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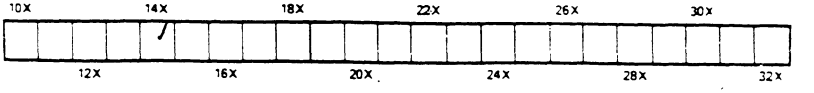

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VICAR'S TALES.

Page 81.

London, Published by Dean & Munday, Threadneedle Street.

PROFESSION

AND

PRINCIPLE;

OR,

THE VICAR'S TALES.

By S. STRICKLAND.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY DEAN AND MUNDAY,

THREADNEEDLE-STREET.

THE VICAR'S TALES.

Through what a magnifying glass we view
The faults of others!—with half-shut eyes behold
The follies incident to human nature,
When pictured in ourselves!

It were well for mankind in general, did they attend more strictly to the benign precept delivered by our blessed Saviour in his inimitable Sermon on the Mount:—"Judge not, that ye be not judged."—We are all too prone to pronounce a hasty and even severe judgment on the actions of our fellow-creatures; and maliciously to exaggerate their foibles, and to place their failings in the most conspicuous point of view, at the same time carefully concealing from our own hearts, all consciousness that we are ourselves deserving the same censure we so liberally bestow on the actions of our neighbours.

Francis Stanhope, the hero of the following tale, was the only child of a gentleman of good family and considerable fortune. He had just

returned from the University, to enjoy for a season, on his paternal estate, the easy life of an independent country gentleman.

Possessing a fine person, splendid talents, and good health, young Stanhope did not enjoy that cheerfulness of disposition and happiness of mind which generally result from such advantages. Vain of his family, education, and riches, he derived no pleasure from the objects of his self-love; he was disappointed that other people did not form the same high opinion of him that he had formed of himself, and he viewed the world with a discontented, prejudiced eye, though unconsciously most desirous of its applause. He courted virtue in theory, and was loud in his condemnation of vice; but he wanted resolution to practise the one, or to subdue the other; thinking himself sufficiently good in abstaining from those scenes of riot and dissipation too commonly resorted to by young men of his own age. His leisure hours were occupied in fanciful speculations on the baseness of mankind, the follies of the rich, and the want of moral worth in the lower walks of life; and he had so completely poisoned his mind with these pernicious doctrines, that he was universally shunned and disliked by his connexions and acquaintance.

His father, who most tenderly loved him, was

anxious to remove such a delusion from his mind; and, therefore, tried every argument to convince him that, even amongst the most criminal of his fellow-creatures, he might find some good feeling, or principal of virtue, left; talents, which, if wisely applied, would have rendered the erring possessor an ornament of, instead of an outcast from, society. Mr. Stanhope endeavoured to convince his son that a plain, religious education often produced better fruits than a refined one; that good sense was superior to sensibility; and honest industry preferable to a state of indolent affluence, which seldom conferred permanent or real happiness on its possessor.

These parental admonitions and lessons of wisdom had hitherto been vainly applied. Francis still continued to contemplate the actions of his neighbours with the same jaundiced eye, and to pass his usual harsh and hasty criticisms on every individual who was not fortunate enough to reach his ideal standard of perfection.

One morning, when the usual topic had been for some time warmly disputed, Mr. Stanhope remarked sternly to his son on his want of charity towards his fellow creatures:—"Francis," said he, "it is with painful solicitude for your future welfare, that I daily witness the harsh and arbitrary manner in which you pass your opinion

on the conduct of others. If you value your own peace of mind, overcome this querrulous and discontented disposition; or you will make every man your enemy, and not enjoy the benefit of a single friend."

"Excepting Mr. Irvin, our excellent vicar," returned his son, "I know no one here deserving that name: and the ill-will of people I despise, never affects me; nay, I consider it a positive compliment to myself to be the object of their aversion."

"Pride, self-love, and vanity, dictated that speech," continued Mr. Stanhope: "you are my only son, Francis; and all my earthly hopes centre in you; yet, in spite of the indulgence generally granted to parents in their estimation of the worth of their offspring, I cannot perceive in what you so eminently excel the young people of your own age, whom you thus affect to despise. But since you allow Mr. Irvin to be your friend, visit with him the dwellings of the poor; and contemplating the virtues and the piety, as well as the wants and sufferings, of your fellow-creatures, learn to think humbly of yourself."

Mr. Stanhope sternly withdrew, leaving Francis overwhelmed with confusion, and ashamed of the vanity he had displayed on this occasion. For the first time in his life, he determined to

make a stricter, though a more candid, investigation into the actions of men.

Mr. Irvin was the only man, next to his father, for whom Francis felt the least affection; and to him he gave his unbounded esteem and confidence.—In his choice of a friend, Francis Stanhope had chosen wisely. The excellent character and exemplary life of the pious divine never failed to enforce the truth of his doctrines; and Francis, when under his tuition, had been an amiable and benevolent boy. The gentle admonitions of the pastor had successfully subdued the violent and irascible temper of his pupil; but association with the world, in after life, had produced the most fearful change in his habits and disposition, and had again excited those violent passions which Mr. Irvin had so successfully endeavoured to overcome.

Francis had been absent from home two years; during which period he had occasionally corresponded with his respected tutor; and it was with real sorrow that Mr. Irvin perused letters which, instead of containing the joyous benevolent sentiments of youth, were filled with discontented murmurings and ungenerous strictures on the conduct of mankind.

Conscious of an alteration in himself, Francis had hitherto delayed returning the good vicar's

visit of congratulation on his arrival, once more to enjoy the society of his native town; he now determined, therefore, to make a candid apology for his unpardonable neglect, and to open his whole heart to his indulgent master. Snatching up his hat, he now directed his steps towards the parsonage.

A lovely afternoon in the fall of the year, tended not a little to rouse Francis from his usual gloomy train of thought, and to restore to his spirits the gaiety and animation of youth.—The hedges, glowing with autumnal berries; the changing hues of the woods that skirted the town, reflecting their broad shadows in the river, whose silvery waters glided in ample curves through the extended plain; and the rich meadows, still decked with verdure, filled his mind with a sense of devotion, and a spirit of contemplation he had not often experienced since his communion with the world.

Those fields had witnessed the guileless sports of his childhood; in the quiet mansion, whose old-fashioned white turrets peeped through the lofty elms which surrounded it, he had, in the days of boyhood, received from Mr. Irvin's lips, the sacred lessons of religion and peace.—At that happy period his eyes would have glistened at the recital of a tale of sorrow, and his heart swoln

with benevolent compassion towards his fellow-creatures.—Yes, he felt he was changed—that he was no longer the Francis Stanhope of former years; yet this alteration he imputed to the companions with whom he had associated, instead of the vanity and deceitfulness of his own heart, which felt an unusual degree of agitation as he crossed the lawn in front of the parsonage, and approached the house where he had spent the best and happiest hours of his life.

He found Mr. Irvin in his study, preparing a discourse for the ensuing Sabbath. At the sight of his old pupil, the vicar resigned his pen, and welcomed him with his usual kindness.

"I fear I intrude, my dear sir, for I perceive you are engaged."

"You have long been a stranger, Francis, where you should be most at home.—When did you ever find me too busy to welcome an old friend? I have long wished to have some private conversation with you."

"And I, sir, am almost afraid to encounter the lecture I richly deserve for my neglect."

"You have sinned more against yourself than me," returned the vicar; "but candidly tell me to what circumstance I am indebted for your visit to day."

"Mr. Irvin, I am sick at heart!" exclaimed

Francis, grasping the hand of the vicar, while his quivering lip and faultering voice proclaimed the perturbation of his feelings.

"And you seek me, to heal its wounds?"

"If you will deign to give me your advice—."

"When did I ever refuse it to my friend? but I fear I shall tax your temper and patience to the utmost; for as I perceive the disease is violent, the remedy must unavoidably be severe.—Francis," he continued in a sterner voice, "a faulty character I ever knew you to be; but if your disposition was hasty, your heart was good; and the promise of your early youth made me fondly anticipate, that I should, one day, behold in you a good and amiable man. You are greatly altered since we parted. I can scarcely recognise my pupil in the gloomy misanthrope before me. Lay your heart open to my inspection, and tell me what has effected this change in your once generous disposition."

Francis became greatly agitated as he replied, "The world."

"It is a school," returned the vicar, "in which both good and evil are to be acquired; presenting a varied picture of virtue and vice. The choice rests with ourselves, and if directed by religion, you will not fail to prefer the right path. If you have yielded to the temptations which too often

ensnare and mislead young and inexperienced minds, renounce the error of your ways; implore pardon at the hands of your Creator, and he will not fail to restore to you your former peace and ——."

"Indeed, my dear sir, I have given way to no vice,—I have carefully abstained from the idle pursuits of my gayer companions, and lothe the disgusting manner in which they employ their talents and time. It is of this I complain; of this I am sick and weary; so that I can feel no fellowship, no affection for a race of beings, whose employments are dictated either by a sordid love of gain, or by a desire to further the gratification of their animal passions. The more I look into mankind, the more dissatisfied I am with myself and with all the world."

"The fault lies not in the world, my son, but in your own bosom; your discontent has its origin in self-love and inordinate vanity."

The colour rose to young Stanhope's brow. "Impossible!"

"Yes, Francis: I repeat it, vanity.—You consider yourself superior to all mankind; while you condemn in them the follies and weakness of your own heart."

"Mr. Irvin!" exclaimed Francis, starting abruptly from his seat, "you speak——"

"Like a friend—" returned the good vicar, interrupting and gently detaining his impatient companion.—"What I advance is the truth, however unwelcome to your ears. The surgeon must lay bare the wound before he can attempt to heal it; and though the exposure must be painful to himself and his patient, a cure cannot be effected without such disagreeable circumstances. Francis, I answered for you at the font; I have loved you as a son, and that sullen frown and impatient gesture will neither terrify nor deter me from doing my duty."

Francis looked up, his heart in his eyes; stammered—coloured, and remained silent.

Mr. Irvin perceived his advantage, and continued——

"I wish I could infuse into your bosom a little more of the sunshine of content.—Why, my dear Francis, suffer the contrary feeling to throw an everlasting cloud over the natural benevolence of your heart? Banish from your mind this false sensibility, which destroys all its energies, and renders your life a burthen to yourself and useless to others."

"Would you wish me to become a mere animal, a living machine? confining my ideas to the dull circle of worldly avocations, without suffer-

ing a thought to expand beyond their narrow limits?" returned Francis, with some warmth.

"I wish you had been the son of a poor man, Francis, and your thoughts directed to the attainment of that knowledge necessary for some useful business or liberal profession. You would have possessed a more cheerful disposition, a wiser head, and a warmer heart."

"A warmer heart!" repeated Francis, trembling with indignation, which he with great difficulty suppressed: "no mechanical employment would have given me that."

His pride was now completely wounded: he tried to conceal it from the vicar, but did it so awkwardly, that he only betrayed himself; while that worthy gentleman, without noticing his apparent confusion, calmly continued—

"Want of employment is the true cause of your discontent; this renders you restless and unhappy. Nursed in the lap of prosperity, you have never received a single lesson from the severe but useful school of adversity. In the possession of health and many personal advantages, you have never felt any real cause of sorrow beyond the loss of your lamented mother. Yet you despise the good which a munificent Creator has so profusely showered down on you; making to yourself imaginary evils, spending

hours of valuable time in discontented repinings against that all-wise Providence for suffering, unwisely as you think, evil to exist in the world. I repeat, Francis, had you been born in a humbler station of life, you would have been a wiser and a better man. The time so unprofitably wasted would have been constantly employed in business and the necessary avocations attending on employment. Your thoughts would early have been directed to the profession or calling you were destined to fill, and the hours allotted to exercise and pleasure would have been thankfully received and truly enjoyed."

"You have convinced me that I am at present a very useless being," replied Francis, beginning to feel the folly of his past conduct.

"You might be quite the reverse; it rests entirely with yourself," returned Mr. Irvin. "But since we are upon the subject, allow me to ask you how you spend your time?"

"In reading and contemplation."

"What books are most suited to your taste?"

"History, biography, poetry; works of imagination, commonly denominated novels, and the drama.—But what please me most, and completely captivate my attention, are the writings of the French philosophers."

"I thought as much," said Mr. Irvin with a

sigh; "but, my young friend, does the Bible often form a part of your studies?"

Francis had expected this question, but when it was put to him with an air of such tender concern for his welfare, he felt confused and abashed as he replied—"I have often perused the sacred volume with attention, and seldom fail to refer to it on the Sabbath."

"I am sorry it has not been the daily companion of your thoughts—Do you believe the sacred truths it contains?"

"Yes, in a general way; but doubts will sometimes arise."

"You may thank your modern philosophers, in a great measure, for that," returned Mr. Irvin. "Read the sacred volume more attentively, and those doubts will vanish. Make it your companion, and it will ultimately bestow on you that peace and happiness, the possession of which you so ardently desire. It is a counsellor that will not deceive; a friend who will never desert you in the hour of need, but prove your safeguard and support through the trials of this world, and an unerring guide and passport to the next." Mr. Irvin paused, exhausted by the earnestness with which he had enforced his argument; but perceiving the eyes of young Stanhope bent on the ground, and full of tears, he changed the sub-

ject: and, in a cheerful voiee, said, "Perhaps, my dear Francis, you will step into the parlour, and spend half an hour with my wife and daughter, till I am at leisure to accompany you in a walk. They will be glad to welcome an old friend."

Francis joyfully assented, willing to terminate a scene which had been very painful to his feelings; retiring, therefore, from the library, and crossing the hall, he tapped with a trembling hand at the parlour-door.—"Come in," was twice repeated by a sweet female voice, and the next moment Francis found himself in the well-known apartment.

The entrance of Francis caused some confusion in the family party, who expected a female visitor.

Mrs. Irvin, for several years, had lost her sight from a *gutta serena;* which was the source of deep affliction and regret to her husband and daughter. —She was seated on a sofa, knitting; and Miss Irvin, a lovely girl of eighteen, was kneeling on the ground, for the better convenience of measuring two poor children for stuff gowns, and cloaks for the ensuing winter.

On the entrance of young Stanhope, she rose hastily, her cheeks betraying evident confusion at being surprised in so lowly an attitude; while

with her slender fingers, she shook back the bright ringlets of flaxen hair which had escaped from their bandage, and were scattered over her face.

"Miss Irvin," stammered Francis, surprised at beholding the pretty companion of his early years grown into an elegant young woman, "I fear I have interrupted your benevolent employment?"

"Oh, not at all, Mr. Francis," replied the blushing girl, recovering her usual composure, and advancing to meet him;—"I am always happy to see you, and poor mamma will be so pleased with your visit: she said, this very afternoon, she longed to hear the tone of your voice again."

"I have been a sad, ungrateful fellow, not to pay my respects to my kind godmother before," returned Francis, taking a seat by Mrs. Irvin on the sofa. The benevolent smile which passed over her sightless countenance, expressed the lively satisfaction she felt at his presence.

"You are quite a stranger, Francis, to the home of your youth: it must be nearly three years since you left B——, for college. I knew your step at the door, though it is somewhat heavier and more manly since we parted.—I wish I could see you as plainly as I did, when you came to us twelve years ago.—You were a laughing

rosy, black-eyed boy, your poor mother's pride. —Ah, Frank! she spoiled you not a little."

"I fear I have ever been a spoilt child," said Francis, with a sigh, "which I hope will plead an excuse for my wayward freaks, now I am a man. Here, however, I feel myself a different creature; I seem to breathe a purer atmosphere, to live in another world.—All that I love is centred in this spot: the very tone of your voices recals years of pure and intellectual delight. Ah, mother!" he continued, kissing Mrs. Irvin's hand, "why did I ever leave you to mingle with the world?"

"Nay, Francis, why did you so long absent yourself from friends who tenderly loved you?" returned Mrs. Irvin.

"I deserve your censure," replied Francis, not a little touched by the kind but reproachful tone in which it was uttered. "I own myself guilty of the most unpardonable folly. I have been wandering for the three last years in the dark. I return to this beloved spot; and am again restored to freedom and to light."

He threw himself back on the sofa, and remained, for some time, lost in his own reflections, till his attention was arrested by the graceful movements of Anne Irvin, and the unaffected

manner in which she performed her charitable task.

As he contemplated her mild countenance, glowing with affectionate solicitude for the comforts of the poor little orphans before her, he was forced to own, that virtue was not merely confined to theory, but animated, at that moment, the fine features of the amiable girl. After Anne had finished her task, she rolled up the garments she had fixed in a bundle, and selecting from a drawer some appropriate tracts, she gave them to the elder girl, telling her to be a good child, to teach her younger sister to read, and to say her catechism well on the following Sunday: then, with a benevolent smile, dismissed her young pensioners—and, turning to Francis, with the ease of an old acquaintance, said—

"Mr. Stanhope, I have scarcely had time to welcome you: excuse the seeming rudeness of an old friend, whose heart is not less warm, though her tongue is silent. My little pupils' time is precious. The eldest is a good, industrious girl, who greatly assists her mother, a widow, with seven small children; I have, perhaps, detained her too long already, in listening to the innocent prate of little Susan, who is quite a favourite with mamma."

Francis tried to say something; but he felt

that flattery or compliment would be insulting to a girl of Anne Irvin's good sense, fortunately, Mrs. Irvin changed the conversation, and, by so doing, relieved his confusion.

"They tell me, Francis, that my Nancy is grown a tall girl; but I," she continued with a sigh, "can only discover her nearer approach to womanhood by the skilful management of the house, and by her unwearied attention to all my little wants and comforts; and I cease to regret my heavy visitation, when I find in her a constant source of satisfaction and delight."

The tears glistened in Anne's blue eyes as she said, in a low voice, to Francis—"It is natural poor mamma should think too highly of me: she cannot see my faults."

The entrance of the vicar prevented the answer which rose to young Stanhope's lips.

"Betsy," he said, addressing his wife—"Francis will take an early tea with us. So be quick, my little Nancy, and see that every thing is ready as soon as possible.—I have been busy at the desk all day, and must not lose my walk into the country."

Tea passed away too quickly for Francis, who regretted rising to bid the amiable Mrs. Irvin and her lovely daughter good evening. He did not, however, leave the parsonage before he had

learned from Anne the name of her poor pensioners; with whom he wished to leave a small donation. She soon satisfied his enquiries by informing him their name was Brown; and that their mother lived in a small cottage by the side of the common.

Francis remained silent for some minutes after the door of the parsonage had closed on them: his thoughts were busy with those he had left behind, and he believed, if happiness could be found on the earth, that the vicar's family were in the possession of it, and he expressed himself somewhat in the same terms to Mr. Irvin; to which the good vicar replied with a smile—

"Happiness, my dear Francis, does not belong to this world, or, we should place all our affections here, instead of raising them to that Being who can alone bestow permanent felicity. But, if we are not happy, we are cheerful and contented, which is the first step towards the great object of our future hopes. A perfect reliance on God, and a firm belief that the dispensations of Providence are for our good, will seldom fail to produce this. But happiness is a step beyond human capacity; a pitch of perfection the soul cannot attain in its mortal bondage. While we possess a single error of temper, or yield to bad passions, or feel the consciousness of sin in our

bosoms, we cannot, truly speaking, be called happy.—The blindness of my wife is, often, a source of deep regret to my daughter and me. She is perfectly resigned to the will of her Creator, and, though we appreciate her fortitude, our human feelings cannot cease to deplore her loss."

Francis was disappointed in not finding Mr. Irvin the happy man he had taken him for; and, after a short silence, he mentioned his wish of accompanying him in his visits to his poor parishoners.

In this proposal the vicar willingly acquiesced. "It will be a source of pleasure to me, and of improvement to yourself. The scenes you witness will present a varied picture for your study. Your sensibility will often undergo a severe shock; but rest assured, Francis, that you will find human nature the same in every station of life. Man is, every where, at home, in every rank, beset by those evil passions that war against the soul; though the shades may be deepened, or softened, according to the circumstances in which we are thrown."

"But the vices of the poorer class of mankind," replied Francis, "are of a grosser and more animal nature than those of the rich."

"The crimes of the rich," returned Mr. Irvin,

"are more of their own seeking, as they generally have the advantage of a good education and the use of religious books to improve their morals, and to exalt and refine their minds; while the vices of the poor are often the result of extreme misery and neglect: but, in both cases, most of the sorrows and disappointments we meet with in life, may be traced back to our own hearts."

"I never can assent to that doctrine!" exclaimed Francis with more than his usual warmth; "so many unforeseen accidents happen to overwhelm men with calamity, which no prudence could anticipate, no human wisdom avert."

"I do not speak of temporal concerns," replied Mr. Irvin; "they are easy to be borne when compared with mental calamities, which press down and overwhelm the soul; and, too often, originate in the indulgence of evil passions, or the sinful propensities of the mind. But, even in worldly misfortunes, we must trace such events through all their channels before we can decide on them with justice."

"For instance, my dear sir," said Francis, "how can a parent account for the ill doings of his son?"

"Too often," replied Mr. Irvin; "believe me, Francis, the faults of many men had their first

origin in the cradle, through the injudicious management of those to whose care their first dawn of life was intrusted. When I hear a parent who has neglected a child in his early years, exclaim against his wickedness as a man, and lament the sorrow and trouble his bad conduct has occasioned him, I find, on a close investigation, that he has most cause to blame himself for the guilt he deplores. Step with me into this house, and I will shew you a sad but convincing proof of the truth of my words."

As he finished speaking, they crossed a neat garden, and entered a small dwelling which stood back from the main road. The door was opened by a genteel, middle-aged woman, whose countenance bore the impression of premature decay, and great mental suffering.

"How is your husband to day, Mrs. Jervis?" said the Vicar. "This fine weather, I hope, will have a favourable effect on his spirits."

"Alas! no, sir. No change of season produces any alteration in him. He remains in the same forlorn state as when you last saw him. He knows no one; and, I think, never will again."

"We must not despair, my dear friend: the God in whom we trust is merciful, and in his own good time may pour the light of reason on

his darkened mind, and restore him to our prayers. Can I see him?"

Mrs. Jervis answered by shewing them into a plainly-furnished room; and then, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, slowly withdrew.

The object which presented itself, on entering the apartment, was truly a distressing one.—The room was occupied by a venerable gentlemanly man, in the decline of life, whose appearance, in spite of his mental derangement, was of the most prepossessing kind, and bore the testimony of his having seen better days. His long white locks were scattered loosely over his shoulders, and he was pacing to and fro the room, with hurried steps and a distracted mein.—Sometimes he clenched his emaciated hands together, as if in unutterable anguish; then folded them mournfully across his breast, exclaiming in sorrowful accents and with a voice which thrilled through the ears of his auditors—"Oh! my son! my son!"

Totally disregarding the presence of the strangers, he continued to traverse the apartment with the same violence; at intervals repeating this one mournful ejaculation.

Mr. Irvin silently pointed out to Francis the track which his steps had worn in the brick pavement of the room.—"For five years, Stanhope,

no other word has passed the lips of that bereaved individual; nor has he ceased to hurry, to and fro, through this apartment, till night brings exhausted nature rest, and suspends her woes; but, at intervals, during the stillness of the night, you will hear him, even in sleep, call upon the son whose crimes were the sole cause of his present malady."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Francis, "that a son should be such a monster as to reduce a parent to this deplorable condition."

"Judge not too rashly, Francis. As we return home, I will give you a slight sketch of this poor gentleman's story."

