare of another, was lost by the entrance of a bevy of his young companions. Forester attended him to the door, evidently relieved by the interruption, and called his servant to conduct him down stairs. Lawrence came forward, while, with a countenance expressive of that mock simplicity so frequently assumed by the lower class of Irish, he inquired :

“ Please your honour, will I go now to disorder the carriage and pair you bespoke, to attend you from the lion and lamb.”

A loud laugh followed this speech, while the enraged Forester exclaimed :