

living on bad food ;—that there were, besides all these, two hundred thousand people, in Scotland, begging their bread from door to door.

Such, then, were the hard circumstances and times in which Donald Macleod was brought up, from the fifth year of his age nearly to the twelfth.

Towards Christmas, in the year 1699, in the midst of frost and snow, with his indenture, which he had contrived to get into his hands, and one linen shirt in his pocket, our young adventurer, before it was yet day, set out from his master's house at Inverness, secretly, without any other destination than that of wandering with his face southward. His brogues and his stockings soon gave way, and he was reduced to the necessity of encountering the icy and rugged paths through which he passed with his legs and feet quite bare. This circumstance, however, was not half so afflicting to little Donald, as the constant apprehension lest he should be pursued and overtaken by the Macpherions, his masters, and forcibly taken back to fulfil the time of his apprenticeship. He, therefore, as much as possible, avoided the highway, and struck, at every turn, into the narrow defiles, and bye-paths, that led through the mountains. Mr. Burke thinks that nothing, no, not liberty itself, is absolutely or abstractedly good : that things are only desirable and good relatively ; and that all their comfort depends on circumstances. But Donald Macleod was of a different opinion : for, even in the midst of snowy hills, and dreary, frozen wastes, he exulted in his freedom, in the consciousness of being uncontrolled, and his own master. Liberty appeared to Donald to be good, abstractedly and in itself ; for, though it did not immediately remove the evil, of which he had so much reason to complain in a state of servitude, it excited courage, and nourished hope : it gave full scope to fancy and contrivance, and alleviated the weight of what he now suffered, by the prospect of what he might yet enjoy. His feelings were in exact unison with those of another adventurer, on a Tour into the Interior Parts of Africa :

“ I now exulted,” says the traveller, “ in my emancipation, (from his masters,) and felt an extasy of joy in the mere possession of life and liberty, though I knew not how to sustain the one, or secure the other. Nor was I plunged into despair when this transport began to subside. If I should subsist on the reptiles of the earth, and roots, and herbs, and seeds, and to what-foever I should be drawn by the keenness of sense, purified by want, and invigorated by the breath of Heaven, I would esteem myself happy in being my own master.”

Our young wanderer seldom went near any house in the day-time ; but when night approached, he looked about for some hamlet, or village, where he might get a lodging, and something to sustain Nature. Though, in those calamitous times, he met with frequent repulses when he begged a bit of bread or a little meal, he was never refused a night's lodging by any one to whom he made application. “ Woe is me !” people would say, “ he is a comely boy. His coat and kilt too are of a finer plaid than usual. He is surely some gentleman's son.—“ Perhaps,” another would say, “ he is some gentleman's bastard.” Some, in the morning, would give him a small pittance of the little that they had for their own famished children, and, with tears in their eyes, bid the Lord bless him and guide him. Others would earnestly advise him to return home. To all their inquiries concerning his family, his name, and the place from whence he came, he gave evasive answers, fearing nothing so much, as that he should fall again into the hands of the Macpherions. Those men were not harsh to him, though they confined him closely to his work ; but he was absolutely starved, as they had not, in the midst of prevailing famine, wherewithal to satisfy the wants of their family.

When he came (for he steered his course southward by the highland, not by the coastroad) near to Aberfeldie, where there was a ferry, the bridge not being yet built, he fell in with an elderly woman, decently appparelled, and, in appearance, rather above the common rank. She put many questions, and at length offered to take him home with her to her own house. He asked her what

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