They had scarcely gained the road, before Francis solicited Mr. Irvin to fulfil his promise; which the good vicar instantly complied with.

"I knew Mr. Jervis in the days of his prosperity: we were old friends, and had been schoolfellows together. I went to College, and he up to London to take a situation in a merchant's counting-house; and, in process of time, he became one of the most wealthy men in the metropolis.

"Mr. Jervis married early in life, and was the father of two sons. On the eldest, who was a very handsome boy, he lavished the most extravagant affection, never suffering him to be

thwarted in the indulgence of any of his childish whims, much less corrected, or even reproved, for the faults to which his evil passions, thus fostered, daily gave rise. George, the youngest son, was a plain, modest, clever child; as much the object of his father's aversion as the other was of his idolatry. Fortunately for George, he was left entirely to the prudent management of his excellent mother, whose judicious and kind treatment, in a great measure, atoned for the unreasonable severity of his father.

"I happened to have business in town, and called on my old friend when these lads were just in their teens. I was charmed with the mild, dignified character of George, and shocked at the bold, insolent, overbearing conduct of Robert, whose fate, even at that early period of his life, I anticipated.—Willing to snatch him from certain destruction, I proposed to his father that, for a moderate stipend, I would finish his education in the country, and instruct him in those moral duties of which he was entirely ignorant. My freedom gave great offence to Mr. Jervis, who could see no fault in his son, and he rejected my offer with displeasure. 'What! part with Robert—his first-born—his clever, handsome boy, the pride and delight of his heart, who was to be the comfort and support of his age?—No! no!

he did not want to make a whining parson of him; but I might take George, and he would pay me handsomely too.' I closed with his proposition; and never was preceptor blessed with a more tractable and clever pupil.

"While George was rapidly improving under my tuition, Robert had got far beyond the management of his parents; a tyrant at home, and a general pest to society at large. His ingratitude to his misjudging father was followed by the commission of every vice into which a young man, living in the vortex of the metropolis, could plunge. His frantic course of folly was considered by Mr. Jervis as the natural gaities of youth; and he argued that a few years would tame the wild flow of his spirits, and render him all he could wish or desire in a son.

"As Robert became more involved in difficulties, brought on by gaming and extravagance, he altered his conduct towards his father; adopting a fawning servility in his tone and manner, with every outward demonstration of the most devoted affection and respect. This artifice was successful. Mr. Jervis was so blinded by his partiality, that he took him into partnership, and entrusting all the active part of the business to his son's superintendence, he retired into the country, where he spent most of his leisure hours in laying out

plans for the further improvement of a very pretty estate.—You will, I dare say, anticipate the result. The son gave way to gaming, and soon squandered away the wealth the father had been for years accumulating; and, in a few months, found himself on the eve of ruin.—To pay a nobleman a large sum he had lost to him at the gaming table, he was tempted to forge to a large amount, and, in a few weeks after, terminated his short but guilty career on the scaffold.

"Mr. Jervis was from town at the time, on a visit to me in the country; and I contrived to keep the public papers from his view till concealment was no longer possible. A letter from his agent, brought, at one and the same time, the news of his own bankruptcy and of his son's execution.—His reason bowed beneath the shock. But treacherous memory for ever presents that one horrible circumstance to his bewildered mind; and those few simple words convey to every hearer the extent of his calamity, That son, on whom he so fondly doated, is the only object traced upon his brain. His name is impressed there in characters of fire, which I fear nothing will obliterate till nature and reason end their dreadful strife.—George is my curate; and as his father is perfectly harmless, this neglected, despised son provides for his wants, and saves him from the horrors

of a madhouse, while on his slender income he supports his worthy mother; maintaining himself and her with respectability, and affording her every comfort under her afflictions.

"Great as this man's sufferings are, will you deny, Francis, that he was the first cause of his present misery? laying the foundation, by his fatal indulgence of that son, whose crimes led to his own destruction, and to his father's ruin?"

"But his son, Mr. Irvin; you, surely, cannot excuse his son?"

"All I shall say of him, Francis, is contained in a few words,—'It were better for him had he never been born.'—Yet he was unfortunate in being educated in so erroneous a manner. When we arrive at an age of reason, the paths of good and evil are before us; and from every pulpit we hear the fatal consequences which attend a wrong choice, But the man who has never been under the control of others when a child, will find it a difficult task, when a man, to govern himself.—Used only to consult the bent of his headstrong passions from infancy, Robert Jervis obeyed nothing beyond his own wayward will. His father had neglected to point out to him the right path, and habit had long reconciled him to the other. In him conscience had never been awakened; he had never suffered the least inconvenience or pu-

nishment for crime. I attended him on the scaffold, and tried to rouse him to a sense of his awful situation, but the horror he felt at his sudden wrench from the world and all its guilty pleasures, absorbed every other feeling; and while he died calling on his Maker for mercy, he charged his crimes upon the head of that unfortunate parent to whom he had been an object of such blind partiality."

When Mr. Irvin had finished his relation, he found himself opposite Mr. Stanhope's door, and wishing his young friend good night, returned to the parsonage. Francis, finding it too late to prosecute his benevolent visit to the poor widow, retired to his own chamber to muse on the events of the past day.

Francis was delayed in his visit to Mrs. Brown's cottage by company, who detained him at home all the morning; and while his thoughts were on Mr. Irvin and his family, he was obliged, with seeming patience, to listen to an affected detail of races which had been held, the day before, on a heath not many miles from the town, delivered by a young dandy, who was studying the law at a solicitor's office in the same street; and who had called in with two young men engaged in the same profession, to enlighten the ideas of the young collegian with an account of the sports

they had witnessed, and the vices of which they had been guilty.

Whatever young Stanhope's failings were, they were not of this class; and he listened with provoking apathy to all their witticisms.

Mr. Johnstone observing the perfect nonchalance with which he heard his discourse, began to rally him on the gravity of his deportment.

"Frank, you are grown very dull of late. I suppose you mean to be a parson after all, and to cheat the fancy of a very good fellow?"

"I have not yet determined on my future destination," replied Francis, coldly; "but, at present, feel myself unworthy to fill the first station, and too much a gentleman to degrade myself in the other." "Umph" said Johnstone, not in the least disconcerted by this severe reproof—"any thing now-a-days will do for a parson: but, really, you are so sanctified, that the restraints imposed on churchmen will be too liberal; nothing but a methodist preacher will suit Francis Stanhope."

This speech rousing all the inflammable particles in Stanhope's hasty temper, he answered with an air of bitter contempt, "I wish, Mr. Johnstone, you would find some other subject to exercise your wit on. I listened to the detail of your yesterday's adventures with politeness,

however repugnant to my feelings; but I will stay in no room to hear religion or the church insulted."

He was about to leave the apartment, when Johnstone, who had spoken more from a foolish levity of character than any intention of giving offence, started up, and gently detained him.

"Nonsense, Frank! you are offended.—I was wrong.—I acknowledge my folly, but I did not think you had really grown so serious. The town is sadly altered of late; all the young people are turning evangelicals, and setting up for saints; surely you cannot be affected by the same mania. If you once tasted the pleasure we enjoy, you would abandon your fanciful theories, your ideal search after virtue, and which, after all, is but a name, and learn, like us, to enjoy life."

"I must learn to enjoy life in a different manner, Mr Johnstone," returned Francis sternly. —"Your pursuits would afford me no amusement; the scenes you admire are disgusting to a mind of any definement.—I would not, like you, abuse a good education by so gross a mixture of sensuality."

"Then, I suppose, you renounce all public places of amusement, as vain and sinful?" said Johnstone, who had resumed his seat and his former air of composure.

"The theatre, the race-course, and the ball-room, (and well would it be for you, Henry, if these were your only haunts,) are very well when not made too frequent places of resort; they even help to sweeten the cares of life; but all our thoughts ought not to be wasted on such trifles.—I am grieved," he continued with a milder air—"that you, Johnstone, who possess good abilities, and have ample means to enlighten your mind, should bestow all your talents in such an unprofitable manner."

"An excellent sermon, only it wanted a text," said Henry, determined to be provoking in his turn.—"Now, Stanhope, what old woman has possessed you with such absurd notions? Did you ever, in the course of your short life, meet with a man on whom you could with justice bestow the epithat of *good*?"

"If you mean a sinless character, certainly not," returned Francis; but if a man as virtuous as our frail human nature will admit, will satisfy your enquiry, I think I can name three, whom you are all well acquainted with." Johnstone purposely looked incredulous,—"Well, name them."

"Mr. Irvin, our excellent vicar; his curate, Mr. George Jervis; and my own esteemed father."

"Why did you not add a fourth, and name his

son, ha! ha! ha! As to us, we are such wicked dogs, I was certain we should not be included in your very limited list. Doubtless, these you have named had their follies in their younger days; and when we arrive at their venerable years, we may be wise and excellent too.—"

"Mr. George Jervis is a very young man," returned Francis.

"Oh! I forget him, he truly deserves the title you have given him; but he is very plain; and ugly people, you know, are not subjected to the temptations which beset such handsome fellows as you and I, Stanhope."

"Really, I thought myself vain," said Francis, laughing in his turn; "but you surprise me. If your argument can go no farther than yourself, we will, if you please, leave it there."

"Not, at least, till you confess, Francis, who has converted you back to a state of humanity; and forced you, a professed misanthrope, to allow that there are three beings, among your own species, who do not deserve entirely to be hated?"

"It is a subject on which you, Mr. Johnstone, have no authority to question me," said Francis, resuming his natural hauteur. "I shall never interfere with your private opinions or pursuits."

"Perhaps not," returned Henry; his usual le-

vity of manner sinking into a half-checked sigh. —"I hope, Stanhope, we part as friends?"

"As good friends as ever *we* can be," said Francis, laying a strong emphasis on the word we.

"Then, in token of amity, will you accompany me to the theatre to-night?" returned his volatile companion, carefully avoiding to take any notice of the hostile manner in which Francis had concluded his last speech—"It is the ladies' bespeak."

Francis paused: he had no inclination to go, but a thought occurred to him, that he might gain some useful hints from examining more closely the frivolities of Johnstone's character; and with this charitable motive he replied, "I am not engaged; I will meet you at your lodgings at half past six; but don't expect me a minute beyond that time: I am so *unfashionable* as to be always very punctual."—The young men then shook hands, and parted.

"I wonder how I could ever tolerate the society of that young man?" exclaimed Francis, looking down the street after Johnstone and his companions. "What an useless combination of vanity and conceit! I do not think I shall like Mr. Henry Johnstone again."

"In what has poor Henry so highly offended you?" said his father, who, at that moment,

came up to the door, and happened to overhear his son's soliloquy.

"Oh! he is so shallow—so frivolous—He has no heart—no sensibility.—In short, I detest his society, and am determined, before long, to cut his acquaintance."

"If he heard you, Francis, he might with justice accuse you of intemperance, and want of Christian charity. Henry Johnstone is not a bad young man, though a very faulty one; neither does he possess so vile a heart as you imagine. You have it in your power to be his friend; and, as you are so sensible of his failings, use all your influence to disengage him from the vortex of folly into which he has heedlessly plunged.—Use every argument to make virtue appear lovely in his eyes, and vice detestable."

"I should have little chance of succeeding with one who considers virtue but a name," returned Francis. "No; our pursuits and dispositions are so widely different, that Henry Johnstone and I can never assimilate."

"How often, Francis, must I remind you that practice is superior to precept. I have given you a noble field, in which to exercise your talents—to turn a sinner from the error of his way, and to make a friend of one whom you now falsely consider in the light of an enemy. If I beheld John-

stone in the prejudiced manner that you do, I should not recommend him as a companion to my only son." Francis could find no answer to this last speech; dissatisfied with himself, therefore, he quitted the room.

The cloth was scarcely removed from the dinner-table, before Francis set forth on his charitable visit to the poor widow's cottage. The path that led to is was through a heathy lane by the side of a common, about a mile from the town. As he strolled down the narrow lane, his attention was diverted from unpleasant reflections by joyous groups of happy children, armed with hooked sticks, and busily employed in gathering blackberries and elderberries to sell, for making the favourite Christmas beverage of their wealthier towns-people.

These wholesome berries arrive at great perfection in the eastern counties of England. The high hawthorn hedges, which enclose the beautiful wooded lanes and dingles in Suffolk, present at the fall of the year, to the eye of the delighted traveller, a thousand glowing hues, from the vivid scarlet of the holly-berry peeping from among its dark leaves of burnished green, to the rich purples which deck the bramble and white thorn; while the more aspiring briony flings its fantastic wreaths, from tree to tree, of deep and

glowing red, tempting the eye and hand of roving children, yet, wisely, placed beyond their reach.

Naturally fond of children, Francis often assisted them in reaching down the brambles which reared their purple treasures far above the heads of the laughing, ragged crew.—The glow of the autumnal sky, the gay tinkling of the sheep-bells from the common, and the hilarity of the scene before him, all successfully restored those tranquil feelings the events of the morning had destroyed.—As he advanced nearer to the cottages, his attention was drawn to a pretty little girl who was sitting on the bank opposite, weeping bitterly.

Thinking she had quarrelled with her gayer comrades, Francis took her tiny hand, and was about to ask the cause of her grief, when a neat young woman stepped across the road, calling out to the child, "Come home, Mary; I have got some food for you now."—"What is the matter with your little girl?" said Francis. The young woman dropped a curtsey as she replied—"She is very hungry, sir; we have been in great trouble to-day, and I had not a morsel of bread to give her an hour ago, or money to buy any."

"Poor thing," said Francis, patting the rosy cheek of the child, which was still wet with tears: "you might well cry.—But, my good woman,

why did you not apply for relief from the parish? our overseer, fortunately, is a humane man, and very attentive to the comforts of the poor."

"We have been a long time on the bounty of the parish,"—returned the young woman: "my husband fell from a ladder, in the spring, and broke his leg; in consequence of which, he lost his work in the hay season and through all this harvest; he did not belong to a club, so that we had only the allowance of six shillings a week from the parish to support ourselves and five small children.—The money we had saved to pay our year's rent, went in medicine and nourishing things for my husband; and our landlord, who is a hard man, finding we were not able to pay any of the money, distrained this morning for it; and we must all have gone to the workhouse, if it had not been for the kindness of young Mr. Johnstone."

"Mr. Johnstone!" exclaimed Francis, starting in evident surprise: "how did he prevent it?"

"Dear, good-tempered young gentleman, in the most effectual way.—He was coming down the lane an hour ago with his dogs and gun, just at the moment when I and the poor children were crying and taking on sadly.—He stopped the bailiff, and enquired the cause of our distress, and not only discharged the rent, but, God

bless his kind heart! gave me a few shillings to buy bread for my family."

"And Johnstone did this!" said Francis, as he passed on, after having contributed a small donation to the poor woman: "Johnstone, whom I deemed a heartless, extravagant votary of fashion! he capable of performing such a noble, generous action!"—I will court his acquaintance for the future; I will dive deep into his heart, to discover from what mine this gem was extracted."

Another turning in the lane brought him in front of Mrs. Brown's cottage; and, on entering the humble dwelling, the first object that met his eyes was Anne Irvin.

Anne Irvin was seated on a rude bench, within the ivy-covered porch of the cottage, hearing a little boy of eight years old read a chapter in the new Testament; explaining the meaning of different passages in the simplest and most comprehensive language, adapting them, as well as she could, to the boy's capacity. Mrs. Brown, who was at work, first discovered her additional visitor, and bustled up to reach him a chair.

"You are come to perform your promise, I see,"—said Anne, striving to conceal the bright glow his unexpected presence had given to her cheeks:—"I thought your charitable visit had been paid last night?"

"If it had, I should have lost the pleasure of seeing Miss Irvin here, to-day—calling on poor Mr. Jervis prevented it; which I shall now consider a fortunate event. But how is your dear mother and good vicar?"

"Both, I am happy to say, are quite well. Papa is with me: he has only stepped across the common to inspect the gipsey's encampment, and will be here presently."

"You have had a beautiful walk from the parsonage, this fine afternoon," said Francis, hardly knowing how to begin a conversation from which he anticipated much pleasure, while a thousand subjects were in his head to which his treacherous lips could give no utterance.

"Yes," returned Anne, not less confused than her companion,—"I have enjoyed our ramble exceedingly. This is the season of the year I most love.—There is a glow in the heavens; a richness in the varied hues of the fading woods; and a clear, bracing spirit in the air, which convey to my bosom an indefinable charm."

"I must confess I prefer the spring," said Francis: "it is the birth of the year.—We see nature, as it were, rising from the grave, and replenishing the earth with flowers and verdure. It calls forth the best feelings of the heart, and presents to the soul a glorious type of its own resurrection.

"That last observation does not savour much of infidelity," returned Anne, with a glance of arch meaning at her companion.

"You surely do not suspect me of infidelity, Miss Irvin?"

"It is a weakness of which I have heard Mr. Stanhope accused—"

"And you believed it?"

"Your surprise at the charge convinces me to the contrary.—Alas! Mr. Stanhope, it is a doctrine too commonly entertained by the young people of the present day. Many have even the temerity boldly to avow their doubts as to the authenticity of the Scriptures, and find their opinions assented to, and upheld by the unthinking, as arguments founded on reason.

"The dispersion of the Jews, and the promulgation of the gospel, are to me unanswerable proofs of its truth," returned Francis: "neither have I the vanity to disbelieve what so many good and wise men, for ages past, have held sacred; I would as soon suspect the sun of becoming ice, as that the glorious hopes they entertained should perish.—It is true, I have felt doubts sometimes arise, but I always considered my own reason most in fault."

"It would be a good thing for mankind, in general, could they receive the Scriptures as

meekly as this little child," said Anne. "When a man rejects the Bible, he throws from him the only true source of tranquillity and comfort; and, in denying his God, resigns all hope of a future existence. I never yet found peace and infidelity inmates of the same bosom."

Here they were interrupted by the entrance of the vicar, who had overheard the latter part of their discourse.

"What!" he cried, "my Nancy and Mr. Stanhope engaged in so grave a discussion!—I listened for descriptions from nature, and heard lectures from divinity instead."

"Infidelity was the subject of our conversation, papa."

"So I find," returned the vicar. "It is certainly a most extraordinary delusion. In my journey through life, I have met with people who denied a God, yet admitted and feared a power of evil.—And with some, who doubted the truth of the Bible, yet give credit to the most absurd superstitions. There was a striking instance of this in the man who occupied the farm you see across those fields, many years ago.

"Mr. Smith was one of those stern men who never apply any thing of what they consider their own lawful property to relieve the most urgent necessities of their fellow-creatures. It is true

he never demanded more than his right; but he enforced his claims in the most cruel and arbitrary manner. He added to the character of a severe master and domestic tyrant, that of a professed infidel.

"My tythes were never paid without the most abusive language, and the coarsest sarcasms thrown out against the folly of religion, the vices of the clergy, and the ridiculous fables contained in a book, which he said, we were pleased to call the Bible.

"It happened one severe frosty night, that a gang of gipseys made their encampment in this lane, and the weather being very cold they came to Mr. Smith's gate with a humble petition to beg a bundle of straw for their bed.—Now, though I do not approve of the manner in which these wandering children of necessity procure a subsistence, which is, generally, drawn from the community at large, yet I always think it the wisest plan to refuse their offers of service, or demands of assistance, with civility, as they are not insensible to kindness, and have it in their power to be very mischievous.—But this was not Mr. Smith's method of acting and thinking; he not only dismissed them from his doors with hard words, but, ordering his servants to follow him, he proceeded to the lane, and, in spite of the

darkness of the night and the inclemency of the season, broke up their encampment.

"One of the old sybils, enraged at this harsh treatment, lifted up her voice and loudly cursed him, ending her frightful anathema by saying—'That as he had denied them a bed of straw on such a night, on the barren heath, he should never, from that hour, enjoy the sweets of repose himself, as the first time he laid down on his bed he should never rise from it more.' This wild menace had such an effect on the mind of the infidel, that, from that hour, he considered himself in a state of damnation; and, for eighteen years, always slept in a chair by the side of the kitchen fire: nor could sickness or the remonstrances of his friends, ever induce him to alter his uneasy couch.—Hearing this strange story, I went myself to visit this extraordinary victim of superstition, thinking that I might convince him of the folly of the gipsey's prophecy, and of the absurdity of his own conduct.

"I found him raving in a fit of the gout, his anguish being increased by his uneasy position; but he remained deaf to all my arguments, still obstinately denying the truth of the gospel; yet placing the most unbounded reliance on the supernatural powers of an erring fellow-creature.

"His wife one night was alarmed by a dread-

ful scream; and, going down stairs, found the unfortunate man burnt to death in his chair. A spark of fire had ignited his clothes, and he expired before any one came to his assistance. Such was the deplorable end of this eccentric character."

"It is a son of this man," said Mrs. Brown, "who this morning distrained our poor neighbour Carr's goods for rent."

"How!" exclaimed Mr. Irvin, starting from his chair; "is it possible he could be so unfeeling as to distress those poor afflicted creatures? but what better conduct is to be expected by such a son of such a father!"

"Dear papa," said Anne, rising, "had we not better step as far as the cottage, and see what can be done for them?"

"With all my heart," returned the vicar; "I wish I had known this before."

Francis now related the anecdote he had just heard of Johnstone, with which Mr. Irvin was greatly pleased.

"Henry," he said, "disgraces himself by affecting the foolish manners of the dandies of the present day: but this is not the first instance I have known of his generous mitigation of the woes of others. I hope, I shall be able to make something of him yet. But come, Nancy, we

must be walking, or your aunt will wait tea for us." So bidding Francis good evening, the vicar and his daughter left the cottage.

Mrs. Brown received Francis's charity with unfeigned gratitude, and was eloquent in her praises of Miss Irvin. "She is an excellent young lady, Mr. Stanhope—There is scarcely a distressed family in, or near the town, who have not enjoyed her bounty.—I have heard the servants at the Parsonage say that her goodness even extends to the poor creatures in the Bridewell."

"She is, indeed, a charming girl," sighed Francis, as he proceeded on his walk. "Happy would that man be who obtained such a partner to sweeten the cares of life!"

It was now sunset, and the wide common lay extended before him with all its golden furze and heath, glowing in the broad and ruddy light.—Francis had still an hour good to his appointment with Johnstone, and being rather in a reflective mood, he extended his walk further into the country.

Crossing the lower part of the common, he reached a deep, narrow vale; sheltered, on one side, by low plantations for the preservation of game; and, on the other, by an abundance of furze, and stunted hawthorn bushes, with which its rugged sides were completely clothed.

From the hollow bosom of the glen echoed a mingled din of human voices, laughter, shout, and song. From the height on which he stood, Francis had a full view of the wild scene which burst like magic beneath his feet; and he soon found what he, in part, expected, that he had unconsciously approached the gipsey encampment.

The gang was assembled round a blazing fire, at which an old woman, who seemed the female patriarch of the horde, was busily preparing supper. Several tall, athletic, harsh-featured men were stretched on the ground before it, drinking, smoking, and singing; while a number of little black-headed, ragged, sun-burnt urchins, were rolling on the grass, at a short distance, among an odd assortment of ponies, horses, and donkeys, which, for better security, were fastened, by ropes, to the broken stumps, which abounded on either side of the glen; and these Francis thought the most civilized animals in the group. The younger part of the female train, with their wild, glancing eyes, and black locks, were variously employed—mending old saddles, cementing broken china, and conversing in a strange, unintelligible jargon, among themselves.

