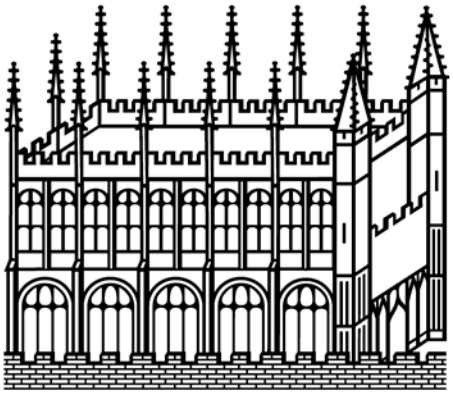

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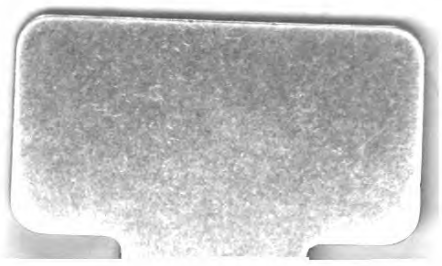

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ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

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THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR, THE

ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Amidst the woods the leopard knows his kind;
The tyger preys not on the tyger brood:
Man only is the common foe of man.

LONDON:
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LUDGATE-STREET.
1794.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

CHAP. I.

I HAVE ſtated the narrative of Mr. Collins, interſperſed with ſuch other information as I was able to collect, with all the exactneſs that my memory, aſſiſted by certain memorandums I made at the time, will afford. I do not pretend to warrant the authenticity of any part of theſe memoirs except ſo much as fell under my own knowledge, and that part ſhall be ſtated with the ſame ſimplicity

and accuracy that I would obſerve towards a court which was to decide in the laſt reſort upon every thing dear to me. The ſame ſcrupulous fidelity reſtrains me from altering the manner of Mr. Collins's narrative to adapt it to the precepts of my own taſte; and it will ſoon be perceived how eſſential that narrative is to the elucidation of my own hiſtory.

The intention of my friend in this communication was to give me eaſe; but he in reality added to my embarraſſment. Hitherto I had had no intercourſe with the world and its paſſions; and, though I was not totally unacquainted with them as they appear in books, this proved to be of little ſervice to me when I came to witneſs them myſelf. The caſe ſeemed entirely altered, when the ſubject of thoſe paſſions was continually before my eyes, and the events had happened but the other day as it were, in the very neighbourhood where

where I lived. There was a connection and progreſs in this narrative, which made it altogether unlike the little village incidents I had hitherto known. My feelings were ſucceſſively intereſted for the different perſons that were brought upon the ſcene. My veneration was excited for Mr. Clare, and my applauſe for the intrepidity of Mrs. Hammond. I was aſtoniſhed that any human creature ſhould be ſo ſhockingly perverted as Mr. Tyrrel. I paid the tribute of my tears to the memory of the artleſs miſs Melvile. I found a thouſand freſh reaſons to admire and love my maſter.

At firſt I was ſatisfied with thus conſidering every incident in its obvious ſenſe. But the ſtory I had heard was for ever in my thoughts, and I was peculiarly intereſted to comprehend its full import. I turned it a thouſand ways, and examined it in every point of view. In

the original communication it appeared ſufficiently diſtinct and ſatisfactory; but, as I brooded over it, it gradually became myſterious. There was ſomething ſtrange in the character of Hawkins. So firm, ſo ſturdily honeſt and juſt, as he appeared at firſt; all at once to become a murderer! His firſt behaviour under the proſecution, how accurately was it calculated to prepoſſeſs one in his favour! To be ſure, if he were guilty, it was very cruel of him to ſuffer a man of ſo much dignity and worth as Mr. Falkland to be tried for his crime! And yet I could not help bitterly compaſſionating the honeſt fellow, brought to the gallows, as he was, ſtrictly ſpeaking, by the machinations of that devil incarnate, Mr. Tyrrel. His ſon too, that ſon for whom he voluntarily ſacrificed his all, to die with him at the ſame tree; ſurely never was a ſtory more affecting!

Was it poſſible after all that Mr. Falkland

Falkland ſhould be the murderer? The reader will ſcarcely believe that the idea ſuggeſted itſelf to my mind, that I would aſk him. It was but a paſſing thought; but it ſerves to mark the ſimplicity of my character. Then I recollected the virtues of my maſter, almoſt too ſublime for human nature; I thought of his ſufferings ſo unexampled, ſo unmerited; and chid myſelf for the ſuſpicion. The dying confeſſion of Hawkins recurred to my mind; and I felt that there was no longer a poſſibility of doubting. And yet what was the meaning of all Mr. Falkland's agonies and terrors? In fine, the idea having once occurred to my mind, it was fixed there for ever. My thoughts fluctuated from conjecture to conjecture, but this was the centre about which they revolved. I determined to place myſelf as a watch upon my maſter.

The inſtant I had choſen this employ-

ment for myſelf, I found a ſtrange ſort of pleaſure in it. To do what is forbidden always has its charms, becauſe we have an indiſtinct apprehenſion of ſomething arbitrary and tyrannical in the prohibition. To be a ſpy upon Mr. Falkland! That there was danger in the employment ſerved to give an alluring pungency to the choice. I remembered the ſtern reprimand I had received, his terrible looks; and the recollection gave a kind of tingling ſenſation, not altogether unallied to enjoyment. The farther I advanced, the more the ſenſation was irreſiſtible. I ſeemed to myſelf perpetually upon the brink of being countermined, and perpetually rouſed to guard my deſigns. The more impenetrable Mr. Falkland was determined to be, the more uncontrolable was my curioſity. Through the whole my alarm and apprehenſion of perſonal danger, had a large mixture of frankneſs and

ſimplicity, conſcious of meaning no ill, that made me continually ready to ſay every thing that was upon my mind, and would not ſuffer me to believe that, when things were brought to the teſt, any one could be ſeriouſly angry with me.

Theſe reflections led gradually to a new ſtate of my mind. When I had firſt removed into Mr. Falkland's family, the novelty of the ſcene rendered me cautious and reſerved. The diſtant and ſolemn manners of my maſter ſeemed to have annihilated my conſtitutional gaiety. But the novelty by degrees wore off, and my conſtraint in the ſame degree diminiſhed. The ſtory I had now heard, and the curioſity it excited, reſtored to me activity, eagerneſs and courage. I had always had a propenſity to communicate my thoughts; my age was naturally inclined to talkativeneſs; and I ventured occaſionally in a ſort of heſita-

ting way, as if queſtioning whether ſuch a conduct might be allowed, to expreſs my ſentiments as they aroſe, in the preſence of Mr. Falkland.

The firſt time I did ſo, he looked at me with an air of ſurpriſe, made me no anſwer, and preſently took occaſion to leave me. The experiment was ſoon after repeated. My maſter ſeemed half inclined to encourage me, and yet doubtful whether he might venture. He had been long a ſtranger to pleaſure of every ſort, and my artleſs and untaught remarks appeared to promiſe him ſome amuſement. In this uncertainty he could not probably find it in his heart to treat with ſeverity my innocent effuſions. I needed but little encouragement: for the perturbation of my mind ſtood in want of this relief. My ſimplicity, ariſing from my being a total ſtranger to the intercourſe of the world, was accompanied with a mind in ſome degree cultivated

vated with reading, and perhaps not altogether deſtitute of obſervation and talent. My remarks were therefore perpetually unexpected, at one time implying extreme ignorance, and at another ſome portion of acuteneſs, but at all times having an air of innocence, frankneſs and courage. There was ſtill an apparent want of deſign in the manner, even after I was excited accurately to compare my obſervations and ſtudy the inferences to which they led; for the effect of old habit was more viſible, than that of a recently conceived purpoſe which was hardly yet mature. Mr. Falkland's ſituation was like that of a fiſh that plays with the bait employed to entrap him. By my manner he was in a certain degree encouraged to lay aſide his uſual reſerve and relax his ſtatelineſs; till ſome abrupt obſervation or interrogatory ſtung him into recollection and brought back his alarm. Still

it was evident that he bore about him a ſecret wound. Whenever the cauſe of his ſorrows was touched, though in a manner the moſt indirect and remote, his countenance altered, his diſtemper returned, and it was with difficulty that he could ſuppreſs his emotions, ſometimes conquering himſelf with painful effort, and ſometimes burſting into a ſort of paroxyſm of inſanity, and haſtening to bury himſelf in ſolitude. Theſe appearances I too frequently interpreted into grounds of ſuſpicion, though I might with equal probability and more liberality have aſcribed them to the cruel mortifications he had encountered in the objects of his darling ambition. Mr. Collins had ſtrongly urged me to ſecrecy; and Mr. Falkland, whenever my geſture or his conſciouſneſs impreſſed him with the idea of my knowing more than I expreſſed, looked at me with wiſtful earneſtneſs, as queſtioning what

was

was the degree of information I poſſeſſed, and how it was obtained. But again at our next interview the ſimple vivacity of my manner reſtored his tranquillity, obliterated the emotion of which I had been the cauſe, and placed things afreſh in their former ſituation. The longer this humble familiarity on my part had continued, the more effort it would require to ſuppreſs it; and Mr. Falkland was neither willing to mortify me by a ſevere prohibition of ſpeech, nor even perhaps to make me of ſo much conſequence as that prohibition might ſeem to imply. Though I was curious, it muſt not be ſuppoſed that I had the object of my enquiry for ever in my mind, or that my queſtions and innuendos were perpetually regulated with the cunning of a grey-headed inquiſitor. The ſecret wound of Mr. Falkland's mind was much more uniformly preſent to his recollection than to mine; and a thouſand

times he applied the remarks that occurred in converſation, when I had not the remoteſt idea of ſuch an application till ſome ſingularity in his manner brought it back to my thoughts. The conſciouſneſs of this morbid ſenſibility, and the imagination that its influence might perhaps conſtitute the whole of the caſe, ſerved probably to ſpur Mr. Falkland again to the charge, and connect a ſentiment of ſhame with every project that ſuggeſted itſelf for interrupting the freedom of our intercourſe.

I will give a ſpecimen of the converſations to which I allude, and as it ſhall be ſelected from thoſe which began upon topics the moſt general and remote, the reader will eaſily imagine the diſturbance that was almoſt daily endured by a mind ſo tremblingly alive as that of my maſter.

Pray, ſir, ſaid I, one day as I was aſſiſting Mr. Falkland in arranging ſome papers

papers previouſly to their being tranſcribed into his collection, how came Alexander of Macedon to be ſurnamed the Great?

How came it? Did you never read his hiſtory?

Yes, ſir.

Well, Williams, and could you find no reaſons there?

Why, I do not know, ſir. I could find reaſons why he ſhould be famous; but every man that is talked of, is not admired. Judges differ about the merits of Alexander. Doctor Prideaux ſays in his Connections that he deſerves only to be called the Great Cut-throat, and the author of Tom Jones has written a volume to prove that he and all other conquerors ought to be claſſed with Jonathan Wild.

Mr. Falkland involuntarily reddened at theſe citations.

Accurſed blaſphemy! Did theſe au-

thors think that by the coarſeneſs of their ribaldry they could deſtroy his well-earned fame? Are learning, ſenſibility and taſte no ſecurities to exempt their poſſeſſor from this vulgar abuſe? Did you ever read, Williams, of a man more gallant, generous and free? Was ever mortal ſo completely the reverſe of every thing engroſſing and ſelfiſh? He formed to himſelf a ſublime image of excellence, and his only ambition was to realiſe it in his own ſtory. Remember his giving away every thing when he ſet out upon his grand expedition, profeſſedly reſerving for himſelf nothing but hope. Recollect his heroic confidence in Philip, the phyſician, and his entire and unalterable friendſhip for Epheſtion. He treated the captive family of Darius with the moſt cordial urbanity, and the venerable Syſigambis with all the tenderneſs and attention of a ſon to his mother. Never take the judgment, Williams,

liams, upon ſuch a ſubject of a clerical pedant or a Weſtminſter juſtice. Examine for yourſelf, and you will find in Alexander a model of honour, generoſity and diſintereſtedneſs, a man who for the cultivated liberality of his mind and the unparalleled grandeur of his projects muſt ſtand alone the ſpectacle and admiration of all ages of the world.

Ah, ſir! it is a very fine thing for us to ſit here and compoſe his panegyric. But would you have me forget what a vaſt expence was beſtowed in erecting the monument of his fame? Was not he the common diſturber of mankind? Did not he overrun nations that would never have heard of him, but for his devaſtations? How many hundred thouſands of lives did he ſacrifice in his career? What muſt I think of his cruelties; a whole tribe maſſacred for a crime committed by their anceſtors one hundred and fifty years before; fifty thouſand ſold into ſlavery;

very; two thouſand crucified for their gallant defence of their country? Man is ſurely a ſtrange ſort of creature, who never praiſes any one more heartily than him who has ſpread deſtruction and ruin over the face of nations!

The way of thinking you expreſs, Williams, is natural enough, and I cannot blame you for it. But let me hope that you will become more liberal. The death of a hundred thouſand men is at firſt ſight very ſhocking; but what in reality are a hundred thouſand ſuch men more than a hundred thouſand ſheep? It is mind, Williams, the generation of knowledge and virtue that we ought to love. This was the project of Alexander; he ſet out in a great undertaking to civiliſe mankind; he delivered the vaſt continent of Aſia from the ſtupidity and degradation of the Perſian monarchy; and, though he was cut off in the midſt of his career, we may eaſily perceive the

vaſt

vaſt effects of his project. Grecian literature and cultivation, the Seleucidæ, the Antiochuſes and the Ptolomies followed, in nations which before had been ſunk to the condition of brutes. Alexander was the builder as notoriouſly as the deſtroyer of cities.

And yet, ſir, I am afraid that the pike and the battle-axe are not the right inſtruments for making men wiſe. Suppoſe it were admitted that the lives of men were to be ſacrificed without remorſe if a paramount good were to reſult, it ſeems to me as if murder and maſſacre were but a very left-handed way of producing civiliſation and love. But pray, do not you think this great hero was a ſort of a madman? What now will you ſay to his firing the palace of Perſepolis, his weeping for other worlds to conquer, and his marching his whole army over the burning ſands of Lybia, merely to viſit a temple,

a temple, and perſuade mankind that he was the ſon of Jupiter Ammon ?

Alexander, my boy, has been much miſunderſtood. Mankind have revenged themſelves upon him by miſrepreſentation, for having ſo far eclipſed the reſt of his ſpecies. It was neceſſary to the realiſing his project that he ſhould paſs for a God. It was the only way by which he could get a firm hold upon the veneration of the ſtupid and bigoted Perſians. It was this, and not a mad vanity, that was the ſource of his proceeding. And how much had he to ſtruggle with in this reſpect in the unapprehending obſtinacy of ſome of his Macedonians ?

Why then, ſir, at laſt Alexander did but employ means that all politicians profeſs to uſe, as well as he. He dragooned men into wiſdom, and cheated them into the purſuit of their own happineſs. But what is worſe, ſir, this Alexander in the paroxyſm of his headlong rage

rage ſpared neither friend nor foe. You will not pretend to juſtify the exceſſes of his ungovernable paſſion. It is impoſſible ſure that a word can be ſaid for a man whom a momentary provocation can hurry into the commiſſion of murders——

The inſtant I had uttered theſe words, I felt what it was that I had done. There was a magnetical ſympathy between me and my maſter, ſo that their effect was not ſooner produced upon him, than my own mind reproached me with the inhumanity of the alluſion. Our confuſion was mutual. The blood forſook at once the tranſparent complexion of Mr. Falkland, and then ruſhed back again with rapidity and fierceneſs. I dared not utter a word, leſt I ſhould commit a new error worſe than that into which I had juſt fallen. After a ſhort, but ſevere, ſtruggle to continue the converſation, Mr. Falkland began with trepidation, but afterwards became calmer:

You are not candid—Alexander—You muſt learn more clemency—Alexander, I ſay, does not deſerve this rigour. Do you remember his tears, his remorſe, his determined abſtinence from food, which he could ſcarcely be perſuaded to alter? Did not that prove acute feeling and a rooted principle of equity?—Well, well, Alexander was a true and judicious lover of mankind, and his real merits have been little comprehended.

I know not how to make the ſtate of my mind at that moment accurately underſtood. When one idea has got poſſeſſion of the mind, it is ſcarcely poſſible to keep it from finding its way to the lips. Error, once committed, has a faſcinating power, like the eyes of the rattle-ſnake, to draw us into a ſecond error. It deprives us of that proud confidence in our own ſtrength, to which we are indebted for ſo much of our virtue. Curioſity is a reſt-

a reſtleſs propenſity, and often does but hurry us forward the more irreſiſtibly, the greater is the danger that attends its indulgence.

Clitus, ſaid I, was a man of very coarſe and provoking manners, was he not?

Mr. Falkland felt the full force of this appeal. He gave me a penetrating look as if he would ſee my very ſoul. His eyes were then in an inſtant withdrawn. I could perceive him ſeized with a convulſive ſhuddering, which, though ſtrongly counteracted, and therefore ſcarcely viſible, had I know not what of terrible in it. He left his employment, ſtrode about the room in anger, his viſage gradually aſſumed an expreſſion as of ſupernatural barbarity, he quitted the apartment abruptly, and flung the door with a violence that ſeemed to ſhake the houſe.

Is this, ſaid I, the fruit of conſcious guilt, or of the diſguſt that a man of honour conceives at guilt undeſervedly imputed?

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE reader will feel how rapidly I was advancing to the brink of the precipice. I had a confuſed apprehenſion of what I was doing, but I could not ſtop myſelf. Is it poſſible, ſaid I, that Mr. Falkland, who is thus overwhelmed with a ſenſe of the unmerited diſhonour that has been faſtened upon him in the face of the world, will long endure the preſence of a raw and unfriended youth, who is perpetually bringing back that diſhonour to his recollection, and who ſeems himſelf the moſt forward to entertain the accuſation?

I felt indeed that Mr. Falkland would not haſtily incline to diſmiſs me, for the ſame reaſon that reſtrained him from many other actions which might ſeem to favour

ſavour of a too tender and ambiguous ſenſibility. But this reflexion was little adapted to comfort me. That he ſhould cheriſh in his heart a growing hatred againſt me, and that he ſhould think himſelf obliged to retain me a continual thorn in his ſide, was an idea by no means of favourable augury to my future peace.

It was ſome time after this that in clearing out a caſe of drawers I found a paper that by ſome accident had ſlipped behind one of the drawers, and been overlooked. At another time perhaps my curioſity might have given way to the laws of decorum, and I ſhould have reſtored it unopened to my maſter, its owner. But my eagerneſs for information had been too much ſtimulated by the preceding incidents to allow me at preſent to neglect any occaſion of obtaining it. The paper proved to be a letter written by the elder Hawkins, and from its contents ſeemed to

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have been penned when he had firſt been upon the point of abſconding from the perſecutions of Mr. Tyrrel. It was as follows.

Honourable Sir,

I have waited ſome time in daily hope of your honour's return into theſe parts. Old Gines and his dame, who are left to take care of your houſe, tell me, they cannot ſay when that will be, nor juſtly in what part of England you are at preſent. For my ſhare misfortune comes ſo thick upon me, that I muſt determine upon ſomething (that is for certain), and out of hand. Our ſquire, who I muſt own at firſt uſed me kindly enough, though I am afraid that was partly out of ſpite to ſquire Underwood, has ſince determined to be the ruin of me. Sir, I have been no craven; I fought it up ſtoutly; for after all, you know, God bleſs your honour! it is but

a man to a man; but he has been too much for me.

Perhaps if I were to ride over to the market town and enquire of Munſle, your lawyer, he could tell me how to direct to you. But having hoped and waited o' this faſhion, and all in vain, has put me upon other thoughts. I was in no hurry, ſir, to apply to you; for I do not love to be a trouble to other people. I kept that for my laſt ſtake. Well, ſir, and now that has failed me like, I am aſhamed as it were to have thought of it. Have not I, thinks I, arms and legs as well as other people? I am driven out of houſe and home. Well, and what then? Sure I arn't a cabbage, that if you pull it out of the ground, it muſt die. I am pennyleſs. True; and how many hundreds are there that live from hand to mouth all the days of their life? (Begging your honour's pardon) thinks I, if we little folks had but the wit to do for ourſelves,

ourſelves, the great folks would not be ſuch maggoty changelings as they are. They would begin to look about them.

But there is another thing that has ſwayed with me more than all the reſt. I do not know how to tell you, ſir—My poor boy, my Leonard, the pride of my life, has been three weeks in the county jail. It is true indeed, ſir. Squire Tyrrel put him there. Now, ſir, every time that I lay my head upon my pillow under my own little roof, my heart ſmites me with the ſituation of my Leonard. I do not mean ſo much for the hardſhip; I do not ſo much matter that. I do not expect him to go through the world upon velvet; I am not ſuch a fool. But who can tell what may hap in a jail? I have been three times to ſee him; and there is one man in the ſame quarter of the priſon that looks ſo wicked! I do not much fancy the looks of the reſt. To be ſure Leonard is as good a lad as ever lived.

I think he will not give his mind to ſuch. But, come what will, I am determined he ſhall not ſtay among them twelve hours longer. I am an obſtinate old fool perhaps; but I have taken it into my head, and I will do it. Do not aſk me what. But, if I were to write to your honour, and wait for your anſwer, it might take a week or ten days more. I muſt not think of it!

Squire Tyrrel is very headſtrong, and you, your honour, might be a little hottiſh or ſo. No, I would not have any body quarrel for me. There has been miſchief enough done already; and I will get myſelf out of the way. So I write this, your honour, merely to unload my mind. I feel myſelf equally as much bound to reſpect and love you, as if you had done every thing for me that I believe you would have done if things had chanced differently. It is moſt likely you will never hear of me any more. If

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it ſhould be ſo, ſet your worthy heart at reſt. I know myſelf too well ever to be tempted to do any thing that is really bad. I have now my fortune to ſeek in the world. I have been uſed ill enough, God knows. But I bear no malice; my heart is at peace with all mankind; and I forgive every body. It is like enough that poor Leonard and I may have hardſhip enough to undergo, among ſtrangers and being obliged to hide ourſelves like houſebreakers or highwaymen. But I defy all the malice of fortune to make us do an ill thing. That conſolation we will always keep againſt all the croſſes of a heart-breaking world.

God bleſs you!

So prays,

Your honour's humble ſervant to command,

BENJAMIN HAWKINS.

