

come too bitter to dwell upon.—But you want refreshment, and such fare as Providence has bestowed on an object unworthy of its attention, I will place before you;

The venerable penitent now entered a recess, from whence he brought some shell fish, which necessity had taught him to render

‘ Rich to the taste, and wholesome to the frame.’

Necessity ! thy hand is invested with the wand of enchantment ; thou createst ideas for the forlorn moment, which cheers the rugged path of human existence, and comforts the suffering children of mortality.

Alonzo having ended his repast, requested to hear the hermit’s story ; who sighing deeply, said, ‘ Attend young stranger, and draw instruction from the relation of my self inflicted sufferings :

‘ Nursed in the lap of partial fondness, my infant years passed on with every wish gratified, and every error indulged. Donna Isabella de Cespides was esteemed one of the finest women in Madrid. To obtain her, my father Don Manuel de Guzman, had opposed a family whose enmity towards his own was implacable. Her early death, which happened soon after their union, not only involved him in the deepest affliction, but, by some means, the explanation of which shall not now interrupt my narrative, her relations threw around him the cruel net of law ; and thus enwebbed, they not only harrassed his mind, but reduced his fortune to so low an ebb as to sink him into a state of despondency. Often would he weep over me in silent anguish ; but it was not until I was fifteen that I found out the real cause of his dejection.

‘ Don Philip de Fernandez, whose fortune was equal, but whose family was less noble than that of my father, had been the approved friend of his youth, the companion of his happier days. Don Philip lived retired : the education of his daughter Elvira engrossed all his attention ; and an object more lovely was never beheld. He had likewise a son about my own age, who had been placed for some years under the care of a rich relation in a distant part of the world, whose fondness for the youth exceeded that of his own parent.—This partiality shewn by Don Philip in the division of regard towards his children, was the only drawback upon as generous and noble a heart as Spain could boast of. I wish I could here omit the relation of my father’s conduct towards a gentleman who had a claim to far different treatment, and

who, in the moment of distress, not only made a proffer of a very considerable sum to support the long contested suit commenced by the family of Isabella, which now promised a favourable issue on the part of Don Manuel, but at the same time thus addressed him, —‘ It has been a wish long formed in my heart, that Felix and Eivira might be brought up under our mutual care, and that in their union our families might become one : let us then from this moment mingle our fates and our fortunes ; let us live for our children only, consult their happiness alone, and teach them that goodness and felicity ever go together.’ Picture to yourself the feelings of this worthy man on beholding the cold disdainful look, and hearing the still more chilling reply of my father, who observed that, as his family was noble, he would never consent to sully its dignity—that he had ever treated Don Philip, although an inferior, with a marked distinction, which he was sorry to find had induced him to lose sight of the difference between them.—I had then attained the age before mentioned, and was witness to the conversation. Don Philip remained silent for some time ; a tear trickled down his cheek ; his heart was wounded ; but checking his feelings, he replied, ‘ I am sorry that Don Manuel’s prejudice is of a nature that common pride forbids me to oppose.—I feel myself insulted, and am sensible we can never meet again.—I am likewise sensible that I am sinking by slow but sure degrees to the grave, and that my duty commands me to die in peace with all the world.—Our parting, therefore, shall not still further embitter remembrance on my side ; and in the farewell which I now take, I unite blessing, pity, and forgiveness.’

‘ My father made no reply, but with hasty steps and folded arms bit his lips, and measured the room from one end to the other. This sullen silence still more affected the disappointed Philip, who beheld him with a look of sorrow, and departed from a mansion he never again re-entered. A few months after this an unlooked for turn in the long depending cause which had preyed upon the peace of Don Manuel, suddenly and unexpectedly restored him to his former affluence. But the stab had been given—the rankling wound was working its way to his heart. His idol, Dignity, had been tottering to a threatened fall ; and, after lingering a few years, Don Manuel fell a martyr to those fears which ought never to disturb the children of mortality. So much indeed was he wedded to worldly pomp, that even his last sentiments were expres-