Gipsies were a race of people for whom Francis had always entertained a decided aversion. He considered them a set of thieving, malicious

vagabonds; who ought to be banished from the country as a public nuisance.

As he stood surveying the rude scene before him, his old antipathy to this wandering race was strengthened by the harsh physiognomy of a youth of his own age, who stood in the midst of the circle, leaning on a hedge-stake, (which Francis doubted not he had stolen from a neighbouring fence,) and listening with great apparent interest to what was going forward among the group of young females—quite unconscious of the mute caresses of a noble, black Newfoundland dog, who, from time to time, touched him with one of his shaggy paws, to draw from him some act of reciprocal kindness.

The stern, high features of the youth produced a very unpleasant sensation in young Stanhope's breast; yet he could not withdraw his eyes from his face.

"There is a countenance," thought he, "capable of committing the most daring and cruel actions. What a keen eye! what a fierce, energetic expression! he might sit for the picture of his savage race.' While thus employed in scanning the features of the young Egyption, the report of a gun echoed among the plantations. The men started on their feet, as the shot whistled through the dry sere furze; and the next

moment a beautiful little spaniel limped through the hedge of the enclosure, crying in a piteous manner. He was instantly caught up by the young gipsey, whose harsh linaments relaxed into an expression of genuine compassion, as, seating himself on the ground, and taking the wounded animal between his knees, he proceeded, with great tenderness, to examine its hurts.

"Thou art a pretty toy," he said, in a compassionate voice; "but I much fear the gamekeeper has given thee thy death-wound."

"I should be ashamed, Ishmael, to make such a foolish lamentation over a dog," grumbled forth one of the older men—"knock it at head, and put him out of his misery at once; we shall find a use for his skin, if it be good for any thing, I warrant you."

"I would not do it for a handful of silver," returned the youth, "while I see any chance of saving his life.—His wound, I perceive, is not mortal. I thought so at first; but the shot is only lodged just beyond the skin, and with a sharp knife may easily be extracted.—And this broken leg, with a good bandage, will soon be well again."

"We have too many dogs, already," said one of the women: "they consume more food than a man; and rob the children of bread. But

Ishmael can always see more in a dog than a human——."

Have I not had reason?" cried the youth, fiercely. "Did I not owe my life to a dog, when my fellow-creatures left me to perish in the deep sea?"

"We don't blame you for taking care of Moor," returned the woman; "but why should you wish to preserve this dog, who is as good as dead already?"

"In remembrance of the debt of gratitude I owe his species," said Ishmael, laying his own jetty locks as he spoke in a coaxing manner on the shaggy black head of his favourite:—"Yes, my faithful Moor, I will never forget the service you rendered me."

The admiration which the noble conduct of the youth excited in young Stanhope's bosom, overcame his old prejudices; and he regarded the wounded spaniel with more attention, and with no small concern discovered it to belong to Anne Irvin. Following the impulse of his feelings, he sprung down the glen, and, the next moment, made one in the strange group.

"Generous young man," he said, addressing Ishmael, "your humane conduct to this poor little animal does you great credit. I know the spaniel; he belongs to a young lady in the town;

and if you succeed in curing him, I will handsomely reward you.—In the mean time, if you follow me home, I will give you some suits of cast-off clothes, which may be serviceable to you."

The joy which danced in the dark eyes of Ishmael, and lightened over his rude features, as he glanced round him with a look of triumphant virtue, spoke the genuine feelings of his heart. He begged the gentleman wait a few minutes till he had finished dressing the spaniel's wounds, and he would then follow him with pleasure. With this request Francis willingly complied, as he was very desirous to learn the circumstance which had produced in the breast of the young savage, such strong feelings of gratitude; and he seated himself on a log of wood which lay near the fire.

He was soon surrounded by the young women, who all separately asked to tell his fortune; each promising the most happy destiny, should he comply.—When their offers were civilly rejected, they retired to a short distance, just far enough for their discourse to reach his ears, talking over his future lot in a low, mysterious voice among themselves; till one of the dark sisterhood, more sagacious than the rest, said, in an arch tone, "The gentleman will see the fair young lady the little dog belongs to, before the night is over.

True to human nature, Francis started, and turned round. The girl, perceiving her advantage, went on—

"Oh, she is such a pretty young lady—she don't live far from here;—just a nice walk for a gentleman over the fields.—Cross my hand with silver, and I will tell you the first letter of her name, and if she is to become your wife."

Ashamed of having been betrayed into such weakness, Francis told the young sibyl to desist, as he had no faith in her pretended skill. He now remembered that Anne Irvin had returned home this way; and he doubted not the girl had discovered that she was the young lady to whom the dog belonged; and that the interest he took in the cure of the animal might be occasioned by the admiration he felt for her; and as these pretended magicians judge greatly by the force of contrast, she had concluded that he, with his dark eyes and clear olive complexion, would most probably prefer a lady with a fair skin.

Ishmael had now finished his surgical operations, and put the animal in a place of security, when Francis, wishing the gipseys quietly good night, proceeded across the common, followed by his new companion, and his dog Moor. They had not gone far before Francis urged the youth to inform him what had first given rise to his

singular humanity towards the canine species.—With some reluctance, Ishmael complied with his request.

"Our wandering mode of life, sir, is well known," he said, "and that we are forced to depend upon our own sagacity to supply the common wants of nature; and the way in which they are often procured is not the most lawful, but necessity knows no law; and the gipsey tribes may truly be called the children of necessity. We follow the dictates of nature; and, in some way or other, she generally provides for our wants. In the following relation I must unavoidably discover some of our underhand means of procuring food; but you, sir, who could be touched by a generous action in another, cannot be devoid of the same feeling yourself."

Francis understood his dark companion's indirect appeal, and passed his word of honour, that whatever he revealed would be considered sacred by him. Satisfied by this promise, Ishmael continued—

"It is a custom with us to pitch our tents in shady lane, by the side of a wood, or near some common. The first supplies us with plenty of firing and game; and the second with food for our cattle; and an abundance of wild rabbits, and sometimes, but rarely, a good fat goose."

"I may infer from your words," said Francis, interrupting him, "that you are daring poachers?"

"I answer no questions," returned Ishmael, drily; "I shall tell you plain facts, and you may draw from them what inferences you please."—After a pause of a few minutes he continued—

"The job of snaring the game is generally left to the younger males in the tribe, while the men are traversing the country on more important business—and this office one night devolved (as it often did) on me.—It was at this time of the year, and a bright moonlight night, when I took my gun, and went down into the plantations—On reaching the spot, I had the mortification of perceiving, instead of a hare or a rabbit, a large black dog in the trap.—Enraged at losing my supper, (for we were never allowed to eat till we have gained our food) I levelled my gun at the poor animal, determined to shoot him. The aim was certain, but the gun missed fire. The dog looked at me in the most piteous manner, watching all my movements as if perfectly aware of my intention. I raised the gun again.—He ceased whining, and laid down on his belly, stretching out his fore paws towards me in the most beseeching manner, as if imploring my mercy and protection.—Something in my heart pleaded for him, I dropped the gun. It was a feeling I had never

experienced before. I could not shoot him—but immediately released him from the trap; when, as he was not wounded, he followed me home to the camp, testifying his gratitude in joyous bounds and caresses. From that hour he has been my constant companion. The children call him Black-a-Moor, from his jetty colour; but I shorten it into Moor.

"Last year, I was tired of our wandering mode of life.—I wished for a change. My parents were both dead, and I said I would go forth into the world, and observe the manners and customs of men who resided in towns, and who had a regular method of gaining a livelihood. To make observations on all we see and hear, and to turn it to the most advantage, is one of the favourite maxims of our race, and most of us are pretty shrewd observers.—I had always had a fancy for a sea life, and begging my way to S———, I joined myself to a band of smugglers. The sagacity of Moor pleased them, and he always accompanied us in all our expeditions.

"I made many voyages with them, and we generally had good luck.—Whilst with the smugglers, I had an opportunity of observing the manners and dispositions of the men whom we met, of an evening, at the public-houses, which were our constant resort. I found the life I had aband-

oned was virtuous when compared with my present employment, and that, pursued by many people who had enjoyed the benefit of a good education, and called themselves Christians.

"The last voyage we made, we were pursued by a revenue-cutter. Our men stood to their arms, and in the scuffle our boat was sunk. I knew by the shiver that run through her, what was about to happen; and, being a good swimmer, saved my life by throwing myself overboard. The next moment all was over with the smugglers. A few bubbles on the surface of the water, alone declared their fate.

"I had swam to some distance, but, finding it impossible to reach the shore in a stiff sea, and with the tide against me, I tried to gain the cutter.—I was near enough to make myself heard. I implored for a rope to be thrown to me, or for them to put off a boat to save my life; but they were deaf to my cries, thinking it as well for me, I suppose, to end my life in the water, as on the gallows.

"My head grew giddy; I heard a confused roaring in my ears; the waves beat over me.—I remembered nothing more.

"When I recovered sensation, I found myself stretched on the beach, beyond the reach of the billows, and my faithful Moor lying beside me,

licking my hands and face, He had followed me from the vessel into the water, and, when I flagged, he had contrived to tow me along, and bring me in safety to the shore. This is the debt of gratitude I owe my dog; and, for his sake I will ever befriend his species. I soon after joined my tribe, and have remained with them ever since."

"The obligations which you and Moor owe to each other, I think, are pretty reciprocal," said Francis, when Ishmael had finished his relation. "What say you, Ishmael?—Will you leave your wandering mode of life, and become my servant?—I will make you a kind master."

"I doubt it not, sir," returned the gipsey; "but I am now perfectly contented with my present mode of life. A rude, ignorant fellow, like me, would cut but a sorry figure among smart chamber-maids and gaudy lackeys. You are rich, sir, and must need a more suitable attendant than a poor gipsey could make; and I have been so long used to enjoy my liberty, that I could never endure restraint, or settle in one place of abode."

Francis, who felt, every moment, a greater interest in the young man, redoubled his arguments to induce him to enter into his service; but, finding the gipsey inflexible, he proceeded to question him as to the religion, laws, and cus-

toms, of his tribe, but could obtain only one uniform reply—

"Sir, I betray no secrets. I have informed you of the circumstance you desired to know, which must suffice you.—Rude and ignorant as we may appear, our tribes are capable of love, friendship, and hospitality.

Francis had now reached home, and ordered his servant to give the young man the things he had promised him; he added a few pieces of silver, and then left the grateful Ishmael, to prepare for his appointment with Johnstone.

On entering Johnstone's lodgings, Francis found him dressed, and waiting for him. The dandy welcomed him with a good-humoured smile.

"Never dare to laugh at me again, Stanhope, for the time I expend at the toilet.—Be candid, and confess that you have just been two hours dressing, to shine peerless in the eyes of the belles of B——?"

"Pshaw!" said Francis, laughing, "my time has been very differently employed, I have not even changed my dress since I saw you in the morning.—But I am sorry I made you wait."

"Oh! not at all—I have been sipping my coffee, and looking over the Fashionable Mirror. But how is this?" he continued, remarking the

unusual warmth with which Francis returned the pressure of his hand, "you are either in excellent spirits, or take me for somebody else."

"For no other but Henry Johnstone, the generous, kind-hearted Johnstone; whom I despised this morning as an acquaintance, and could love to-night as a friend."

"You speak in riddles, Stanhope," said Henry, laughing; "I cannot understand you; and know not whether to be pleased or affronted by your last speech.—But, in the name of fortune! Francis, what have I done, since the morning, to alter the despicable opinion I am very sorry to find you had formed of me?"

Francis related what he had heard from Mrs. Carr.

After a long and hearty laugh, Johnstone replied—"Is that all, Frank? Why, did you think I possessed a heart of steel, which was proof against the tears of women and children? I should never have given that affair another thought, till I found my purse empty, and began to puzzle my wise brains to know in what folly I had squandered away my money.—But, since it has bought your friendship, I will call it well expended."

"Oh! Henry!" cried Francis, grasping his hand, "you might be——"

"Something very different to what I am at present," said Johnstone, interrupting him—"I might be a very modest, pretty-behaved, young gentleman; just fit for some old maiden aunt to take out to tea with her on a holiday—an ornament to the grave profession of the law, and a pattern to all the gay lads about town; and, perhaps, in due time, arrive at the honour of having all my pious sayings and doings, my conversion and repentance, made the moral of some penny tract, like the last dying-speech and confessions of my Lord Rochester.—No, Frank! all your logic will never metamorphose me into such a dull, solemn animal."

"I am sorry to hear you treat with such levity, a subject which demands our most serious attention. Real religion never can wear a forbidding aspect; but, as our good Mr. Irvin says, infuses a constant cheerfulness and contentment through the mind. It would regulate, but not destroy, your spirits; and you know, my dear Henry, there is a medium to be observed in all things."

"Aye, I have often heard of that same happy path; but I never had the good luck to find it.—No, Frank, I must jog on my own way; and if, now and then, I obey a generous impulse, I give you my word of honour, I will not sound a trumpet before me."

"But why adopt a conduct so opposite to the real feelings of your heart?"

"Because I hate display," returned Henry, "without it is to show off a new, elegant, fashionable suit of clothes, with a happy consciousness that the tailor has fitted me well, and that they are exceedingly becoming.—But this is to please the ladies, you know; and even the gravest of us like to be considered as smart fellows by them."

"Do you consider the heart of woman only to be won by show? do you leave nothing to the nobler feelings of the soul? are the fair sex, think you, insensible to worth, wit, genius, and taste?"

"No, certainly not—but these great advantages are often disregarded, when accompanied by uncourteous manners and negligent attire. You, Frank, for instance, carry the matter too far. The very carriage of your head and shoulders gives one the idea of a man doing penance for his sins."

"Indeed!" said Francis, starting, "is my appearance so very restrained and formal?"

"Nay, is it not? just step across the room, and that mirror will inform you how very correctly you have studied the dismals."

Stanhope's eyes involuntarily turning towards the glass, he was not a little disconcerted at the

affected solemnity of his appearance.—Johnstone caught it; and, in an arch, waggish tone, continued—" Take my advice, Frank, that is, if you will deign to receive advice from a thoughtless rake, like me; if you feel serious, never wear it so decidedly on your countenance, nor look so like one who wishes to be thought good. Bad as I may appear, I too can quote from Scriptnre, and bid you call to mind a command, delivered by our blessed Saviour, very much to the present purpose, ' Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.' "

Francis turned to the window; the tell-tale colour rose to his conscious cheek; he was humbled and mortified, that Johnstone, in spite of his thoughtless levity, had discovered the great failing in his character. Display, and an inordinate love of praise, were the main-spring of too many of his actions: his very eccentricity and discontent had been occasioned by this weakness. Overcome by a conviction of his past folly, he remained thoughtful and silent.

" Come, I see you have some grace left," continued Henry, affectionately taking his hand; " do not think I mean to follow up my advantage with a sermon an hour long; we have all our

faults, Frank; and those who practish virtue can only effectually enforce her precepts." Then, glancing his eyes on the dial, over the mantle-piece, he said—We have let time slip; the play has already commenced, and we shall just arrive at the fashionable hour."

The theatre was a shabby old building; which had, from a barn, been converted, with great difficulty, into a temple, by the wandering sons of Thespis; and was not only badly lighted, but afforded very indifferent accommodations for visitors; yet, in spite of these disadvantages, the house was well filled by many genteel families.

The performers (two only excepted) were of the most common and extravagant cast, and gave to the piece, Shakespeare's beautiful comedy of Twelfth Night, a broad air of caricature.

The female who represented the character of Viola, by her graceful movement and genteel figure, appeared to have seen better days, But though her recitation was rich and flowing, and her voice sweet and impressive, her action was so languid and dispirited, that it gave her the air of a person suffering from ill-health, and great mental uneasiness; it was, moreover, evident to all who beheld her, that she took no interest in the passing scene.

Her husband, the hero of the night, a hand-

some, and even elegant young man, was by no means an indifferent performer, but care had stamped his iron signet on his faded brow, whilst his attention appeared more actively employed in watching the languid movements of his partner, than in any effort to gain the applause of the spectators.

"That pretty, delicate young woman has great capabilities of making a good actress," said Johnstone to his companion: "my mind misgives me if I have not seen her before, though in a very different capacity; and with his voice I am quite familiar."

"You were always famous, Henry, when a boy at school, in finding in every stranger the likenesses of your old friends," replied Stanhope, laughing; "I see nothing here to call forth any admiration. I pity the young woman, for she is ill; and her husband is too anxious about it to exert himself to please his auditors: for my part, I wonder you can tolerate such wretched stuff."

Stanhope's taste, unfortunately, was of the most fastidious kind; he turned, therefore, with an air of disgust from the stage, to contemplate the company in the boxes.

A group opposite soon claimed all his attention; it was composed of Anne Irvin, her aunt,

Mrs. Clifton, and a handsome, fashionable young lady, who sat between her and Mr. Jervis.

Francis had heard much of George Jervis, but had never before seen him; though both had been brought up and educated by Mr. Irvin.

Mr. Stanhope did not come to reside on his paternal estate at B——, before George had left the vicarage to prosecute his studies at college; after which he made the tour of Europe, with a young nobleman, in the capacity of travelling companion; and when he returned to B——, Francis had just departed for the university, where he had remained for the last three years: so that the young men were personally unacquainted with each other.

With feelings of painful curiosity, Francis scanned the person of this formidable rival to him, in the good vicar's esteem; and he recognised in George Jervis a very plain, but very sensible looking man, whose benevolent expression and gentlemanly deportment, in some measure, atoned for a decided want of all other external advantages.

To Stanhope's no small disappointment, not to say indignation, Anne seemed greatly amused by the performance, and from time to time, replied to Mr. Jervis's remarks with an air of lively interest. A feeling nearly allied to jealousy darted

through young Stanhope's bosom; and all his faculties were soon intensely employed in watching Anne and Mr. Jervis.

"Was it possible that she loved him?" The thought was very distressing to a young lover, who saw in the object of his regard, a woman capable of making a paradise of home.

Johnstone's remark in the morning, aided by his own vanity, and the consciousness of possessing a very fine person, helped to lull his suspicions to sleep. But then, again, he recollected they had been brought up in the same house together; and Francis had often experienced how soon habit reconciles us to defects of person in those we love, and with whom we are in the constant habit of associating. Mr. Jervis was very plain, but an excellent and clever man; and Francis knew that accomplisments of mind would outweigh, with a girl of Anne Irvin's just way of thinging, all external disadvantages.

From these unpleasant reveries he was roused by Johnstone's suddenly asking him, "if he did not think the young lady in the opposite box, a very beautiful girl?"

Francis stammered, and replied, "Miss Irvin is a very interesting girl; but, critically speaking, cannot be called a beauty."

"Oh! oh! Stanhope! I perceive where your

thoughts were wandering. It is not of her I speak.—Anna Irvin is a pretty piece of still life, but I prefer that sprightly, dark-eyed girl, that sits by our friend George, who has thus contrived to monopolise to himself, the two finest women in the theatre."

"How we differ in opinion, Henry! I cannot look at that handsome girl without a feeling of aversion, something indiscribable—I know not what. Those brilliant eyes you admire so much, are on the constant search for admiration; and I doubt not, but she is a heartless, unfeeling coquet. I wonder Anne Irvin should choose such a companion."

"May I only be fortunate enough to gain such a one for life!" returned Johnstone, with some warmth: "you are too severe, Frank; you condemn every body you happen to conceive a prejudice against, without the benefit of judge or jury. What is there in Miss Hill's appearance to draw forth such a severe invective?"

"I cannot exactly tell you. But I dislike her expression; there is a freedom in her air and manner, that disgusts me,—nothing that the world would find fault with, but something extremely repugnant to my ideas of female deportment."

"She is a lively, spirited girl," returned John-

stone; "and every thing you can say to her disadvantage, is the effect of mere prejudice."

"I am happy to find Miss Hill has so warm an advocate in Mr. Johnstone," said Francis, sarcastically; "you would have some difficulty in persuading me, that I had passed a harsh, or undeserved censure on her."

"I am sure I can make you, Francis, retract your opinion, when I relate an anecdote of her, which I had from the parties themselves; and, therefore, know to be true."

Francis in his turn looked sceptical. "While the violins are giving us the wretched prelude to the afterpiece; perhaps you will favour me with it."

"With pleasure," returned Henry, who thus continued in a lower voice:—"Miss Hill was left an orphan, at a very early age; and was brought up under the roof of her paternal uncle and guardian. Mr. Hill had an only son, a lieutenant in the army, a fine showy young man, and the cousins soon formed an ardent attachment for each other. Doatingly fond of his lovely niece, Mr. Hill looked forward to their union, with the interest of a parent, who had centred all his earthly wishes in one object. Fanny had scarcely completed her twentieth year before every preparation was made for the long-anticipated marriage, when

Anthony Hill, trampling on the feelings of his cousin, and in direct opposition to his father's wishes, ran off with a young woman of mean family, entirely destitute of the advantages of a good education, and whose whole attractions consisted in a pretty face.

"When informed, by letter, of his son's marriage, Mr. Hill's indignation knew no bounds, and he ordered his doors for ever to be closed against his unworthy son. The grief of poor Fanny may well be imagined; her early dream of happiness was over, and she had to still the bitter throbbings of a wounded heart in the best manner she could. Lieutenant Hill was soon reduced by his extravagance to sell his commission; and, a few months afterwards, sank, with his young wife, into the most abject poverty. At this deplorable crisis, he returned to his native town, and implored, in the humblest manner, his father's forgiveness and assistance in his present necessitous state. The old gentleman refused to see him, and remained deaf to his prayers. Compassionating her cousin's forlorn condition, and forgetful of her own wrongs, the generous Fanny undertook to plead his cause with her incensed uncle: and finding her arguments fail in mitigating his displeasure, she fetched the infant son of Anthony, and placing him in his grand-sire's

arms, besought him, for the sake of the helpless little innocent, who was his own flesh and blood, to restore his unfortunate son once more to his favour. This fresh proof of her noble disposition, served only to enrage her uncle still more against the man who had treated her so unworthily.

"Fanny's generosity did not rest here. Her maternal aunt had left her a few hundred pounds at her own disposal; and this she at once sold out of the funds, and transmitted in his father's name to the indigent Anthony and his suffering partner.

"Mr. Hill died shortly after, and left Fanny sole heir to his fine property. But she, considering his son had a more lawful claim than herself, directly she had followed her uncle to the grave, made over the estates to him; only reserving for herself the property left her by her father, with which Mr. Hill had been entrusted as her guardian."

During Johnstone's relation, Francis had been carefully examining Miss Hill's face; and, though he felt convinced that what he, at first, took for freedom of carriage and manner, was the natural expression of a very lively and spirited girl, who had been used to obey the impulse of her own generous feelings, he was too proud to confess to

Johnstone his error; who felt hurt and disappointed that he passed no remark on his story.

The play being over, Francis and his companion joined Miss Irvin's party, and found, to their no small satisfaction, the ladies intended to walk home, as the distance did not exceed half a mile; and the moon was up, and the night exceeding fine.

With a palpitating heart, Francis offered Anne his arm, which was accepted by her with guileless pleasure.

During their walk home, he expressed his surprise that she could be amused by the wretched performance they had just witnessed.

"You are too fastidious, Mr. Stanhope," said Anne, mildly; "I went to be entertained; the performers did their best to please us, and I was not disappointed."