I read this letter with conſiderable attention, and it occaſioned me many reflec-

tions. To my way of thinking it contained a very intereſting picture of a blunt, downright, honeſt mind. It is a melancholy conſideration, ſaid I to myſelf; but ſuch is man! To have judged from appearances one would have ſaid, This is a fellow, to have taken fortune's buffets and rewards with an incorruptible mind. And yet ſee where it all ends! This man was capable of afterwards becoming a murderer, and finiſhing his life at the gallows. O poverty! thou art indeed omnipotent! Thou grindeſt us into deſperation; thou confoundeſt all our boaſted and moſt deep-rooted principles; thou filleſt us to the very brim with malice and revenge, and rendereſt us capable of acts of unknown horror! May I never be viſited by thee in the fulneſs of thy power!

Having ſatisfied my curioſity with reſpect to this paper, I took care to diſpoſe of it in ſuch a manner as that it ſhould be found

found by Mr. Falkland; at the ſame time that, in obedience to the principle which at preſent governed me with abſolute dominion, I was willing that the way in which it offered itſelf to his attention, ſhould ſuggeſt to him the idea that it had poſſibly paſſed through my hands. The next morning I ſaw him, and I exerted myſelf to lead the converſation, which by this time I well knew how to introduce, by inſenſible degrees to the point I deſired. After ſeveral previous queſtions, remarks and rejoinders, I continued:

Well, ſir, after all, I cannot help feeling very uncomfortably as to my ideas of human nature, when I find that there is no dependence to be placed upon its perſeverance, and that, at leaſt among the illiterate, the moſt promiſing appearances may end in the fouleſt diſgrace.

You think then that literature and a

cultivated mind are the only aſſurance for the conſtancy of our principles?

Um!—why do you ſuppoſe, ſir, that learning and ingenuity do not often ſerve people rather to hide their crimes, than to reſtrain them from committing them? Hiſtory tells us ſtrange things in that reſpect.

Williams! ſaid Mr. Falkland, a little diſturbed, you are ſtrangely given to cenſure and ſeverity.

I hope not. I am ſure I am moſt fond of looking on the other ſide of the picture, and conſidering how many men have been aſperſed, and even at ſome time or other almoſt torn to pieces by their fellow creatures, whom, when properly underſtood, we find worthy of our reverence and love.

Indeed, replied Mr. Falkland with a ſigh, when I conſider theſe things, I do not wonder at the dying exclamation of Brutus, O Virtue! I ſought thee as a ſubſtance,

ſubſtance, but I find thee an empty name! I am too much inclined to be of his opinion.

Why to be ſure, ſir, innocence and guilt are too much confounded in human life. I remember a very affecting ſtory of a poor man in the reign of queen Elizabeth, who would have infallibly been hanged for murder upon the ſtrength of circumſtantial evidence, if the perſon really concerned had not been himſelf upon the jury, and prevented it.

In ſaying this I touched the ſpring that wakened madneſs in his mind. He came up to me with a ferocious countenance as if determined to force me into a confeſſion of my thoughts. A ſudden pang however ſeemed to change his deſign; he drew back with trepidation; and exclaimed, Deteſted be the univerſe, and the laws that govern it! Honour, juſtice, virtue are all the juggle of knaves! If it

were in my power, I would inſtantly cruſh the whole ſyſtem into nothing!

I replied; Oh, ſir! things are not ſo bad as you imagine. The world was made for men of ſenſe to do what they will with it. Its affairs cannot be better than in the direction of the genuine heroes; and, as in the end they will be found the trueſt friends of the whole, ſo the multitude have nothing to do, but to look on, be faſhioned and admire.

Mr. Falkland made a powerful effort to recover his tranquillity. Williams! ſaid he, you inſtruct me well. You have a right notion of things, and I have great hopes of you. I will be more of a man. I will forget the paſt, and do better for the time to come. The future, the future is always our own.

I am ſorry, ſir, that I have given you pain. I am afraid to ſay all that I think. But it is my opinion that miſtakes will ultimately be cleared up, juſtice be done,

and

and the true ſtate of things come to light in ſpite of the falſe colours that may for a time obſcure it.

The idea I ſuggeſted did not give Mr. Falkland the proper degree of delight. He ſuffered a temporary relapſe. Juſtice! —he muttered. I do not know what is juſtice. My caſe is not within the reach of common remedies; perhaps of none. I only know that I am miſerable. I began life with the beſt intentions and the moſt fervid philanthropy; and here I am —miſerable—miſerable beyond expreſſion or endurance.

Having ſaid this, he ſeemed ſuddenly to recollect himſelf, and re-aſſume his accuſtomed dignity and command. How came this converſation? cried he. Who gave you a right to be my confident? Baſe, artful wretch that you are! learn to be more reſpectful! Are my paſſions to be wound and unwound by an inſolent domeſtic? Do you think I will be an in-

ſtrument to be played on at your pleaſure, till you have extorted all the treaſures of my ſoul? Begone, and fear leſt you be made to pay for the temerity you have already committed.

There was an energy and determination in the geſtures with which theſe words were accompanied that did not admit of their being diſputed. My mouth was cloſed; I felt as if deprived of all ſhare of activity, and was only able ſilently and paſſively to quit the apartment.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

TWO days ſubſequent to this converſation Mr. Falkland ordered me to be called to him. [I ſhall continue to ſpeak in my narrative of the ſilent, as well as the articulate part of the intercourſe between us. His countenance was habitually animated and expreſſive much beyond that of any other man I have ſeen. The curioſity, which, as I have ſaid, conſtituted at this time my ruling paſſion, ſtimulated me to make it my perpetual ſtudy. It will alſo moſt probably happen, while I am thus employed in collecting together the ſcattered incidents of my hiſtory, that I ſhall upon ſome occaſions annex to appearances an explanation, which I was far from poſſeſſing at the time, and was only ſuggeſted to me through the medium of ſubſequent events.]

Upon

Upon this occaſion Mr. Falkland's countenance exhibited an unwonted compoſure. This compoſure however did not ſeem to reſult from internal eaſe, but from an effort which, while he prepared himſelf for an intereſting ſcene, was exerted to prevent his preſence of mind and power of voluntary action from ſuffering any diminution.

Williams, ſaid he, I am determined, whatever it may coſt me, to have an explanation with you. You are a raſh and inconſiderate boy, and have given me a great deal of diſturbance. You ought to have known that, though I allow you to talk with me upon indifferent ſubjects, it is very improper in you to lead the converſation to any thing that relates to my perſonal concerns. You have ſaid many things lately in a very myſterious way, and appear to know ſomething more than I am aware of. I am equally at a loſs to gueſs how you came by your knowledge,

as

as of what it conſiſts. But I think I perceive too much inclination on your part to trifle with my peace of mind. That ought not to be, nor have I deſerved any ſuch treatment from you. But, be that as it will, the gueſſes in which you oblige me to employ myſelf are too painful. It is a ſort of ſporting with my feeling, which, as a man of reſolution, I am determined to bring to an end. I expect you therefore to lay aſide all myſtery and equivocation, and inform me explicitly what it is upon which your alluſions are built. What is it you know? What is it you want? I have been too much expoſed already to unparalleled mortification and hardſhip, and my wounds will not bear this perpetual handling.

I feel, ſir, anſwered I, how wrong I have been, and am aſhamed that ſuch a one as I ſhould have given you all this trouble and diſpleaſure. I felt it at the time; but I have been hurried along

I do not know how. I have always tried to ſtop myſelf, but the devil that poſſeſſed me was too ſtrong for me. I know nothing, ſir, but what Mr. Collins told me. He told me the ſtory of Mr. Tyrrel and miſs Melvile and Hawkins. I am ſure, ſir, he ſaid nothing but what was to your honour, and proved you to be more an angel than a man.

Well, ſir: I found a letter written by that Hawkins the other day: did not that letter fall into your hands? Did not you read it?

For God's ſake, ſir, turn me out of your houſe. Puniſh me in ſome way or other, that I may forgive myſelf. I am a fooliſh, wicked, deſpicable wretch. I confeſs, ſir, I did read the letter.

And how dared you read it? It was indeed very wrong of you. But we will talk of that by and by. Well, and what did you ſay to the letter? You know it ſeems that Hawkins was hanged.

I ſay,

I ſay, ſir? why it went to my heart to read it. I ſay, as I ſaid the day before yeſterday, that, when I ſee a man of ſo much principle, afterwards deliberately proceeding to the very worſt of crimes, I can ſcarcely bear to think of it.

That is what you ſay? It ſeems too you know, accurſed remembrance! that I was tried for this crime?

I was ſilent.

Well, ſir. You know too perhaps that, from the hour the crime was committed,—yes, ſir, that was the date [and, as he ſaid this, there was ſomewhat frightful, I had almoſt ſaid diabolical, in his countenance]—I have not had an hour's peace; I became changed from the happieſt into the moſt miſerable thing that lives; ſleep has fled from my eyes; joy has been a ſtranger to my thoughts; and annihilation I ſhould prefer a thouſand times to the being that I lead. As ſoon as I was capable of a choice, I choſe

choſe honour and the eſteem of mankind as a good I preferred to all others. You know, it ſeems, in how many ways my ambition has been diſappointed,—I do not thank Collins for having been the hiſtorian of my diſgrace,—Would to God that night could be blotted from the memory of man!—But the ſcene of that night, inſtead of periſhing, has been a ſource of ever new calamity to me, which muſt flow for ever! Am I then, thus miſerable and ruined, a proper ſubject for you upon which to exerciſe your ingenuity, and improve your power of tormenting? Was it not enough that I was publicly diſhonoured? that I was deprived by the peſtilential influence of ſome demon of the opportunity of avenging my diſhonour? No: in addition to this I have been tried upon the charge of having in this critical moment intercepted my own vengeance by the foulеſt of crimes. That trial is paſt.

Miſery

Miſery itſelf has nothing worſe in ſtore for me except what you have inflicted: the ſeeming to doubt of my innocence which neither proſecutor, nor judge, nor jury ever ventured to do. You have forced me to this explanation. You have extorted from me a confidence which I had no inclination to confer. But it is a part of the miſery of my ſituation, that I am at the mercy of every creature, however little, who feels himſelf inclined to ſport with my diſtreſs. Be content. You have brought me low enough.

Oh, ſir! I am not content; I cannot be content! I cannot bear to think what I have done. I ſhall never again be able to look in the face the beſt of maſters and the beſt of men. I beg of you, ſir, to turn me out of your ſervice. Let me go and hide myſelf where I may never ſee you more.

Mr. Falkland's countenance had indicated

cated great ſeverity through the whole of this converſation; but now it became more harſh and tempeſtuous than ever. How now, raſcal! cried he. You want to leave me, do you? Who told you that I wiſhed to part with you? But you cannot bear to live with ſuch a miſerable wretch as I am! You are not diſpoſed to put up with the caprices of a man ſo diſſatisfied and unjuſt!

Oh, ſir! do not talk to me thus! Do with me any thing you will. Kill me if you pleaſe.

Kill you? [Volumes could not deſcribe the emotions with which this echo of my words was given and received.]

Sir, I could die to ſerve you! I love you more than I can expreſs. I worſhip you as a being of a ſuperior nature. I am fooliſh, raw, inexperienced,—worſe than any of theſe;—but never did a thought of diſloyalty to your ſervice enter into my heart.

Here

Here our converſation ended; and the impreſſion it made upon my youthful mind it is impoſſible to deſcribe. I thought with aſtoniſhment, even with rapture, of the attention and kindneſs towards me I diſcovered in Mr. Falkland through all the roughneſs of his manner. I could never wonder enough at finding myſelf, humble as I was by my birth, obſcure as I had hitherto been, thus ſuddenly become of ſo much importance to the happineſs of one of the moſt enlightened and accompliſhed men in England. But this conſciouſneſs attached me to my maſter more eagerly than ever, and made me ſwear a thouſand times as I meditated upon my ſituation, that I would never prove unworthy of ſo generous a protector.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Is it not unaccountable that, in the midſt of all my increaſed veneration for my maſter, the firſt tumult of my emotion was ſcarcely ſubſided, before the old queſtion that had excited my conjectures recurred to my mind, Was he the murderer? It was a kind of fatal impulſe that ſeemed deſtined to hurry me to my deſtruction. I did not wonder at the diſturbance that was given to Mr. Falkland by any alluſion however diſtant to this fatal affair. That was as completely accounted for from the conſideration of his exceſſive ſenſibility in matters of honour, as it would have been upon the ſuppoſition of the moſt atrocious guilt. Knowing as he did, that ſuch a charge had once been connected with his name, he would of courſe be perpetually uneaſy, and ſuſpect ſome latent

latent inſinuation at every poſſible opportunity. He would doubt and fear, leſt every man with whom he converſed harboured the fouleſt ſuſpicions againſt him. In my caſe he found that I was in poſſeſſion of ſome information more than he was aware of, without its being poſſible for him to decide to what it amounted, whether I had heard a juſt or unjuſt, a candid or calumniatory tale. He had alſo reaſon to ſuppoſe that I gave entertainment to thoughts derogatory to his honour, and that I did not form that favourable judgment which the exquiſite refinement of his ruling paſſion made indiſpenſible to his peace. All theſe conſiderations would of courſe maintain in him a ſtate of perpetual uneaſineſs. But, though I could find nothing that I could conſider as juſtifying me in perſiſting in the ſhadow of a doubt, yet, as I have ſaid, the uncertainty and reſtleſſneſs of my contempla-

tions

tions would by no means depart from me.

The fluctuating ſtate of my mind produced a contention of oppoſite principles that by turns uſurped dominion over my conduct. Sometimes I was influenced by the moſt complete veneration for my maſter; I placed an unreſerved confidence in his integrity and his virtue, and implicitly ſurrendered my underſtanding for him to ſet it to what point he pleaſed. At other times the confidence, which had before flowed with the moſt plenteous tide, began to ebb; I was, as I had already been, watchful, inquiſitive, ſuſpicious, full of a thouſand conjectures as to the meaning of the moſt indifferent actions. Mr. Falkland, who was moſt painfully alive to every thing that related to his honour, ſaw theſe variations, and betrayed his conſciouſneſs of them now in one manner and now in another, frequently before

before I was myſelf aware, ſometimes almoſt before they exiſted. The ſituation of both was diſtreſſing; we were each of us a plague to the other; and I often wondered that the forbearance and benignity of my maſter was not at length exhauſted, and that he did not determine to thruſt from him for ever ſo inceſſant an obſerver. There was indeed one eminent difference between his ſhare in the tranſaction and mine. I had ſome conſolation in the midſt of my reſtleſſneſs. Curioſity is a principle that carries its pleaſures as well as its pains along with it. The mind is urged by a perpetual ſtimulus; it ſeems as if it were continually approaching to the end of its race; and, as the inſatiable deſire of ſatisfaction is its principle of conduct, ſo it promiſes itſelf in that ſatisfaction an unknown gratification, which ſeems as if it were capable of fully compenſating any injuries that may be ſuffered in

the career. But to Mr. Falkland there was no conſolation. What he endured in the intercourſe between us appeared to be all gratuitous evil. He had only to wiſh that there was no ſuch perſon as myſelf in the world, and to curſe the hour when his humanity led him to reſcue me from my obſcurity, and place me in his ſervice.

A conſequence produced upon me by the extraordinary nature of my ſituation it is neceſſary to mention. The conſtant ſtate of vigilance and ſuſpicion in which my mind was retained worked a very rapid change in my character. It ſeemed to have all the effect that might have been expected from years of obſervation and experience. The ſtrictneſs with which I endeavoured to remark what paſſed in the mind of one man, and the variety of conjectures into which I was led, appeared as it were to render me a competent adept in the different modes in which the human intellect

tellect diſplays its ſecret workings. I no longer ſaid to myſelf, as I had done in the beginning, "I will aſk Mr. Falkland whether he were the murderer." On the contrary, after having carefully examined the different kinds of evidence of which the ſubject was ſuſceptible, and recollecting all that had already paſſed upon the ſubject, it was not without conſiderable pain that I felt myſelf unable to diſcover any way in which I could be perfectly and unalterably ſatisfied of my maſter's innocence. As to his guilt, I could ſcarcely bring myſelf to doubt that in ſome way or other, ſooner or later, I ſhould arrive at the knowledge of that, if it really exiſted. But I could not endure to think almoſt for a moment of that ſide of the alternative as true; and, with all my ungovernable ſuſpicion, ariſing from the myſteriouſneſs of the circumſtances, and the delight which a young and unfledg-

ed mind receives from ideas that give ſcope to all that imagination can picture of terrible or ſublime, I could not yet bring myſelf to conſider Mr. Falkland's guilt as a ſuppoſition attended with the remoteſt probability.

I hope the reader will forgive me for dwelling thus long on preliminary circumſtances. I ſhall come ſoon enough to the ſtory of my own miſery. I have already ſaid that one of the motives which induced me to the penning of this narrative was to conſole myſelf in my inſupportable diſtreſs. I derive a melancholy pleaſure from dwelling upon the circumſtances which imperceptibly paved the way to my ruin. While I recollect or deſcribe paſt ſcenes which occurred in a more favourable period of my life, my attention is called off for a ſhort interval from the hopeleſs misfortune in which I am at preſent involved. The man muſt indeed poſſeſs an uncommon

uncommon portion of hardneſs of heart, who can envy me ſo ſlight a relief.—To proceed.

For ſome time after the explanation which had thus taken place between me and my maſter, his melancholy, inſtead of being in the ſlighteſt degree diminiſhed by the lenient hand of time, went on perpetually to increaſe. His fits of inſanity, for ſuch I muſt denominate them for want of a diſtinct appellation, though it is poſſible they might not fall under the definition that either the faculty or the court of chancery appropriate to that term, became ſtronger and more durable than ever. It was no longer practicable wholly to conceal them from the family and even from the neighbourhood. He would ſometimes without any previous notice abſent himſelf from his houſe for two or three days, unaccompanied by any ſervants or attendants. This was the more extraordi-

nary, as it was well known that he paid no viſits, nor kept up any ſort of intercourſe with the gentlemen of the vicinity. But it was impoſſible that a man of Mr. Falkland's diſtinction and fortune ſhould long continue in ſuch a practice without its being diſcovered what was become of him, though a conſiderable part of our county was among the wildeſt and moſt deſolate diſtricts that are to be found in South Britain. Mr. Falkland was ſometimes ſeen climbing among the rocks, reclining motionleſs for hours together upon the edge of a precipice, or lulled into a kind of nameleſs lethargy of deſpair by the daſhing of the torrents. He would remain for whole nights together under the naked cope of heaven, inattentive to the conſideration either of place or time, inſenſible to the variations of the weather, or rather ſeeming to be delighted with that uproar of the elements which partially

called

called off his attention from the diſcord and dejection which occupied his own mind.

At firſt, when we received intelligence at any time of the place to which Mr. Falkland had withdrawn himſelf, ſome perſon of his houſhold, Mr. Collins or myſelf, but moſt generally myſelf, as I was always at home, and always in the received ſenſe of that word at leiſure, went to him to perſuade him to return. But after a few experiments we thought it adviſeable to deſiſt, and to leave my maſter to prolong his abſence, or to terminate it, as might happen to ſuit his own inclination. Mr. Collins, whoſe grey hairs and long ſervices ſeemed to give him a ſort of right to be importunate, ſometimes ſucceeded; though even in that caſe there was nothing that could ſit more uneaſy upon Mr. Falkland than this inſinuation as if he wanted a guardian to take care of him, or as if

he were, or were in danger of, falling into a ſtate in which he would be incapable of deliberately controling his own words and actions. At one time he would ſullenly yield to his humble, venerable friend, murmuring grievouſly at the conſtraint that was put upon him, but without ſpirit enough even to complain of it with energy. At another time, even though complying, he would ſuddenly burſt out in a paroxyſm of reſentment. Upon theſe occaſions there was ſomething inconceivably, ſavagely terrible in his anger, that gave to the perſon againſt whom it was directed the moſt humiliating and inſupportable ſenſations. Me he always treated at theſe times with fierceneſs, and drove me from him with a vehemence, lofty, emphatical and ſuſtained beyond any thing of which I ſhould have thought human nature to be capable. Theſe ſallies ſeemed always to conſtitute a ſort of

criſis in his indiſpoſition; and, whenever he was induced to ſuch a premature return, he would fall immediately after into a ſtate of the moſt melancholy inactivity, in which he uſually continued for two or three days. It was by an obſtinate fatality that, whenever I ſaw Mr. Falkland in theſe deplorable ſituations, and particularly when I lighted upon him after having ſought him among the rocks and precipices, pale, emaciated, ſolitary and haggard, the ſuggeſtion would continually recur to me, in ſpite of inclination, in ſpite of perſuaſion and in ſpite of evidence, Surely this man is a murderer!

CHAP. V.

IT was in one of the lucid intervals, as I may term them, that occurred during this period, that a peaſant was brought before him, in his character of a juſtice of peace, upon an accuſation of having murdered his fellow. As Mr. Falkland had by this time acquired the repute of a melancholy valetudinarian, it is probable he would not have been called upon to act in his official character upon the preſent occaſion, had it not been that two or three of the neighbouring juſtices were all of them from home at once, ſo that he was the only one to be found in a circuit of many miles. The reader however muſt not imagine, though I have employed the word inſanity in deſcribing Mr. Falkland's ſymptoms, that he was by any

any means reckoned for a madman by the generality of thoſe who had occaſion to obſerve him. It is true that his behaviour at certain times was ſingular and unaccountable; but then at other times there was in it ſo much dignity, regularity and economy; he knew ſo well how to command and make himſelf reſpected; his actions and carriage were ſo condeſcending, conſiderate and benevolent; that, far from having forfeited the eſteem of the unfortunate or the many, they were loud and earneſt in his praiſes.

I was preſent at the examination of this peaſant. The moment I heard of the errand which had brought this rabble of viſitors, a ſudden thought ſtruck me. I conceived the poſſibility of rendering the incident ſubordinate to the great enquiry which drank up all the currents of my ſoul. I ſaid, This man is arraigned of murder, and murder is the maſter-key that wakes diſtemper in the mind of Mr.

Falkland. I will watch him without remiſſion. I will trace all the mazes of his thought. Surely at ſuch a time his ſecret anguiſh muſt betray itſelf. Surely, if it be not my own fault, I ſhall now be able to diſcover the true ſtate of his plea before the tribunal of unerring juſtice.

I took my ſtation in a manner moſt favourable to the object upon which my mind was intent. I could perceive in Mr. Falkland's features as he entered a ſtrong reluctance to the buſineſs in which he was engaged; but there was no poſſibility of retreating. His countenance was embarraſſed and anxious; he ſcarcely ſaw any body. The examination had not proceeded far before he chanced to turn his eye to the part of the room where I was. It happened in this, as in ſome preceding inſtances; we exchanged a ſilent look by which we told volumes to each other. Mr. Falkland's complexion turned from red to pale, and from pale

to red. I perfectly underſtood his feelings, and would willingly have withdrawn myſelf. But it was impoſſible; my paſſions were too deeply engaged; I was rooted to the ſpot; though my own life, that of my maſter, or almoſt of a whole nation had been at ſtake, I had no power to change my poſition.

