

"how handsomely she had lived once; and how hard it was to be reduced; and she little thought ever to end her days in an alms-house;" (which is the common language of those who were never so well off before;) she was thankful that such an asylum was provided for want and age; and blessed God that it was to the Christian dispensation alone that such pious institutions owed their birth.

One fine evening, as she was sitting reading her Bible, on the little bench shaded with honey-suckles, just before her door, who should come and sit down by her but Mrs. Betty, who had formerly been lady's maid at the nobleman's house of the village of which Mrs. Simpson's father had been minister. Betty, after a life of vanity, was, by a train of misfortunes, brought to this very alms-house; and though she had taken no care, by frugality and prudence, to avoid it, she thought it a hardship and disgrace, instead of being thankful, as she ought to have been, for such a retreat. At first she did not know Mrs. Simpson; her large bonnet, cloak, and brown stuff gown, (for she always made her appearance conform to her circumstances,) being very different from the dress she had been used to wear when Mrs. Betty had seen her dining at the great house; and time and sorrow had much altered her countenance. But when Mrs. Simpson kindly addressed her as an old acquaintance, she screamed with surprise.

"What! you, madam! you in an alms-house, living on charity? you, who used to be so charitable yourself that you never suffered any distress in the parish which you could prevent?"

"That may be one reason, Betty," replied Mrs. Simpson, "why Providence has provided this refuge for my old age. And my heart overflows with gratitude when I look back on his goodness."

"No such great goodness, methinks," said Betty; "why, you were born and bred a lady, and are now reduced to live in an alms-house."

"Betty, I was born and bred a sinner, undeserving of the mercies I have received."

"No such great mercies," said Betty; "why, I heard you had been turned out of doors, that your husband had broke, and that you had been in danger of starving, though I did not know what was become of you."

"It is all true, Betty, it is all true."

"Well," said Betty, "you are an odd sort of a gentle-woman. If from a prosperous condition I had been made a bankrupt, a widow, and a beggar, I should have thought it no such mighty matter to be thank-