"Had you ever seen Miss M. Tree, and Liston, in the characters of Viola and Sir Andrew, you would have found the awkward imitation of these great actors intolerable," returned he.

"But I never did see either of these celebrated performers; and as a theatrical representation is a novel sight to me, I must confess I had the bad taste to enjoy it."

"If every one regarded their talents in the same light I do," said Francis, his querrulous dis-

position overcoming his better feelings, "they would perform to empty houses."

"I am sorry to hear that remark from you," returned Anne, with more severity in her tone and manner than he had thought her capable of assuming: "there are, in this company, I am told, several distressed individuals, who have been genteelly brought up, but taking erroneous notions into their heads, rashly deserted their friends and parents, to follow a mode of life replete with mortification and sorrow; they are too proud to solicit our charity, and if it was not for the humanity of those who, out of compassion, tolerate their performance, they must starve, or finish their miserable course in a parish workhouse."

Francis remained silent: he had yielded in so many instances, that night, to his old habit of condemning the conduct and appearance of others, that he began to perceive his error, and to be heartily ashamed of himself.—"I see," continued his fair monitress, "that what I have advanced in their defence, has altered your opinion, though you want the candour to own it."

"How can I fail being convinced by Miss Irvin's observations, when she enforces their truth with such benevolence?"

"When Mr. Stanhope has recourse to compli-

ment and flattery with an old friend, my arguments are over," said Anne, coldly.

"Dear Miss Irvin, do not thus misconstrue my words; most happy should I be in receiving instructions from such a monitress."

"That office must be filled by some person more adequate to instruct others, than I feel myself to be," said Anne, timidly: "If your own heart, Mr. Stanhope, cannot suggest the path of moral duty, do not expect to discover it through the medium of another."

"But we are, generally, blind to our own failings."

"True," replied Anne: "but when an action strikes us as very reprehensible in another, we ought carefully to examine our own hearts, to see if the same passions which have led to such dangerous errors in others, do not exist in our own bosoms; lest in the condemnation we pronounce on our neighbours, we should entail on ourselves the severe reproof of our blessed Lord, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam that is in thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

Anne had now touched on the most faulty part of Stanhope's character. The stroke was brought home to his feelings; and as the remembrance of

many a harsh criticism recurred to his mind, he became greatly agitated, and, in a voice subdued by repentant feelings, said, "Miss Irvin, I stand guilty, before my own conscience, of the crime you allude to; for the three past years of my life, I have suffered the most uncharitable prejudices to blind my judgment, and to overcome my better feelings. Severe in my judgment of others, I have ever been too lenient to myself. You have taught me to acknowledge my error, and to deplore my folly; extend your goodness still further, and assist me in subduing my hasty and impetuous disposition."

"The road to self-improvement is difficult and thorny;" returned Anne, in an encouraging tone; "but in the end, you will find it strewed with roses: It is a conquest of such importance, that Alexander's splendid victories were but child's play compared with it. It is harder, Mr. Stanhope, to subdue passions, than to destroy kingdoms; to overcome the enemies of the soul, than men: You have acknowledged your error; and the first great step towards amendment is already taken: persevere then, my dear Francis, and I doubt not that time will render you all your friends could wish you,—all you could wish yourself."

There was a tender faultering in Anne's voice,

as she finished speaking, that sunk deeply into young Stanhope's heart; the moon shone full on her pale meek face, and he perceived that her eyes were full of tears.

The events of years long vanished, now returned to his memory, and brought with them the remembrance of the guileless sports and sympathies of childhood, when he and the fair fragile girl, who leant so timidly on his arm for support, were all the world to each other; he thought on the long summer evenings, when, seated together, by the banks of the river, Anne had read some fairy legend aloud to him, while he watched his angle, or wreathed the golden flowers of the mead into garlands with which to bind her flaxen hair. The affection he had borne his pretty playmate, had slumbered during his intercourse with the world; it now returned with tenfold interest, and he felt that she alone, of all the world, could make him happy.

"Anne," he said, in a hurried voice, "when I was a boy, you loved me; would that I was still as dear to you, as at that happy period! these fields have witnessed our infantine sports; and that moon has often heard our childish vows to love each other; but I fear some more fortunate rival has robbed me of a heart, I once thought myself sure of possessing."

"I *did* love you, Francis;—I beheld in you that brother, of whom the grave early robbed me; you were my companion, guide, and playmate; the partner of all my little sports, and the sharer of my studies; and you were very dear to me."

"Am I then so no longer, that you treat me with such indifference, such formality, so unlike the social intercourse of our early years?"

"Perhaps, Mr. Stanhope," said Anne, her voice faultering, and her eyes filling with tears, "you were, at that period, more worthy of my regard."

"I understand you, Miss Irvin—Mr. Jervis possesses those virtues, and that equanimity of temper, in which I am so deficient. Had you really ever loved me, you would not have been so sensible of my faults."

"I never thought you would have added injustice to them," returned Anne; while Francis felt the arm tremble which he supported, as she continued: "for Mr. George Jervis, I entertain the most sincere respect and esteem; I reverence him as a friend, and as a pious and deserving minister of the church of Christ: but I feel hurt and surprised that you should, in any other way, connect his name with mine."

"Will you allow me then to hope, dear Anne,

that I am not become entirely indifferent to you?"

"My affections, Francis, have undergone no change; but time has altered you: when I perceive in Mr. Stanhope, the same generous feelings which influenced his actions as a boy, I may again love him with unaffected zeal."

"Heaven bless you for that, at least!" exclaimed Francis, scarcely able to control his joy at this concession on the part of Anne: "for your sake, best, dearest girl, I will steadily persevere in the thorny path of self-improvement."

They were now nearly opposite the parsonage, and were joined by Mr. Jervis, who, having seen Mrs. Clifton safe home, had returned in quest of Anne. His presence was welcomed by her with pleasure, as her conversation with Francis had been a painful one.

"George!" she said, "I met with such a serious loss to-day, that it will require more patience than I am mistress of, to enable me to bear it with any degree of fortitude."

"Has your dormouse escaped again from his cage?" returned the curate, with a smile, "or any accident befallen your favourite Grimalkin?"

"You must guess again, George; much worse than either of those petty misfortunes."

"Has your pony run away?"

"No, I have not lost Saladin; but my pretty Florizel would accompany papa and me in our walk to-day, and we have lost him."

"Indeed: I shall regret that, for dear mother's sake," replied Mr. Jervis, "for I know how greatly he conduces to her comfort in leading her about the house and gardens: you must have him cried; perhaps he has not wandered far."

"And what reward, Miss Irvin, do you offer to the person who shall be so fortunate as to discover and restore your favourite?" said Francis, in a playful voice.

"A couple of sovereigns, and my very best thanks."

"Pretty high bribe," said Francis: "I will return you the first part of the reward, and keep the other for myself, for I think I can restore the dog."

He then related his adventure with Ishmael, to the great delight and entertainment of his auditors. "I am quite charmed with your Ishmael," said Anne, when he had concluded; "I must see this rough diamond, and reward him myself for his humanity to my poor Florizel. I will persuade papa to walk with me to-morrow, and visit their encampment."

"Are not you afraid to venture among such a savage crew?" returned Francis.

"Oh! not at all; gipseys are a race of people in whom I am greatly interested; the mystery which envelopes their origin, and the little we know of their religion and customs, give a sort of romantic interest to these wandering tribes: I have often thought, when we are sending so many missionaries to foreign countries, we might form some advantageous plan for their conversion at home."

"They possess such a depth of artifice," said Mr. Jervis, "that we should always feel a great doubt as to the sincerity of their professions. But I am happy to say that this savage race of people, residing in the bosom of our native land, are daily approaching nearer to civilization; and it is not long since, that I baptized a female gipsey and her whole family; and we have frequent instances of their being buried in our church-yards; and, I doubt not that, fifty years hence, the name will only be remembered in the legends of the nursery."

They had now reached the little wicket that parted the lawn before the parsonage, from the flower garden; and the path of communication was a broad gravel walk, overshadowed by majestic elms, which, in the language of Bloomfield,

> "Had reached their full meridan height,
> Before our father's father breathed:"

and formed a delightful vista, terminated by the peaceful edifice, reposing in undisturbed serenity in the full beams of an unclouded moon.

The sound of music came suddenly floating on the breeze; and they could distinctly catch the rich, sweet tones of an exquisite female voice, accompanying it.

"This is truly delightful," said Anne, leaning on the gate; "music softened by distance, and on such a night as this, produces a magic effect on my spirits; my bosom swells with deep and heartfelt devotion, and I am, as it were, transported from earth to heaven.—Hark!" she continued: "Fanny is playing 'the Harp of Tara's hall," and accompanying it with her enchanting voice."

"This is indeed a voice of melody," said Francis, listening with intense interest; "I think I never heard such a one."

"Miss Hill is a sweet girl," said Jervis: "you should hear her and our dear Anne sing duets together."

"Poor Fanny has recovered her spirits of late," continued Anne; "when I first knew her, she was labouring under severe mental uneasiness; but she is a noble, generous creature, and I feel for her the most lively interest." Stanhope's heart smote him; and he felt half inclined to

confess the unjust prejudice he had formed against her, when he was prevented by Anne asking him if she had ever read to him Mr. Jervis's Morning and Evening Hymns. Francis replied in the negative; and Anne, turning to the curate, requested him in a playful manner, to favour her with them.

"I am such an indifferent poet, my dear Anne, that if the pieces in question were not in praise of my Creator, I should really find it it in my heart to be angry with you for asking me to repeat them to a stranger."

"A stranger, Mr. Jervis!" said Francis, holding out his hand: "I hope you will consider me as such no longer."

"I had determined, Mr. Stanhope, to meet you as a friend, for I have long considered you as such, through the good offices of our mutual ones; but the formality with which you answered my first salutation, led me to imagine that a more intimate acquaintance would not be agreeable to you."

"It was the fault of my manners, (which are naturally reserved on a first introduction,) and not of my heart," said Francis, returning with interest the hearty pressure of his hand, while his accusing conscience again reproached him for the feelings which had actuated his coldness towards

him; "and in token of our newly-cemented friendship, I hope you will favour me with repeating the lines Miss Irvin so much admires."

"Ah! I perceive, George would rather hear them from my lips," said Anne; "and whilst you have been settling this important business, I have recalled the first to memory, and Francis shall read the other to us after supper. Then, with easy and unaffected grace, she recited the following hymn:—

MORNING HYMN.

O'ER Time's mighty billows borne,
Angels lead the purple morn;
Chasing fair the shades of night,
From the burning throne of light:
Where their glorious wings unfold,
There the east is streaked with gold;
Gilding, with immortal dyes,
The azure curtain of the skies.
High in the air their matin song
Floats the ethereal fields along:
Ere creation wakes they sing
Glory to the eternal King!
Whilst silent woods, and sleeping plains,
Echo far, "Jehovah reigns!"

Rising from the couch of night,
Nature hails the birth of light;
Smiling sweetly through her tears,
High her verdant crown she rears:

At her call the sunny hours,
Wreathe her humid locks with flowers;
Bright with many a lucid gem
Shines her spotless diadem.
Every grove has found a voice,
Countless tribes in thee rejoice;—
In melody untaught they sing,
Glory to the eternal King!
Earth, and seas, and heavens, proclaim
The wonders of Jehovah's reign!

On man's sin-bound soul and eyes,
Alone the shade of darkness lies:
The last of Nature's children, he,
To laud the eternal Deity;
The last, his passive voice to raise,
The Lord of Life and Light, to praise.
Slumberer, awake! arise! arise!
Join the chorus of the skies.
Dost thou sleep? to thee is given,
The privilege of sons of heaven:
Join with angel choirs to sing
The mercies of that mighty King,
Who life within himself retains;
Lord of all, Jehovah reigns.

Rising o'er the tide of years,
Lo, a morn more blest appears:—
When yon burning orb of fire,
And moon, and stars, and heavens, expire;
And all that once had life and breath,
Emerging from the arms of death.

Shall animate each heaving sod,
And countless millions meet their God;
Whose hands the links of time shall sever,
And man shall wake—to live for ever:
When souls redeemed, with angels, sing
The mercies of their glorious King,
Vanquished Death is led in chains,
Lord of life, Jehovah reigns!

Sinful mortal! watch and pray,
The coming morn may bring that day;
And thou, immersed in woe and sin,
Shall feel no kindling light within;
No voice divine—to still thy fears,
No angel hand—to dry thy tears.
From God, from heaven, from comfort, torn,
Eternal night may shade that morn;
And thou, in agony, would give
The world, thy course again to live;
And thou, midst everlasting pains,
Must, trembling own, Jehovah reigns.

Anne ceased speaking: but her raised eyes, clasped hands, and leaning attitude, aided by the soft light the moon-beams threw round her, gave her the appearance of a spirit just overleaping the barrier of mortal suffering, and pouring the first hymn of praise to her Creator. Her enthusiasm had excited feelings of the deepest devotion in the breast of Stanhope, and he expressed the delight he had experienced from her recital, in the most lively terms.

As they approached the house, Anne, turning to Mr. Jervis, said, with an arch smile, "Fanny and Johnstone have been home a long while. Mamma will laugh heartily at our delay."

"She would forgive it," returned Francis, "if she knew how much her godson had enjoyed the walk."

On entering the parlour, the vicar came forward to welcome them. "Very pretty, young people; you have just been as long walking half a mile, as I could two: Upon my word, Francis! I do not think I shall trust my girl to your care another evening. What! George too?" continued he, turning to Mr. Jervis: "As you, my grave friend, made one in this expeditious journey; I must say no more, I suppose on the subject."

"I confess we have not made a toil of pleasure," returned the curate, laughingly; "we staid sometime at the gate, to enjoy the effect of Fanny's voice in the open air."

"A very good excuse," said Johnstone, leaving the piano-forte.

"You, Jervis and Frank, ought to make Miss Hill a low bow for affording you such a one: Mrs. Irvin began to think you had run away with her daughter."

"I forgive my truant for loitering, as she was

in such good hands," returned Mrs. Irvin: "I remember the time when a walk by moonlight, gave me the greatest pleasure. But now," she continued, with a sigh:—"neither light of sun nor moon can dispel the night which overshadows me, but the recollection of their glory never fails to shed a cheering influence on the darkness of my mind."

Anne, who had retired to change her dress, now returned, and announced supper. Francis led his godmother into the dining-room with great tenderness; whilst he secretly envied Jervis the pleasure of performing the same office with Anne Irvin.

After supper, Anne rose from the table, and taking from her writing desk an elegant album, gave Francis the hymn she had promised, to read aloud to the company. He gladly obeyed, and read, in a deep and impressive voice, Mr. Jervis's

HYMN TO THE EVENING.

SINKING now in floods of light,
The sun resigns the world to night;
When a lingering glance he turns,
The glowing west with glory burns,
And the blushing heavens awhile
Long retain his parting smile.
Ere grey evening's dull eye
Bids these tints of beauty die;

Ere her tears have washed away
The footsteps of departing day,
Nature from her verdant bowers
Her last, long strain of rapture pours;
Shrouded in her misty vest,
She sings a drowsy world to rest,
And tells to man in thrilling strains,
Lord of all, Jehovah reigns!

Lingering twilight dies away,
Night resumes her ancient sway;
Round her sable tresses twining,
Countless hosts of stars are shining;
Weaving round the brow of night
A coronet of living light—
O'er the couch of Nature bending,
Their beauteous glances downward sending
A silent watch of glory keeping,
Guard the earth while life is sleeping—
Strains unheard by mortal ears,
Echo through their starry spheres;
Other worlds awake to sing
The praises of their mighty King,
'Till azure fields and liquid plains
Echo far, Jehovah reigns!

Creation sleeps—but many a sound
Of melody is floating round—
Where the moonlight wave is flinging
Its snowy foam, and upward springing
To meet the shore advancing nigh,
Pours, in many a broken sigh,
A mornful dirge o'er those who rest
Forgotten in its stormy breast.

Restless billows onward rave,
He who trod thy stormy wave,
Shall to life those forms restore,
Thy tides have rushed for ages o'er;
Exulting from thy womb they'll spring
To meet in air their gracious King,
While shrinking seas repeat their strains,
Lord of all, Jehovah reigns!

Sweeping o'er the moonlight ground,
Pouring soft complainings round,
From yon dark and shady dell,
The summer breezes rise and swell:
Now through lofty branches sighing.
Now in plaintive murmurs dying;
Now o'er beds of dewy flowers;
A voice of wailing sweetness pours.
From mossy glen, and wood-crowned height,
Sad Philomel sings through the night,
Pouring from her feeble throat
Many a soft enchanting note;
Not for mortal ears alone
She warbles from her leafy throne.—
Her tender lay is heard by Him
Who formed the beauteous seraphim.
All night long she sweetly sings
Glory to the Kings of Kings!
'Till misty hills and moonlight plains
Echo far, Jehovah reigns!

This is night;—her mantle grey
She flings across the brow of day.
To hide from mortal ken awhile
The splendour of his glorious smile.—

But what magic beauties lie
In her dark and shadowy eye;
When with star and moonbeam crowned
She chequers o'er the distant ground;
Bathing now in floods of light,
Now retreating from the sight.
As the heavy vapoury cloud
Flings athwart its sable shroud;
Onward as her course is steering,
Now through broken cliffs appearing,
She shews the splendour of her form,
And laughs, exulting, at the storm;
While all the starry hosts proclaim
The wonders of Jehovah's reign!

This is night:—but not that gloom
Which seals the hardened sinner's doom:
That dreary and eternal night
Which knows no cheering beam of light;
The grave of darkness and of death,
Where palsied nature holds her breath;
And conscience wakes the flame within,
The never-dying fire of sin.
Evil spirits have no power
O'er this tranquil, lovely hour;
'Tis the shade of guilt that lies
On thy soul,—and on thine eyes,
That bids the phantom fear, I ween.
Preside o'er such a peaceful scene.—
Night, thy end is hastening fast.
Immortal day will dawn at last;
The sun of righteousness shall rise,
Triumphant through his native skies;

And men, released from dust, shall spring
To hail the advent of their King,
Till heaven's wide arch repeats their strains,
Christ! our own Immanuel, reigns!

"Perhaps, Mr. Jervis, you would hardly imagine, from the gaiety of my character," said Fanny, after Stanhope had closed the book, "that, for many years of my life, the approach of night brought with it indescribable terrors?"

"You are certainly the very last person in the world, I should have suspected of being subject to such a painful malady as fear," returned the curate.

"Nay," my dear Fanny," said the vicar, "I can hardly think a girl with your lively spirits could be affected by any such vagaries."

"I found it too true, my dear sir; until within the four last years, I was a complete victim to my own fears."

"Have you any idea of the cause which first gave rise to this distressing affection of the mind?"

"I always imputed it to terror, produced by the sight of my dear old nurse after her death," said Fanny, "when I was a very young child. My father, you know, died of a fall from his horse, a few hours before I saw the light; and my poor mother was only allowed to bless her first-born, and commit me, a helpless, wailing infant,

to the care of my good aunt Hill, ere she followed her husband to the grave. As I was a poor, sickly little thing, my aunt wisely entrusted me entirely to the care of my mother's old nurse, Judith; who took me with her into the country, where she nourished me with new milk, and succeeded in rearing the feeble orphan, beyond the hope or expectation of my kind friends. It was my misfortune to lose, at the early age of six years, this dear, invaluable old woman; she died in fits, and the cause of her death and the lines of great age imprinted on her countenance, rendered her, after death, a frightful spectacle. I cried bitterly to see my dear, dear mammy, once more; and her daughter, without reflecting on the impression such a sight would make on the mind of a young child, imprudently carried me into the chamber of death. It was a summer's evening, and the departing light shed a dim twilight through the narrow darkened casement. I had not till then any idea of death; and that dreadful sight haunted my imagination for years after. It terrified me in the day, and presented itself to my dreams by night, and was the constant theme of my waking reveries. Being a spoiled and wayward child, my nursemaid, a cruel, artful girl, made use of my fears to keep me in subjection; and when I cried, she used to tell

me that, if I was not quiet directly, my nurse would come from the church-yard to fetch me. Then, recalling to remembrance the ghastly livid face, and distorted features, I had seen by that dim, uncertain light, I shuddered, clung to her neck, and persevered in maintaining the most agonising silence. I dared not sleep without a light and an attendant; and even when at play in my uncle's garden, the hum of a bee passing suddenly near me, or the sighing of the wind in the trees, startled me; I fancied I heard, in these simple sounds, the steps of my old nurse coming to carry me off to her cold, dark grave.

"My good uncle and aunt tried to reason me out of these extravagant fears; but early impressions are not so easily forgotten; and my gaiety was often, in a great measure, assumed, to conceal the terrors which beset me in solitude."

"Your's, my dear girl," said Mr. Irvin, "was, indeed, a pitiable case: how did you succeed in effecting so perfect a cure?"

"A very odd circumstance," said Fanny, laughing, "completely overthrew my belief in supernatural agency. We are just seated round the fire comfortably, to enjoy a ghost story. It is very near, if I mistake not. the dreaded hour of midnight; so I hope, good people, you will pay due attention to the horrors of my tale."

Johnstone and Anne assumed, in a moment, the most ludicrous appearance of gravity; Fanny shook her head at them, and commenced her narrative.

"Though I considered my uncle Hill's house my home, and always called it by that name, I often spent several months in the year with my maternal aunt, Mrs. Jones, a rich old lady, who had no family, and was very fond of her little black-eyed niece; though, at the same time, very jealous of my attachment to my dear aunt and uncle Hill, whom I always called my papa and mamma, paying them the respect which a child owes to kind and indulgent parents.

"I had just completed my seventeenth year, and was too proud to own to my aunt my nightly terrors, as she was a plain matter-of-fact woman, who would have rallied me unmercifully on my unpardonable weakness.

"Even I was a little ashamed of being afraid of ghosts haunting a snug modern dwelling, which was situated in the centre of a populous village only four miles from London, and not above a stone's-throw from the turnpike, through which there was a constant traffic, at all hours of the night. For once, therefore, I consented to the horrors of sleeping alone. My chamber was at the very top of the house; but not less plea-

sant on that account, being a large, airy, well-ceiled room, with three handsome sash-windows in front, commanding a fine view of the hills of Greenwich and the adjacent country. These windows were accommodated with heavy Venetian blinds, which fell from the top of the sash to the bottom; and, in addition to this, holland rolling blinds which let down beneath, obscuring, even of a moonlight night, the room in impenetrable darkness.

"My aunt Jones, though a very worthy woman, took the privilege of age to indulge in many foolish whims and prejudices. She was as I before told you, a suspicious character, and never would tolerate the sight of pens and ink in her house. She fancied, if you conveyed your private feelings to your friends, by a written correspondence, that you were writing of her and her concerns; and as I was in the constant practice of writing to Mrs. Hill, when from home, this unpleasant restraint was very irksome; and my attachment to my adopted mother so far overcame my fears, that I used to write to her, of a night, after the family had retired to rest. Often have I started when the great, old-fashioned dial, on the stair-case, and the church clocks, have proclaimed the lateness of the hour, and my own expiring candle forced me to resign my pen, and

reluctantly to yield once more to the horrors of darkness.

"Sarah, my aunt's old servant, who had lived with her for thirty years, slept in a little chamber through mine, which had served as a dressing-room to the larger apartment; so that I considered her door being open, as a sort of protection to me.