The firſt ſurpriſe however having ſubſided, Mr. Falkland aſſumed a look of determined conſtancy, and even ſeemed to increaſe in ſelf-poſſeſſion much beyond what could have been expected from his firſt entrance. This he could probably have maintained, had it not been that the ſcene, inſtead of being permanent, was in ſome ſort perpetually changing. The man who was brought before him was vehemently accuſed by the brother of the deceaſed as having acted from the moſt rooted malice. He ſwore that there had been an old grudge between the parties, and related ſeveral inſtances of it. He affirmed

affirmed that the murderer had ſought the earlieſt opportunity of wreaking his revenge, had ſtruck the firſt blow, and, though the conteſt was in appearance only a common boxing match, had watched the occaſion of giving a fatal ſtroke which was followed by the inſtant death of his antagoniſt.

While the accuſer was giving in his evidence, the accuſed diſcovered every token of the moſt poignant ſenſibility. At one time his features were convulſed with anguiſh, tears unbidden rolled down his manly cheeks; and at another he ſtarted with aſtoniſhment at the unfavorable turn that was given to the narrative, though without betraying any impatience to interrupt. I never ſaw a man leſs ferocious in his appearance. He was tall, well made and comely. His countenance was ingenuous and benevolent, without folly. By his ſide ſtood a young woman, his ſweetheart, extremely agree-

able

able in her perſon, and her looks teſtifying how deeply ſhe intereſted herſelf in the fate of her lover. The accidental ſpectators were divided between indignation againſt the enormity of the ſuppoſed criminal, and compaſſion for the poor girl that accompanied him. They ſeemed to take little notice of the favourable appearances viſible in the perſon of the accuſed, till in the ſequel thoſe appearances were more forcibly ſuggeſted to their attention. For Mr. Falkland, he was at one moment engroſſed by curioſity and earneſtneſs to inveſtigate the tale, while at another he betrayed a ſort of revulſion of ſentiment which made the inveſtigation too painful for him to ſupport.

When the accuſed was called upon for his defence, he readily owned the miſunderſtanding that had exiſted, and that the deceaſed was the worſt enemy he had in the world. Indeed he was his only ene-

my,

my, and he could not tell the reaſon that had made him ſo. He had employed every poſſible effort to overcome his animoſity, but in vain. The deceaſed had upon all occaſions ſought to mortify him, and do him an ill turn; but he had reſolved never to be engaged in a broil with him, and till this day he had ſucceeded. If he had met with a misfortune with any other man, people at leaſt might have thought it matter of accident; but now it would always be believed that he had acted from ſecret malice and a bad heart.

The fact was that he and his ſweetheart had gone to a neighbouring fair, where this man had met them. The man had often tried to affront him, and his paſſiveneſs, interpreted into cowardice, had perhaps encouraged the other to additional rudeneſs. Finding that he had endured trivial inſults to himſelf with an even temper, the deceaſed now thought proper to turn his brutality upon the young woman

that

that accompanied him. He purſued them; he endeavoured in various manners to haraſs and vex them; they had ſought in vain to ſhake him off. The young woman was conſiderably terrified. The accuſed expoſtulated with their perſecutor, and aſked him how he could be ſo barbarous as to perſiſt in frightening a woman? He replied with an inſulting tone, Then the woman ſhould find ſome one able to protect her; people that encouraged and truſted to ſuch a thief as that, deſerved no better! The accuſed tried every expedient he could invent; at length he could endure it no longer; he became exaſperated, and challenged the aſſailant. The challenge was accepted; a ring was formed; he confided the care of his ſweetheart to a byſtander; and unfortunately the firſt blow he ſtruck proved fatal.

The accuſed added that he did not care what became of him. He had been

anxious

anxious to go through the world in an inoffenſive manner, and now he had the guilt of blood upon him. He did not know but it would be a kindneſs in them to hang him out of the way; for his conſcience would reproach him as long as he lived, and the figure of the deceaſed, as he had laid ſenſeleſs and without motion at his feet, would perpetually haunt him. The thought of this man, at one moment full of life and vigour, and the next lifted a helpleſs corpſe from the ground, and all owing to him, was a thought too dreadful to be endured. He had loved the poor maiden who had been the innocent occaſion of this with all his heart, but from this time he ſhould never ſupport the ſight of her. The ſight would bring a tribe of fiends in its rear. One unlucky minute had poiſoned all his hopes, and made life a burden to him.—Saying this his countenance fell, the muſcles of his face

face trembled with agony, and he looked the ſtatue of deſpair.

This was the ſtory of which Mr. Falkland was called upon to be the auditor. Though the incidents were for the moſt part wide of thoſe which belonged to the adventures of the preceding volume, and there had been much leſs policy and ſkill diſplayed on either part in this ruſtic encounter, yet there were many points which, to a man who bore the former ſtrongly in his recollection, ſuggeſted a ſufficient reſemblance. Theſe points perpetually ſmote upon the heart of Mr. Falkland. He at one time ſtarted with aſtoniſhment, and at another ſhifted his poſture like a man who is unable longer to endure the ſenſations that preſs upon him. Then he new ſtrung his nerves to ſtubborn patience. I could ſee, while his muſcles preſerved an inflexible ſteadineſs, tears of unbidden anguiſh roll down his cheeks. He dared not truſt his eyes to glance

glance towards the ſide of the room where I ſtood; and this gave an air of embarraſſment to his whole figure. But, when the accuſed came to ſpeak of his own feelings, to deſcribe the depth of his compunction for an involuntary fault, he could endure it no longer. He ſuddenly roſe, and with every mark of horror and deſpair ruſhed out of the room.

This circumſtance made no material difference in the affair of the accuſed. The parties were detained about half an hour. Mr. Falkland had already heard the material parts of the evidence in perſon. At the expiration of that interval, he ſent for Mr. Collins out of the room. The ſtory of the culprit was confirmed by many witneſſes who had ſeen the tranſaction. Word was brought that my maſter was indiſpoſed, and at the ſame time the accuſed was ordered to be diſcharged. The vengeance of the brother however, as I afterwards underſtood, did not

not reſt here, and he found a magiſtrate more ſcrupulous or more deſpotic, by whom the culprit was committed.

This affair was no ſooner concluded than I haſtened into the garden, and plunged into the deepeſt of its thickets. My mind was full almoſt to burſting. I no ſooner conceived myſelf ſufficiently removed from all obſervation, than my thoughts forced their way ſpontaneouſly to my tongue, and I exclaimed in a fit of uncontrolable enthuſiaſm: "This is the murderer! the Hawkinses were innocent! I am ſure of it! I will pledge my life of it! It is out! It is diſcovered! Guilty upon my ſoul!"

While I thus proceeded with haſty ſteps along the moſt ſecret paths of the garden, and from time to time gave vent to the tumult of my thoughts in involuntary exclamations, I felt as if my animal ſyſtem had undergone a total revolution. My blood boiled within me. I was conſcious

ſcious to a kind of rapture for which I could not account. I was ſolemn, yet full of rapid emotion, burning with indignation and energy. In the very tempeſt and hurricane of the paſſions, I ſeemed to enjoy the moſt ſoul-raviſhing calm. I cannot better expreſs the then ſtate of my mind, than by ſaying, I was never ſo perfectly alive as at that moment.

This ſtate of mental elevation continued for ſeveral hours, but at length ſubſided and gave place to more deliberate reflection. One of the firſt queſtions that then occurred was, What ſhall I do with the knowlege I have been ſo eager to acquire? I had no inclination to turn informer. I felt, what I had had no previous conception of, that it was poſſible to love a murderer, and, as I then underſtood it, the worſt of murderers. I conceived it to be in the higheſt degree abſurd and iniquitous to cut off a man qualified

qualified for the moſt eſſential and extenſive utility merely out of retroſpect to an act which, whatever were its merits, could not now be retrieved.

This thought led me to another which had at firſt paſſed unnoticed. If I had been diſpoſed to turn informer, what had occurred amounted to no evidence that was admiſſible in a court of juſtice. Well then, added I, if it be ſuch as would not be admitted at a criminal tribunal, am I ſure it is ſuch as I ought to admit? There were twenty perſons beſide myſelf preſent at the ſcene from which I pretend to derive ſuch entire conviction. Not one of them ſaw it in the light that I did. It either appeared to them a caſual and unimportant circumſtance, or they thought it ſufficiently accounted for by Mr. Falkland's infirmity and misfortunes. Did it really contain ſuch an extent of arguments and application, that nobody

nobody but I was diſcerning enough to ſee?

But all this reaſoning produced no alteration in my way of thinking. For this time I could not get it out of my mind for a moment: "Mr. Falkland is the murderer! He is guilty! I ſee it! I feel it! I am ſure of it!" Thus was I hurried along by an uncontrolable deſtiny. The ſtate of my paſſions in their progreſſive career, the inquiſitiveneſs and impatience of my thoughts, appeared to make this determination unavoidable.

An incident occurred while I was in the garden, that ſeemed to make no impreſſion upon me at the time, but which I recollected when my thoughts were got into ſomewhat of a ſlower motion. In the midſt of one of my paroxyſms of exclamation, and when I thought myſelf moſt alone, the ſhadow of a man as avoiding me paſſed tranſiently by me at a ſmall diſtance. Though I had ſcarcely caught a faint

a faint glimpſe of his perſon, there was ſomething in the occurrence that perſuaded me it was Mr. Falkland. I ſhuddered at the poſſibility of his having overheard the words of my ſoliloquy. But this idea, alarming as it was, had not power immediately to ſuſpend the career of my reflections. Subſequent circumſtances however brought back the apprehenſion to my mind. I had ſcarcely a doubt of its reality, when dinner time came, and Mr. Falkland was not to be found. Supper and bed-time paſſed in the ſame manner. The only concluſion made by his ſervants upon this circumſtance was, that he was gone upon one of his accuſtomed melancholy rambles.

CHAP. VI.

THE period at which my ſtory is now arrived ſeemed as if it were the very criſis of the fortune of Mr. Falkland. Incident followed upon incident in a kind of breathleſs ſucceſſion. About nine o'clock the next morning an alarm was given that one of the chimnies of the houſe was on fire. No accident could be apparently more trivial; but preſently it blazed with ſuch fury, as to make it clear that ſome beam of the houſe, which in the firſt building had been improperly placed, had been reached by the flames. Some danger was apprehended for the whole edifice. The confuſion was the greater, in conſequence of the abſence of the maſter, as well as of Mr. Collins, the ſteward. While ſome of the domeſtics were employed

ployed in endeavouring to extinguiſh the flames, it was thought proper that others ſhould buſy themſelves in removing the moſt valuable moveables to a lawn in the garden. I took ſome command in the affair, to which indeed my ſtation in the family ſeemed to entitle me, and for which I was thought qualified by my underſtanding and mental reſources.

Having given ſome general directions, I conceived that it was not enough to ſtand by and ſuperintend, but that I ſhould contribute my perſonal labour in the public concern. I ſet out for that purpoſe; and my ſteps by ſome myſterious fatality were directed to the private apartment at the end of the library. Here, as I looked round, my eye was ſuddenly caught by the cheſt mentioned in the firſt pages of my narrative.

My mind was already raiſed to its utmoſt pitch. In a window-ſeat of the room lay a parcel of chiſſels and other

carpenter's tools. I know not what infatuation inſtantaneouſly ſeized me. The idea was too powerful to be reſiſted. I forgot the buſineſs upon which I came, the employment of the ſervants and the urgency of general danger. I ſhould have done the ſame, if the apartment round me had been in flames. I ſnatched a tool ſuitable for the purpoſe, threw myſelf upon the ground, and applied with eagerneſs to a magazine which incloſed all for which my heart panted. After two or three efforts, in which the energy of uncontrolable paſſion was added to my bodily ſtrength, the faſtenings gave way, the cheſt opened, and all that I ſought was at once within my reach.

I was in the act of lifting up the lid, when Mr. Falkland entered, wild, breathleſs, diſtraction in his looks! He had been brought home from a conſiderable diſtance by the ſight of the flames. At the moment of his appearance the lid

dropt

dropt down from my hand. He no ſooner ſaw me, than his eyes emitted ſparks of rage. He ran with eagerneſs to a brace of loaded piſtols which hung up in the room, and, ſeizing one, preſented it to my head. I ſaw his deſign, and ſprang to avoid it; but, with the ſame rapidity with which he had formed his reſolution, he changed it, and inſtantly went to the window and flung the piſtol into the court below. He bade me begone with his uſual irreſiſtible energy; and, overcome as I was already by the horror of the detection, I eagerly complied.

A moment after a conſiderable part of the chimney was tumbled with noiſe into the court below, and a voice exclaimed that the fire was more violent than ever. Theſe circumſtances ſeemed to produce a mechanical effect upon my maſter, who, having firſt locked the cloſet, appeared on the outſide of the houſe, aſcended the

roof, and was in a moment in every place where his preſence was required. The flames were preſently extinguiſhed.

The reader can with difficulty form a conception of the ſtate to which I was now reduced. My act was in ſome ſort an act of inſanity; but how undeſcribable are the feelings with which I looked back upon it! It was an inſtantaneous impulſe, a ſhort lived and paſſing alienation of mind; but what muſt Mr. Falkland think of that alienation? To any man a perſon, who had once ſhown himſelf capable of ſo wild a flight of the mind, muſt appear dangerous; how muſt he appear to a man under Mr. Falkland's circumſtances? I had juſt had a piſtol held to my head by a man reſolved to put a period to my exiſtence. That indeed was paſt; but what was it that fate had yet in reſerve for me! The inſatiable vengeance of a Falkland, of a man whoſe hands were to my apprehenſion red with blood and

and his thoughts familiar with cruelty and murder. How great were the reſources of his mind, reſources henceforth to be confederated for my deſtruction! This was the termination of an ungoverned curioſity, an impulſe that I had repreſented to myſelf as ſo innocent and ſo venial!

In the high tide of boiling paſſion I had overlooked all conſequences. It now appeared to me like a dream. Is it in man to leap from the high-raiſed precipice, or ruſh unconcerned into the midſt of flames? Was it poſſible I could have forgotten for a moment the awe-creating manners of Falkland, and the inexorable fury I ſhould awake in his ſoul? No thought of future ſecurity had reached my mind. I had acted upon no plan. I had conceived no means of concealing my deed, after it had once been effected. But it was over now. One ſhort minute had effected a reverſe in my ſituation, the ſuddenneſs of

which the hiſtory of man perhaps is unable to ſurpaſs.

I have always been at a loſs to account for my having plunged thus headlong into an act ſo monſtrous. There is ſomething in it of unremarked and involuntary ſympathy. One ſentiment flows by neceſſity of nature into another ſentiment of the ſame general character. This was the firſt inſtance in which I had witneſſed a danger by fire. All was confuſion around me, and all changed into hurricane within. The general ſituation to my unpractiſed apprehenſion partook of deſperate, and I by contagion became alike deſperate. At firſt I had been in ſome degree calm and collected, but that too was a deſperate effort, and when it gave way, a kind of inſtant inſanity became its ſucceſſor.

I had now every thing to fear. And yet what was my fault? It proceeded from

from none of thoſe errors which are juſtly held up to the averſion of mankind; my object had been neither wealth, nor the means of indulgence, nor the uſurpation of power. No ſpark of malignity had harboured in my ſoul. I had always reverenced the ſublime mind of Mr. Falkland; I reverenced it ſtill. My offence had merely been a miſtaken thirſt of knowledge. Such however it was as to admit neither of forgiveneſs nor remiſſion. This epoch was the criſis of my fate, dividing what may be called the offenſive part, from the defenſive which was the ſole buſineſs of my remaining years. Alas, my offence was ſhort, not aggravated by any ſiniſter intention: but the repriſals I was to ſuffer, are long, and can terminate only with my life!

In the ſtate in which I found myſelf when the recollection of what I had done flowed back upon my mind, I was in-

capable of any reſolution. All was chaos and uncertainty within me. My thoughts were too full of horror to be ſuſceptible of activity. I felt deſerted of my intellectual powers, palſied in mind, and compelled to ſit in ſpeechleſs expectation of the miſery to which I was deſtined. To my own conception I was like a man, who, though blaſted with lightning and deprived for ever of the power of motion, ſhould yet retain the conſciouſneſs of his ſituation. Death-dealing deſpair was the only idea of which I was ſenſible.

I was ſtill in this ſituation of mind when Mr. Falkland ſent for me. His meſſage rouſed me from my trance. In recovering I felt thoſe ſickening and loathſome ſenſations, which a man may be ſuppoſed at firſt to endure who ſhould return from the ſleep of death. Gradually I recovered the power of arranging my ideas and directing my ſteps. I un-

I underſtood that the minute the affair of the chimney was over Mr. Falkland had retired to his own room. It was evening before he ordered me to be called.

I found in him every token of extreme diſtreſs, except that there was an air of ſolemn and ſad compoſure that crowned the whole. For the preſent all appearance of gloom, ſtatelineſs and auſterity was gone. As I entered, he looked up, and, ſeeing who it was, ordered me to bolt the door. I obeyed. He himſelf went round the room, and examined all its other avenues. He then returned to where I was. I trembled in every joint of my frame. I exclaimed within myſelf, "What bloody ſcene has Roſcius now to "act?"

Williams, ſaid he, in a tone that had more in it of ſorrow than reſentment, I have attempted your life! I am a wretch devoted to the ſcorn and exe-

cration of mankind!—There he ſtopped.

If there be one being in the whole earth, that feels the ſcorn and execration due to ſuch a wretch more ſtrongly than another, it is myſelf. I have been kept in a ſtate of perpetual torture and madneſs. But I can put an end to it and its conſequences; and, ſo far at leaſt as relates to you, I am determined to do it. I know the price, and——I will make the purchaſe.

You muſt ſwear, ſaid he. You muſt atteſt every ſacrament, divine and human, never to diſcloſe what I am now to tell you.—He dictated the oath, and I repeated it with an aching heart. I had no power to offer a word of remark.

This confidence, ſaid he, is of your ſeeing, not of mine. It is odious to me, as it is dangerous to you.

Having thus prefaced the diſcloſure he had to make, he pauſed. He ſeemed

to collect himſelf as for an effort of magnitude. He wiped his face with his handkerchief. The moiſture that incommoded him appeared not to be tears, but ſweat.

Look at me. Obſerve me. Is it not ſtrange that ſuch a one as I ſhould retain lineaments of a human creature? I am the blackeſt of villains. I am the murderer of Tyrrel. I am the aſſaſſin of the Hawkinses.

I ſtarted, as if I had trod upon a rattleſnake.

What a ſtory is mine! Inſulted, diſgraced, polluted in the face of hundreds, I was capable of any act of deſperation. I watched my opportunity, followed Mr. Tyrrel from the rooms, ſeized a ſharp-pointed knife that fell in my way, came behind him, and ſtabbed him to the heart. My gigantic oppreſſor rolled at my feet.

All are but links of one chain. A blow! A mur-

A murder! My next buſineſs was to defend myſelf, to tell ſo well digeſted a lie, as that all mankind ſhould believe it true. Never was a taſk ſo harrowing and intolerable!

Well: thus far fortune favoured me. She favoured me beyond my deſire. The guilt was removed from me, and caſt upon another; but this I was to endure. Whence came the circumſtantial evidence againſt him, the broken knife and the blood, I am unable to tell. I ſuppoſe by ſome miraculous accident he was paſſing by, and endeavoured to aſſiſt his oppreſſor in the agonies of death. You have heard Hawkins's ſtory; you have read one of his letters. But you do not know the thouſandth part of the proofs of his ſimple and unalterable rectitude that I have known. His ſon ſuffered with him, that ſon for the ſake of whoſe happineſs and virtue he ruined himſelf, and would

have died a hundred times.——I have had feelings, but I cannot deſcribe them.

This it is to be a gentleman! a man of honour! I was the fool of fame. My virtue, my honeſty, my everlaſting peace of mind were cheap ſacrifices to be made at the ſhrine of this divinity. But, what is worſe, there is nothing that has happened that has in any degree contributed to my cure. I am as much the fool of fame as ever. I cling to it to my laſt breath. Though I be the blackeſt of villains, I will leave behind me a ſpotleſs and illuſtrious name. There is no crime ſo malignant, no ſcene of blood ſo horrible, in which that object cannot engage me. It is no matter that I regard theſe things at a diſtance with averſion;——I am ſure of it; bring me to the teſt, and I ſhall yield. I deſpiſe myſelf; but thus I am; things are gone too far to be recalled.

Why

Why is it that I am compelled to this confidence? From the love of fame. I ſhould tremble at the ſight of every piſtol, or inſtrument of death that offered itſelf to my hands; and perhaps my next murder may not be ſo fortunate as thoſe I have already committed. I had no alternative but to make you my confident or my victim. It was better to truſt you with the whole truth under every ſeal of ſecrecy, than to live in perpetual fear of your penetration or your raſhneſs.

Do you know what it is you have done? To gratify a fooliſhly inquiſitive humour you have ſold yourſelf. You ſhall continue in my ſervice, but can never ſhare in my affection. I will benefit you in reſpect of fortune, but I ſhall always hate you. If ever an unguarded word eſcape from your lips, if ever you excite my jealouſy or ſuſpicion, expect to pay for it by your death or worſe. It is a dear bargain you have

worſe.

made. But it is too late to look back. I charge and adjure you by every thing that is ſacred and that is tremendous, preſerve your faith!

My tongue has now for the firſt time for ſeveral years ſpoken the language of my heart; and the intercourſe from this hour ſhall be ſhut for ever. I want no pity. I deſire no conſolation. Surrounded as I am with horrors, I will at leaſt preſerve my fortitude to the laſt. If I had been reſerved to a different deſtiny, I have qualities in that reſpect worthy of a better cauſe. I can be mad, miſerable and frantic, but even in frenzy I can preſerve my preſence of mind and diſcretion.

Such was the ſtory I had been ſo earneſtly deſirous to know. Though my mind had brooded upon the ſubject for months, there was not a ſyllable of it that did not come to my ear with the moſt

moſt perfect ſenſe of novelty. Mr. Falkland is a murderer! ſaid I, as I retired from the conference. This dreadful appellative "a murderer," made my very blood run cold within me. He killed Mr. Tyrrel, for he could not control his reſentment and anger: he ſacrificed Hawkins the elder and Hawkins the younger, becauſe he could upon no terms endure the public loſs of honour: how can I expect that a man thus paſſionate and unrelenting will not ſooner or later make me his victim?

But, notwithſtanding this terrible application of the ſtory, an application to which perhaps in ſome form or other mankind are indebted for nine tenths of their abhorrence againſt vice, I could not help occaſionally recurring to reflections of an oppoſite nature. Mr. Falkland is a murderer! reſumed I. He might yet be a moſt excellent man, if he did but think ſo. It is the thinking

ourſelves

ourſelves vicious then, that principally contributes to make us vicious?

Amidſt the ſhock I received from finding, what I had never ſuffered myſelf conſtantly to believe, that my ſuſpicions were true; I ſtill diſcovered new cauſe of admiration for my maſter. His menaces indeed were terrible. But, when I recollected the offence I had given, ſo contrary to every received principle of civilized ſociety, ſo inſolent and rude, ſo intolerable to a man of Mr. Falkland's elevation and in Mr. Falkland's peculiarity of circumſtances, I was aſtoniſhed at his forbearance. There were indeed ſufficiently obvious reaſons why he might not chooſe to proceed to extremities with me. But how different from the fearful expectations I had conceived were the calmneſs of his behaviour and the regulated mildneſs of his language! In this reſpect I for a ſhort time imagined that I was emancipated

pated from the miſchiefs which had appalled me, and that in having to do with a man of Mr. Falkland's liberality I had nothing rigorous to apprehend.

It is a miſerable proſpect, ſaid I, that he holds up to me. He imagines that I am reſtrained by no principles, and deaf to the claims of perſonal excellence. But he ſhall find himſelf miſtaken. I will never become an informer. I will never injure my maſter; and therefore he will not be my enemy. With all his misfortunes and all his errors, I feel that my ſoul yearns for his welfare. If he have been criminal, that is owing to circumſtances; the ſame qualities under other circumſtances would have been, or rather were ſublimely beneficent.

My reaſonings were no doubt infinitely more favourable to my maſter than thoſe which human beings are accuſtomed to make in the caſe of ſuch as they ſtyle great criminals. This will

not

not be wondered at, when it is conſidered that I had myſelf juſt been trampling on the eſtabliſhed boundaries of obligation, and therefore might well have a fellow feeling for other offenders. Add to which, I had known Mr. Falkland from the firſt as a beneficent divinity. I had obſerved at leiſure and with a minuteneſs which could not deceive me the excellent qualities of his heart, and I found him poſſeſſed of a mind beyond compariſon the moſt fertile and accompliſhed I had ever known.

But, though the terrors which had impreſſed me were conſiderably alleviated, my ſituation was notwithſtanding ſufficiently miſerable. The eaſe and lightheartedneſs of my youth were for ever gone. The voice of an irreſiſtible neceſſity had commanded me to "ſleep no more." I was tormented with a conſcious ſecret of which I muſt never diſburthen myſelf; and this conſciouſneſs

was

was at my age a ſource of perpetual melancholy. I had made myſelf a priſoner, in the moſt intolerable ſenſe of that term, for years, perhaps for the reſt of my life. Though my prudence and diſcretion ſhould be invariable, I muſt remember that I ſhould have an overſeer, vigilant from conſcious guilt, full of reſentment at the unjuſtifiable means by which I had extorted from him a confeſſion, and whoſe lighteſt caprice might at any time decide upon every thing that was dear to me. The vigilance even of a public and ſyſtematical deſpotiſm is poor, compared with a vigilance which is thus goaded by the moſt anxious paſſions of the ſoul. Againſt this ſpecies of perſecution I knew not how to invent a refuge. I dared neither fly from the obſervation of Mr. Falkland, nor continue expoſed to its operation. I was at firſt indeed lulled in a certain degree to ſecurity upon the verge of the precipice.

pice. But it was not long before I found a thouſand circumſtances perpetually reminding me of my true ſituation. Thoſe I am now to relate are among the moſt memorable.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

IN no long time after the diſcloſure Mr. Falkland had made, Mr. Foreſter, his elder brother by the mother's ſide, came to reſide for a ſhort period in our family. This was a circumſtance peculiarly adverſe to my maſter's habits and inclinations. He had broken off, as I have already ſaid, all intercourſe of viſiting his neighbours. He debarred himſelf every kind of amuſement and relaxation. He ſhrunk from the ſociety of his fellows, and thought he could never be ſufficiently buried in obſcurity and ſolitude. This principle was in moſt caſes of no difficult execution to a man of firmneſs. But Mr. Falkland knew not how to avoid the viſit of Mr. Foreſter. This gentleman was juſt returned from a reſidence of ſeveral years upon

upon the continent, and his demand of an apartment in the houſe of his half-brother till his own houſe at the diſtance of thirty miles ſhould be prepared for his reception, was made with an air of confidence that ſcarcely admitted of a refuſal. Mr. Falkland could only ſay that the ſtate of his health and ſpirits was ſuch, that he feared a reſidence at his houſe would be little agreeable to his kinſman; and Mr. Foreſter conceived that this was a diſqualification which would always augment in proportion as it was tolerated, and hoped that his ſociety, by inducing Mr. Falkland to ſuſpend his habits of ſecluſion, would be the means of eſſential benefit. Mr. Falkland oppoſed him no farther. He would have been ſorry to be thought unkind to a kinſman for whom he had a particular eſteem; and the conſciouſneſs of not daring to aſſign the true rea-

ſon, made him cautious of adhering to his objection.

The character of Mr. Foreſter was in many reſpects the reverſe of that of my maſter. Like him he had ſeen much of the world; but to judge of him from the unfaſhioned bluntneſs of his manner, you would have thought he had never ſtirred from his fire-ſide. Yet under this rude exterior it was eaſy to diſtinguiſh various knowledge, nice diſcrimination, and a ſtrong and active mind. Nor was it ill-humour or miſanthropy that gave this turn to Mr. Foreſter's behaviour. He diſclaimed exaggeration of every kind, and was equally averſe to the cynic who paints every thing in the moſt ſplenetic colours, and the ſanguine enthuſiaſt to whom the whole appears to be exactly as it ought. In the mean time, while he hated exaggeration, he was himſelf one of its groſſeſt dupes.

He

He was poſitive in all things, even where good ſenſe required him to be ſceptical; and he roughly imputed perverſeneſs, where true wiſdom would have taught him to correct miſtake. The ſame inconſiſtency followed him throughout. Full of originality and genius, he pretended to deſpiſe them in others. His favourite principle was to care nothing for what the world ſhould ſay, and to aim only at doing right. So long as that debt was diſcharged, he would not ſtoop to purchaſe, at the expence of moving a finger, the applauſe of mankind in preference to their hatred. He believed that the credit which is ſometimes given to men of ability, was the diſhoneſt gains of a combination, not the juſt reward of merit; and he took pleaſure in ſtating this opinion in its harſheſt form. He held that an honeſt ploughman is a more uſeful member of ſociety, than all the poets and philoſophers that ever exiſted.

In a word Mr. Foreſter was one of thoſe men who, with every ſeeming requiſite for the diſcovery of important truth, are all their lives in ſubjection to the moſt contemptible prejudices.

The peculiarities of this gentleman's character were not undiſplayed in the ſcene to which he was now introduced. Having much kindneſs in his diſpoſition, he ſoon became deeply intereſted in the unhappineſs of his relation. He did every thing in his power to remove it; but his attempts were rude and unſkilful. He exhorted his hoſt to pluck up a ſpirit, and defy the foul fiend; but the tone of his exhortations found no ſympathetic chord in the mind of Mr. Falkland. The more he explained the articles of his creed, the more irreconcileable did they appear with thoſe of my maſter. He had not the ſkill to carry conviction to an underſtanding ſo well fortified in error; and the leſs ſo as the effort

effort of his reflections had long been turned to a bold and intelligible enunciation of principles, rather than to analyſing the rudiments out of which they were formed. In a word, after a thouſand efforts of kindneſs to his entertainer, he drew off his forces, growling and diſſatisfied with his own impotence, rather than angry at the obſtinacy of Mr. Falkland. He felt no diminution of his affection for him, and was ſincerely grieved to find that he did him ſo little good. Both parties in this caſe did juſtice to the merits of the other; at the ſame time that the diſparity of their humours was ſuch as to prevent the ſtranger from being even a dangerous companion to the maſter of the houſe. They had ſcarcely any points of contact in their characters; Mr. Foreſter was incapable of giving Mr. Falkland that degree either of pain or pleaſure, which can raiſe the ſoul into

a tumult and deprive it for a while of tranquillity and ſelf-command.

Our viſitor was a man of an extremely communicative diſpoſition, and he began to feel himſelf painfully out of his element upon the preſent occaſion. Mr. Falkland was devoted to contemplation and ſolitude. He put upon himſelf ſome degree of reſtraint upon the arrival of his kinſman, though even then his darling habits would break out. But when they had ſeen each other a certain number of times, and it was ſufficiently evident that the ſociety of either would be a burthen rather than a pleaſure to the other, they conſented by a ſort of ſilent compact that each ſhould be at liberty to follow his own inclination. Mr. Falkland was in a certain ſenſe the greateſt gainer by this. He returned to the habits of his choice, and acted as nearly as poſſible juſt as he would have done if Mr. Foreſter had not been in exiſtence.

But

But the latter was wholly at a loſs. He had all the diſadvantages of retirement, without being able, as he might have done at his houſe, to bring his own aſſociates or his own amuſements about him.

In this ſituation he caſt his eyes upon me. It was his principle to do every thing that his thoughts ſuggeſted, without caring for the forms of the world. He ſaw no reaſon why a peaſant, with certain advantages of education and opportunity, might not be as eligible a companion as a lord; at the ſame time that he was deeply impreſſed with the venerableneſs of old inſtitutions. Reduced as he was to a kind of laſt reſort, he found me better qualified for his purpoſe than any other perſon of Mr. Falkland's houſhold. My habitual ſimplicity was extremely agreeable to him; and, be it obſerved by the way, he loved to countenance the appearance of talents, while he profeſſed to be their enemy.

The manner in which he began this ſort of correſpondence was ſufficiently characteriſtical. It was abrupt; but it was ſtrongly ſtamped with eſſential benevolence. It was blunt and humorous; but there was attractiveneſs, eſpecially in a caſe of unequal intercourſe, in that very ruſticity by which he levelled himſelf with the great bulk of his ſpecies. He had to reconcile himſelf, as well as to invite me; not to reconcile himſelf to the poſtponing an ariſtocratical vanity, for of that he had a very ſlender portion, but to the trouble of invitation, for he loved his eaſe. All this produced ſome irregularity and indeciſion in his own mind, and gave a very whimſical impreſſion to his behaviour.

On my part I was by no means ungrateful for the diſtinction that was paid me. My mind had been relaxed into temporary dejection, but my reſerve had no alloy of moroſeneſs or inſenſibility.

It

It did not long hold out againſt the condeſcending attentions of Mr. Foreſter. I became gradually heedful, encouraged, confiding. I had a moſt eager thirſt for the knowledge of mankind; and, though no perſon perhaps ever purchaſed ſo dearly the inſtructions he received in that ſchool, the inclination was in no degree diminiſhed. Mr. Foreſter was the ſecond man I had ſeen who ſeemed almoſt as much worth being ſtudied as Mr. Falkland himſelf. I was glad to eſcape from the uneaſineſs of my thoughts; and, while engaged with this new friend, I forgot the criticalneſs of the evils with which I was hourly menaced.

Stimulated by theſe feelings on either part we were never at a loſs for ſubjects of converſation. The obſervations Mr. Foreſter had made in his travels, the ſet of opinions he had formed to himſelf, all amuſed and intereſted me. His manner of telling a ſtory or explaining

his thoughts was forcible, perſpicuous and original: his ſtyle in converſation had an uncommon zeſt, which, while it ſeemed to diſdain ornament, was unconſciouſly interſperſed with the boldeſt figures; and often wandered into all the vehemence of oratory, while it affected to be blunt, ſimple and abrupt. Nor was the part I ſuſtained upon theſe occaſions without its recommendations. I received the communications of my friend with an ingenuous and unprejudiced mind. If I objected to any of his views, my objections were not drawn from the ſtores of common place, and had therefore the grace of novelty. And I may venture to ſay that my objections depended more for effect upon their inherent value, than upon any poſitiveneſs and parade with which they were announced.

Mr. Falkland was deſtined to be forever unhappy; and it ſeemed as if no new incident

incident could occur from which he was not able to extract food for this imperious propenſity. He was wearied with a perpetual repetition of ſimilar impreſſions, and entertained an invincible diſguſt againſt all that was new. The viſit of Mr. Foreſter he regarded with antipathy. He was ſcarcely able to look at him without ſhuddering; an emotion which his gueſt perceived, and pitied as the reſult of habit and diſeaſe rather than of judgment. None of his actions paſſed unremarked; the moſt indifferent excited uneaſineſs and apprehenſion. No ſooner had the firſt overtures of a ſort of intimacy between me and Mr. Foreſter taken place, than they probably gave birth to ſentiments of jealouſy in the mind of my maſter. It was not long before he intimated to me that it would not be agreeable to him that there ſhould be too much intercourſe between me and his viſitor.

What could I do? Young as I was, could it be expected that I ſhould play the philoſopher, and put a perpetual curb upon my inclinations? Imprudent though I had been, could I voluntarily ſubject myſelf to an eternal penance, and eſtrangement from human ſociety? Could I diſcourage a frankneſs ſo perfectly in conſonance with my wiſhes, and receive in an ungracious way a kindneſs that ſtole away my heart?

Beſide this, I was but ill prepared for the ſervile ſubmiſſion Mr. Falkland demanded. In early life I was accuſtomed to be much my own maſter. When I firſt entered into Mr. Falkland's ſervice, my perſonal habits were checked by the novelty of my ſituation, and my affections were gained by the high accompliſhments of my patron. To novelty and its influence, curioſity had immediately ſucceeded. Curioſity, ſo long as it laſted, was a principle

ciple ſtronger in my boſom than even the love of independence. To that I would have ſacrificed my liberty or my life; I would have ſubmitted to the condition of a Weſt Indian Negro, or to the tortures inflicted by North American ſavages. But the turbulence of curioſity had now ſubſided.

As long as the threats of Mr. Falkland had been confined to generals, I endured it. I was conſcious of the unbecoming action I had committed, and this rendered me humble. But, when he went farther, and undertook to preſcribe to every article of my conduct, my patience was at an end. He ſtretched his power beyond the limits of policy and prudence, and thus brought its very exiſtence into queſtion. I believed that nothing which his rage irritated by the moſt open rebellion could inflict, would be worſe than the ſlavery he now pretended to impoſe. I had been

been adventurous in the gratification of an infantine and unreaſonable curioſity, and I was reſolved not to be leſs adventurous, if need were, in the defence of every thing that can make life a bleſſing. I was prepared for an amicable adjuſtment of intereſts; I would undertake that Mr. Falkland ſhould never ſuſtain injury through my means; but I expected in return that I ſhould ſuffer no incroachment, but be left to the direction of my own underſtanding.

I went on then to ſeek Mr. Foreſter's ſociety with eagerneſs; and it is the nature of an intercourſe that does not decline, progreſſively to increaſe. Mr. Falkland obſerved theſe ſymptoms with viſible perturbation. Whenever I was conſcious of their being perceived by him, I betrayed tokens of confuſion; this did not tend to allay his uneaſineſs. One day he drew me aſide; and, with a look

look of myſterious, but terrible import, addreſſed me thus:

Young man, take warning! Perhaps this is the laſt time you ſhall have an opportunity to take it! I will not always be the but of your ſimplicity and inexperience, nor ſuffer your weakneſs to triumph over my ſtrength! Why do you trifle with me? You little ſuſpect the extent of my power. At this moment you are ſurrounded with the engines of my vengeance, and before you are aware they will cloſe upon you. You might as well think of eſcaping from the reach of the omnipreſent God, as from mine! If you could touch ſo much as my finger, you ſhould expiate it in hours and months and years of a torment of which as yet you have not the remoteſt idea! Remember! I am not talking at random! I do not utter a word, that, if you provoke me, ſhall

ſhall not be executed to the ſevereſt letter!

It may be ſuppoſed that theſe menaces were not without their effect. I withdrew in ſilence. My whole ſoul revolted againſt the treatment I endured, and yet I could not utter a word. Why could not I ſpeak the expoſtulations of my heart, or propoſe the compromiſe I meditated? It was inexperience, and not want of ſtrength, that awed me. Every act of Mr. Falkland contained ſomething of new, and I was unprepared to meet it. Perhaps it will be found that the greateſt hero owes the propriety of his conduct to the habit of encountering difficulties and calling out with promptneſs the energies of his mind.

I contemplated the proceedings of my maſter with the deepeſt aſtoniſhment. Humanity and general kindneſs were fundamental parts of his character, but

but in relation to me they were ſterile and inactive. His own intereſt required that he ſhould purchaſe my kindneſs; but he preferred to govern me by terror, and watch me with unceaſing anxiety. I ruminated with the moſt mournful ſenſations upon the nature of my calamity. I believed that no human being was ever placed in a ſituation ſo pitiable as mine. Every atom of my frame ſeemed to have a ſeveral exiſtence, and to crawl within me. I had but too much reaſon indeed to believe that Mr. Falkland's were not empty words. I knew his ability; I felt his aſcendancy. If I encountered him, what chance had I of victory? If I were defeated, what was the penalty I had to ſuffer? Well then, the reſt of my life muſt be devoted to ſlaviſh ſubjection? Miſerable ſentence! And, if it were, what ſecurity have I againſt the injuſtice of a man, vigilant, capricious and criminal? I envied the condemned wretch

upon

upon the ſcaffold. I envied the victim of the inquiſition in the midſt of his torture. They know what they have to ſuffer. I have only to imagine every thing terrible, and then ſay, The fate reſerved for me is worſe than this!

It was well for me that theſe ſenſations were but tranſient: human nature could not long ſupport itſelf under what I then felt. By degrees my mind ſhook off its burthen. Indignation ſucceeded to emotions of terror. The hoſtility of Mr. Falkland excited hoſtility in me. I was determined I would never calumniate him in matters of the moſt trivial import; much leſs betray the grand ſecret upon which every thing dear to him depended. But, totally abjuring the offenſive, I reſolved to ſtand firmly upon the defenſive. The liberty of acting as I pleaſed I would preſerve at whatever riſque. If I were worſted in the conteſt, I would at leaſt have the

conſolation

conſolation of reflecting that I had exerted myſelf with energy. In proportion as I thus determined, I drew off my forces from petty incurſions, and felt the propriety of acting with premeditation and ſyſtem. I ruminated inceſſantly upon plans of deliverance, but I was anxious that my choice ſhould not be precipitately made.

It was during this period of my deliberation and uncertainty that Mr. Foreſter terminated his viſit. He obſerved a ſtrange diſtance in my behaviour, and in his good-natured, encouraging way chid me for it. I could only anſwer with a gloomy look of myſterious import, and a mournful and expreſſive ſilence. He ſought me for an explanation, but I was now as ingenious in avoiding, as I had before been ardent to ſeek him; and he quitted our houſe, as he afterwards told me, with an impreſſion, that there was ſome ill deſtiny,

deſtiny that hung over it, that ſeemed fated to make all its inhabitants miſerable, without its being poſſible for a byſtander to penetrate the reaſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

MR. Foreſter had left us about three weeks, when Mr. Falkland ſent me upon ſome buſineſs to an eſtate he poſſeſſed in a neighbouring county about fifty miles from his principal reſidence. The road led in a direction wholly wide of the habitation of our late viſitor. I was upon my return from the place to which I had been ſent, when I began in fancy to take a ſurvey of the various circumſtances of my condition, and by degrees loſt in the profoundneſs of my contemplation all attention to the ſurrounding objects. The firſt determination of my mind was to eſcape from the lynx eyed jealouſy and deſpotiſm of Mr. Falkland; the ſecond to provide, by every effort of prudence and deliberation

I could

I could deviſe, againſt the danger with which I well knew my attempt muſt be accompanied.

Occupied with theſe meditations, I rode many miles before I perceived that I had totally deviated from the right path. At length I rouſed myſelf, and ſurveyed the horizon round me; but I could obſerve nothing with which my organ was previouſly acquainted. On three ſides the heath ſtretched as far as the eye could reach; on the fourth I diſcovered at ſome diſtance a wood of no ordinary dimenſions. Before me ſcarcely a ſingle track could be found to mark that any human being had ever viſited the ſpot. As the beſt expedient I could deviſe, I bent my courſe towards the wood I have mentioned, and then purſued as well as I was able the windings of the incloſure. This led me after ſome time to the end of the heath, but I was ſtill as much at a loſs as ever reſpecting

reſpecting the road I ſhould purſue. The ſun was hid from me by a grey and cloudy atmoſphere; I was induced to continue along the ſkirts of the wood, and ſurmounted with ſome difficulty the hedges and other obſtacles that from time to time preſented themſelves. My thoughts were gloomy and diſconſolate; the drearineſs of the day and the ſolitude which ſurrounded me ſeemed to communicate a ſadneſs to my ſoul. I had proceeded a conſiderable way, and was quite overcome with hunger and fatigue, when I diſcovered a road and a little inn at no great diſtance. I made up to them, and upon enquiry found that, inſtead of purſuing the proper direction, I had taken one that led to Mr. Foreſter's, rather than to my own habitation. I alighted, and was entering the houſe, when the appearance of that gentleman ſtruck my eyes.

Mr. Foreſter accoſted me with kind-

neſs, invited me into the room where he had been ſitting, and enquired what accident had brought me to that place. While he was ſpeaking, I could not help recollecting the extraordinarry manner in which we were thus once more brought together, and a train of ideas was by this means ſuggeſted to my mind. Some refreſhment was by Mr. Foreſter's order prepared for me; I ſat down, and partook of it. Still this thought dwelt upon my recollection:——Mr. Falkland would never be made acquainted with our meeting; I had an opportunity thrown in my way, which if I did not improve, I ſhould deſerve all the conſequences that might reſult. I could now converſe with a friend, and a powerful friend, without fear of being watched and overlooked. What wonder that I was tempted to diſcloſe, not Mr. Falkland's ſecret, but my own ſituation, and receive the advice of a man of worth

and

and experience, which might perhaps be adequately done without entering into any detail injurious to my maſter?

Mr. Foreſter was forward on his part, to learn why it was that I thought myſelf unhappy, and why I had avoided him during the latter part of his reſidence under the ſame roof, as evidently as I had before taken pleaſure in his communications. I told him that I could give him but an imperfect ſatisfaction upon theſe points, but what I could I would willingly explain. The fact, I proceeded, was, that there were certain reaſons which rendered it impoſſible for me to have a tranquil moment under the roof of Mr. Falkland. I had revolved the matter again and again in my mind, and was finally convinced that I owed it to myſelf to withdraw from his ſervice. I added, that I was ſenſible by this half confidence I might rather ſeem to merit the diſapprobation of Mr.