"One night, I had been employed at my writing-desk longer than usual, when hearing the clock strike one, I hastily extinguished my light, and retired to bed. Thoughts of home and all its sweet recollections hindered me from going to sleep, when I was frightened out of my pleasing reveries by a light suddenly springing up in my room, and by the appearance of a tall, shadowy figure standing at the foot of my bed. I clasped my hands together, and uttering a loud shriek, buried my head in the bed-clothes. My sudden outcry brought old Sarah, who loved me tenderly, to my bed-side. 'My dear missie,' she said, 'what's the matter? are you frightened, or, are you ill? for heaven's sake! speak, and tell me what has happened.'

"The sound of the good creature's voice, in a small degree re-assured me, and trying to calm my agitation and the violent beating of my heart, with my face still concealed, I, in a trembling

tone of voice, recounted to her what I had just beheld.

"Sarah, who was very shrewd, and did not want for good sense, tried to convince me that the dreadful apparition was the effect of a dream. I was very much hurt at her unghost-like conclusion, as I replied, 'No! no! Sarah, I was wide awake. Indeed, I have only been in bed a few minutes, and have not been to sleep."

"As Sarah was unacquainted with my practise of writing of a night, this convinced her, more than ever, that my fright was occasioned by some fantastic vision formed in sleep; and whilst we were debating the matter, the watchman called under the window, 'Half past one o'clock! and a rainy morning!'

"Now my terrors always dimished after I fancied the dread hour of midnight was over, and I consented to be pacified, if Sarah would sleep with me, till our usual time of rising, and for the future. But I made her promise not to inform my aunt, who would not fail to laugh at my fears, and consider this nocturnal visitant of her peaceful mansion as a ridiculous fable, or the distempered coinage of a heated imagination, while I felt a horrible conviction of its reality.

"When daylight restored my mind to its usual serenity, the events of the night would have

passed from my memory like one of its fantastic dreams, had not the sight of old Sarah's head, reposing on my pillow, convinced me of the appearance of the spectre.

"The day past too quickly away; and the long, dreary winter night came, and brought with it, its usual attendants, fear, and feverish restlessness. My night-candle was brought in at ten o'clock, and I could find no excuse for lingering below; I retired, therefore, to my own room, with a heavy and foreboding heart.

"As Sarah was undressing me, the idea of a thief being secreted in the room for the purpose of robbing the house, for the first time, popped into my head, and we diligently searched the apartment to discover the intruder: but to no effect. There were likewise two closets in the room, one on each side the bed, a circumstance I did not much like, but, out of principle, I had never attempted to open them, thinking my aunt would be justly offended at my prying into what did not concern me; but fear, at length, overcame these delicate scruples; and, with a trembling hand, I unfastened the doors, calling to Sarah, at the same time, to bring the candle. But these imaginary dens for thieves only contained a quantity of rags and faded old finery, the collection of half a century; which had once

formed a part of my aunt's wardrobe, and had been for years consigned to these closets to moulder in dust and obscurity: however, several old-fashioned long-waisted hooped silk petticoats, as they dangled against the wall, had a very spectral appearance. My search being so unsuccessful, I retired to bed; convinced that my nocturnal guest was not of this world.

"I had agreed with Sarah, before-hand, that we would not put out the candle, but leave it in her room, and lie down on the bed in our clothes, in case the ghost should repeat its visit.

"This good woman, by her sensible arguments, had almost succeeded in convincing me that my fears were either the result of a dream or a delusion of sight, to which some people have been subject, when the watchman called the fated hour of twelve. The blood crept back to my heart; the hair rose on my head; the light sprung up in my apartment—and the mysterious figure stood arrayed in all its shadowy terrors. I screamed, and hid my face; but the dauntless Sarah sprung from the bed, and, after a few minutes of breathless silence, for nothing was audible to me but the violent beating of my own heart, she called out, 'Courage, dear missie! I have discovered the ghost.'

"'Speak, Sarah: who is it? What is it?'

"'Nothing more nor less, my dear young lady, than the shadow of the watchman, which is thrown from the opposite side of the street, through the broken spline of the venetian blind, on to the curtains at the foot of the bed.'

"'My spectre dwindled into the reflection of a shabby watchman thrown to such a height from a great distance! the idea I considered as impossible and ridiculous; and I expressed myself in the same terms to Sarah, who meekly replied, 'Well, missie, if you will promise to lie awake till the next half-hour, I will convince you of the truth of what I say.'

"To this I willingly consented, and found what she had advanced to be the fact, strange and incredible as it may appear.

"One of the splines belonging to the blind of the corner window was broken, and hung down aslant, just below what is called a bull's-eyes in the glass: which, I suppose, caught the figure of the watchman coming down the opposite side of the street in an oblique direction, and by some powers of reflection, with which I am unacquainted, formed a sort of magic lantern, which cast the shadow of him and his light through the window, on to the curtain at the foot of the bed. When once convinced of my error, it became a source of amusement to me to watch the object

which had given rise to such terror; and, in so doing, I gained a degree of courage which soon overcome all my old fears."

"I wish all believers in supernatural agency may meet with so easy and successful a cure," said Mr. Irvin, when Fanny ceased her relation; "but although you, my dear girl, was convinced of the folly of such a theory from the shadow of a watchman and his lantern; I knew, a few years ago, a poor man who lost his reason and life from the unexpected appearance of a Jack-o'lantern, or, Will-o'the-whisp, as the common people call the Ignis fatuus.

"He was a labourer, residing at B——, a small town, or rather a village, a few miles from H——, at which latter place his father lived. Being a poor, ignorant creature, he never happened, during the whole course of his life, to see one of these wandering vapours, much less heard any good description of them. One night—being called up late to attend his aged father, who was supposed to be dying, and had expressed an ardent wish to see his son—he encountered one of these lights in the low, marshy meadows that lie to the left all the way from B—— to H——; with a heart saddened by the mournful errand he was going on, the poor fellow was in a state of mind adapted to receive the most

melancholy impressions.—He formed the dreadful idea, that his father was dead, and that his soul was gone into a state of punishment, and had taken the appearance of the blue flame that hovered in his path, to inform him of the horrible event. The wild phantom to which his fears had given birth, effectually destroyed the poor creature's reason. He fled towards the town with all the speed he could, but the flame continued to dance before his eyes, and in his very path. Some working people met him screaming and wringing his hands, in a state of mental distraction. Perceiving the cause of his terror, they tried to stop and convince him of the unreasonableness of his fears; but he rushed past them, and sunk down on the threshold of his father's cottage, exhausted with fatigue and the mental agonies he had endured, The father was better, but the inmates of the dwelling raised up the son in a state of delirium, in which he remained till he expired. All the account his distressed family could draw from him of the events of the night, was contained in a few words, which he continued to repeat, without intermission, till he died.—"Oh my poor lost father! Oh the light! the light!"

"It is strange that a belief in spiritual appearances has been entertained, through all ages,"

said Francis, "and is to be found in every country in the world."

"Probably, before the coming of our Saviour," returned Mr. Irvin, "such appearances were not uncommon in the world. Magic seems likewise to have been practised to a great extent. But we are told, that, at his death, the powers of the kingdom of darkness were shaken, and doubtless, evil spirits were no longer permitted to haunt and terrify the children of men.—In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, you will see the impossibility of the dead returning to visit this world."

"Savages may have received an idea of spectres from oral traditions," said Mr. Jervis, "transmitted from father to son in the same way that they all acknowledge an universal deluge, though they have no written authority among themselves for such a stupendous event."

"You consider, then, my dear sir, that the account of apparitions we have both heard and read of, and the truth of which has been attested by people whose veracity I should be loth to doubt, were merely fables invented to deceive others?" said Francis.

"Certainly not," returned Mr. Jervis;" they really saw what they imagined, but under a strong delusion of vision, owing to a derange-

ment of the organs of the brain, which produced such strange phantasms, that the mind, unable to give a physical reason for such an unusual and extraordinary circumstance, naturally enough imputed it to supernatural agency. I myself knew a gentleman who was constantly surrounded by crowds of apparitions of this kind, which took the shape of his most intimate friends. He even fancied he could hear them speak, but, being a very sensible man, he considered that these sights were owing to the disordered state of the nerves belonging to the brain."

"If you attentively examine the character of people who assert that they have seen spectres," said Mr. Irvin, "you will either find them subject to occasional fits of melancholy, or acting under the influence of extravagant gaiety. I remember a school-fellow of mine, who, for many years of his life, was constantly haunted by a singular apparition, and was always influenced by these extremes of temper.

"I was born in a small village near Morpeth, in Northumberland, where I received the first rudiments of my education under the care of a respectable clergyman of the church of England.

"William Stanton was a day-boarder, whose daring disposition and invincible courage, aided by the mischievous pranks he constantly played

on all who passed near the bounds of our school-ground, and the lane which led to it, gained him the name of Wild Will among his comrades. The epithet of Mad Will would have suited him better than the title we bestowed on him in joke. Few, I am convinced, could have examined attentively the ferocious expression of his countenance, and the fierce, restless, wandering glance of his full dark eye, without entertaining strong doubts of his sanity. He was generous, frank, and bold; and possessed a mind which scorned falsehood, and an iron constitution which paid little regard to any corporeal punishment which could be inflicted on him.

"Stanton's father was a large farmer, who resided at a short distance from Morpeth; and his two sons, who were both receiving their education at Mr. Kirby's school, had, to reach home, only to cross a long field, which had been enclosed from the common, and which terminated in a narrow green lane, surrounded on all sides by high hawthorn hedges, which led directly into the play-ground.

As Wild Will was returning home one evening with his brother John, he was surprised by the sudden appearance of a gigantic figure, stalking before them, arrayed in a seaman's blue jacket and trowsers, with a red worsted cap on his

heard; his feet and hands were naked, and he was moving along the path with incredible rapidity. Will. pointed out this singular being to his brother, and, with a loud laugh, asked him, if he had ever seen such an odd mortal before.

"The brother, aghast at the presence of a third person, whom he could neither see nor hear, said, 'he could distinguish nothing in the wide field before them, but their own shadows reflected, to an immense size, in the slanting beams of the setting sun.'—'Do our shadows wear blue trowsers and red worsted night-caps?' returned William, enraged at a suspicion levelled against the clearness of his occular vision. 'I tell you, I see him, as plainly as ever I saw any thing in my life.—Look! look! there he goes! What enormous strides he takes! I wonder the stones don't wound his naked feet.—What, ho! Mr. Sailor! stop, and tell us who, and what you are?'

"The figure moved on with increasing velocity, and disappeared through the opposite gate. Startled, but not daunted, by this singular mode of exit, Will. exclaimed, 'Ha! Jack, it is not a man, but the ghost of a giant! did you observe, he passed through the stile without getting over?'

"'I tell you,' cried John, yielding to uncontrolled terror, and beginning to weep aloud, 'I see nothing.' Then, whilst William was carefully

examining the little pools of water, that recent rains had left in the path, to see if he could discover the print of the apparition's naked feet, John ran screaming back to the school, crying out that William had seen a ghost! Knowing the mischievous disposition of the boy, we all concluded that this marvellous tale was invented to frighten his brother. Time and observation convinced us to the contrary. From that hour, his energetic character acquired a tone af desperation; he became wilder, fiercer, and more courageous than he was before. Constantly haunted for four years by the daily appearance of this spectre, I have seen him start away from his comrades, in the midst of some boyish game, and fling himself down in the path before the creature of his own gloomy imagining, calling to him to pass over him, that he might feel the pressure of his feet, and be convinced that he was a living man. Then, perceiving the object of his terror at the other end of the field, he would pursue him with loud cries, flinging stones and dirt into the empty air.

"Time reconciled us to his strange and wayward behaviour, though, for the first few months, we were greatly alarmed by it, and never dared cross the haunted field alone; and even when in company, if a boy, more roguish than the rest, cried

out suddenly—'Here comes Will's ghost! don't you see his red night-cap?' away we all ran, as fast as we could, back to the school-room, panting with terror.

"At the end of four years, William left us to go to sea, and never afterwards returned to Morpeth. He made good the promise of his youth, by growing up a fearless man, and has since become a daring seaman. I chanced to meet him when in London some ten years ago; and recounting together the scenes of our youth, I asked him, on the score of old friendship, if he had ever really beheld the apparition which had haunted his childhood, or whether it was only the creature of romance—I will repeat his own words—'Seen him, Edward Irvin!—By Him who made the heaven! the wide earth, and the rolling sea! for four years of my life, I never passed through that field and lane, by night or by day, without seeing him.—I have beheld him striding before me in the first rays of the sun, I have encountered him at the heat of the noon, and traced the gigantic proportions of his figure in the cold beams of the moon, while the earth returned no echo to his noiseless steps. But in no other spot did I ever behold him. I have since sailed eight times round the world; I have been ship-wrecked and cast alone upon a desolate island; I have trod the un-

broken solitude of the wilderness, and made my home with the wild beasts of the forest; I have thought on him, and my brain seemed on fire, and my heart has burned within me. I have called on him in the still night, and dared him to appear, and answer me face to face. But the rocks repeated my voice, and I saw only the starry heavens above me, and the blue ocean rolling its restless billows at my feet.

"'If he were the creature of my own imagination, why did I confine him to one spot? If his shadowy dwelling was in my own troubled bosom, would he not have accompanied me round the world? Why did he not appear to me, night after night, when I have been alone at the helm, when deep sleep has reigned round me, and there has not been a star in the misty heavens, a ripple on the waters, nor a breath of wind in the shrouds?—No, no! he was only destined to haunt one lonely field in Northumberland; and I am convinced, did I ever return to visit that spot, he would rise before me, in all his accustomed terrors.'

"Had you known the man—Had you seen that dauntless cheek wax pale, that iron form tremble, and beheld the fierce gloomy fixture of his troubled eye, you would have doubted his reason, but not the truth of what he asserted.

"The tone of his mind, at all times, nearly approached to insanity. This spectre was, at first, doubtless a deception of the eye, produced by the sight of his own shadow in the red light of the setting sun, but was converted into a frightful apparition in the heated vortex of his own visionary mind; and so strong was the impression, that he never, when a boy, visited the same spot, without a derangement of the nerves, aided by his own powerful imagination, producing the same effect."

As Mr. Irvin ceased speaking, the clock struck one. The gentlemen rose hastily to take their leave, but not without Fanny's rallying Johnstone on the grave expression his face had assumed during the relation of the last story. She laughingly told the young student, that if he was very much alarmed, and saw any actual danger of meeting the ghost in the red night-cap during his walk back to the town, she would intercede with Mr. Jervis, who, she doubted not, out of compassion, would see him safe home.

Francis awoke next morning by break of day; and finding himself not disposed to sleep again, he started from his bed, determined to take a long stroll into the country, before breakfast.

The principal streets in the town were still in profound silence: but, on approaching the suburbs,

he found trade stirring, and the busy children of labour already awake and abroad. As he sauntered down a narrow alley, which made a short cut into the common, his attention was arrested by the passionate weeping of a female, in a wretched little hovel, situated at the extremity of the lane, and detached from the neighbouring houses. The door was open, and the angle of the projecting wall, at the corner of the lane, while it concealed Francis from observation, gave him an opportunity of looking directly into the house, which stood back on the common, detached from the regular line of buildings.

A delicate, but emaciated, young woman was seated on a low stool, just within the door, holding a sickly babe on her lap; another child, whose age did not exceed four years, being seated on the ground, at her feet. Her dress, which had once been good, was now old and soiled; and, in spite of the removal of paint and finery, Francis, with feelings of painful commiseration, discovered in the faded, half-famished being, before him, the Viola of the preceding night.

She was very, very young, and her heart seemed bursting with grief. The eldest child cried, and held up its little hands; she drew it to her knees, and kissed it with great tenderness. The innocent creature twined her little arms round

her mother's neck, and wiped the tears out of her eyes.

"Do not cry, mamma; I am not very hungry, and papa will soon come home." The poor young woman pressed her half-starved prattler to her bosom, and gave way to a fresh gush of sorrow. The entrance of a slight, genteel-looking young man, roused her from the uncontrolled indulgence of grief.

She raised her streaming eyes to his face, without venturing to speak, with such a piteous look of hopeless enquiry, that it cut Francis to the heart.

The actor understood her mournful appeal, and sighing deeply, shook his head.—"Alas! what shall we do?" she cried, wringing her hands: "Did you really see him?"

"Yes, Lucy, I did."

"Will he not have compassion on us? will he not pity our distress?" "My dear Lucy, it is out of his power to advance a single farthing before the middle of next week; you know we are already deeply in his debt."

"But, Richard, what will become of us? Our landlady insists on being paid; and these poor children must starve, or be driven forth, like houseless vagrants, to find a lodging in the streets."

The young man answered her heart-rending appeal with a heavy groan, and continued to pace the narrow limits of the wretched apartment, with slow and dejected steps, while his wan and haggard countenance, which still bore the remains of manly vigour and beauty, expressed despair and agony of mind: at length, suddenly stopping before his partner, (who had again buried her face in her garments) and surveying her with a glance of painful anxiety, he said, in a soothing voice—"Dry these tears, my poor Lucy, the indulgence of grief will neither provide food for our famishing children, nor better our condition; you shall not starve, while I have hands to work, or a tongue to solicit the charity of others. Yes!" he continued with an air of bitterness; "it must come to this! what business has a wretch like me with pride? I, who am already justly classed with vagrants and vagabonds!

"Oh! that I was the only sufferer! that the reward of my folly was only heaped on this devoted head! but, when I look on you, my poor, afflicted wife,—my dear, innocent children,—and perceive that want and disease are hurrying you fast to an early grave, I cannot but view myself in the light of your murderer!" Overcome with the agony of his feelings, he sunk down on a

seat, covered his face with his trembling hands, and wept aloud.

Forgetting her own sorrows, the young wife seemed only anxious to alleviate his: she hastily rose, and embraced him with great tenderness. "You must not say so, my Richard; rouse your drooping spirits, and we will yet be happy."

"Impossible, Lucy! without money, without friends!"

"God will rise us up friends!" replied the young woman, striving to infuse into his mind, a hope she had herself long ceased to feel. "He has never yet deserted us in the hour of need: I have addressed a fervent prayer to the throne of mercy, and I feel comforted; you see, my love, he has already dried my tears."

The actor raised his head, and surveyed her with a mournful smile: "It is the voice of my Lucy, and it never yet failed to cheer me: Dear girl, what shall we do in our present exigency?"

"I have but one resource left," said she, "and that I fear is but a forlorn hope. During your absence of a day, distributing play-bills round the country, I plaited a couple of coarse straw bonnets, and yesterday offered them for sale, at a very low price, to all the milliners in town; and though I pleaded distress, they coldly refused to purchase the goods; but the vicar's daughter

(a poor woman opposite told me) is a very charitable young lady; and if I applied to her ——"

"You would be sure of success!" cried a voice near her; and the next moment, Francis stood before the astonished couple. Carried away by the impetuosity of his feelings, he never for a moment reflected that he would cut a very dishonourable figure, as a spy and a listener.

"Who are you, sir," said the actor, turning fiercely towards him, "who dare intrude thus abruptly on our misery?"

With an air of frank and manly commiseration, Stanhope replied, "My conduct must appear mean in your eyes; but it was dictated by benevolence. I was drawn hither by the voice of a fellow-creature, apparently in great sorrow, and have been a painful spectator of the late distressing scene. I am deeply interested in your afflictions, and should feel a pleasure in relieving them."

He held out his hand to the actor, as he ceased speaking, who grasping it for some moments with convulsive energy, exclaimed, "Most gratefully will I accept your offers of service, generous young man! nor will I attempt to hide from you, that we are suffering from actual want, and stand greatly in need of assistance."

"If I am not mistaken," said Francis, "your

name is Warren,—the gentleman who acted the part of Sebastian last night."

"That is my theatrical name; I bore a better once, but I have disgraced it, and a good family, by my folly."

"What could induce a genteel, well-educated man, like you, to join a party of strolling players?"

"At this moment, it appears to me an act of madness," said the actor,—"the blindest infatuation that ever led youth and inexperience to destruction. I am not the first man whom headstrong passions, vanity, and a romantic spirit, have hurried on to ruin. You, sir, appear to take a kindly interest in our fate; if, therefore, you will deign to take a seat in this wretched apartment, I will relate to you the circumstances which led to this act of indiscretion." Francis having gladly accepted the proffered invitation, the actor thus continued: "My father was a captain in the army, the younger son of an ancient, and highly respectable family; he fell, in Lord Wellington's first campaign, on the continent, and left my mother a young widow, to bring up two sons on a very limited income, which was principally derived from a small estate in Berkshire, together with the pension allowed her by government.

"My eldest brother, Walter, had turned his wishes towards the sea, from his earliest years, and my inclinations tended the same way.

"A cousin of my mother's, a captain in the navy, came so pay us a visit in the country, and, being greatly prepossessed by the bold, manly character, and fine person of Walter, he requested my mother to allow him to take him with him to sea, promising that he would use all his influence to push him forward in his profession.

"My mother, who spoiled us both sadly, reluctantly granted his suit; Walter, therefore, accompanied Captain Graham to London, and, a few weeks after, came to bid us adieu, in his smart, new uniform.

"I was so captivated by my brother's dress and appearance in his naval clothes, that I hung on my mother's arm, and, even with tears, implored her to permit me to enter into the same service; she, however, was so fond of me, that the bare mention of my wishes caused her such anguish, that I, who tenderly loved her, yielded to her tears and remonstrance, and abandoned all thoughts of becoming a sailor.

"Dear mother, could you have looked forward into the dread futurity, and beheld the bitter fate that awaited your favourite son, how gladly would you have yielded to his youthful prayers!

"Soon after this, our house, which, together with a few acres, was the whole of our actual property, was consumed by fire, and my mother was glad to sell the land that belonged to it, and seek for another home: she went to London, and boarded in the house of a respectable widow-lady in Paddington. I was then sixteen, and my mother, finding her health daily declining, began to consider some eligible plan for my future maintainance; physic, law, and divinity, were attended with expences which my mother's shattered finances could no longer supply; and the idea of trade, to one who had filled a very genteel station in life, and felt the proud consciousness of having belonged to a good family, was not at all in unison with her feelings. She applied, in this exigency, to her rich relatives; but she was struggling with adversity, and they returned no answer to her solicitations.

"Her maternal uncle was a very wealthy merchant; and, after many delays, and vain hopes of bettering our condition, stern necessity obliged her to apply to him to take me into his counting-house.

"After many demurs, and a long time for consideration, and a thousand doubts as to the probability of his young kinsman, who had been brought up as a fine gentleman, ever making a man of

business, he consented to receive me, on very moderate terms, into his house.

"This important affair once settled, my mother yielded to the nervous debility which had long preyed on her spirits, and I had not been an inmate two months in my uncle's house in Threadneedle-street, before I was called upon to perform the sad office of following my only parent to the grave.

"Her whole property, after the deduction of the funeral expences, only amounted to one thousand pounds, which was left to be equally divided, when I came of age, between my brother and me. My uncle was appointed as our common guardian; an office that worthy gentleman did not much approve of, grumbling greatly at its being imposed on him: but he told me, if I was a good lad, and looked well to the main chance, much might be done towards making a fortune, with five hundred pounds.

"Never was there a person in this world, so ill calculated to make a man of business, as myself: having spent so much idle time in the country, I was romantic to a degree; and my head turned on nothing but the adventures of the heroes of a neighbouring circulating library, whose treasures my indefatigable search after novelty had nearly exhausted: but was mostly capti-

vated by the charms of the drama, and knew a great part of Shakespeare's finest compositions by heart.