Foreſter than his countenance; but I declared my perſuaſion that, if he could be acquainted with the whole affair, however ſtrange my behaviour might at preſent appear, he would applaud my reſerve.

He aſked what reaſon I had to complain of Mr. Falkland? I replied, that I entertained the deepeſt reverence for my maſter; I admired his abilities, and conſidered him as formed for the benefit of his ſpecies. I ſhould in my own opinion be the vileſt of miſcreants, if I uttered a whiſper to his diſadvantage. But all this did not avail: I was not fit for him; perhaps I was not good enough for him; at all events I muſt be perpetually miſerable ſo long as I continued to live with him.

I obſerved Mr. Foreſter gaze upon me eagerly with curioſity and ſurpriſe, but this circumſtance I did not think proper to notice. Having recovered himſelf,

ſelf, he aſked, Why then, that being the caſe, I did not quit his ſervice? I anſwered, What he now touched upon was that which moſt of all contributed to my misfortune. Mr. Falkland was not ignorant of my diſlike to my preſent ſituation; perhaps he thought it unreaſonable, unjuſt; but I knew that he would never be brought to conſent to my giving way to it.

Here Mr. Foreſter interrupted me; and, ſmiling, ſaid, I magnified obſtacles, and overrated my own importance, adding that he would undertake to remove that difficulty, as well as to provide me with a more agreeable appointment. This ſuggeſtion produced in me a ſerious alarm. I replied, that I muſt intreat him upon no account to think of applying to Mr. Falkland upon the ſubject. I added, that perhaps I was only betraying my own imbecility; but in reality, unacquainted as I was with ex-

perience and the world, I was afraid, though diſguſted with my preſent reſidence, to expoſe myſelf upon a mere project of my own, to the reſentment of ſo conſiderable a man as Mr. Falkland. If he would favour me with his advice upon the ſubject, or if he would only give me leave to hope for his protection in caſe of any unforeſeen accident, this was all I preſumed to requeſt; and, thus encouraged, I would venture to obey the dictates of my inclination, and fly in purſuit of my loſt tranquillity.

Having thus opened myſelf to this generous friend as far as I could do it with propriety and ſafety, he ſat for ſome time ſilent with an air of deep reflection. At length with a countenance of unuſual ſeverity he thus addreſſed me: Young man, I am afraid you are ignorant of the nature of the tale you have been telling me. There is myſtery in it; there is ſomething you cannot prevail

vail upon yourſelf to diſcloſe. Myſtery always implies ſomewhere or other an uncommon portion of wrong; what am I to think of you? Are you aware of the prejudice you are voluntarily creating againſt yourſelf thus upon the threſhold of life?

I anſwered that, whatever were the amount of that prejudice, I muſt ſubmit. I placed my hope of a candid conſtruction in the preſent inſtance, in the rectitude of his nature.

He went on: Well, be it as you pleaſe. It was abſolutely neceſſary I ſhould tell you what you were doing. I am in ſome reſpects the worſt perſon you could have applied to under theſe circumſtances. I am the idolator of frankneſs, and have an unconquerable abhorrence to every thing that is the reverſe of it. If any body had told me ſix months ago that I could have been brought to countenance a perſon that

practiſed that reverſe, I ſhould not have believed him. But I will tell you fairly the ſtate of my mind. Your conduct in this reſpect has not, as yet at leaſt, deſtroyed the early predilection I conceived in your favour. The balance, ſo far as I am able at preſent to adjuſt it, is with you. I will therefore, though in total oppoſition to my principles, yield to this inſtigation. I put myſelf into your hands; I will do exactly what you require. I will receive you either now or hereafter under my own roof, truſting that you will not deceive my confidence, and that I ſhall find unfavourable appearances ultimately terminating as the man moſt ſolicitous for your welfare would deſire.

We were engaged in the earneſt diſcuſſion of ſubjects thus intereſting to my peace, when we were interrupted by an event of all others the moſt ſeriouſly to be deprecated. Without the ſmalleſt notice,

notice, and as if he had dropped upon us from the clouds, Mr. Falkland burſt into the room. I found afterwards that Mr. Foreſter had come thus far upon an appointment to meet Mr. Falkland, and that the place of their intended rendezvous was the next ſtage. Mr. Foreſter was detained unexpectedly at the inn where we now were, by our accidental rencounter, and in reality had for the moment forgotten his appointment; while Mr. Falkland, not finding him where he expected, had proceeded thus far towards the houſe of his kinſman. To me the meeting was the moſt unaccountable in the world.

I inſtantly foreſaw the dreadful complication of misfortune that was included in this event. To Mr. Falkland the meeting between me and his relation muſt appear, not accidental, but concerted. I was totally out of the road I had been travelling by his direction; I

was in a road that led directly to the houſe of Mr. Foreſter. What muſt he think of this? How muſt he ſuppoſe I came to that place? The truth, if told, that I came there without deſign, and purely in conſequence of having loſt my way, muſt appear to be the moſt impudent lie that ever was deviſed.

Here then I ſtood detected in the fact of that intercourſe which had been ſo ſeverely forbidden. But in this inſtance it was infinitely worſe, than in thoſe which had already given ſo much diſturbance to Mr. Falkland. It was then open, frank and unconcealed; and therefore the preſumption was that it was for purpoſes that required no concealment. But the preſent interview, if concerted, was in the moſt emphatical degree clandeſtine. Nor was it leſs perilous than it was clandeſtine. It had been forbidden with the moſt dreadful menaces, and Mr. Falkland

was

was not ignorant how deep an impreſſion thoſe menaces had made upon my imagination. Such a meeting therefore could not have been concerted under ſuch circumſtances for a trivial purpoſe, or for any purpoſe that his heart did not quake to think of. Such was the amount of my crime; ſuch was the agony my appearance was calculated to inſpire; and it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe that the penalty I had to expect would be proportionable. The threats of Mr. Falkland ſtill ſounded in my ears, and I was in a tranſport of terror.

The conduct of the ſame man in different circumſtances is often ſo various as to render it very difficult to be accounted for. Mr. Falkland, in this to him terrible criſis, did not ſeem to be in any degree hurried away by his paſſions. For a moment he was dumb, his eyes glared with aſtoniſhment; and the next moment as it were, he had the moſt perfect

neſs and ſelf-command. Had it been otherwiſe I have no doubt that I ſhould inſtantly have entered into an explanation, the ingenuouſneſs and conſiſtency of which could not but have been in ſome degree attended with a favourable event. But as it was, I ſuffered myſelf to be overcome; I yielded as in a former inſtance to the diſcomfiting influence of ſurpriſe. I dared ſcarcely breathe; I obſerved the appearances with anxiety and wonder. Mr. Falkland quietly ordered me to return home, and take along with me the groom he had brought with him. I obeyed in ſilence.

I afterwards underſtood that he enquired minutely of Mr. Foreſter the circumſtances of our meeting, and that that gentleman, perceiving that the meeting itſelf was diſcovered, and guided by habits of frankneſs, which, when once rooted in a character, it is very difficult to counteract, told Mr. Falkland every

every thing that had paſſed, together with the remarks it had ſuggeſted to his own mind. Mr. Falkland received the communication with an ambiguous and ſtudied ſilence, which by no means operated to my advantage in the already poiſoned mind of Mr. Foreſter. His ſilence was partly the direct conſequence of a mind watchful, inquiſitive and doubting; and partly perhaps was adopted for the ſake of the effect it was qualified to produce, Mr. Falkland not being unwilling to encourage a prejudice againſt the character of a perſon who might one day become the adverſary of his own.

As to me, I went home indeed, for this was not a moment to reſiſt. Mr. Falkland, with a premeditation to which he had artfully given the appearance of accident, had taken care to ſend with me a guard to attend upon his priſoner. I ſeemed as if conducting to one of thoſe

fortreſſes, famed in the hiſtory of deſpotiſm, from which the wretched victim is never known to eſcape; and, when I entered my chamber, I felt as if I were entering a dungeon. I reflected that I was at the mercy of a man, exaſperated at my diſobedience, and who was already formed to cruelty by ſucceſſive murders. I had occaſionally indulged in viſions of pleaſure, authority and honour as the attendants of my maturer years: who has not? eſpecially who, with an imagination as buſy and a ſpirit as ardent as mine? All theſe proſpects were now cloſed; I was cut off for ever from purſuits that I had meditated with ineffable delight; my death might be the event of a few hours. I was a victim at the ſhrine of conſcious guilt that knew neither reſt nor ſatiety; I ſhould be blotted from the catalogue of the living, and my fate remain eternally a ſecret; the man who added my murder to his former

mer crimes, would ſhow himſelf the next morning, and be hailed with the admiration and applauſe of his ſpecies.

In the midſt of theſe terrible imaginations one idea preſented itſelf that alleviated my feelings. This was the recollection of the ſtrange and unaccountable tranquillity which Mr. Falkland had manifeſted, when he diſcovered me in company with Mr. Foreſter. I was not deceived by this. I knew full well that this calm was temporary, and would be ſucceeded by a tumult and whirlwind of the paſſions of the moſt dreadful ſort. But a man under the power of ſuch terrors as now occupied me, catches at every reed. I ſaid to myſelf, that this tranquillity was a period it was incumbent upon me to improve; and the ſhorter its duration might be found, the more ſpeedy was I obliged to be in the uſe of it. I could not endure the thought that the apprehenſions I now entertained, ſhould be realiſed through the

the neglect of any exertion or even daring on my part. In a word, I took the reſolution, becauſe I already ſtood in fear of the vengeance of Mr. Falkland, to riſque the poſſibility of provoking it in a degree ſtill more inexpiable, and terminate at once my preſent ſtate of uncertainty. Add to which, I had now opened my caſe to Mr. Foreſter, and he had given me poſitive aſſurances of his protection. This in the preſent deſperation of my fortune was an idea to which my mind willingly had recourſe for ſupport and conſolation.—Inſtigated by theſe reflections, I ſat down to addreſs the following letter to Mr. Falkland.

SIR,

I have conceived the intention of quitting your ſervice. This is a meaſure we ought both of us to deſire. I ſhall then be, what it is my duty to be, the maſter of my own actions. You will be delivered

livered from the preſence of a perſon, whom you cannot prevail upon yourſelf to behold without unpleaſing emotions.

Why ſhould you ſubject me to an eternal penance? Why ſhould you conſign all my youthful hopes to ſuffering and deſpair? Conſult the principles of humanity that have marked the general courſe of your proceedings, and do not let me, I intreat you, be made the ſubject of a uſeleſs ſeverity. My heart is impreſſed with gratitude for your favours. I ſincerely aſk your forgiveneſs for the many errors of my conduct. I conſider the treatment I have received under your roof as one almoſt uninterrupted ſcene of kindneſs and generoſity. I ſhall never forget my obligations to you, and will never betray them.

I remain, SIR,
Your moſt grateful, reſpectful
and dutiful ſervant,
CALEB WILLIAMS.

Such was my employment of the evening of a day, which will be ever memorable in the hiſtory of my life. Mr. Falkland not being yet returned, though expected every hour, I was induced to make uſe of the pretext of fatigue to avoid an interview. I went to bed. The next morning I was informed, that he did not come home till late, that he had enquired for me, and, being told that I was in bed, had ſaid nothing farther upon the ſubject. Satisfied in this reſpect, I went to the breakfaſting parlour, and buſied myſelf for ſome time in arranging a few books and ſome other little occupations, till Mr. Falkland ſhould appear. After a little time I heard his ſtep, which I perfectly knew how to diſtinguiſh, in the paſſage. Preſently, he ſtopped, and, ſpeaking to ſome one in a ſort of deliberate, but ſmothered voice, I overheard him repeat my name as enquiring for me. In conformity to the plan I had

had perſuaded myſelf to adopt I now laid the letter I had written upon the table, near where he uſually ſat, and made my exit at one door as Mr. Falkland entered at the other. This done, I withdrew in expectation of the event to a private apartment, a ſort of light-cloſet at the end of the library, where I was accuſtomed not unfrequently to ſit.

I had not been here three minutes when I heard the voice of Mr. Falkland calling me. I went to him in the library. That is your letter, ſaid he, throwing it. His manner was that of a man labouring with ſome dreadful thought, and endeavouring to give an air of careleſſneſs and inſenſibility to his behaviour. I think no carriage of any other ſort could have produced a ſenſation of ſuch inexplicable horror, or have excited in the perſon who was moſt immediately its object, ſuch an alarm for the event.

My lad, continued he, I believe now you

you have played almoſt all your tricks, and, damn me, if the farce be not nearly at an end! With your apiſhneſs and abſurdity however you have taught me one thing, and, whereas before now I have winced at them with torture, I am now as tough as an elephant. I ſhall cruſh you in the end with the ſame indifference that I would any other little inſect that diſturbed my ſerenity.

I believe you have decided your fate. I think myſelf ſure that you will never have done till you have brought my whole weight upon you. You may try however. Your only chance is in paſſiveneſs. I am now perfectly inſenſible to every thing you can ſuffer, but I have no pleaſure in it. I will let you alone, if I can.

I am unable to tell what brought about your meeting with Mr. Foreſter yeſterday. It might be deſign; it might be accident. But, be it which it will, I

ſhall

ſhall not forget it. You write me here, that you are deſirous to quit my ſervice. To that I have a ſhort anſwer, You ſhall never quit it with life. If you attempt it, you ſhall never ceaſe to rue your folly as long as you exiſt. That is my will; and I will not have it reſiſted. The very next time you diſobey me in that or any other article, there is an end of your vagaries for ever. Perhaps your ſituation may be a pitiable one; it is for you to look to that. I only know that it is in your power to prevent its growing worſe; no time nor chance ſhall ever make it better.

Do not imagine I am afraid of you! I wear an armour, againſt which all your weapons are impotent. I have dug a pit for you; and, whichever way you move, backward or forward, to the right or to the left, it is ready to ſwallow you. Be ſtill! If once you fall, call as loud as you will, no man on earth ſhall hear your

your cries; prepare a tale ever ſo plauſible, or ever ſo true, the whole world ſhall execrate you as an impoſtor. Your innocence ſhall be of no ſervice to you; I laugh at ſo feeble a defence. It is I that ſay it; you may believe what I tell you. Do you not know, miſerable wretch! added he, ſuddenly altering his tone, and ſtamping upon the ground with fury, that I have ſworn to preſerve my reputation at whatever expence, that I love it more than the whole world and its inhabitants taken together? And do you think that you ſhall wound it? Begone, miſcreant! reptile! and ceaſe to contend with unſurmountable power!

The part of my hiſtory which I am now relating is that which I reflect upon with the leaſt complacency. Why was it that I was once more totally overcome by the imperious carriage of Mr. Falkland, and unable to utter a word? The reader will be preſented with many occa-

occaſions in the ſequel in which I wanted neither facility in the invention of expedients, nor fortitude in entering upon my juſtification. Perſecution at length gave firmneſs to my character, and taught me the better part of manhood. But in the preſent inſtance I was irreſolute, overawed and abaſhed.

The ſpeech I had heard was the dictate of frenzy, and it created in me a ſimilar frenzy. It determined me to do the very thing againſt which I was thus ſolemnly warned, and fly from my maſter's houſe. I could not enter into parley with him; I could no longer endure the vile ſubjugation he impoſed on me. It was in vain that my reaſon came to my aid, and warned me of the raſhneſs of a meaſure to be taken without concert or preparation. I ſeemed to be in a ſtate in which reaſon had no power. I felt as if I could coolly ſurvey the ſeveral arguments of the caſe, perceive that

that they had prudence, truth and common ſenſe on their ſide; and then anſwer, I am under the guidance of a director more energetic than you.

I was not long in executing what I had thus rapidly determined. I fixed on the evening of that very day as the period of my evaſion. Even in this ſhort interval I had perhaps ſufficient time for deliberation. But all opportunity was uſeleſs to me; my mind was fixed, and each ſucceeding moment only increaſed the unſpeakable eagerneſs with which I meditated my eſcape. The hours uſually obſerved by our family in this country reſidence were regular; and one in the morning was the time I ſelected for my undertaking. I ſtole down quietly from my chamber with a lamp in my hand; I went along a paſſage that led to a ſmall door opening into the garden, and then croſſed the garden to a gate that interſected an elm walk

walk and a private horſe-path on the outſide.

I could ſcarcely believe my good-fortune in having thus far executed my deſign without interruption. The terrible images Mr. Falkland's menaces had ſuggeſted to my mind, made me expect impediment and detection at every ſtep, though the impaſſioned ſtate of my mind impelled me to advance with deſperate reſolution. I drew a favourable omen as to the final reſult of my project, from the deſirable event which had attended me in the outſet.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE firſt plan that had ſuggeſted itſelf to me was, to go to the neareſt public road, and take the earlieſt ſtage for London. There I believed I ſhould be moſt ſafe from diſcovery, if the vengeance of Mr. Falkland ſhould prompt him to purſue me; and I did not doubt, among the multiplied reſources of the metropolis, to find ſomething which ſhould ſuggeſt to me an eligible mode of diſpoſing of my perſon and induſtry. I reſerved Mr. Foreſter in my arrangement as a laſt reſource, not to be called forth unleſs for immediate protection from the hand of perſecution and power.

The mode of my proceeding being thus far digeſted, I traced with a chearful

ful heart the unfrequented path it was now neceſſary for me to purſue. The night was gloomy, and it drizzled with rain. But theſe were circumſtances I had ſcarcely the power to perceive; all was ſunſhine and joy within me. I hardly felt the ground; I repeated to myſelf a thouſand times, I am free. What concern have I with danger and alarm! I feel that I am free; I feel that I will continue ſo. What power is able to hold in chains a mind ardent and determined? What power can cauſe that man to die, whoſe whole ſoul commands him to continue to live? I looked back with abhorrence to the ſubjection in which I had been held. I did not hate the author of my misfortunes; truth and juſtice acquit me of that; I rather pitied the hard deſtiny to which he ſeemed condemned. But I thought with unſpeakable loathing of thoſe errors, in conſequence of which every man is fated to be more or

leſs the tyrant or the ſlave. I was aſtoniſhed at the folly of my ſpecies, that they did not riſe up as one man, and ſhake off chains ſo ignominious and miſery ſo inſupportable. So far as related to myſelf, I reſolved, and this reſolution has never been entirely forgotten by me, to hold myſelf diſengaged from the odious ſcene, and never fill the part either of the oppreſſor or the ſufferer.

My mind continued in this enthuſiaſtical ſtate, full of confidence, and acceſſible only to ſuch a portion of fear as ſerved rather to keep up a ſtate of pleaſurable emotion, than to generate anguiſh and diſtreſs, during the whole of this nocturnal expedition. After a walk of three hours I arrived without accident at the village from which I hoped to have taken my paſſage for the metropolis. At this early hour every thing was quiet; no ſound of any thing human ſaluted my ear. It was with difficulty

culty that I gained admittance into the yard of the inn, where I found a ſingle oſtler taking care of ſome horſes. From him I received the unwelcome tidings that the coach was not expected till ſix o'clock in the morning of the following day, its route through that town recurring only three times a-week.

This intelligence gave the firſt check to the rapturous inebriation by which my mind had been poſſeſſed from the moment I quitted the habitation of Mr. Falkland. The whole of my fortune in ready caſh conſiſted of about eleven guineas. I had about fifty more that had fallen to me from the diſpoſal of my property at the death of my father; but that was ſo veſted as to preclude it from immediate uſe, and I even doubted whether it would not be found better ultimately to reſign it, than by claiming it to riſk the furniſhing a clue to what I moſt of all dreaded to incur, the perſe-

cution of Mr. Falkland. There was nothing I ſo ardently deſired as the annihilation of all future intercourſe between us, that he ſhould not know there was ſuch a perſon on the earth as myſelf, and that I ſhould never more hear the name of my quondam maſter.

Thus circumſtanced, I conceived frugality to be an object by no means unworthy of my attention, unable as I was to prognoſticate what diſcouragements and delays might preſent themſelves to the accompliſhment of my wiſhes, after my arrival in London. For this and other reaſons I determined to adhere to my deſign of travelling by the ſtage; it only remaining for me to conſider in what manner I ſhould prevent the eventual delay of twenty-four hours from becoming by any untoward event a ſource of new calamity. It was by no means adviſable to remain at the village where I now was, during this interval; nor did I

even

even think it proper to employ it in proceeding on foot along the great road. I therefore decided upon making a circuit, the direction of which ſhould ſeem at firſt extremely wide of my intended route, and then ſuddenly ſtriking into a different path ſhould enable me to arrive by the cloſe of day at a market-town twelve miles nearer to the metropolis.

Having fixed the economy of the day, and perſuaded myſelf that it was the beſt which under the circumſtances could be adopted, I diſmiſſed for the moſt part all farther anxieties from my mind, and eagerly yielded myſelf up to the different amuſements that aroſe. I reſted and went forward at the impulſe of the moment. At one time I reclined upon a bank immerſed in contemplation, and at another exerted myſelf to analyſe the proſpects which ſucceeded each other. The hazineſs of the morning was fol-

lowed by a ſpirit-ſtirring and beautiful day. With the ductility ſo characteriſtic of a youthful mind, I forgot the anguiſh which had lately been my continual gueſt, and occupied myſelf entirely in dreams of future novelty and felicity. I ſcarcely ever in the whole courſe of my exiſtence ſpent a day of more various or exquiſite gratification. It furniſhed a ſtrong and perhaps not an unſalutary contraſt to the terrors which had preceded, and the dreadful ſcenes that awaited me.

In the evening I arrived at the place of my deſtination, enquired for the inn at which the coach was accuſtomed to call, and ordered myſelf refreſhment and a bed. I had not been long here, before, having occaſion to croſs the inn yard upon ſome occaſion, juſt as I was going again to enter the houſe I ſaw one of Mr. Falkland's footmen riding into the gate-way. I had no doubt that

I was

I was myſelf the object of his journey. But it was too late to think of avoiding his obſervation; he was almoſt upon me before I ſaw him. Every incident connected with my late abhorred ſituation was calculated to impreſs me with the deepeſt alarm. My firſt thought was to betake myſelf to the fields, and truſt to the ſwiftneſs of my flight for ſafety. But I preſently remarked that he was alone; and I believed that it would be diſgraceful to fly, when, man to man, I might reaſonably hope I could at any time get the better, either by the firmneſs of my determination, or the ſubtlety of my invention.