"My uncle, Mr. Moreland, was the father of a large family of daughters, who were all married and settled well in the world, excepting the youngest, who was finishing her education in a convent in France. What fairy castles, what delightful speculations, did the return of this daughter give rise to in my young heart! The time I had hitherto spent in Threadneedle-street had been, to me, worse than Egyptian bondage; Lucy came, and turned my prison into a home of love and peace. Brought up in the solitude of a convent, I found Miss Moreland as romantic and visionary as myself: and, united by the same sentiments and ties of relationship, we soon formed an ardent attachment to each other.

"Our affection was carefully concealed from Mr. Moreland, but as we always spent our evenings together, we had an opportunity of enjoying each other's conversation, till our lively and entertaining dialogues drew on Lucy the displeasure of her father; who, in order to prevent all social intercourse between us, instituted the disagreeable custom of either one or other of us reading aloud the newspaper to him, till we retired to rest, which was seldom later than ten o'clock in

the winter-time: but even here I continued to elude his vigilance, by concealing letters between the leaves of the paper, by which means we continued nightly to communicate our opinions and sentiments to each other. Mr. Moreland was a close man, and never allowed us to frequent any places of amusement natural to young people of our age, excepting once a week, on a Saturday-night, when we always attended him to Covent-Garden theatre. The manager being a relation of his, presented the orders, so that this weekly entertainment was free of expence.

"As this was the only evening in the week we were ever allowed to leave home, we enjoyed it with all our hearts, and the performers, and the performance, became, for days afterwards, a theme of conversation. So far did we carry our admiration for theatricals, that we privately got up many plays of Shakespeare's; and, when the old gentleman was out of town, acted them, with a few young friends, in a spare warehouse.

"Our youthful associates thought my Lucy a second Miss O'Neil, and, as for me, I was equal to Young or Kemble: I drank in this flattery with delight, and paid many visits to the theatre without my uncle's knowledge, till my love for acting became a ruling passion.

"I was just out of my time, and my uncle

admitted me a confidental clerk on a very handsome salary; for, to give Mr. Moreland his due, he was a strict master, but not an unjust man. After serving him with great fidelity for a twelvemonth, I confessed my attachment to Lucy, and asked his consent to our union.

"I shall never forget his indignation, nor the scornful laugh which accompanied his refusal. Lucy was instantly dispatched to a married sister's house in the country; and, the next week, the old gentleman presented me with a hundred pounds, as a reward for my services, together with a draft on his bankers, for the five hundred pounds he held in trust for me, and a letter of recommendation into another merchant's family. With a heavy heart I quitted his roof to seek another home.

"The gentleman to whom I was now recommended, received me with all imaginary kindness; but, as I was to board out of the family, I only saw him once a day at the counting-house, to settle business, and give orders.

"After the ordinary hours of duty were over, my time, unfortunately, was my own; and, as I had formed no acquaintance in town, and heard no tidings of Lucy, I frequented the theatres every night, to dissipate my own dulness, and to banish all memory of the past. I had been with

Mr. Johnstone about six months, when I was roused from this state of careless indifference by a note from Lucy."

"I ask pardon for interrupting you," said Francis; "but did Mr. Johnstone reside in Lombard-street?"

"He did: the firm was Johnstone, Witherington, and Co. Mr. Johnstone was a man of large property, and the father of a lovely and promising family."

"His eldest son is studying the law in this town. Do you remember the name of Henry Johnstone?"

"Oh, perfectly well; a handsome, gay, lively boy he was, and very partial to me. So Henry is here? oh, it is well for me, that this haggard visage, and wasted form will effectually conceal from his knowledge, his once dear Richard?"

"I am sure it would afford him the greatest pleasure to assist you."

"I doubt it not; but there is something struggling here," he continued, laying his hand on his breast, "which I cannot wholly overcome; pride is, perhaps, despicable in a wretch like me: but to conclude my tale—

"If you have never loved,—you can never form an idea of the raptures I felt, on perusing my Lucy's letter. She said, in brief words, that she

had received all my epistles; that her affections were firmly centred in me; and that neither time nor absence would ever effect any alteration in her sentiments; that her father and sisters, believing she had given up all thoughts of me, had suffered her quietly to return to London; and that, if I wished to see her, I must meet her at twelve o'clock the next morning, in Trinity-square.

"That day appeared the longest in my existance; every coach and cart, as it passed, made me start, and the pulses in my head throbbed with such violence, I could scarcely hold my pen. At length the promised hour arrived; and the result of that interview was, my persuading Lucy to meet me the next morning at St. George's church in the Borough, where I would be waiting with a licence and a clergyman; and after we should be once united, I proposed that we should go boldly to Mr. Moreland, and confess our marriage. Lucy was, it first, terrified at the bare mention of this daring project; but my expostulations, prayers, and entreaties, at length overcame her scruples; and I never suffered myself to reflect, for a moment, on the consequences of this rash step till the knot was tied, and I found myself the husband of my beloved girl.

"As we walked down the street towards her

father's mansion, I felt my heart and courage fail me; I was going to present myself, like an audacious thief, before the man who had afforded me an asylum in my orphan years, and calmly tell him I had robbed him of his daughter: but the time for reflection was past, and I went through the trying scene with an intrepidity that astonished even myself.

"The old man's anger at first, was loud and furious; it yielded, at last, to his daughter's tears. From threatening to turn me, as a base, ungrateful villain, from his doors, he finally received me as a son; and, though he would not advance a farthing towards our future maintainanee, he gave us his hearty blessing.

"He told me that I had a good salary, and if I turned that, and the five hundred pounds left me by my mother, to a good use, I might live very comfortably, and my future conduct would decide his. This concession was more than we expected from him, and we returned to ready-furnished apartments with light and joyous hearts.

"The first year after my marriage, I was the happiest man in the world, blest with the best of wives, and a sweet baby, who was the mutual darling of our hearts. Mr. Johnstone and his family treated me with distinction and kindness; we were visited by all Lucy's friends; and the old

gentleman was so pleased with the steady perseverance I manifested in business, that he promised to take me into partnership at the end of the year.

"You will scarcely believe me madman or fool enough to mar, by my own imprudence, the fortune it was now in my power to make; but such was the case. Our visits to the theatre were as frequent as ever, and it was my ill-luck to form an intimate acquaintance with a young man, who had tried his fortune on the London boards, and been dismissed with contempt: he thought himself worthy of a better fate, and so did I.

"Whether from a mean desire for me to incur the same disgrace as he had done, or from what other motive, I know not, but Mr. King was always urging me to try my abilities that way: he praised my voice, my figure, my air, my attitudes, and induced one of the minor performers to join in his commendations. Fired by ambition, and my mind and better judgment enervated with their insiduous flattery, I seized an opportunity of making myself known to the manager of Covent Garden theatre, who professed himself very much pleased with my recitation and theatrical talents; so that, after several months of close attendance on rehearsals, he gave me a trial, in the well-known character of Richard the Third.

Romeo was more suited to my style of person, taste, and abilities; but I was over-persuaded by King to make my debût in the blustering tyrant. It was that character that he had himself failed in, but he had not the least doubt, he said, of my success.

"With a heart high with hope, and burning with impatience, I made my first entrance on the boards of a London stage, before a crowded audience. I had never suffered myself for a moment to anticipate the agitating feelings to which such a public situation would give rise. The eyes of every one were upon me: I had scarcely uttered the first speech before my voice faultered, the theatre swam round with me, my knees trembled under me, and a cold perspiration bedewed my hands and face; the part I was to act, completely escaped my memory, in spite of the assistance of the prompter, I hesitated, stopped; and was finally hissed off the stage.

"My feelings of mortification, when I recovered my former self-possession, were almost too acute to bear: I even shed tears of bitter vexation and regret, when I called to mind the disgrace this adventure would cast, both upon myself and my family: I dreaded to return home to my wife and friends, whom I had kept in profound ignorance of my intention of going on the stage: I

could not encounter the reproaches of my incensed father-in-law, and the sarcasms of my acquaintance. I was restless, miserable, and irresolute, when King appeared, to offer his advice and condolence.

"He told me to rally my spirits, for worse misfortunes had happened to better men than me; and though I might not suit the fastidious taste of a London audience, I might make my fortune in the country; and he proposed that we should collect what ready money we were masters of, and form a company, of which we should be managers, sharing the profits equally between us.

"I eagerly accepted his offer, flattering myself that, at no very distant period, I might tread triumphantly that stage from which I had been so uncourteously expelled.

"The next morning, the papers teemed with my disgrace, and the news fell like a stroke of thunder on my poor Lucy; and when I revealed to her my future plans, her grief knew no bounds: but the ridicule this adventure had drawn on me, made me so anxious to quit a scene which had become so odious to me, that I was deaf to her prayers; and disposing of my effects in town, in a few weeks I bid adieu to Mr. Johnstone and his family, and in an evil hour commenced a professional actor.

"Whilst our money lasted, we succeeded pretty well; being able to procure handsome scenery, and splendid dresses, which attract the notice of country people, far beyond the best performance. Mr. King soon became jealous of the applause I gained, and I found my situation daily growing more unpleasant. After the first novelty was over, I was disgusted at the life I had chosen, and humbled at beholding my virtuous wife in a situation so degrading to her mind and talents; the agitation of mind she was constantly in, produced a long and lingering illness, which reduced us to such poverty, that I was forced to sell my share in the concern; and, what was worse, to run deeply in Mr. King's debt. To leave the stage, was now impossible, and our weekly wages dwindled to a very trifle. I will not harrow up your feelings by a recital of our miseries for the last two years: we have been many times on the point of perishing for want, but I never could conquer my pride sufficiently to solicit the charity of others. To add to our misfortunes, Mr. Moreland died without even mentioning my poor Lucy in his will; and Walter returned from sea a distinguished and gallant officer, justly disowning all relationship to his unworthy brother. To conclude this disgraceful narration; we are at present without food, and without money; I have

just made a hopeless, ineffectual application to Mr. King, who has flatly told me, he will pay no more in advance. Our landlady is clamorous for her rent; my wife is ill, and my children are starving?"

Again overcome by bitter reflections, the actor clenched his hands together, and traversed the apartment with the same dejected steps and distracted mein, which had, at first, so deeply awakened the sympathy of Francis; who now, unable any longer to witness his agony, slipped his purse into Warren's hand, telling him that he should see him again 'ere long: he left the house, his feelings quite overcome by the heartfelt "God bless you!" pronounced by the actor, and by the convulsive sobs of his young wife.

Francis directed his eteps towards Johnstone's lodgings, thinking that, as he had known the unfortunate Warren, he would be the fittest agent to assist him in relieving them.

He found Henry at breakfast; and, without much ceremony, entered on the purport of his visit. Johnstone expressed much feeling and concern in the distress of the actor and his family; "Is it possible!" he said, "that the high spirited handsome Richard Musgrave, can have sunk into any thing so low. Poor fellow! I thought, last night, his figure and voice were familiar to me.

But I could scarcely have recognised in his wife, the beautiful Lucy Moreland."

"Can you think of any plan which may help to rescue them from their forlorn situation?" asked Stanhope.

Johnstone paused some minutes: and then looked up with an air of lively hope on his countenance: "Yes, Stanhope, there is a chance that my father, who is a truly benevolent man, would again receive him as his clerk; Musgrave was an excellent accountant, and always a great favourite with him; and he has never ceased to regret the folly which induced Richard to leave his service. I will write to him this very day, and say all I can to interest the cause of an old friend."

"Henry, you are a dear, good fellow!" cried Stanhope, heartily shaking his hand, and rejoicing in so fair a prospect of success, "Charity may be well said to cover a multitude of faults."

"Now do not praise me, Frank; there is more of my own dear self in the matter than meets your eye; Captain Walter Musgrave pays his addresses to my sister Kate, and it is only natural that I should wish to rescue my relations from indigence and disgrace: besides, it may bring about a reconciliation between the brothers."

"I now rejoice in sacrificing my own feelings, and accompanying you to the play, last night:

what singular events has it not brought about?" said Francis, his thoughts returning to his conversation with Anne Irvin, and the pleasing hopes to which that interview had given rise. "I feel quite a different being to what I was a few days ago, and could now almost call myself happy: But I must not loiter here. Fare-thee-well, Hal! I shall see thee again in the evening."

"Stay!" said Johnstone, "and hear what I have to say." Francis impatiently turned round: "If you will draw up a subscription for the benefit of poor Richard, I will forward it among our townspeople, and will freely add my own mite."

"That I will do with the greatest pleasure," said Francis, turning to the young student with glistening eyes. "In the mean time, Frank, sit down and take breakfast with me."

"Not a bit! My spirits are too much excited to require food; I must see Anne Irvin directly. So saying, he darted out of the room, to the no small entertainment of the gay, light-hearted Johnstone, who, pushing the tea equipage from him, began his letter to his father.

Francis was so intent on the project he had in view, that he scarcely paused in his rapid walk to the parsonage.

Here he learnt, to his infinite disappointment, that Anne and her friend had just left home, ac-

companied by the groom, to take a long ride into the country on horseback; and that they were not expected to return before four o'clock to dinner.

On entering the parlour, he found Mr. Irvin ready equipped for a journey; and he took a seat on the sofa by Mrs. Irvin, but with such an expression of chagrin on his countenance, that it did not escape the observation of the good vicar, who, in his usual kind manner, enquired the cause of his uneasiness. Francis coloured, was confused, and, after hesitating a few minutes, stammered forth, that he wished very much to see Miss Irvin, and was disappointed at her absence.

"Was your business with Nancy of such a very pressing nature, that waiting a few hours should make such a material difference?" said Mr. Irvin, with a good-natured smile. "But clear that cloudy brow, Francis; I am going to visit a sick man at S——; perhaps you will accompany me, and if not too unfashionable to sit down to a plain family dinner at four o'clock, the girls will then be home, and you, in the interim, will have leisure to reflect on this mighty affair."

Francis joyfully accepted the invitation, and, after partaking of a hasty luncheon, Mr. Irvin ordered the chaise to the door. They had passed the second mile-stone, before Francis had sufficiently dismissed the plans that were floating

through his mind for the relief of Musgrave, to observe that they had taken the road that led towards the sea; he now, with some degree of interest, asked Mr. Irvin whether the invalid resided on the coast.

"Yes: Where you ever at S——?"

"Once; but my visit was a brief one, and did not extend beyond a couple of hours."

"It is a pretty place," returned Mr. Irvin, "and affords better accommodation to the traveller and invalid, than are commonly met with in small sea-port towns; the adjacent country is well worth exploring, being rich in fine old ruins; and these venerable monuments of antiquity draw much company to S——, in the summer season. The person I am going to visit resides about sixteen miles from us in a neat cottage, as I am told, on the brow of one of the eastern cliffs."

"Who is he?"

"His name is Skinner; he was once a parishioner of mine, but left our town upwards of twenty years ago. I am rather surprised at his present urgent application to me, as I am in perfect ignorance of the manner in which he has spent his life since he left our town.

"Whilst a resident there, he was almost constantly employed by me in his occupation of a gardener; not from any partiality I had to the

man, who bore a very indifferent character, but he was the only person, for miles around, who understood the proper method of training fruit-trees, and taking charge of a green-house.

"Gardeners, in general, are a very moral and religious class of people. The cultivation of fruits and flowers seems to give them a refinement of taste and sentiment, above the common order of husbandmen; and their employment, in itself, is so rational and amusing, that it tends to draw forth the noble qualities of the mind, and to render them agreeable and entertaining companions.

"Skinner, though a good hand at his business, was an exception to this rule, as his mind and pursuits were of the coarsest and most brutal description; his countenance was dark, sullen, designing, and cruel; and the severity with which he treated a large family of small children, was supposed to be the cause of the premature death of most of them; whilst those who were so unfortunate as to survive, have given to the world fatal proofs of the ill effect of bad example and an erroneous education. I often argued with Skinner on his evil course of life, but he was one of those on whom advice may, literally, be said to be thrown away: who, having chosen the path of ill, sullenly and morosely adhere to their sinful ways.

"I had, hitherto, employed him out of compassion to his wife and children, but his petty depredations every day becoming more daring and apparent, I was obliged to dismiss him altogether from my service. A gentleman, who owned a large portion of the land which composes part of the cliffs I have before mentioned, let him an acre of ground at a very reasonable rent, in consequence of which he left B——; he converted the plot of land into a vegetable garden, from which he supplied the markets of the adjacent towns; and, suddenly, from being a very poor man, became comparatively rich. I understand he had built a house out of his earnings, and was enjoying a competence from the fruits of his labour, when a fall from the cliff, in a fit of intoxication, laid him on that bed from which he is never again expected to rise. My servant awoke me this morning with a message from him, to implore my immediate presence; as something lay on his conscience, which he would reveal to no one but his old master, and he could not die in peace till he had seen me."

"And have you any idea of the disclosure he is about to make?"

"Not the least; without it refers to his bad conduct as a husband and father."

They were now approaching the town; and Mr.

Irvin, leaving the chaise at the inn, hired a boy to show him the way to Skinner's cottage. Their walk extended for a mile along a high ridge of cliffs, whose broken sides, composed of hard gravel and loose running sand, presented their rugged points to the waves of the restless ocean; which, hourly undermining their unstable basis, frequently brought down from the top, huge fragments of stony earth, which strewed the narrow beach, giving a wild and gloomy aspect to the surrounding scenery. Naturally fond of a sea prospect, Francis greatly enjoyed his walk; the glow of the autumnal sky, the keen bracing of the sea air, and the deep blue of the ocean, alive with fishing-boats, tended to raise his spirits to an unusual degree of animation; he forgot in the train of pleasing thoughts to which the scene before him gave birth, the purport of his visit, till the boy stopped before a pretty stone-dwelling, surrounded by a neat garden; he now called to mind the character of the man whom they were about to see.

The door was opened by an old woman, acting in the capacity of nurse, (for Mrs. Skinner had been long dead,) who seemed truly glad to welcome Mr. Irvin. "God bless you, sir; I am heartily rejoiced to see you. The poor soul, above stairs, is desperately bad, and keeps calling on you sadly."

Francis shuddered as the groans of a person in keen bodily pain, mingled with frequent oaths in the ravings of delirium, came from the apartment over head.

"Let us lose no time," said Mr. Irvin, taking from his bosom a small bible: "moments are precious: if I mistake not, his sands are nearly out."

He immediately followed the old woman up stairs, accompanied by Francis, whose cheeks had already lost the ruddy glow which his quick walk in the sea breeze had bestowed on his manly countenance; the sick man was sitting up in the bed, his teeth and hands clenched, and his hollow eyes restlessly wandering from side to side, as if in quest of some imaginary object of terror.

His long grey locks had escaped from the handkerchief that was tied round his head, and streamed over his shoulders, giving to the harsh lines of his avaricious and forbidding aspect, a more ghastly appearance, which was rendered doubly hideous by the livid stamp of death. "Skinner!" said Mr. Irvin, in a mild voice, as he approached the bed, "how do you find yourself?"

The man gazed wildly on him: "Are you come to call me to judgment!"

"To offer you the consolation and hope contained in the gospel," said the vicar, striving to

recal the wandering mind of the wretched sufferer, who, pushing him rudely back, exclaimed: "Away! there's blood upon my soul; I will not die!"

"Unhappy man! what is it that lies so heavy on your conscience?"

He spoke in vain; Skinner's eyes were fixed in vacancy, with an intensity which seemed almost to deprive his strained eye-balls of the power of vision: "There! there, he comes! He glides between you and the bed-post; he calls me to appear at the judgment-seat of God: Ah! save me from him!" He covered his head, and groaned aloud, while the bed shook under him, as one suffering from an ague fit.

"Skinner!" said Mr. Irvin, in an impressive voice, while he felt convinced that something dreadful lay on his conscience; "what have you done? what is it you fear?"

"Ah! is it you, Mr. Irvin?" returned Skinner, recovering himself with a heavy sigh: "You are come at last. Martha," he continued, "bring me a drop of water; my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth." The woman reached him a cup of wine and water, with a trembling hand. He had scarcely tasted it, when throwing it angrily from him, he added, "Take away that cursed liquor! have I not had enough of it be-

fore? I ask for water, and you bring me fire: so it will be at the last day! I shall burn, but there will be no water to cool me!"

Mr. Irvin, who felt very anxious for the eternal welfare of the conscience-striken wretch before him, now took a seat by the side of the bed; and tried, by gentle admonitions, to induce him to attend to the prayers appointed by the church for the sick and dying. The man listened with frightful eagerness, but neither joined in the service, nor uttered the least response; till, taking advantage of a pause in Mr. Irvin's discourse, he rose up suddenly in the bed, and grasping Mr. Irvin's arm, said, with great solemnity—"Twenty years ago, you told me, Mr. Irvin, what my end would be; twenty years ago I mocked you in my heart, but time has proved your words but too true: How, think you, did a drunken dissolute sinner like me become rich?" Mr. Irvin turned pale at the frightful vehemence with which this speech was addressed to him.

"I know not," he replied; "I heard of the alteration in your circumstances, and hoped it had been the reward of honest industry." The dying creature now uttered a wild exclamation, something between a laugh and a scream, whose horrid and discordant tones smote so electrically on the nerves of Francis, that he withdrew to a

distant window, and turned his back on a scene which he had no resolution to encounter; while Skinner, in a hurried voice, said,—"Let every one but you leave the apartment, while I reveal to you the manner in which I acquired wealth."

Old Martha gladly obeyed, and Francis would willingly have followed her example, but Mr. Irvin motioned him to stay.

After glancing round the chamber with a timid, yet anxious eye, Skinner continued: "Mr. Irvin! I could not die without seeing you: till this heavy weight is removed from my soul, I cannot pray; I am given over to the power of the tempter, who mocks me when I only think of mercy and forgiveness."

"Skinner!" you must combat with these dreadful thoughts," said Mr. Irvin; "repentance never comes too late, when accompanied with a humble, contrite heart: 'Turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy; to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.'"

"I cannot, Mr. Irvin, while that pale figure stands there accusing me: so will he stand before the great judge: his voice will be heard! It rises from the deep sea against me; I know neither his nation, nor his tongue; but God knows all; He will bring the hidden thing to light, and proclaim what was done in darkness and secresy on the

house top, and I am lost—lost—and that for ever!"

Another fit of convulsive shuddering followed this frightful speech; after a pause of some minutes, however, the dying man raised his head, and, with a heavy groan, commenced the following relation:

"I had been here two years, and was struggling with great poverty, when, one night, I was awakened by signals of distress from a ship off this coast. Starting from my bed, I ran to the casement to ascertain what was the matter. It was a stormy winter's night, and the billows were rolling mountains high, and sparkling and flashing like liquid silver in the clearest moonlight I think I ever witnessed; by her beams I could plainly discover a noble vessel tossing on yonder reef of rocks, the sea breaking dismally over her shattered decks; she lay so close in shore that, with the naked eye, I could discover the men clinging to the shrouds, and their cries for help came upon the wind, and rose awfully amidst the yelling of the storm.

"It was deep midnight, and the wind, I suppose, carried their signals of distress the other way; for no boat was put off from the town to her resistance; and in truth, sir, no boat could have left the shore in such a sea. Whilst I stood

watching her from the casement, a giant wave hid her from my view; the billows rolled onward, but the ship was no longer visible.

"A few hours after she had sunk, the wind lulled, and the sea became comparatively calm; and as I could not sleep for thinking of the midnight storm, I hastily dressed myself, and, taking a large stick in my hand, ran down to the beach to see what fortune had cast upon our coast.

"The moon was still very bright, and shone with frosty splendour on the cloudless sky, and by her light I could discover something beneath one of the highest cliffs which glittered like a star. On approaching nearer, I discovered a young officer, dressed in a splendid military uniform, who had succeeded in gaining the shore, and was the only one saved, out of the whole ill-fated crew. He was still alive, but so weak that he was unable to rise. Perceiving me, he held up his hand, as if to implore my assistance, which, at that moment, I call God to witness! I would frankly have offered him; but as I drew close to him, the devil entered my heart: I perceived that he had a beautiful chain round his neck, and that the gold on his dress was worth something considerable. As I stood debating with myself what course to pursue, he called to me in his own language, and made an effort to rise. I

think he mistrusted me: for, as I stood with my eyes rivetted on him, and the bludgeon poised in my hand, he gave me such a look, that eternity will scarcely be able to efface it from my memory. He then raised his eyes to heaven, as if in deep and earnest prayer. I retired under the shadow of the cliff, and raised the stick. There was something so beautiful in his countenance, I could not then commit the horrid dead I meditated,—I dropped the weapon, looked at him again, and was determined to save his life. I approached nearer with this intention. Oh! that the moon had hid her light!—but she shone full, when that accursed gold—the sordid love of gain—stifled the voice of conscience, and rendered me deaf to the cries of a fellow-creature imploring mercy. A demoniac spirit entered my breast, and imparted terrible strength to my arm. One deep groan told me my aim had been certain:—the next moment, the gallant young man who had escaped the fury of the ocean, lay a corpse at my feet. Horror took possession of my mind. I was no longer alone, but surrounded by a thousand frightful phantoms that flitted to and fro in the deep shadows of the projecting cliff, and the very noise of the waters meeting the shore seemed to accuse me of murder.

"I hastily stripped the rich clothes from the

dead body, and tying up a quantity of stones in a handkerchief, fastened them round his neck: and, as the tide was fast retreating, I once more committed him to the bosom of the deep, carefully obliterating from the spot all traces of the murder.

"With feelings of indiscribable horror, I returned home; fancying in every sound that met my ear, the pursuing steps of my recent victim.

"On examining his pockets, I found they contained a hundred pieces of gold, a handsome watch, a picture set round with pearls, and a large packet of papers;—which latter I burnt, lest they might lead to a discovery. A few days after I took a journey to London, and disposed of the gold, the clothes, the watch, and the setting of the picture to a Jew, upon whom I could trust; and who gave me a hundred pounds in lieu of these things; which enabled me, with careful management, to make a successful speculation, which has since placed me above the reach of poverty. In that little drawer, Mr. Irvin, you will find the painting. I have never dared to look at it since the hour I thrust it there."

After a long pause, for both Francis and Mr. Irvin was too much affected to speak, Skinner continued in a hollow voice, "Mr. Irvin! I have become rich with this money, but the curse of

blood is upon it, and I have never lost sight of the lawful possessor, since I murdered him. For eighteen years, his face has constantly been before me. When the moon is bright, I see him standing on the edge of that cliff, pointing, with a mournful gesture, to the billows, and to the spot where I slew him. I hear his groans in the noon-day; but the dark night brings with it horrors you can never know, and which no language can convey. Look! he comes again! he is standing at your side, with his pale face and dark eyes!"

Mr. Irvin involuntarily startled, and turned round, but only met the colourless and agitated countenance of his young friend, who had approached the murderer's bed, who now cried out, in an agony, while the death-rattles hoarsely murmured in his throat,—"He beckons me!—I will not come! Hold me, Mr. Irvin! keep me here!—I will not go! I cannot—I will not die! Oh! Lord, have mercy on my sinful soul!"

The voice ceased: the struggle was over. The guilty wretch sunk back on the pillow; his eyes now became glazed, and fixed; and the next moment, the open mouth and the ghastly stillness which spread awfully round, showed that the sinner was already summoned to that bar, before which he so much dreaded to appear.

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After Mr. Irvin had consigned the body to the care of old Martha, he proceeded to examine the drawer before-mentioned, in the hope of discovering who the unfortunate gentleman was that had been thus barbarously murdered.

Among a heap of old things, he discovered the picture; which was the likeness of a very beautiful young woman. At the back was a braid of very light hair, surrounded by a German motto, and the names of Augustus and Theresa wrought beneath. Whilst looking at this interesting portrait, Mr. Irvin felt the tears start from his eyes. "Unhappy young lady!" he said, "how many anxious looks have you cast upon the ocean! how many prayers have you breathed for his safety! what tears have you not shed over the probable fate of your lover, till hope has again dried them, and whispered the possibility of his return! Francis, this little portrait speaks more forcibly to the heart, than a thousand volumes; and the very mystery which involves the fate of the original, gives it an additional interest."

"The gentleman," said Stanhope, "was, most likely, a foreigner of distinction. But what can be said of the man who could commit such an act of barbarous cruelty?"

"He has been already dreadfully punished by his own accusing conscience," returned the vicar,

as they quitted the abode of sin and death. "Of all the passions of the human breast, avarice is the most insatiable. Love, hatred, and ambition, have an end, and perish with the attainment of their object, and the hopes that led to it. But this sordid and unaccountable propensity is never satisfied; but continues to corrode the heart, and shut up every avenue to virtue. It renders a man deaf to the voice of compassion, till his bosom becomes even harder than the metal which is the object of his idolatry; often does it hurry on the besotted wretch to the commission (as in the case of Skinner) of the most dreadful crimes. It was of such rich men that our blessed Lord doubtless spoke in those memorable words, 'How hardly shall they who have great riches, enter into the kingdom of God!'"

The thoughts of Mr. Irvin and his companion were so intently occupied by the events of the past scene, that they did not at first observe that they had taken the wrong path, and were nearly opposite the ruins of C—— church, which stood about a quarter of a mile from the sea.

Francis had often heard visitors to the neighbouring seaports descant on the beauties of this noble piece of antiquity, and he requested Mr. Irvin to allow him to take a nearer survey of the place. The vicar kindly and immediately com-

plied with his wishes, and Francis was gratified beyond his utmost expectations. Few can visit this majestic ruin without feelings of profound awe, or gaze on the once hallowed fane with a careless and indifferent eye.

The mind seems instinctively to recal the thousands who have trod these grass-grown aisles, and who now sleep calm and forgotten beneath the sod. A small church of more modern date occupies the steeple end of the ancient edifice, but so little does it take from the size of the old structure, that it serves to make it appear yet more stupendous. "Where could the people have resided who once filled this magnificent building?" said Francis glancing round him; "I can only discover a few scattered houses, and fishermen's cabins, on the spot."

"This ruin must serve as a record of their fate, and supplies the place of a monument. The devouring waves of the ocean has consumed the dwellings of the children of the land, and even their graves, together with this magnificent pile, will, in a few years, share the same destiny." returned Mr. Irvin; "but, Francis, we are not alone!"

Young Stanhope started as his eye fell for the first time on a young peasant girl who had remained motionless as a statue, steadily surveying

the ocean through an old telescope which rested against a broken abutment of one of the Gothic windows.

Her dress was very plain, but fantastically adjusted; and her long dark hair, that fell in neglected tresses round her face, was crowned with a wreath of the graceful leaves of the ash, which had been gathered from the noble tree which grows in front of the ruins, and appears like the drooping genius of the place, weeping over the graves of her departed children. The girl arose, and presenting the telescope to Mr. Irvin, asked him with great simplicity to see if he could discover a ship upon the sea. "I dare say there is one," she said; "but my eyes are dim with tears, and I cannot hold the glass steadily." The wandering glance of the large, light blue eye, revealed to the humane vicar the state of the poor creature's mind. He took the glass, to please her, and looked for a few minutes through it attentively. "The sea is quite calm, my dear, and is occupied by no vessel larger than a fishing-boat."

"He will not come to-day, then," said the girl, with a deep sigh; "I will go home, and tell my mother so."

She was about to depart, but Francis, who felt strongly interested in the object before him, enquired whom she expected.

The colour flushed the poor girl's pale emaciated cheek as she replied—"One whom the neighbours tell me will never return; but he will come home to his poor Mary, now the days are long and the weather is fine, and we shall be so happy again." She looked up, as she ceased speaking, with an expression of lively hope in her eyes, which a moment before were dim with tears, then with a heavy sigh turned them once more on the ocean: "The sea is quite calm on the ocean now, and glitters like silver in the sunbeams; but in the winter it is dark and stormy: I hope he will come before the long dark nights, for when the moon is behind the clouds, I cannot see his ship. My eyes ache and my heart aches, and my temples burn; and I say, he will come on the morrow—but the morrow comes, and finds me still alone."

At this moment they were joined by the mother of the girl, a sensible-looking elderly woman,—"Alas! gentlemen," she said, "you must pay no regard to my daughter, her mind is distracted. It is a heavy trial to me, but the Lord's will be done."

"How long has she been afflicted? and what was the cause of her frightful malady?" asked Mr. Irvin.

The woman sighed deeply, then leading the

girl to a little distance, she bade her sit down on the piece of a broken column, and tie up a nose-gay for the gentlemen from the heath which grew in abundance at her feet. Poor Mary joyfully obeyed, while her mother returned to the gentlemen.

"I dared not, sir, mention the cause of her calamity before her. She is more sensible to-day, and would have discovered herself to be the subject of our discourse."

"Is it possible," said Francis, "that she is so unfortunate as to be conscious of her present state?"

"Oh, yes, sir: at times, deeply so. Then she will weep, and call herself a poor, lost creature. I lived in hope for a long time that she would ultimately recover. But she is not long for this world, the grave will soon terminate her sorrows.

"Three years ago she was a good, industrious girl, the pride and joy of my heart, and she greatly assisted me with her needle in helping to support a large family. We had a neighbour, a fisherman, who had resided in the house adjoining for thirty years, and the strictest friendship subsisted between the two families. His only son, a fine, handsome young man, bore an unexceptionable character in the village, and sailed as mate in a trading vessel belonging to a wealthy merchant

in the neighbouring town, from whom he earned very good wages, and always appeared smart and respectable.

"Robert, from a boy, took a fancy to my Mary, and their affection strengthened with years into the most ardent attachment. The match pleased all parties, and their banns were put up at church, and the day appointed for their marriage. But Mr. Turner's vessel, at that juncture, happened to be loaded and just ready to sail for London with a very valuable freight of corn on board, and he particularly requested Robert to go that voyage; and he, willing to oblige his master, consented, though very reluctantly, to leave his betrothed bride. Mary only waited his return to become the wife of the man on whom she had for years placed all her hopes and affections: but the expected vessel never again entered the port to which she was bound; and, after a few weeks of agonizing suspense, we concluded the probable result, that she had sunk in the night, and all hands had perished.

"Robert's aged parents soon followed their only son to the grave, and well had it been for Mary had she shared their fate; but she was young, and strong: yet the grief which could not break her heart, turned her brain; her quiet mind forsook her, and we had soon the sorrow of be-

holding our darling child a confirmed maniac. Mr. Turner, out of compassion, got her admitted into St. Luke's hospital. She was there a twelvemonth, and was then dismissed as an incurable patient. Since her return to her native village, she has formed the idea that her lover is not dead, but will certainly come back one day, and marry her. As this hope became stronger, her violence diminished, and she is now perfectly tractable and harmless, confining her malady almost entirely to this spot, to which she has taken the most enthusiastic predilection. She calls these ruins her home, and tells me that she and Robert mean to live here, and be very comfortable. She lingers here with that telescope from break of day to sunset, and often her watch extends through the long hours of night, when the weather is fine and the moon is at her full, for darkness brings to her bewildered mind a thousand imaginary horrors.

"I never try to argue her out of this idea, as some of our neighbours do; she is happy in the hope of his return, and becomes frantic when any one strives to convince her to the contrary."

"You are right," said Mr. Irvin; "what would be the use of depriving her of the only consolation her mind in its bereaved state is capable of receiving?"

"Ah, sir!" returned the woman, casting her eyes mournfully towards her daughter, "when I call to mind what she was three years ago, and see her thus, it is enough to break my heart." She turned away and burst into tears.

Mary, who by this time had finished selecting her nosegays, approached the gentlemen, and giving Mr. Irvin a bunch of beautiful heath and harebells, tied together with a piece of long grass, said in a plaintive voice, "Wear this, to remember poor Mary."

"I shall not easily forget thee, poor, afflicted one," returned the vicar, accepting the proffered gift, and slipping some money in exchange into the thin, extended hand. The girl smiled, and with an air of ineffable sweetness turned to Francis,—"You are young, and, if you love, ought to be kind and true; for woman's heart is tender, and droops before neglect as quickly as these flowers wither in the heat of the sun. The heath is an emblem of joy—it raises its crimson crest aloft, and smiles in all weathers; but this hareball is a type of sorrow—it bows its desponding head to the earth, and, like me, goes on in its way weeping. Farewell, and when you would be false-hearted, look at these flowers, and remember poor Mary,"

She put the nosegay into his hand, and, taking

her mother's arm, they disappeared among the ruins; and Francis and Mr. Irvin, deeply affected, pursued their walk to the town.

They had not resumed their seat in the chaise long, before Francis turned impatiently towards Mr. Irvin. "Is there nothing but sin and misery to be found in the world? Think of poor Mary,—what has she done to incur the wrath of heaven? Why is she overwhelmed with such direful afflictions? Three years ago, a good industrious girl, the pride and delight of her fond parent's heart—assisting with her labour to the support of a large family. What is she now? a blank!—the wreck of a human being!"

"Stay, Francis! you are going too far," said Mr. Irvin, sternly, "who shall dare to arraign the wisdom and justice of God? Her visitation is heavy; but it is from him. Therefore commune with your own heart, and be still. Shall the worm strive with its maker, or the clay say to the potter, why did you fashion me thus? Her life was in his hands, and he disposed of it as seemed best to his eternal wisdom; and rest assured of this truth, 'That he wounds but to heal—punishes but to reform.'"

"But in what could this poor creature have offended?"

"He alone knows, who reads the human heart

at a glance. Perhaps, had she calmly submitted to the will of her Creator, and sought for consolation in prayer, humbling herself before the chastening rod of affliction, this calamity had not befallen her. Think not I would accuse the poor stricken creature, or attempt to crush a broken reed; but, knowing the frailty and deceit of the human heart, and how prone we are, at all times, to murmur at the awful dispensation of Providence, I would rather accuse our own vile nature of ingratitude, than question the wisdom and justice of my Maker."

"Your reasoning may be good," said Francis, yielding to the gloomy feelings the two last scenes had called forth; "but the more I see of life, the more fully I am persuaded that it is the good who are, generally speaking, the victims of misfortune; while the bad flourish, and enjoy the fat of the earth."

"Do you envy their lot—their portion, which is of this world? But even here they do not always remain in the undisturbed possession of their ill-gotten wealth. 'What shall it benefit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' 'Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Do riches give happiness, or bring along with them peace? Have you forgotten already the death-bed of Skinner? Do you

think a good man, who walked humbly with his God, amid the agonies of disease, and on a bed of straw, could have suffered in the body one pang as keen as those which shook that guilty creature's soul?"

The image of the man, in his dying terrors, presented itself to Francis; he shuddered, and remained silent, while Mr. Irvin continued—

"Never, for a moment, suffer yourself to imagine that the eternal self-existing Principle of Good ever did, or ever could, create any of his creatures for evil. What may appear stern and inexplicable to our narrow comprehension, may be infinite goodness and mercy in him, 'who wishes not the death of a sinner, but would rather he should turn from his wickedness, and live.'" Francis leant back in the chaise, without replying to Mr. Irvin's arguments. Sorrow and regret were busy in his heart, and he remained silent and sad during the greater part of their ride home.

The eager hopes the events of the early part of the morning had awakened in his breast, the inward satisfaction he had felt in the prospect of relieving a distressed fellow-creature, by his own exertions, faded in discontented repinings. He no longer anticipated the joy of Musgrave, in being rescued from a life of poverty and shame,

or the tears of the grateful Lucy, in being released from the servile bondage of the stage, and restored to her former respectable situation in life, to her friends and family. The scenes of misery he had witnessed, since his visit to S—, had roused all the false sensibility he had been for the last few days combatting; and he felt so wretched and low-spirited, that, but for very shame, he could have found a relief in tears. The interesting remarks made by Mr. Irvin, on various parts of the beautiful country they were passing through, failed to rouse him from his mental disease, or draw from him one calm or consistent reply. The good pastor cast on his godson a look of heartfelt compassion, and, quickening his horse's pace, he soon had the satisfaction of beholding the white chimneys of the parsonage rising above the old elms which surmounted his home of peace and love.

The cries of the rooks, returning to their favourite haunts, dispelled young Stanhope's day-dreams. He suddenly started again into life and animation, and shaking back, with his hand, the rich locks of chestnut hair the wind had scattered over his face, he turned to Mr. Irvin, with a look which seemed tacitly to say, "I have been a dull, discontented fellow-traveller, forgive the infirmities of my temper."

The pastor understood the silent appeal, and warmly pressed the extended hand of his young friend; but before he could give utterance to the words that trembled on his lips, his attention was arrested by the trampling of horses' hoofs, from the path opposite the lawn they had just entered, and the vicar discovered it to be his daughter and her friend, but under circumstances which greatly alarmed him. Supported in the saddle by the groom, and her horse led at foot-pace by a tall dark youth, in whose swarthy complexion and raven locks Francis instantly recognised the gipsey Ishmael, appeared Anne Irvin—her countenance pale as death, her hair loose and disarranged, and her habit torn and soiled in many places, convinced the gentlemen that some accident had taken place; and both instantly abandoned the chaise to the groom, and hurried to meet her. In another moment, Francis was by Miss Irvin's side; but before he had succeeded in lifting her from the saddle, she fainted in his arms.—"Pray do not carry her into the parlour, Mr. Stanhope!" cried Fanny, leaping from her horse. "The bustle would terrify her poor mother exceedingly; she would imagine an accident of the most fatal nature. Miss Irvin has had a fall from her horse; but, I trust, is not dangerously hurt."

Mr. Irvin, seeing his daughter pale and insensible in the arms of Francis, apprehended the most fatal consequences, and instantly dispatched the groom, at full speed, to B——, for medical assistance; while Francis and Fanny succeeded in carying Anne into the drawing-room, and laying her on the sofa. Stanhope trembled from head to foot, and the vicar was as pale as the fair girl over whom his tears unconsciously fell. Fanny, who knew more the nature and extent of her friend's accident, was the only composed person in the group, and her active presence of mind soon succeeded in restoring her to animation. As soon as the first deadly faintness, succeeding her swoon, had worn off, Anne raised herself on the sofa, though apparently with much pain, and seeing her beloved parent in tears, flung herself on his bosom.

"Be not alarmed, my own dear kind papa," she said, "I do not think I am much hurt. Go and tell dear mamma so."

"She is not acquainted with your accident."

"Then pray inform her, before the servants have exaggerated particulars. She might have heard us arrive home, and our absence cannot fail to excite her fears."

Anne's prudent measures were rendered abortive, by the door suddenly opening, and Mrs.

Irvin rushing into the apartment, in a state of mind nearly bordering on distraction. "Where is she? Where's my child? Who will lead me, in compassion, to my child!"

Overcome by her natural solicitude, Mrs. Irvin staggered to a seat, and burst into a violent flood of tears.

"I am well, quite well, dear mamma!" exclaimed Anne, suppressing the mien of pain that rose to her lips: "your distress afflicts me more than the few bruises my fall has inflicted on me. I have sprained my ankle, nothing more, I assure you."

Hearing the voice of her child, Mrs. Irvin became more composed, and Mr. Irvin led his sightless partner to the sofa Anne occupied with great tenderness.

The mother and daughter embraced with tears of joy, as if they had never experienced greater, till Anne, extricating herself from her parent's arm, inquired eagerly what had become of Ishmael. "It is to the young gipsey's prompt and courageous assistance I stand indebted for my life."

Mr. Irvin instantly made inquiries after him, but learnt with regret that he had waited at the door till he heard Miss Irvin had recovered from

her swoon, and had then returned to the encampment.

While the surgeon was holding a consultation with Mrs. Irvin and Anne as to the extent of the injury she had received, Mr. Irvin drew Fanny into the recess of the window, and asked her how the accident had happened.

"We had enjoyed a delightful ride into the country," said Fanny, "and after calling on several friends and pensioners of Anne's, we determined to return home over the common, and take a peep at the gipsey encampment. The proposal pleased Anne, and we trotted on, sometimes checking our horses to enjoy the beauty of the prospect, and chatting over the scenes of our early youth. As we descended the hill, at the bottom of the heath, a large Newfoundland dog sprung suddenly out of a clump of furze, and darted across the path in pursuit of a hare. The action was done with such velocity, that it startled Saladin, who set off at a furious speed, making towards the broken glen occupied by the gipseys and their cattle. For some minutes Anne kept her seat in the most heroic manner, till the high-spirited pony, becoming unmanageable, suddenly reared up and threw her with violence to the ground; but her habit catching in the buckles of the saddle, she would infallibly have lost her

life, had it not been for the prompt assistance of Ishmael, who, leaping from behind a thicket, threw himself before the affrighted animal, and successfully stopped his progress, and lifted our dear friend, in a state of insensibility, from the ground. James and I had followed the course the pony had taken, with all the speed we could, and, on reaching the spot, we found Anne fainting on the bank, supported by Ishmael, who, considering his rude nurture, made a very tender nurse.

"When she recovered, on attempting to rise, we found she had sprained her right ankle so violently that she was unable to put it to the ground, but the dear sufferer was not a little grateful to find her bones unbroken. I would have sent home for the carriage, or to the town for a post-chaise, but this Anne would by no means agree to, fearing that so unusual a circumstance would not fail to alarm and hurry her mother, who you know is always the first in her thoughts. James shifted the side-saddle on to his quiet nag, and mounting Saladin himself, with the assistance of Ishmael, we contrived to reach home in safety.

The surgeon dissipated Mr. Irvin's fears, by assuring him that, beyond the sprain and a few bruises, Miss Irvin had received no other injury,

and he did not think it necessary for her to be banished to her own apartment, though she would be forced to confine herself for some days to the sofa.

Before the night closed in, Anne had recovered her usual flow of spirits, and was dispensing life and hilarity to all around her, and not only listened to Stanhope's relation of the distressed circumstances of the poor Musgraves with great interest, but formed many plans to enable Lucy to gain a comfortable livelihood, should Johnstone fail in his application to his father. As Miss Irvin retired directly the tea equipage was removed, Francis early took his leave, and satisfied the enquiries of his father, as to the manner in which he had spent the day.

Early the next morning Francis dispatched his valet, with a note, to the parsonage, to enquire after the health of Miss Irvin; and with the deepest regret he perused the vicar's answer, which informed him that she had passed a very bad night, and was too much indisposed to leave her chamber. Anne had exerted her spirits to dispel the fears of her friends; but those apprehensions were destined to be roused in a tenfold degree.

The violence of her fall, and the severe shock her nerves had received from the danger she had encountered, brought on a fever, and for some

weeks her life was despaired of. Francis suffered the greatest mental uneasiness, during her long and dangerous illness. He had centred all his hopes and affections in this amiable girl, and the idea of losing her was attended by the most poignant grief. He was unremitting in his attentions, and never failed calling twice a day, at the parsonage, to ascertain the progress of her disease.