Thus determined, I came up to him as he alighted from his horſe, and bad him follow into the room where I had been ſitting. Well, Thomas, ſaid I, I gueſs your errand; but it is to no purpoſe. You come to conduct me back to Falkland Houſe; but no force

ſhall ever drag me to that place alive. I have not taken my reſolution without great conſideration and ſtrong reaſons; and, having taken it, all the world ſhall never perſuade me to alter. I am an Engliſhman; and it is the privilege of an Engliſhman to be ſole judge and maſter of his own actions.

Why, maſter Williams, replied Thomas, to be ſure you ſhould know beſt what you are about. We are all at a ſtound, as a man may ſay, to think what you have got in your head. But that is none of my buſineſs. Sure enough the ſquire expects you to go back with me; but I have a letter for you, and mayhap when you have read that, you may come off from a little of your ſtoutneſs. For my part I knew poor farmer Williams, your father, theſe many a day, and I ſhould be main loth for his ſake and your own too, that you ſhould come to any ſorrow.

Thus

Thus ſaying, he gave me his letter, which was from Mr. Foreſter, whom, as he told me, he had left at my maſter's houſe. It was as follows:

WILLIAMS,

My brother Falkland has ſent his man Thomas in purſuit of you. He expects that, if found, you will return with him. I expect ſo too. It is of the utmoſt conſequence to your future honour and character. After reading theſe lines, if you are a villain and a raſcal, you will perhaps endeavour to fly. If your conſcience tells you, You are innocent, you will out of all doubt come back. Let me know whether I have been your dupe; and whether, while I was won over by your ſeeming ingenuity, I was the tool of a deſigning knave. If you come, I pledge myſelf that, if you clear your reputation, you ſhall not only be free to go wherever you pleaſe, but ſhall

receive every aſſiſtance it is in my power to give. Remember! I engage for nothing farther than that.

VALENTINE FORESTER.

What a letter was this? To a mind like mine glowing with the love of virtue, ſuch an addreſs was ſtrong enough to draw the perſon to whom it was addreſſed from one end of the earth to the other. Priſons, racks and gibbets would have ſhrunk into nothing in compariſon with it. The ideas it ſuggeſted had a tendency to fill the mind, and ſhut out the poſſibility of competition.

I repaſſed in my thoughts every memorable incident that had happened to me under the roof of Mr. Falkland. I could recollect nothing, except the affair of the myſterious cheſt, out of which the ſhadow of an accuſation of the nature alluded to in Mr. Foreſter's letter could be extorted. In that inſtance no doubt

doubt my conduct had been highly reprehenſible and I had never looked back upon it without remorſe and ſelf-condemnation. But I did not believe that it was of the nature of thoſe actions which can be brought under legal cenſure. I ſtill leſs could perſuade myſelf to believe, that Mr. Falkland, who ſhuddered at the very poſſibility of his own detection, and who conſidered himſelf as completely in my power, would dare to bring forward a ſubject ſo cloſely connected with that topic, which wakened eternal agony in his ſoul. In a word, the more I reflected on the phraſes of Mr. Foreſter's billet, the leſs could I imagine the nature of thoſe ſcenes to which they were to ſerve as a prelude.

The inſcrutableneſs however of the myſtery they contained was by no means calculated to mitigate my apprehenſions. It ſerved on the contrary to give new pungency to my alarm. It overwhelmed

every quality of my mind; except my fortitude. What reſources had not my perſecutor at his command? It was now that I began to fear him. All the apprehenſions that had before haunted my mind ſeemed, in compariſon with what I now felt, like the gambols of children. But what could I do? This was an enemy to face and not to fly. Tear me to pieces, exclaimed I, tremendous and incomprehenſible genius! hang up this miſerable carcaſs to writhe beneath a burning ſun, inflict upon me unheard-of and lingering tortures!—that in ſome part or other of the earth you might do! But my good name ſhall never be your victim! I will be heard; I will be underſtood! All the arts of hell ſhall not prevent that! I may be unfortunate; but my very perſecutors ſhall confeſs my innocence!

Thomas, ſaid I after a conſiderable interval ſpent in ſilence to my attendant;

You

You are right. This is indeed a very extraordinary letter you have brought me; but it anſwers its purpoſe. I will certainly go with you now, whatever be the conſequence. No perſon ſhall ever be able to lay any blame to me, ſo long as I have it in my power to clear myſelf. So, get ready immediately!

Bleſs us, cried Thomas, this is a ſurpriſing change indeed! But I ſhould think, ſir, if you pleaſe, that there is no need of being in ſuch a devil of a hurry. It is now dark night, and I am woundy tired. Whatever it is you may have got in your head, I dare to ſay neither you nor maſter will do any thing till to-morrow.

To this remonſtrance I replied, that I would willingly conſent to a reſpite of an hour or two hours, if he deſired it, but longer than that I was determined I would not wait, and, if he were not then ready, I would proceed without him.

I con-

I conceived that, in the circumſtances in which I was placed by Mr. Foreſter's letter, it became me to ſhow, not merely a willingneſs, but an alacrity and impatience to return. Thomas confeſſed that it was in his orders not to part from me when I was once found, and of conſequence he was obliged to agree to the compromiſe I propoſed. We procured a ſecond horſe from the village. As we rode home, my mind was occupied again and again in endeavouring to account for Mr. Foreſter's letter; but none of my attempts were productive of ſatisfaction. I knew the inflexibility and ſternneſs of Mr. Falkland's mind in accompliſhing the purpoſes he had moſt at heart; but I alſo knew that every virtuous and magnanimous principle was congenial to his character.

When we arrived it was ſtill dark, though the greater part of the night had already elapſed. We were obliged

to

to waken one of the ſervants to give us admittance. I found that Mr. Foreſter had left a meſſage for me in conſideration of the poſſibility of my arrival during the night, directing me immediately to go to bed, and to take care that I did not come weary and exhauſted to the buſineſs of the following day. I endeavoured to take his advice; but my ſlumbers were unrefreſhing and diſturbed. This did not diſcourage me; the ſingularity of my ſituation, my conjectures with reſpect to the preſent, my apprehenſions for the future did not allow me to think it poſſible that I could ſink into a languid and inactive ſtate.

Next morning the firſt perſon I ſaw was Mr. Foreſter. He told me that he did not yet know what Mr. Falkland had to allege againſt me, for that he had refuſed to know. He had arrived at the houſe of his brother by appoint-

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ment on the preceding day to ſettle ſome indiſpenſible buſineſs, his intention having been to depart the moment the buſineſs was finiſhed, as he knew that conduct on his part would be moſt agreeable to Mr. Falkland. But he was no ſooner come than he found the whole houſe in confuſion, the alarm of my elopement having been given a little before. Mr. Falkland had diſpatched ſervants in all directions in purſuit of me; and the ſervant from the market town arrived at the ſame moment with Mr. Foreſter, with intelligence that a perſon anſwering to the deſcription he gave had been there very early in the morning enquiring reſpecting the ſtage to London.

Mr. Falkland ſeemed extremely diſturbed at this information, and exclaimed upon me with great acrimony as an unthankful and unnatural villain.

Mr.

Mr. Foreſter replied: Have more command of yourſelf, ſir! Villain is a very ſerious appellation, and ought not to be trifled with. Engliſhmen are free; and no man ought to be charged with villainy becauſe he chooſes to change one ſource of ſubſiſtence for another.

Mr. Falkland ſhook his head, and with a ſmile expreſſive of acute ſenſibility ſaid, Brother, brother, you are the dupe of his art. For my part I always conſidered him with an eye of ſuſpicion, and was aware of his depravity. But I have juſt diſcovered——

Stop, ſir! interrupted Mr. Foreſter. I own I thought you might be employing in a moment of acrimony harſh epithets without any accurate meaning. But, if you have any ſerious accuſation to make againſt Williams, let us not be told of that, till it be known whether the poor lad is within reach of a hearing.

Though

Though a juſt man will chearfully ſuffer the ill opinion of others, he will not lightly entertain an ill opinion againſt them. For my part the ſlendereſt allowance I can make to ſuch as are unhappy enough to incur the deteſtation of their ſpecies, is that of being previouſly heard in their own defence. It is a wiſe principle in Engliſh law that requires the judge to come into court totally uninformed of the merits of the cauſe he is to try; and to that principle I am determined to conform as an individual. I think it right to be ſevere and inflexible in proceeding againſt offenders, but the ſeverity I exerciſe in the ſequel ſhall always be accompanied with impartiality in the preliminary.

While Mr. Foreſter related to me theſe particulars, he obſerved me ready to break out into ſome of the expreſſions which the narrative ſuggeſted, but he

he would not ſuffer me to ſpeak. No, Williams, ſaid he; I would not hear Mr. Falkland againſt you; neither will I hear you in your defence. I am come to you at preſent to ſpeak, and not to hear. I thought it became me to warn you of your danger, but I have nothing more to do now. Reſerve what you have to ſay to the proper time. Make the beſt ſtory you can for yourſelf; true, if truth, as I hope, will ſerve your purpoſe; but, if not, the moſt plauſible and ingenious you can invent. That is an exertion which ſelf-defence requires from every man in caſes where, as it always happens when a man is put upon his trial, he has the whole world againſt him, and has his own battle to fight againſt the world. Farewel, and God ſend you a good deliverance! If Mr. Falkland's accuſation, whatever it be, ſhall appear to be premature, depend upon

upon having me more zealouſly your friend than ever. If not, this is the laſt act of friendſhip you will ever receive from me!

It may be believed that this addreſs, ſo ſingular, ſo ſolemn, ſo big with conditional menace, did not greatly tend to aſſuage my anxieties. I was totally ignorant of the charge to be advanced againſt me; and not a little aſtoniſhed, when it was in my power to be in the moſt formidable degree the accuſer of Mr. Falkland, to find the principles of equity ſo completely reverſed, as for the innocent, but inſtructed individual to be the party accuſed and ſuffering, inſtead of having, as was juſt, the real criminal at his mercy. I was ſtill more aſtoniſhed at the ſupernatural power Mr. Falkland ſeemed to poſſeſs of bringing back by the moſt irreſiſtible means the ob-

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ject of his perſecution within the ſphere of his authority; a reflection attended with ſome diſcouragement to that thirſt of independence which now conſtituted the ruling paſſion of my mind.

But this was no time for meditation. To the ſufferer the courſe of events is taken out of his direction, and he is hurried along with an irreſiſtible force, without finding it within the compaſs of his efforts to check their rapidity. I was allowed only a very ſhort time to recollect myſelf, when my trial commenced. I was conducted to the library where I had paſſed ſo many happy and ſo many contemplative hours, and found there Mr. Foreſter and three or four of the ſervants already aſſembled in expectation of me and my accuſer. Every thing was calculated to ſuggeſt to me that I muſt truſt only in the juſtice of the parties

parties concerned, and had nothing to hope from their mercy. Mr. Falkland entered at one door, almoſt as ſoon as I entered at the other.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

HE began: It has been the principle of my life never to inflict a wilful injury upon any thing that lives; I need not expreſs my regret when I find myſelf obliged to be the promulgator of a criminal charge. How gladly would I paſs unnoticed the evil I have ſuſtained; but I owe it to ſociety to detect an offender, and prevent other men from being impoſed upon, as I have been, by an appearance of integrity.

It would be better, interrupted Mr. Foreſter, to ſpeak directly to the point. We ought not, though unwarily, by apologiſing for ourſelves, to create at ſuch a time a prejudice againſt an individual, againſt whom a criminal accuſation will always be prejudice enough.

I ſtrongly ſuſpect, continued Mr. Falkland, this young man, who has been peculiarly the object of my kindneſs, of having robbed me to a conſiderable amount.

What, replied Mr. Foreſter, are the grounds of your ſuſpicion?

The firſt of them is the actual loſs I have ſuſtained in notes, jewels and plate. I have miſſed bank notes to the amount of nine hundred pounds, three gold repeaters of extraordinary value, a complete ſuit of diamonds the property of my late mother, and ſeveral other articles.

And why, continued my arbitrator, aſtoniſhment, grief, and a deſire to retain his ſelf-poſſeſſion ſtrongly contending in his countenance and voice, do you fix on this young man as the inſtrument of the depredation?

I found him, on my coming home upon the day when every thing was in confu-

diſorder from the alarm of fire, in the very act of quitting the private apartment where theſe things were depoſited. He was confounded at ſeeing me, and haſtened to withdraw as ſoon as he poſſibly could.

Did you ſay nothing to him, take no notice of the confuſion your ſudden appearance produced?

I aſked what was his errand in that place. He was at firſt ſo terrified and overcome that he could not anſwer me. Afterwards with a good deal of faltering he ſaid that, when all the ſervants were engaged in endeavouring to ſave the moſt valuable part of my property, he had come hither with the ſame view; but that he had as yet removed nothing.

Did you immediately examine to ſee that every thing was ſafe?

No. I was accuſtomed to confide in his honeſty, and I was ſuddenly called

away in the preſent inſtance to attend to the increaſing progreſs of the flames. I therefore only took out the key from the door of the apartment, having firſt locked it, and, putting it in my pocket, haſtened to go where my preſence ſeemed indiſpenſibly neceſſary.

How long was it before you miſſed your property?

The ſame evening. The hurry of the ſcene had driven the circumſtance entirely out of my mind, till going by accident near the apartment, the whole affair, together with the ſingular and equivocal behaviour of Williams, ruſhed at once upon my recollection. I immediately entered, examined the cheſt in which theſe things were contained, and to my aſtoniſhment found the locks broken and the property gone.

What ſteps did you take upon this diſcovery?

I ſent for Williams, and talked to him

him very ſeriouſly upon the ſubject. But he had now perfectly recovered his ſelf command, and calmly and ſtoutly denied all knowledge of the matter. I urged him with the enormouſneſs of the offence, but it made no impreſſion. He did not diſcover either the ſurpriſe and indignation one would have expected from a perſon entirely innocent, or the uneaſineſs that generally attends upon guilt. He was rather ſilent and reſerved. I then informed him, that I ſhould proceed in a manner different from what he might perhaps expect. I would not, as is too frequent in ſuch caſes, make a general reſearch, for I had rather loſe my property for ever without redreſs, than expoſe a multitude of innocent perſons to anxiety and injuſtice. My ſuſpicion for the preſent unavoidably fixed upon him. But in a matter of ſo great conſequence I was determined not to act upon ſuſpicion. I would

neither incur the poſſibility of ruining him being innocent, nor be the inſtrument of expoſing others to his depredations, if guilty. I ſhould therefore merely inſiſt upon his continuing in my ſervice. He might depend upon it he ſhould be well watched, and I truſted the whole truth would eventually appear. Since he avoided confeſſion now, I adviſed him to conſider how far it was likely he would come off with impunity at laſt. This I was determined on, that the moment he attempted an eſcape, I would conſider that as an indication of guilt and proceed accordingly.

What circumſtances have occurred from that time to the preſent?

None upon which I can infer a certainty of guilt. Several that agree to favour a ſuſpicion. From that time Williams was perpetually uneaſy in his ſituation, always deſirous, as it now appears, to eſcape, but afraid to adopt ſuch

ſuch a meaſure without certain precautions. It was not long after, that you, Mr. Foreſter, became my viſitor. I obſerved with diſſatisfaction the growing intercourſe between you, reflecting on the equivocalneſs of his character, and the attempt he would probably make to render you the dupe of his hypocriſy. I accordingly threatened him ſeverely, and I believe you obſerved the change that preſently after took place in his behaviour with relation to you.

I did, and it appeared at that time myſterious and extraordinary.

Some time after, as you well know, a rencounter took place between you, whether accidental or intentional on his part I am not able to ſay, when he confeſſed to you the uneaſineſs of his mind without diſcovering the cauſe, and openly propoſed to you to aſſiſt him in his flight, and ſtand in caſe of neceſſity between him and my reſentment. You

offered, it ſeems, to take him into your ſervice, but nothing, as he acknowledged, would anſwer his purpoſe, that did not place his retreat wholly out of my power to diſcover.

Did it not appear extraordinary to you that he ſhould hope for any effectual protection from me, while it remained perpetually in your power to ſatisfy me of his unworthineſs?

Perhaps he had hopes that I ſhould not proceed to that ſtep, at leaſt ſo long as the place of his retreat ſhould be unknown to me, and of conſequence the event of my proceeding dubious. Perhaps he confided in his own powers, which are far from contemptible, to conſtruct a plauſible tale, eſpecially as he had taken care to have the firſt impreſſion in his favour. After all, this protection on your part was merely reſerved in caſe all other expedients failed. He does not appear to have had any other ſenti-

ment

ment upon the ſubject, than that, if he were defeated in his projects for placing himſelf beyond the reach of juſtice, it was better to have beſpoken himſelf a place in your patronage than to be deſtitute of every reſource.

Mr. Falkland having thus finiſhed his evidence, called upon Robert, the valet, to confirm that part of it which related to the day of the fire.

Robert ſtated, that he happened to be coming through the library that day a few minutes after Mr. Falkland's being brought home by the ſight of the fire, that he had found me ſtanding there with every mark of perturbation and fright, that he was ſo ſtruck with my appearance that he could not help ſtopping to notice it, that he had ſpoken to me two or three times before he could obtain an anſwer, and that all he could get from me at laſt, was that I was the moſt miſerable creature alive.

He farther ſaid, that in the evening of the ſame day Mr. Falkland called him into the private apartment adjoining to the library, and bid him bring a hammer and ſome nails. He then ſhowed him a cheſt ſtanding in the apartment with its locks and faſtenings broken, and ordered him to obſerve and remember what he ſaw, but not to mention it to any one. Robert did not at that time know what Mr Falkland intended by theſe directions; but he entertained no doubt that the faſtenings were broken and wrenched by the application of a chiſſel or ſuch like inſtrument with the intention of forcibly opening the cheſt.

Mr. Foreſter obſerved upon this evidence, that as much of it as related to the day of the fire ſeemed indeed to afford powerful reaſons for ſuſpicion, and that the circumſtances that had occurred ſince ſtrangely concurred to fortify that

that ſuſpicion. Meantime, that nothing proper to be done might be omitted, he propoſed ſearching my boxes to ſee whether by that means any trace could be diſcovered to confirm the imputation. Mr. Falkland treated this ſuggeſtion ſlightly, ſaying that, if I were the thief, I had no doubt taken the precaution to obviate ſo palpable a means of detection. To this Mr. Foreſter only replied, that conjecture, however ſkilfully formed, was not always realiſed in the actions and behaviour of mankind; and ordered that my boxes and trunks ſhould be brought into the library. The two that were firſt opened contained nothing to confirm the accuſation againſt me; in the third were found a watch and ſeveral jewels that were immediately known to be the property of Mr. Falkland. The production of this ſeemingly deciſive evidence excited emotions of aſtoniſhment and concern; but no perſon's aſtoniſhment

appeared to be greater than that of Mr. Falkland.

To the reſt of the perſons preſent I ſeemed to be merely the ſubject of detection; but in reality I was of all the ſpectators that individual who was moſt at a loſs to conceive through every ſtage of the ſcene what would come next, and who liſtened to every word that was uttered with the moſt uncontrolable amazement. Amazement however alternately yielded the aſcendancy to indignation and horror. At firſt I could not refrain from repeatedly attempting to interrupt; but I was checked in theſe attempts by Mr. Foreſter, and I preſently felt how neceſſary it was to my future peace that I ſhould collect the whole energy of my mind to repel the charge, and aſſert my innocence.

Every thing being now produced that could be produced againſt me, Mr. Foreſter turned to me with a look of concern

cern and pity, and told me that now was the time if I choſe to allege any thing in my defence. In reply to this invitation I ſpoke nearly as follows:

I am innocent. It is in vain that circumſtances are accumulated againſt me: there is not a perſon upon earth leſs capable than I of the things of which I am accuſed. I appeal to my heart; I appeal to my looks; I appeal to every ſentiment my tongue ever uttered.

I could perceive that the fervour with which I ſpoke made ſome impreſſion upon every one that heard me. But in a moment their eyes were turned upon the property that lay before them, and their countenances changed. I proceeded:

One thing more I muſt aver; Mr. Falkland is not deceived: he perfectly knows that I am innocent.

I had no ſooner uttered theſe words

than an involuntary cry of indignation burſt from every perſon in the room. Mr. Foreſter turned to me with a look of extreme ſeverity, and ſaid:

Young man, conſider well what you are doing! It is the privilege of the party accuſed to ſay whatever he thinks proper; and I will take care that you ſhall enjoy that privilege in its utmoſt extent. But do you think it will conduce in any reſpect to your benefit to throw out ſuch inſolent and intolerable inſinuations?

I thank you moſt ſincerely, replied I, for your caution; but I well know what it is that I am doing. I make this averment not merely becauſe it is ſolemnly true, but becauſe it is inſeparably connected with my vindication. I am the party accuſed, and I ſhall be told that I am not to be believed in my own defence. I can produce no other witneſ-

ſes

ies of my innocence; I therefore call upon Mr. Falkland to be my evidence. I aſk him,

Did you never boaſt to me in private of your power to ruin me? Did you never ſay that, if once I brought on myſelf the weight of your diſpleaſure, my fall ſhould be irreparable? Did you not tell me that, though I ſhould prepare in that caſe a tale ever ſo plauſible or ever ſo true, you would take care that the whole world ſhould execrate me as an impoſtor? Were not thoſe your very words? Did you not add that my innocence ſhould be of no ſervice to me, and that you laughed at ſo feeble a defence? I aſk you farther, Did you not receive a letter from me the morning of the day on which I departed, requeſting your conſent to my departure? Should I have done that, if my flight had been that of a thief? I challenge any man to reconcile the expreſſions of

that

that letter with this accuſation. Should I have begun with ſtating that I had conceived a deſire to quit your ſervice, if my deſire and the reaſons for it had been of the nature that is now alleged? Should I have dared to aſk for what reaſon I was thus ſubjected to an eternal penance?

Saying this, I took out a copy of my letter and laid it open upon the table.

Mr. Falkland returned no immediate anſwer to my interrogations. Mr. Foreſter turned to him, and ſaid, Well, ſir, what is your reply to this challenge of your ſervant?

Mr. Falkland anſwered: Such a mode of defence hardly ſtands in need of a reply. But I anſwer, I held no ſuch converſation; I never uſed ſuch words; I received no ſuch letter. Surely it is no ſufficient rebutter of a criminal charge, that the criminal repels what

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is alleged againſt him with volubility of ſpeech and intrepidity of manner?

Mr. Foreſter then turned to me. If, ſaid he, you truſt your vindication to the plauſibility of your tale, you muſt take care to render it conſiſtent and complete. You have not told us what was the cauſe of the confuſion and anxiety in which Robert profeſſes to have found you, why you were ſo impatient to quit the ſervice of Mr. Falkland, or how you account for certain articles of his property being found in your poſſeſſion?