Mr. Irvin was shocked at the alteration in his young friend's person. Anxiety had robbed his cheeks of their bloom, and his eyes of their lustre; and his wasted form gave him more the appearance of a man who had just escaped from the close confinement of a sick chamber, than one who had been in the constant enjoyment of health and vigour. In spite of all his faults, the good vicar loved and regarded Francis as his son, and was deeply interested in the silent grief expressed by his look and manner, whenever he spoke of his daughter's illness. He was convinced that his attachment for Anne was deep and sincere, and that it was not unreturned by her; and he determined, if heaven should restore her to his prayers, he would no longer hesitate in accepting him for a son.

Francis found a solitary pleasure, during her illness, in visiting the gipsey encampment, and

in hearing Ishmael recount Miss Irvin's accident; Florizel, too, was perfectly recovered from his wounds, and Francis handsomely rewarded the young man for the care he had taken of the little animal; but he could scarcely refrain from shedding tears, when he considered the probability of Anne never again beholding her favourite, and he had promised himself much pleasure in restoring him safe and well to his beloved mistress. The interest he had felt in Ishmael had almost amounted to attachment, since Miss Irvin's fall from her horse, and he daily conversed with him on the comforts arising from a civilized state, and the rewards and punishments of a future existence. To the latter arguments Ishmael listened with deep and fixed attention, and would not unfrequently sigh, and pass his hand across his brow, as if oppressed with recollections of the most painful description.

After a long conversation, one evening, on the usual topics, Francis perceived that his repugnance to entering into service was occasioned by the idea of losing his liberty, and the ridicule which he anticipated from regular servants, who would not fail to treat him with insolence and contempt.

"I perceive, Ishmael," he said, "that you dislike the idea of becoming a regular domestic;

but my father will grant you a small cottage, on our estate, at an easy rent, and I will engage to make interest with the neighbouring farmers to keep you in constant employ, when the severity of the weather hinders you from working in the pleasure-grounds. When once accustomed to the domestic endearments of home, you will no longer regret leaving your wandering mode of life, to gain an honest living by virtuous labour."

"What have I done, Mr. Stanhope," said Ishmael, with glistening eyes, to deserve such kindness at your hands?—I saved the life of a dog, and you load me with favours."

"You preserved a life dearer to me than the possession of worlds!" returned Francis, with warmth. "What I offer you, Ishmael, is nothing to the debt of gratitude I feel I owe you. I love and value you, Ishmael!—would wish to have you near me, that I may never be tempted to forget the value of the important service you have rendered me."

"Mr. Stanhope, I would lay down my life to serve you!" returned the gipsey. "But I love the free range of the fields and woods, my own wild tribes, and liberty; I cannot conform to the manners and ways of men in a more domesticated state; I should cease to depend upon the powers of my own mind—the strength of my own arm,

At present I am fettered by no laws, I obey no master, and feel myself independent of others."

"I perceive, said Francis," "that you consider men in a civilized state as little superior to slaves."

"You are right," returned the gipsey, a sarcastic smile passing over his lip.

"Ishmael, you are mistaken. It is only those who are under the bondage of sin that can be reckoned so in a free country like this. My friend, you trust to your own sagacity to elude the vigilance of the laws. Commit crime, and eternal justice will overtake you, though you were hid in the bosom of the wilderness." A bright glow dyed the swarthy countenance of the Egyptian, and mounted even to his brow. He remained silent for some time, as if in deep thought, till, raising his piercing eyes suddenly to the face of his companion, he said, "Yes, I will go with you, Mr. Stanhope; I will serve you with cheerfulness and fidelity. The struggle of natural feeling is over; I will bid adieu for ever to my wandering race. You have pointed out to me a better path—have revealed to me the knowledge of God, and the light of the Gospel. Till I knew you, Mr. Stanhope, I had no expectations in this world, no hope beyond the grave. I wandered on in darkness, like the beasts that perish, and my soul

bent despondingly towards the earth. Death robbed me of those I loved, and I deemed them lost for ever. You have dispelled this gloom; have called me to life and immortality; have taught me to pour forth my soul in humble prayers to her Creator: and may the blessings of that eternal Power rest for ever on you and yours!"

The gipsey passed his hand before his eyes, and walked hastily away.

Francis was deeply affected. His heart beat high; he could have flung himself upon the breast of his dark convert, and wept upon his neck. For the first time he felt in his bosom that peace which the world cannot take away.—He had redeemed a soul from the bondage of death, and turned a sinner from the error of his way; and he felt as if the blessing so solemnly pronounced by Ishmael was already upon him.

On his return home he was met by Johnstone, with an open letter in his hand, and a face glowing with pleasure. Influenced by his usual gay and joyous feelings, he informed Francis that his application to his father had been successful, and that the delighted and grateful Musgraves were preparing for a speedy departure to London; that the subscription he had set on foot among his friends had answered beyond his expectations, and the sum collected had enabled the actor not only

to pay his debts, but to defray the expences of his journey to town.

Only one piece of information was wanting to complete Stanhope's happiness; and after bidding farewell to the actor and his family, and wishing them every comfort in their old situation, he bent his steps towards the parsonage, full of hope and excitation.

As he walked across the lawn, and strolled down the path he had known and loved from a boy, the death-bell smote upon his ear. The dull deep sound vibrating among the woods, fell upon his heart like the knell of all his hopes. His lips quivered, his knees trembled under him, a thick mist floated before his eyes, and leaning against one of the elms near him, he covered his face with his hands, and wept long and bitterly. "Oh, Anne!" he mentally exclaimed, "if thou art indeed gone, what is there now left in this dark miserable world for me?"

From this painful reverie he was roused by a tap on the shoulder, and impatiently raising his eyes to meet those of Mr. Irvin, not dim with grief like his own, but sparkling with animation and pleasure, "Rejoice with me!" he said, "my girl is restored to me. The fever has taken a favourable turn, and she is, thank God! out of danger. Francis! what has happened to affect

you thus? You are pale, and in tears." Francis replied by flinging himself into the good pastor's arms, and relieving his full heart on his bosom.

The sudden transition from grief to excessive joy was so great, that he with difficulty could command his feelings and accompany Mr. Irvin home.

In a few days Anne was so far convalescent as to be able to exchange the easy chair in her own chamber for the sofa by the parlour fire; and Francis, a constant attendant at her side, was now received by the amiable girl, and her whole family, as the favoured and accepted lover.

No one rejoiced more in Stanhope's happiness than Fanny Hill, whose generous disposition had been displayed in many instances during her friend's illness. She was the most tender and assiduous nurse: and Francis never beheld the white hand of Fanny administering medicine, or adjusting the pillow of the invalid, without regretting the harsh and undeserved criticism he had cast upon her.

Fanny had been for some time engaged to Johnstone, with the entire approbation of his friends; and Henry was daily improving in moral worth, though he laughed at the congratulations of Stanhope on that head, continuing to call himself a sad wicked dog. Yet he was not himself

insensible to the visible alteration in his character. By degrees his affected dandyism wore off, and his other foibles yielded to the innocent raillery of the sprightly Fanny, who never failed to place his imitations of the follies and extravagance of the great in the most ludicrous point of view; till he was so heartily ashamed of his former affectation, that he faithfully promised to give up all his idle pursuits, and strive, by a diligent application to business, to merit the esteem of the woman he tenderly loved.

One person alone contemplated Stanhope's promised union with Miss Irvin with regret. This was George Jervis, who had long and fondly loved her. Brought up in the same house with Anne, he had daily witnessed the excellence of her temper and disposition, and had watched, with unspeakable delight, the amiable sweet-tempered child, expand into the benevolent and accomplished woman. Though he had always allowed himself to be unworthy of her, he felt her society necessary to his happiness; and had suffered himself to indulge a hope, which time strengthened into a conviction, that he was not wholly indifferent to her.

Educated in the bitter school of adversity, in the constant practice of the most rigid self-denial, George had, in a manner, inured himself to dis-

appointment. Yet the certainty of Stanhope's engagements with Miss Irvin fell upon his heart like a blight, that palsied for awhile every exertion of mental fortitude, and rendered him, in spite of his boasted stoicism, restless and unhappy. He had just buried his unfortunate father, and as his release from mortal suffering was a thing to be desired, Mr. Irvin (who never suspected the cause of his curate's dejection) was surprised to find him indulging in grief, which seemed inconsistent with the usual patient forbearance of his character.

Francis had formed a most sincere friendship for Jervis, since he had ceased to fear him as a rival, and was anxious to discover the cause of his melancholy. He thought his dejection might arise from pecuniary difficulties; in which case he had it amply in his power to befriend him. But, in all their private walks, the curate maintained a provoking reserve in his manner and conversation, which hindered Francis from making the least allusion to the subject.

One morning they happened to be alone together in Mr. Irvin's study, Francis engaged with a favourite author, and George pacing the room with slow steps and a sorrowful and dejected mien; he seemed perfectly unconscious of Stan-

hope's presence; but often folded his hands across his breast, and sighed deeply.

"Forgive me, dear Jervis," said Francis, closing the book, and advancing towards him, "you are unhappy. Allow a friend, who sincerely esteems you, to share in your grief."

George started into recollection,—He was excessively agitated as he returned the pressure of Stanhope's hand. But he was a man who could bear no envy or malice in his heart, and could even admire worth in a more fortunate rival.

"My sorrow, Stanhope, *you* cannot share; I must not even reveal to you the cause of my uneasiness. Time, which conquers all things, will soften my regret, and restore my usual peace of mind."

"Perhaps I possess greater capabilities of serving you than you imagine," said Francis, still fancying his distress was occasioned by pecuniary difficulties, and the thousand nameless mortifications that generally attend a very limited income; which must have been considerably encroached upon by the long illness and funeral expences of his father.

Jervis shook his head. "I will be candid, Francis, and trust to your generosity to forgive the temerity of the disclosure I am about to make. I love Anne Irvin."—Francis started, and the

colour mounted to his face in a burning and painful glow, as Jervis continued—"for years have I loved her. The affections of boyhood, the gay dreams of youth, and the hopes of manhood, centred in her. Those dreams are over; those hopes perished; I must scarcely whisper to myself her name. It was presumption in me to raise my eyes to her. I felt it, yet persisted in my folly. I had been educated on the bounty of her father. I had seen my brother terminate a career of crime upon the scaffold, and riches make to themselves wings and pass away from my devoted family; yet I had the vanity to think myself a fit mate for her."

"Far more deserving of her esteem, dear George, than the more fortunate Francis Stanhope. But was Miss Irvin ever made acquainted with your attachment?"

"She has not the least idea of my partiality, and never will know it now from me. She esteems me as a friend, and such a disclosure would deprive me, perhaps, of that consolation. The worst struggle is already over; religion and duty will lend their aid in assisting me to subdue this unfortunate passion. I trust you know my principles too well, dear Francis, to fear me as a rival. After what has passed this morning, I can no longer approach Miss Irvin with that friendly

confidence which has so long subsisted between us, and which was so congenial to my feelings; and to be near her, and speak like a stranger, is a pitch of fortitude beyond my philosophy. I am offered a curacy in a distant parish, and shall take the earliest opportunity to leave B——."

"George, you are not in earnest! We cannot, will not consent to part with you. Here your talents are justly appreciated, and you are esteemed and loved as you deserve."

"My determination is fixed. I impose on myself this voluntary banishment; at least till after your marriage. In the mean time, dear Francis, may you enjoy with Anne that happiness I was unworthy to possess." He shook Francis hastily by the hand, and, snatching up his hat from the table, abruptly quitted the room, leaving his friend surprised and grieved at the disclosure he had made.

At the very moment when Francis appeared to have reached the summit of his hopes, he was destined to experience a severe and bitter reverse of fortune. A poor family in the neighbourhood were attacked with typhus fever, of the most malignant nature; and Francis, unconscious of the danger he exposed himself to, continued daily to visit the cottage, and supply them with money and necessaries.

One evening, after his return from the cottage, he was attacked with shivering fits, acute pains in the back and head, and, before morning, presented the most alarming symptoms of this direful disease.

Mr. Stanhope, whose earthly affections were concentrated in his son, attended him with the most unremitting tenderness and assiduity. No remonstrances of his physician could induce the half-distracted parent to leave the apartment, or suffer strangers to supply his place by the sick-bed of his son.

Raving in delirium, alive only to suffering, and unconscious of all that was passing around him, Francis knew not that the being who leant so fondly over his feverish couch, whose hand supported his burning temples, who administered his medicines, and yielded to all his wayward caprices, was his beloved father. Had he been conscious of the nature of his illness, how had he started from that supporting breast into which he was gradually infusing the malignant poison of infection.

Long ere reason returned, that parent had bowed before the breath of contagion; that soothing voice was hushed for ever; that hand cold in the dust. With deep and heartfelt grief, Mr. Irvin followed his old and valued friend to the

grave; while in addition to this painful office remained the heavy task of disclosing his death to his son, when returning health had fortified his mind sufficiently to bear the shock. In the mean time, the strictest secresy on the subject was adopted, to save him from the knowledge of this dreadful event, as he still remained in a fluctuating state between life and death.

Happily unconscious of the calamity which had befallen him, on the morning of his father's funeral, Francis was more rational than he had been for many days; and the noise occasioned by the undertakers, in removing the coffin from the next chamber, irritated his weak nerves to a state of feverish impatience; and, turning to Johnstone and Ishmael, who were constantly in attendance near him, he said, "Go, my dear Henry, and order those servants not to make such a noise in my father's apartment; they distract my head." Johnstone, who had humanely sacrificed his own safety to conduce to the comforts of his friend, tried to soothe him, by telling him the noise would soon be over; that it was occasioned by his father's valet making the necessary preparations for Mr. Stanhope's journey to town. "My father's journey to town!" repeated Francis, starting up in the bed.—"Can my father have the heart to leave me, so ill as I am, without even

bidding me farewell? Henry, this is not like his usual kindness!"

"You wrong him, dear Francis! indeed you do. He has never, till this morning, quitted your bedside, even to take necessary exercise and repose. The most urgent business forces him to leave you for a few weeks, and to subdue his paternal feelings for the general welfare of his family. He staid till the physician had pronounced you out of danger."

"Out of danger, Henry! How can you consider me out of danger? In all probability he will never again behold his son."

Johnstone hastily rose, and retreated to the window; for this last observation drew tears from the eyes of the kind-hearted young man. Ishmael perceived his emotion, and instantly supplied his place by the patient's bed-side, fearful lest his suspicions should be awakened by Henry's abrupt removal.

It was a heavy foggy day, in the latter end of November, and the hearse, which contained the body of Mr. Stanhope, was slowly moving down the street, followed by a long train of mourning coaches. "Poor Francis!" sighed Henry, "this sad sight would break thy heart." He turned from the cheerless spectacle to the bed of his friend. His agitation was unnoticed by Francis,

whose mind was again wandering in the burning vortex of delirium.

Slow and surely he recovered from his severe illness, and during the tedious hours of convalescence, while confined to the easy-chair in his own apartment, he had leisure to reflect on his past life and future prospects. He most earnestly wished to enter into holy orders, should he ever finally recover; justly considering the life that had been so unexpectedly preserved could not be better bestowed than in the service of his Creator. He intimated this wish to Mr. Irvin, and it met with his decided approbation. The dreary interval from sickness to returning health was greatly cheered by the constant correspondence between him and Anne, whose letters were a balm and consolation to his heart, and never failed to cheer his drooping spirits.

His father's silence at first grieved and astonished him, and was at length succeeded by fears for his personal safety. He communicated his apprehensions, one morning, to Mr. Irvin, who had called, as usual, to chat an hour with the invalid, and asked him if he was acquainted with the nature of his father's business in town, or knew where a letter would reach him, as he was not a little surprised at his silence. The hour of concealment was over. In the kindest and most

considerate manner the good vicar revealed the fatal truth; and scarcely had he pronounced the distressing intelligence, before he saw the young man sink at his feet, as if struck down by the bolt of heaven, too soon roused to a state of acute mental suffering. He bitterly accused himself for blaming the seeming neglect of a parent who had sacrificed his life for him.

"Oh that he had died in these arms!—that I had relieved this bursting heart above his bier, and followed him to the grave. My father! my dear, lost, lamented father! Why was life restored to me on terms like these!" Mr. Irvin permitted the first gush of sorrow to flow free and unrestrained; but when he saw Francis sinking back into the same hopeless state of despondency which he had with such difficulty roused him from, he exhausted every argument to induce him to combat with unavailing grief, and to bow with faith and resignation to the will of Heaven. Finding him obstinate in sorrow, and deaf to his remonstrances, he brought a more successful pleader in the person of his amiable daughter, whose tender sympathy and persuasive eloquence had the desired effect, and reconciled him to existence.

In less than a month he was able, supported by Anne and Jervis, to visit the grave of his

father. Here his full heart was relieved, the tears of nature were shed, and he rose from the fresh sod with a mind softened and resigned to the inscrutable decrees of Providence.

Though an old, it is a true saying, that "Sorrow never comes singly." Young Stanhope had a severe trial still to undergo. Most of the large property he inherited from his father was vested in the bank of a maternal uncle, whom Mr. Stanhope had always considered a very responsible man. The sudden and unexpected failure of this gentleman involved his nephew in his ruin. "Thy will be done, O Lord!" exclaimed Francis, calmly folding the letter which conveyed this stunning intelligence. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Trifles often vex and harass the mind; but it is under the pressure of great calamities that the soul exerts her powers, and, as if triumphing in the consciousness of that immortality which no worldly misfortunes can deprive her of, rises superior to distress.

He now felt the consolation arising from Mr. Irvin's excellent precepts, and the superiority of religion over the most splendid theories of philosophy. "I am glad my poor father did not live to witness this day; this heavy reverse of fortune

would have broken his heart. I am young, and can better combat with the world. But Anne Irvin ——"

As this thought recurred to his mind, his resignation vanished. She had plighted her affections to him in the smiling season of prosperity; but how was he certain that they would stand the chilling blight of adversity, or that she would view the portionless Francis Stanhope in the tender light of her future husband. "Now is the moment to try if her attachment is sincere," he exclaimed. "The worst were better known, than this torturing anxiety. I will take her by surprise, and see how she receives this bitter intelligence." In spite of his recent illness, and the weakness and debility the fever had left on him, he walked, or rather ran, to the parsonage.

On entering the sitting-room he found Anne alone, on the sofa, at work. She rose to receive him with her usual kindness. "How I rejoice, my dear Francis, to see you able to walk hither again without support. But you look ill and fatigued. Sit down on the sofa, and take some refreshment. I have a very interesting anecdote to tell you of one of my poor pensioners."

"You have more poor pensioners than you imagine, Anne," returned Francis, trying to conceal his agitation. "You no longer see before

you the wealthy Francis Stanhope, flattered and caressed by the world for his good name and ample inheritance; but a man involved in calamity, worn down with sickness and sorrow, whose boasted wealth has passed from him like dew before the glance of the noon-day sun. Read that paper, my beloved girl, and see if you can any longer regard me as your future husband!"

With a trembling hand Anne received and read his uncle's letter, and though her eyes filled with tears, it was more on his account than her own. "Do you think so meanly of me, Francis," she said, in a tender yet reproachful tone, "as to imagine that this piece of paper, or the distressing intelligence it contains, is sufficient to destroy the affection of years, or can alter my sentiments toward you. Francis, you have wounded my feelings by your ungenerous suspicions. You should have known Anne Irvin better than to have ranked her with that class of females who estimate the good qualities of their lover by the length of his purse."

"Noble, generous girl, I have indeed wronged you!" exclaimed Francis, his heart swelling with inward satisfaction at this proof of her disinterested attachment. "I had not the vanity to imagine that you would resign a life of calm enjoyment to contribute to the happiness of a ruined

man. I have no longer a splendid establishment to offer you, or any of those luxuries you have been accustomed to possess. I have not even the satisfaction of knowing myself deserving of a treasure like you."

"Perhaps more worthy of my love now, than when you were the proud possessor of those tempting riches. Francis, I am an only child. My father is rich, and can do much for us; and if we cannot afford to indulge in luxuries, they are not necessary to happiness; and with a little prudence we may enjoy many comforts. I know my father's sentiments will agree with mine; and as I hear his voice in the next room, I will, if you please, spare you the unnecessary pain of communicating this disagreeable business."

Mr. Irvin received his daughter's information with more composure than she expected. "Nancy!" he said, kissing tenderly her pale cheek, "you ought to rejoice in this event; it will render him a wiser and better man." Then hastening to Francis, he offered him his advice and assistance in the present exigency.

"Your affairs," he said, "perhaps, are not so bad as you imagine. Something will be saved out of the general wreck. Your uncle, I doubt not, will do every thing that lies in his power to ameliorate your misfortune. In the meantime

return to college, and prosecute your intention of entering into the church."

"Most willingly; but the means, my dear sir, are longer in my power."

"But they are in mine—Francis, are you not my son? or if not exactly so at present, do I not consider you as my Nancy's future husband? Believe me, I prize the prospect of your moral improvement far beyond the wealth you have lost."

"But my father's old and faithful servants, what will become of them? And poor Ishmael, who has attended me with such affection and tenderness through my illness, must he return to his old course of life, after my offers of service?"

"Certainly not: Ishmael has a claim upon me. I owe him a debt I shall be proud to repay. He shall still accompany the master to whom he has proved himself to be sincerely attached. As to the others, you may transfer them from your service into mine."

Francis expressed the gratitude he felt in the most lively terms, and perhaps, at that moment, felt more justly proud of the unbought affection of Anne, and the friendship of her excellent father, than he ever had of the riches he had lost; and he entered upon his new course of life with alacrity and pleasure.

Before he quitted B —— for college, he entrusted his affairs entirely to the prudent management of Mr. Irvin; and so well did he discharge the office imposed on him, that after the sale of the estates, he found a handsome sum still due to the old possessor; enough, with economy, to maintain him with respectability. After some months spent in diligent study, Francis returned to his native town, full of hope, and perfectly re-established in health. Many alterations had taken place during his absence. Jervis had been presented to a good living by a distant relation, who having lost his only son, was determined to make George his heir. Francis rejoiced greatly at his friend's happy change of fortune; likewise in the marriage of Johnstone and Fanny, that had been celebrated during his residence at Oxford. From Henry he learnt that Musgrave had been reconciled to his brother, and had succeeded in regaining the confidence of his father, and was likely to do extremely well.

Adversity had produced a most salutary change in young Stanhope's mind and sentiments. No longer a gloomy misanthrope, brooding over the faults of others, he was lively, cheerful, and benevolent, actively employing his time in ameliorating the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, instructing the ignorant, and persuading the hardened sinner

to renounce the error of his ways. His sacred office became a source of satisfaction and comfort; while his fine voice and impressive delivery never failed drawing a numerous congregation to the church where he officiated. Many of his former gay associates, who at first attended to criticise, returned deeply affected by his persuasive and nervous eloquence. Convinced of the great moral improvement in his godson's character, Mr. Irvin no longer withheld his daughter from him; and Francis, as he led the blushing Anne from the altar, declared at that moment, he no longer regretted the wealth he had lost, but considered himself the happiest and richest of men; that he had proved that virtue was not merely confined to theory; but having joined practice to precept, he found "her ways were ways of pleasantness, and all her paths were peace."

THE END.

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