All that, ſir, anſwered I, is true. There are certain parts of my ſtory that I have not told. If they were told, they would not contribute to my diſadvantage, and they would make the preſent accuſation appear ſtill more aſtoniſhing. But I cannot, as yet at leaſt, prevail upon myſelf to tell them. Is it neceſſary

ſary to give any particular and preciſe reaſons why I ſhould wiſh to change the place of my reſidence? You all of you know the unfortunate ſtate of Mr. Falkland's mind. You know the ſternneſs, reſervedneſs and diſtance of his manners. If I had no other reaſons, ſurely it would afford ſmall preſumption of criminality that I ſhould wiſh to change his ſervice for another.

The queſtion of how theſe articles of Mr. Falkland's property came to be found in my poſſeſſion is more material. It is a queſtion I am wholly unable to anſwer. Their being found there was at leaſt as unexpected to me as to any one of the perſons now preſent. I only know that, as I have the moſt perfect aſſurance of Mr. Falkland's being conſcious of my innocence, for, obſerve! I do not ſhrink from that aſſertion, I reiterate it with new confidence; I there-

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fore firmly and from my ſoul believe that their being there is of Mr. Falkland's contrivance.

I no ſooner ſaid this, than I was again interrupted by an involuntary exclamation from every one preſent. They looked at me with furious glances, as if they could have torn me to pieces. I proceeded:

I have now anſwered every thing that is alleged againſt me.

Mr. Foreſter, you are a lover of juſtice; I conjure you not to violate it in my perſon. You are a man of penetration; look at me, do you ſee any of the marks of guilt? Recollect all that has ever paſſed under your obſervation; is it compatible with a mind capable of what is now alleged againſt me? Could a real criminal have ſhown himſelf ſo unabaſhed, compoſed and firm as I have now done?

Fellow ſervants! Mr. Falkland is a man

man of rank and fortune; he is your maſter. I am a poor country lad without a friend in the world. That is a ground of real difference to a certain extent; but it is not a ſufficient ground for the ſubverſion of juſtice. Remember, that I am in a ſituation that is not to be trifled with, that a deciſion given againſt me now, in a caſe in which I ſolemnly aſſure you I am innocent, will for ever deprive me of reputation and peace of mind, combine the whole world in a league againſt me, and determine perhaps upon my liberty and my life. If you believe, if you ſee, if you know that I am innocent, ſpeak for me. Do not ſuffer a puſillanimous timidity to prevent you from ſaving a fellow creature from deſtruction, who does not deſerve to have a human being for his enemy. Why have we the power of ſpeech, but to communicate our thoughts? I will never believe that a man conſcious

ſcious of innocence, cannot make other men perceive that he has that thought. Do not you feel that my whole heart tells me, I am not guilty of what is imputed to me?

To you, Mr. Falkland, I have nothing to ſay. I know you, and know that you are impenetrable. At the very moment that you are urging ſuch odious charges againſt me, you admire my reſolution and forbearance. But I have nothing to hope from you. You can look upon my ruin without pity or remorſe. I am moſt unfortunate indeed in having to do with ſuch an adverſary. You oblige me to ſay ill things of you; but I appeal to your own heart whether it is not in my power to ſay infinitely worſe.

Every thing that could be alleged on either ſide being now concluded, Mr. Foreſter undertook to make ſome remarks upon the whole. Williams, ſaid he,

he, the charge againſt you is heavy; the direct evidence ſtrong; the corroborating circumſtances numerous and ſtriking. I grant that you have ſhown conſiderable dexterity in your anſwers; but you will learn, young man, to your coſt, that dexterity, however powerful it may be in certain caſes, will avail little againſt the ſtubbornneſs of truth. It is fortunate for mankind that the empire of talents has its limitations, and that it is not in the power of ingenuity to ſubvert the diſtinctions of right and wrong. Take my word for it, that the true merits of the caſe againſt you will be too ſtrong for ſophiſtry to overturn, that juſtice will prevail, and impotent malice be defeated.

To you, Mr. Falkland, ſociety is obliged for having placed this black affair in its true light. Do not ſuffer the malignant aſperſions of the criminal to give you any uneaſineſs. Depend upon

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it that they will be found of no weight. I have no doubt that your character in the judgment of every perſon that has heard them ſtands higher than ever. We feel for your misfortune in being obliged to hear ſuch calumnies from a perſon who has injured you ſo groſsly. But you muſt be conſidered in that reſpect as a martyr in the public cauſe. The purity of your motives and diſpoſitions are beyond the reach of malice; and truth and equity will not fail to award to your calumniator infamy, and to you the love and approbation of mankind.

I have now told you, Williams, what I think of your caſe. But I have no right to aſſume to be your ultimate judge. Deſperate as it appears to me, I will give you one piece of advice as if I were retained as a counſel to aſſiſt you. Leave out of it whatever tells to the diſadvantage of Mr. Falkland. Defend yourſelf as well as you can, but do not at-

tack your maſter. It is your buſineſs to create in thoſe that hear you a prepoſſeſſion in your favour. But the recrimination you have been now practiſing will always create indignation. Diſhoneſty will admit of ſome palliation. The deliberate malice you have now been ſhowing is a thouſand times more atrocious. It proves you to have the mind of a demon rather than a felon. Wherever you ſhall repeat it, thoſe who hear you will pronounce you guilty upon that, even if the proper evidence againſt you were glaringly defective. If therefore you would conſult your intereſt, which ſeems to be your only conſideration, it is incumbent upon you by all means immediately to retract that. If you deſire to be believed honeſt, you muſt in the firſt place ſhow that you have a due ſenſe of merit in others. You cannot better ſerve your cauſe than by begging pardon of your maſter, and

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doing homage to rectitude and worth even when they are employed in vengeance againſt you.

It is eaſy to conceive that my mind ſuſtained an extreme ſhock from the deciſion of Mr. Foreſter; but his call upon me to retract and humble myſelf before my accuſer penetrated my whole ſoul with indignation. I anſwered:

I have already told you I am innocent. I believe that I could not endure the effort of inventing a plauſible defence, if it were otherwiſe. You have juſt affirmed that it is not in the power of ingenuity to ſubvert the diſtinctions of right and wrong, and in that very moment I find them ſubverted. This is indeed to me a very awful moment. New to the world, I know nothing of its affairs but what has reached me by rumour, or is recorded in books. I have come into it with all the ardour and confidence inſeparable from my years.

years. In every fellow-being I expected to find a friend. I am unpractiſed in its wiles, and have even no acquaintance with its injuſtice. I have done nothing to deſerve the animoſity of mankind, but, if I may judge from the preſent ſcene, I am from henceforth to be deprived of the benefits of integrity and honour. I am to forfeit the friendſhip of every one I have hitherto known, and to be precluded from the power of acquiring that of others. I muſt therefore be reduced to derive my ſatisfaction from myſelf. Depend upon it I will not begin that carreer by diſhonourable conceſſions. If I am to deſpair of the good will of other men, I will at leaſt maintain the independence of my own mind. Mr. Falkland is my implacable enemy. Whatever may be his merits in other reſpects, he is acting towards me without humanity, without remorſe and without principle. Do you think I will

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ever make any ſubmiſſions to a man by whom I am thus treated, that I will fall down at the feet of one who is to me a devil, or kiſs the hand that is red with my blood?

In that reſpect, anſwered Mr. Foreſter, do as you ſhall think proper. I muſt confeſs that your firmneſs and conſiſtency aſtoniſh me. They add ſomething to what I had conceived of human powers. Perhaps you have choſen the part which all things conſidered may ſerve your purpoſe beſt, though I think more moderation would be more conciliating. The exterior of innocence will, I grant, ſtagger the perſons who may have the direction of your fate, but it will never be able to prevail againſt plain and incontrovertible facts. But I have done with you. I ſee in a you a new inſtance of that abuſe which is ſo generally made of talents the admiration of an undiſcerning public. I regard you with hor-

ror. All that remains is that I ſhould diſcharge my duty in conſigning you as a monſter of depravity to the juſtice of your country.

No, rejoined Mr. Falkland, to that I can never conſent. I have put a reſtraint upon myſelf thus far, becauſe it was right that evidence and enquiry ſhould take their courſe. I have ſuppreſſed all my habits and ſentiments, becauſe it ſeemed due to the public that hypocriſy ſhould be unmaſked. But I can ſuffer this violence no longer. I have through my whole life interfered to protect, not overbear the ſufferer; and I muſt do ſo now. I feel not the ſmalleſt reſentment of his impotent attacks upon my character; I ſmile at their malice; and they make no diminution in my benevolence to their author. Let him ſay what he pleaſes; he cannot hurt me. It was proper that he ſhould be brought to public ſhame, that other people might not

not be deceived by him as we have been. But there is no neceſſity for proceeding any farther; and I muſt inſiſt upon it that he be permitted to depart wherever he pleaſes. I am ſorry that public intereſt affords ſo gloomy a proſpect for his future happineſs.

Mr. Falkland, anſwered Mr. Foreſter, theſe ſentiments do honour to your humanity; but I muſt not give way to them. They only ſerve to ſet in a ſtronger light the venom of this ſerpent, this monſter of ingratitude, who firſt robs his benefactor, and then reviles him. Wretch that you are, will nothing move you? Are you inacceſſible to remorſe? Are you not ſtruck to the heart with the unmerited goodneſs of your maſter? Vile calumniator! you are the abhorrence of nature, the opprobrium of the human ſpecies, and the earth can only be freed from an inſupportable burthen by your being exter-

minated! Recollect, ſir, that this villain, at the very moment that you are exerciſing ſuch unexampled forbearance in his behalf, has the preſumption to charge you with proſecuting a crime of which you know him to be innocent, nay, with having conveyed the pretended ſtolen goods among his property for the expreſs purpoſe of ruining him. By this unexampled villainy he makes it your duty to free the world from ſuch a peſt, and your intereſt to admit no relaxing in your purſuit of him, leſt the world ſhould be perſuaded by your clemency to credit his vile inſinuations.

I care not for conſequences, replied Mr. Falkland, I will obey the dictates of my own mind. I will never lend my perſonal aſſiſtance to the reforming mankind by axes and gibbets; I am ſure things will never go well, till honour and not law be the dictator of mankind, till vice is taught to ſhrink before the reſiſtleſs

ſiſtleſs might of inborn dignity, and not before the cold formality of ſtatutes. If my calumniator were worthy of my reſentment I would chaſtiſe him with my own ſword, and not that of the magiſtrate; but in the preſent caſe I ſmile at his malice, and reſolve to ſpare him, as the generous lord of the foreſt ſpares the inſect that would diſturb his repoſe.

The language you now hold, ſaid Mr. Foreſter, is that of romance, and not of reaſon. Yet I cannot but be ſtruck with the contraſt exhibited before me of the magnanimity of virtue and the obſtinate, impenetrable injuſtice of guilt. While your mind overflows with goodneſs, nothing can touch the heart of this thrice bred villain. I ſhall never forgive myſelf for having once been entrapped by his deteſtable arts. This is no time for us to ſettle the queſtion between chivalry and law.

I ſhall therefore ſimply inſiſt as a magiſtrate, having taken the evidence in this felony, upon my right and duty of following the courſe of juſtice, and committing the accuſed to the county jail.

After ſome farther conteſt Mr. Falkland, finding Mr. Foreſter obſtinate and impracticable, withdrew his oppoſition. Accordingly a proper officer was ſummoned from the neighbouring village, a mittimus made out, and one of Mr. Falkland's carriages prepared to conduct me to the place of cuſtody. It will eaſily be imagined that this ſudden reverſe was very painfully felt by me. I looked round on the ſervants who had been the ſpectators of my examination, but not one of them either by word or geſture expreſſed any compaſſion for my calamity. The robbery of which I was accuſed appeared to them atrocious from its magnitude, and whatever ſparks of com-

compaſſion might otherwiſe have ſprung up in their ingenuous and undiſciplined minds, were totally obliterated by indignation at my ſuppoſed profligacy in recriminating upon their worthy and excellent maſter. My fate being already determined, and one of the ſervants diſpatched for the officer, Mr. Foreſter and Mr. Falkland withdrew, and left me in the cuſtody of two others.

One of theſe was the ſervant who had gone in purſuit of me and found me at the market-town from whence I had intended to take coach for London. I was willing accurately to diſcover the ſtate of mind of thoſe who had been witneſſes of this ſcene, and who had had ſome previous opportunity of obſerving my character and manners. I therefore endeavoured to open a converſation with him. Well, my good Thomas, ſaid I, in a querulous tone and with a

heſitating manner, am I not a moſt miſerable creature?

Do not ſpeak to me, maſter Williams! You have given me a ſhock that I ſhall not get the better of for one while. You were hatched by a hen, as the ſaying is, but you came of the ſpawn of a cockatrice. I am glad to my heart, that honeſt farmer Williams is dead, your villainy would elſe have made him curſe the day that ever he was born.

Thomas, I am innocent! I ſwear by the great God that ſhall judge me another day, I am innocent!

Pray, do not ſwear! for goodneſs ſake, do not ſwear! Your poor ſoul is damned enough without that. For your ſake, lad, I will never take any body's word, nor truſt to appearances, thof it ſhould be an angel. Lord bleſs us! how ſmoothly you palavered it over, for

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all the world as if you had been as fair as a new-born babe! But it will not do; you will never be able to perſuade people that black is white. For my own part I have done with you. I loved you yeſterday, all one as if you had been my own brother. To-day I love you ſo well, that I would go ten miles with all the pleaſure in life to ſee you hanged.

Good God! Thomas, have you the heart? What a change! I call God to witneſs I have done nothing to deſerve it! What a world do we live in!

Hold your tongue, boy! It makes my very heart ſick to hear you! I would not lay a night under the ſame roof with you for all the world! I ſhould expect the houſe to fall and cruſh ſuch wickedneſs! I admire that the earth does not open and ſwallow you alive! It is poiſon ſo much as to look at you!

If you go on at this hardened rate, I believe from my ſoul that the people you talk to will tear you to pieces, and you will never live to come to the gallows. Oh, yes, you do well to pity yourſelf: poor, tender thing! that ſpit venom all round you like a toad, and leave the very ground upon which you crawl infected with your ſlime.

Finding the perſon with whom I talked thus impenetrable to all I could ſay, and conſidering that the advantage to be gained was but ſmall even if I could overcome his prepoſſeſſion, I took his advice and was ſilent. It was not much longer before every thing was prepared for my departure, and I was conducted to the ſame priſon which had ſo lately incloſed the wretched and innocent Hawkinses. They too had been the victims of Mr. Falkland. He exhibited, upon a very con-

contracted ſcale indeed, but in which the truth of delineation was faithfully ſuſtained, a copy of what monarchs are, who reckon among the inſtruments of their power priſons of ſtate.

CHAP. XI.

FOR my own part I had never ſeen a priſon, and like the majority of my brethren had given myſelf little concern to enquire what was the condition of thoſe who committed offence againſt, or became obnoxious to ſuſpicion from the community. Oh, how enviable is the moſt tottering ſhed under which the labourer retires to reſt, compared with the reſidence of theſe walls!

To me every thing was new, the maſſy doors, the reſounding locks, the gloomy paſſages, the grated windows, and the characteriſtic looks of the keepers, accuſtomed to reject every petition, and to ſteel their hearts againſt feeling and pity. Curioſity and a ſenſe of my ſituation induced me to fix my eyes on the

the faces of theſe men, but in a few minutes I drew them away with unconquerable loathing. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the ſort of ſqualidneſs and filth with which theſe manſions are diſtinguiſhed. I have ſeen dirty faces in dirty apartments, which have nevertheleſs borne the impreſſion of health, and ſpoke careleſſneſs and levity rather than diſtreſs. But the dirt of a priſon ſpeaks ſadneſs to the heart, and appears to be already in a ſtate of putridity and infection.

I was detained for more than an hour in the apartment of the keeper, one turnkey after another coming in, that they might make themſelves familiar with my perſon. As I was already conſidered as guilty of felony to a conſiderable amount, I underwent a rigorous ſearch, and they took from me a penknife, a pair of ſciſſars and that part of my money which was in gold. It

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was debated whether or not theſe ſhould be ſealed up, to be returned to me, as they ſaid, as ſoon as I ſhould be acquitted; and had I not diſplayed an unexpected firmneſs of manner and vigour of expoſtulation, ſuch was the conduct that would have been purſued. Having undergone theſe ceremonies, I was thruſt into a day room in which all the perſons then under confinement for felony were aſſembled, to the number of eleven. Each of them was too much engaged in his own reflections to take notice of me. Of theſe two were imprifoned for horſeſtealing, and three for having ſtolen a ſheep, one for ſhop lifting, one for coining, two for highway robbery and two for burglary.

The horſe ſtealers were engaged in a game at cards, which was preſently interrupted by a difference of opinion, attended with great vociferation, they calling upon one and another to decide it to

no purpoſe, one paying no attention to their ſummons, and another leaving them in the midſt of their ſtory, being no longer able to endure his own internal anguiſh in the midſt of their mummery.

It is a cuſtom among thieves to conſtitute a ſort of mock tribunal of their own body, from whoſe deciſion every one is informed whether he ſhall be acquitted, reſpited or pardoned, as well as reſpecting the moſt ſkilful way of conducting his defence. One of the houſebreakers who had already paſſed this ordeal was ſtalking up and down the room with a forced bravery, exclaiming to his companion that he was as rich as the duke of Bedford himſelf. He had five guineas and a half, which was as much as he could poſſibly ſpend in the courſe of the enſuing month, and what happened after that it was Jack Ketch's buſineſs to ſee to, not his. As he uttered theſe words he threw himſelf abruptly

abruptly upon a bench that was near him, and ſeemed to be aſleep in a moment. But his ſleep was uneaſy and diſturbed, his breathing was hard, and at intervals had rather the nature of a groan. A young fellow from the other ſide of the room came ſoftly ſuddenly to the place where he lay with a large knife in his hand, and preſſed the back of it with ſuch violence upon his neck, the head hanging over the ſide of the bench, that it was not till after ſeveral efforts that he was able to riſe. Oh, Jack! cried this manual jeſter, I had almoſt done your buſineſs for you! The other expreſſed no marks of reſentment, but ſullenly anſwered, Damn you, why did not you take the edge? It would have been the beſt thing you have done this many a day *!

* This incident really occurred, and was witneſſed by a friend of the author a few years ſince in Newgate.

The caſe of one of the perſons committed for highway robbery was not a little extraordinary. He was a common ſoldier, of a moſt engaging phyſiognomy, and two and twenty years of age. The proſecutor, who had been robbed one evening as he returned very late from the alehouſe, of the ſum of three ſhillings, ſwore poſitively to his perſon. The character of the priſoner was ſuch as has ſeldom been equalled. The meanneſs of his condition did not preclude him from the purſuit of intellectual cultivation; and he drew his favourite amuſement from the works of Virgil and Horace. His integrity had been proverbially great. In one inſtance he had been employed by a lady to convey a ſum of a thouſand pounds to a perſon at ſome miles diſtance: in another he was intruſted by a gentleman during his abſence with the care of his houſe and furniture

niture to the value of at leaſt five times that ſum. His habits of thinking were peculiar, full of juſtice, ſimplicity and wiſdom. He from time to time earned money of his officers by his peculiar excellence in furbiſhing arms; but he declined offers that had been made him to become a ſerjeant or a corporal, ſaying, that he did not want money, and that in a new ſituation he ſhould have leſs leiſure for ſtudy. He was equally conſtant in refuſing preſents that were offered him by perſons that had been ſtruck with his merit: not that he was under the influence of falſe delicacy and pride, but that his conſcience would not allow him to accept that, the want of which he did not feel to be an evil. This man died while I was in priſon. I received his laſt breath *.

* A ſtory extremely ſimilar to this is to be found in the Newgate Calendar, Vol. I. p. 382.

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The whole day I was obliged to ſpend in the company of theſe men, ſome of them having really committed the actions laid to their charge, others whom their ill fortune had rendered the victims of ſuſpicion. The whole was a ſcene of miſery ſuch as nothing ſhort of actual obſervation can ſuggeſt to the mind. Some were noiſy and obſtreperous, endeavouring by a falſe bravery to keep at bay the remembrance of their condition; while others, incapable even of this effort, had the torment of their thoughts aggravated by the perpetual noiſe and confuſion that prevailed around them. In the faces of thoſe who aſſumed the moſt courage you might trace the furrows of anxious care, and in the midſt of their laboured hilarity dreadful ideas would ever and anon intrude, convulſing their features, and working every line into an expreſſion of the keeneſt agony. To theſe men the

ſun

ſun brought no return of joy. Day after day rolled on, but their ſtate was immutable. Exiſtence was to them a theatre of invariable melancholy; every moment was a moment of anguiſh, yet did they wiſh to prolong that moment, fearful that the coming period would bring a ſeverer fate. They thought of the paſt with inſupportable repentance, each man contented to give his right hand, to have again the choice of that peace and liberty which he had unthinkingly bartered away. We talk of inſtruments of torture; Engliſhmen take credit to themſelves for having baniſhed the uſe of them from their happy ſhore! Alas, he that has obſerved the ſecrets of a priſon, well knows that there is infinitely more torture in the lingering exiſtence of a criminal, in the ſilent, intolerable minutes that he ſpends, than in the tangible miſery of whips and racks!

Such were our days. At ſun ſet our jailors

jailors appeared, and ordered each man to come away, and be locked into his dungeon. It was a bitter aggravation of our fate to be under the arbitrary control of theſe fellows. They felt no man's ſorrow; they were of all men leaſt capable of any ſort of feeling. They had a barbarous and ſullen pleaſure in iſſuing their deteſted mandates, and obſerving the mournful reluctance with which they were obeyed. Whatever they directed, it was in vain to expoſtulate; fetters and bread and water were the ſure conſequences of reſiſtance. Their tyranny had no other limit than their own caprice; to whom ſhall the unfortunate felon appeal? To what purpoſe complain, when his complaints are ſure to be received with incredulity? A tale of mutiny and neceſſary precaution is the unfailing refuge of the keeper, and this tale is an everlaſting bar againſt redreſs.

Our

Our dungeons were cells, $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $6\frac{1}{2}$, below the ſurface of the ground, damp, without window, light or air, except from a few holes worked for that purpoſe in the door. In ſome of theſe miſerable receptacles three perſons were put to ſleep together *. I was fortunate enough to have one to myſelf. It was now the approach of winter. We were not allowed to have candles; and, as I have already ſaid, were thruſt in here at ſun ſet and not liberated till the returning day. This was our ſituation for fourteen or fifteen hours out of the four and twenty. I had never been accuſtomed to ſleep more than ſix or ſeven hours, and my inclination to ſleep was now leſs than ever. Thus was I reduced to ſpend half my day in this dreary abode and in complete darkneſs. This was no trifling aggravation of my lot.

* See Howard on Priſons.

Among

Among my melancholy reflections I taſked my memory, and counted over the doors, the locks, the bolts, the chains, the maſſy walls and grated windows that were between me and liberty. Theſe, ſaid I, are the engines that tyranny ſits down in cold and ſerious meditation to invent. This is the empire that man exerciſes over man. Thus is a being, formed to expatiate, to act, to ſmile and enjoy, reſtricted and benumbed. How great muſt be his depravity or heedleſſneſs who vindicates this ſcheme for changing health and gaiety and ſerenity, into the wanneſs of a dungeon and the deep furrows of agony and deſpair!

Thank God, exclaims the Engliſhman, we have no Baſtille! Thank God, with us no man can be puniſhed without a crime! Unthinking wretch! Is that a country of liberty where thouſands languiſh in dungeons and fetters?

Go,

Go, go, ignorant fool! and viſit the ſcenes of our priſons! witneſs their unwholeſomeneſs, their filth, the tyranny of their governors, the miſery of their inmates! After that ſhow me the man ſhameleſs enough to triumph, and ſay, England has no Baſtille! Is there any charge ſo frivolous upon which men are not conſigned to theſe deteſted abodes? Is there any villainy that is not practiſed by juſtices and proſecutors? But againſt all this, perhaps you have been told, there is redreſs. Yes, a redreſs, that it is the conſummation of inſult ſo much as to name! Where ſhall the poor wretch, reduced to the laſt deſpair, and to whom acquittal perhaps comes juſt time enough to ſave him from periſhing, —where ſhall this man find leiſure, and much leſs money, to fee counſel and officers, and purchaſe the tedious, dear-bought remedy of the law? No, he is too happy to leave his dungeon and the

memory

memory of his dungeon behind him; and the ſame tyranny and wanton oppreſſion become the inheritance of his ſucceſſor.

For myſelf I looked round upon my walls, and forward upon the premature death I had too much reaſon to expect; I conſulted my own heart that whiſpered nothing but innocence; and I ſaid, This is ſociety. This is the object, the diſtribution of juſtice, which is the end of human reaſon. For this ſages have toiled, and the midnight oil has been waſted. This!

The reader will forgive this digreſſion from the immediate ſubject of my ſtory. If it ſhould be ſaid, theſe are general remarks; let it be remembered that they are the dear bought reſult of experience. It is from the fulneſs of a burſting heart that invective thus flows to my pen. Theſe are not the declamations of a man deſirous to be eloquent.

I have felt the iron of ſlavery grating upon my ſoul.

I believed that miſery, more pure than that which I now endured, had never fallen to the lot of a human being. I recollected with aſtoniſhment my puerile eagerneſs to be brought to the teſt and have my innocence examined. I execrated it as the vileſt and moſt inſufferable pedantry. I exclaimed in the bitterneſs of my heart, Of what value is a fair fame? It is the jewel of men formed to be amuſed with baubles. Without it I might have had ſerenity of heart and chearfulneſs of occupation, peace and liberty; why ſhould I conſign my happineſs to other men's arbitration? But, if a fair fame were of the moſt inexpreſſible value, is this the method which common ſenſe would preſcribe to retrieve it? The language which theſe inſtitutions hold out to the unfortunate is, Come, and be ſhut out from the light of day, be the aſſociate

of

of thoſe whom ſociety has marked out for her abhorrence, be the ſlave of jailers, be loaded with fetters; thus ſhall you be cleared from every unworthy aſperſion, and reſtored to reputation and honour! This is the conſolation ſhe affords to thoſe whom malignity or folly, private pique or unfounded poſitiveneſs have without the ſmalleſt foundation loaded with calumny. For myſelf I felt my own innocence, and I ſoon found upon enquiry that three fourths of thoſe who are regularly ſubjected to a ſimilar treatment, are perſons, whom even with all the ſuperciliouſneſs and precipitation of our courts of juſtice no evidence can be found ſufficient to convict. How ſlender then muſt be that man's portion of information and diſcernment, who is willing to commit his character and welfare to ſuch guardianſhip!

But my caſe was even worſe than this. I intimately felt that a trial, ſuch as in-

ſtitution is able to make it, is only the worthy ſequel of ſuch a beginning. What chance had I, after the purgation I was now ſuffering, that I ſhould come out acquitted at laſt? What probability was there that the trial I had juſt endured in the houſe of Mr. Falkland was not juſt as fair as any that might be expected to follow? No, I already anticipated my own condemnation.

Thus was I cut off for ever from all that exiſtence has to beſtow, from all the high hopes I had ſo often conceived, from all the future excellence my ſoul ſo much delighted to imagine, to ſpend a few weeks in a miſerable priſon, and then to periſh by the hand of the public executioner. No language can do juſtice to the indignant and ſoul-ſickening loathing that theſe ideas excited. My reſentment was not reſtricted to my proſecutor, but extended itſelf to take in the whole machine of human ſociety.

I could never believe that all this was the fair reſult of inſtitutions inſeparable from the general good. I regarded the whole human ſpecies as ſo many hangmen and torturers. I conſidered them as confederated to tear me to pieces; and this wide ſcene of inexorable perſecution inflicted upon me inexpreſſible agony. I looked on this ſide and on that; I was innocent; I had a right to expect aſſiſtance; but every heart was ſteeled againſt me; every hand was ready to lend its force to make my ruin ſecure. No man that has not felt in his own moſt momentous concerns juſtice, eternal truth, unalterable equity engaged in his behalf, and on the other ſide brute force, impenetrable obſtinacy and unfeeling inſolence, can imagine the ſenſations that then paſſed through my mind. I ſaw treachery triumphant and enthroned; I ſaw the ſinews of innocence crumbled into duſt by the gripe of almighty guilt.

What relief had I from theſe ſenſations? Was it relief that I ſpent the day in the midſt of profligacy and execrations, that I ſaw reflected from every countenance agonies only inferior to my own? He that would form a lively idea of the regions of the damned, needed only to witneſs for ſix hours a ſcene to which I was confined for many months. Not for one hour could I withdraw myſelf from this complexity of horrors, or take refuge in the calmneſs of meditation. Air, exerciſe, ſeries, contraſt, thoſe grand enliveners of the human frame, I was for ever debarred, by the inexorable tyranny under which I was fallen. Nor did I find the ſolitude of my nightly dungeon leſs inſupportable. Its only furniture was the ſtraw that ſerved me for my repoſe. It was narrow, damp and unwholeſome. The ſlumbers of a mind, wearied like mine with the moſt deteſtable uniformity, to whom neither amuſement nor occupation

tion ever offered themſelves to beguile the painful hours, were ſhort, diſturbed and unrefreſhing. My ſleeping, ſtill more than my waking thoughts, were full of perplexity, deformity and diſorder. To theſe ſlumbers ſucceeded the hours which by the regulations of our priſon I was obliged though awake to ſpend in ſolitary and chearleſs darkneſs. Here I had neither books, nor pens, nor any thing upon which to engage my attention; all was a ſightleſs blank. How was a mind, active and indefatigable like mine, to endure this miſery? I could not ſink it in lethargy; I could not forget my woes; they haunted me with unintermitted and demoniac malice. Cruel, inexorable policy of human affairs, that condemns a man to torture like this; that ſanctions it and knows not what is done under its ſanction; that is too ſupine and unfeeling to enquire into theſe petty de-

tails; that calls this the ordeal of innocence and the protector of freedom! A thouſand times I could have daſhed my brains againſt the walls of my dungeon; a thouſand times I longed for death, and wiſhed with inexpreſſible ardour for an end to what I ſuffered; a thouſand times I meditated ſuicide, and ruminated in the bitterneſs of my ſoul upon the different means of eſcaping from the load of exiſtence. What had I to do with life? I had ſeen enough to make me regard it with deteſtation. Why ſhould I wait the lingering proceſs of legal deſpotiſm, and not dare ſo much as to die but when and how its inſtruments decreed? Still ſome inexplicable ſuggeſtion withheld my hand. I clung with deſperate fondneſs to this ſhadow of exiſtence, its myſterious attractions and its hopeleſs proſpects.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

SUCH were the reflections that haunted the firſt days of my impriſonment, in conſequence of which they were ſpent in perpetual anguiſh. But after a time nature, wearied with diſtreſs, would no longer ſtoop to the burthen; thought, which is inceſſantly varying, introduced a ſeries of reflections totally different.

My fortitude revived. I had always been accuſtomed to chearfulneſs, good-humour and ſerenity, and this habit now returned to viſit me at the bottom of my dungeon. No ſooner did my contemplations take this turn, than I ſaw the reaſonableneſs and poſſibility of tranquillity and peace, and my mind whiſpered to me the propriety of ſhowing in this forlorn condition that I was ſu-

perior to all my perſecutors. Bleſſed ſtate of innocence and ſelf approbation! The ſunſhine of conſcious integrity pierced through all the barriers of my cell, and ſpoke ten thouſand times more joy to my heart than the accumulated ſplendours of nature and art can communicate to the ſlaves of vice.

I found out the ſecret of employing my mind. I ſaid, I am ſhut up for half the day in total darkneſs without any external ſource of amuſement; the other half I ſpend in the midſt of noiſe, turbulence and confuſion. What then? Can I not draw amuſement from the ſtores of my own mind? Is it not freighted with various knowledge? Have I not been employed from my infancy in gratifying an inſatiable curioſity? When ſhould I derive benefit from theſe ſuperior advantages, if not at preſent? Accordingly I taſked the ſtores of my memory and my powers of invention. I

amuſed

amuſed myſelf with recollecting the hiſtory of my life. By degrees I called to mind a number of minute circumſtances which but for this exerciſe would have been for ever forgotten. I repaſſed in my thoughts whole converſations, I recollected their ſubjects, their arrangement, their incidents and frequently their very words. I muſed upon theſe ideas till I was totally abſorbed in thought. I repeated them till my mind glowed with enthuſiaſm. I had my different employments fitted for the ſolitude of the night in which I could give full ſcope to the impulſes of my mind, and the uproar of the day in which my chief object was to be inſenſible to the diſorder with which I was ſurrounded.

By degrees I quitted my own ſtory, and amuſed myſelf with imaginary adventures. I figured to myſelf every ſituation in which I could be placed, and conceived the conduct to be obſerved in

each. Thus ſcenes of inſult and danger, of tenderneſs and oppreſſion became familiar to me. In fancy I often paſſed the awful hour of diſſolving nature. In ſome of my reveries I boiled with impetuous indignation, and in others patiently collected the whole force of my mind for ſome fearful encounter. I cultivated the powers of oratory ſuited to theſe different ſtates, and improved more in eloquence in the ſolitude of my dungeon, than perhaps I ſhould have done in the buſieſt and moſt crowded ſcenes. At length I proceeded to as regular a diſpoſition of my time, as the man in his ſtudy who paſſes from mathematics to poetry, and from poetry to the law of nations in the different parts of each ſingle day; and I as ſeldom infringed upon my plan. Nor were my ſubjects of diſquiſition leſs numerous than his. I went over, by the aſſiſtance of memory only, a conſiderable part of Euclid during

ring my confinement, and revived day after day the ſeries of facts and incidents in ſome of the moſt celebrated hiſtorians.

While I was thus employed I reflected with exultation upon the degree in which man is independent of the ſmiles and frowns of fortune. I was beyond her reach, for I could fall no lower. To an ordinary eye I might ſeem deſtitute and miſerable, but in reality I wanted for nothing. My fare was coarſe; but I was in health. My dungeon was noiſome; but I felt no inconvenience. I was ſhut up from the uſual means of exerciſe and air; but I found the method of exerciſing myſelf even to perſpiration in my dungeon. I had no means of withdrawing my perſon from a diſguſtful ſociety in the moſt chearful and valuable part of the day; but I ſoon brought to perfection the art of withdrawing my thoughts, and ſaw and heard

heard the people about me for juſt as ſhort a time and as ſeldom as I pleaſed.

Such is man in himſelf conſidered; ſo ſimple his nature; ſo few his wants. How different from the man of artificial ſociety! Palaces are built for his reception, a thouſand vehicles provided for his exerciſe, provinces are ranſacked for the gratification of his appetite, and the whole world traverſed to ſupply him with apparel and furniture. Thus vaſt is his expenditure, and the purchaſe ſlavery. He is dependent on a thouſand accidents for tranquillity and health, and his body and ſoul are at the devotion of whoever will ſatisfy his imperious cravings.

In addition to the diſadvantages of my preſent ſituation, I was reſerved for an ignominious death. What then? Every man muſt die. No man knows how ſoon. It ſurely is not worſe to encounter the king of terrors in health and with

with every advantage for the collection of fortitude, than to encounter him already half ſubdued by ſickneſs and ſuffering. I was reſolved at leaſt fully to poſſeſs the days I had to live, and this is peculiarly in the power of the man who preſerves his health to the laſt moment of his exiſtence. Why ſhould I ſuffer my mind to be invaded by unavailing regrets? Every ſentiment of vanity, or rather of independence and juſtice within me, inſtigated me to ſay to my perſecutor, You may cut off my exiſtence, but you cannot diſturb my ſerenity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

IN the midſt of theſe reflections another thought, which had not before ſtruck me, occurred to my mind. I exult, ſaid I, and reaſonably, over the impotence of my perſecutor. Is not that impotence greater than I have yet imagined? I ſay, he may cut off my exiſtence, but cannot diſturb my ſerenity. It is true: my mind, the clearneſs of my ſpirit, the firmneſs of my temper, are beyond his reach; is not my life equally ſo, if I pleaſe? What are the material obſtacles that man never ſubdued? What is the undertaking ſo arduous that by ſome has not been accompliſhed? And, if by others, why not by me? Had they ſtronger motives than I? Was exiſtence more variouſly endeared

endeared to them, or had they more numerous methods by which to animate and adorn it? Many of thoſe who have exerted moſt perſeverance and intrepidity were obviouſly my inferiors in that reſpect. Why ſhould not I be as daring as they? Adamant and ſteel have a ductility like water to a mind ſufficiently bold and contemplative. The mind is its own place; and is endowed with powers that might enable it to laugh at the tyrant's vigilance. I paſſed and repaſſed theſe ideas in my mind; and, heated with the contemplation, I ſaid, No, I will not die!

My reading in early youth had been extremely miſcellaneous. I had read of houſebreakers to whom locks and bolts were a jeſt, and who, vain of their art, exhibited the experiment of entering a houſe the moſt ſtrongly barricaded, with as little noiſe and almoſt as little trouble as other men would lift up a latch. This cir-

circumſtance had caught my attention. There is nothing ſo intereſting to the juvenile mind as the wonderful; there is no power that it ſo eagerly covets as that of aſtoniſhing ſpectators by its miraculous exertions. Mind appeared to my untutored reflections vague, airy and unfettered, the ſuſceptible perceiver of reaſons, but never intended by nature to be the ſlave of force. Why ſhould it be in the power of man to overtake and hold me by force? Why, when I chooſe to withdraw myſelf, ſhould I not be capable of eluding the moſt vigilant ſearch? Theſe limbs and this trunk are a cumbrous and unfortunate load for the power of thinking to drag along with it; but why ſhould not the power of thinking be able to lighten the load till it ſhall be no longer felt?—Theſe early modes of reflection were by no means indifferent to my preſent enquiries.

Our

Our next-door neighbour at my father's houſe had been a carpenter. Freſh from the ſort of reading I have mentioned, I was eager to examine his tools, their powers and their uſes. This carpenter was a man of a ſtrong and vigorous mind; and, his faculties having been chiefly confined to the range of his profeſſion, he was fertile in experiments and ingenious in reaſoning upon theſe particular topics. I therefore obtained from him conſiderable ſatisfaction; and, my mind being ſet in action, I ſometimes even improved upon the hints he furniſhed. His converſation was particularly agreeable to me; I at firſt worked with him ſometimes for my amuſement, and afterwards occaſionally for a ſhort time as his journeyman. I was conſtitutionally vigorous, my bones well-knit, and my limbs ſinewy and powerful; and by the experience thus attained I added to the abſtract poſſeſſion of power

the

the ſkill of applying it, when I pleaſed, in ſuch a manner as that no part ſhould be inefficient.

It is a ſtrange, but no uncommon feature in the human mind, that the very reſource of which we ſtand in greateſt need in a critical ſituation, though already accumulated it may be by preceding induſtry, fails to preſent itſelf at the time when it ſhould be called into action. Thus my mind had paſſed through two very different ſtages ſince my impriſonment, before this means of liberation ſuggeſted itſelf. My faculties were overwhelmed in the firſt inſtance, and raiſed to a pitch of enthuſiaſm in the ſecond, while in both I took it for granted in a manner that I muſt paſſively ſubmit to the good pleaſure of my perſecutors.

During the period in which my mind had been thus undecided, the aſſizes, which were held twice a year in the town

in

in which I was a priſoner, came on. Upon this occaſion my caſe was not brought forward, but was ſuffered to ſtand over ſix months longer. It would have been juſt the ſame, if I had had as ſtrong reaſon to expect acquittal, as I had conviction. If I had been apprehended upon the moſt frivolous reaſons upon which any juſtice of the peace ever thought proper to commit a naked beggar for trial, I muſt ſtill have waited about two hundred and ſeventeen days, before my innocence could be cleared. So imperfect are the effects of the boaſted laws of a country whoſe legiſlators hold their aſſembly from four to ſix months in every year! I never certainly diſcovered whether this delay were owing to any interference on the part of my proſecutor, or whether it fell out in the regular adminiſtration of juſtice, which is too ſolemn and dignified to accommodate

modate itſelf to the rights or benefit of an inſignificant individual.

The term of my impriſonment was thus unaccountably prolonged. But this was not the only incident that occurred to me during my confinement for which I could find no ſatisfactory ſolution. It was nearly at the ſame time, that is, when I had been little more than a month in durance, that the keeper began to alter his behaviour to me. He ſent for me one morning into the part of the building which was appropriated for his own uſe, and after ſome heſitation told me he was ſorry my accommodations had been ſo indifferent, and aſked whether I ſhould like to have a chamber in his family? I was ſtruck with the unexpectedneſs of this queſtion, and deſired to know whether any body had employed him to aſk it. No, he replied; but, now the aſſizes were over,

over, he had fewer felons on his hands, and more time to look about him: He believed I was a good kind of a young man; and he had taken a ſort of a liking to me. I fixed my eye upon his countenance as he ſaid this. I could diſcover none of the uſual ſymptoms of kindneſs; he appeared to me to be acting a part, unnatural and that ſat with aukwardneſs upon him. He went on however to offer me the liberty of eating at his table, which, if I choſe it, he ſaid would make no difference to him, and he ſhould not think of charging me any thing for it. He had always indeed as much upon his hands as one perſon could ſee to; but his wife and his daughter Peggy would be woundily pleaſed to hear a perſon of learning talk, as he underſtood I was; and perhaps I might not feel myſelf diſagreeable in their company.

I reflected on this propoſal, and had little

little doubt, notwithſtanding what the keeper had affirmed to the contrary, that it did not proceed from any ſpontaneous humanity in him, but that he had, to ſpeak the language of perſons of his caſt, good reaſons for what he did. I buſied myſelf in conjectures as to who could be the author of this ſort of indulgence and attention. The two moſt likely perſons were Mr. Falkland and Mr. Foreſter. The latter I knew to be a man auſtere and inexorable towards thoſe whom he deemed vicious. He piqued himſelf upon being inſenſible to thoſe ſofter emotions, which he believed to anſwer no other purpoſe than to ſeduce us from our duty. Mr. Falkland on the contrary was a man of the acuteſt ſenſibility; hence aroſe his pleaſures and his pains, his virtues and his vices. Though he were the bittereſt enemy to whom I could poſſibly be expoſed, and though no ſentiments of humanity could

divert

divert or control the bent of his mind, I yet perſuaded myſelf that he was more likely than his kinſman to viſit in idea the ſcene of my dungeon, and to feel impelled to alleviate my ſufferings.

This conjecture was by no means calculated to ſerve as balm to my mind. My thoughts were unavoidably full of irritation againſt my perſecutor. How could I think kindly of a man, in competition with the gratification of whoſe ruling paſſion my good name or my life was deemed as of no conſideration? I ſaw him cruſhing the one and bringing the other into jeopardy, with a quietneſs and compoſure on his part that I could not recollect without horror. I knew not what were his plans reſpecting me. I knew not whether he troubled himſelf ſo much as to form a barren wiſh for the preſervation of one, whoſe future proſpects he had ſo iniquitouſly tarniſhed. I had hitherto been ſilent as to my principal topic of recrimination. But I was

by no means certain that I ſhould conſent to go out of the world in ſilence, the victim of this man's obduracy and art. In every view I felt my heart ulcerated with a ſenſe of his injuſtice; and my very ſoul ſpurned theſe pitiful indulgences, at a time that he was grinding me into duſt with the inexorableneſs of his vengeance.

I was influenced by theſe ſentiments in my reply to the jailor; and I found a ſecret pleaſure in pronouncing them in all their bitterneſs. I viewed him with a ſarcaſtic ſmile, and ſaid, I was glad to find him of a ſudden become ſo humane: I was not however without ſome penetration as to the humanity of a jailor, and could gueſs at the circumſtances by which it was produced. But he might tell his employer that his cares were fruitleſs; I would accept no favours from a man that held a halter about my neck, and had courage enough to endure the worſt both in time to come

and

and now.—The jailor looked at me with aſtoniſhment, and, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, Well done, my cock! You have not had your learning for nothing I ſee. You are ſet upon not dying dunghill. But that is to come, lad: you had better by half keep your courage till you ſhall find it wanted.

The aſſizes, which paſſed over without influence to me, produced a great revolution among my fellow priſoners. I lived long enough in the jail to witneſs a general mutation of its inhabitants. One of the houſebreakers and the coiner were hanged. Two more were caſt for tranſportation, and the reſt acquitted. The tranſports remained with us; and, though the priſon was thus lightened of nine of its inhabitants, I left within three as many perſons on the felons' ſide as I had found there on my firſt arrival.

The ſoldier, whoſe ſtory I have already recorded, died, on the evening of

the very day on which the judges arrived, of a diſeaſe the conſequence of his confinement. Such was the juſtice that reſulted from the laws of his country, to an individual who would have been the ornament of any age, one who of all the men I ever knew was inexpreſſibly the kindeſt, of the moſt feeling heart, of the moſt engaging and unaffected manners, and the moſt unblemiſhed life. The name of this man was Brightwel. Were it poſſible for my pen to conſecrate him to never dying fame, I could undertake no taſk more grateful to my heart. His judgment was penetrating and manly, totally unmixed with imbecility and confuſion, while at the ſame time there was ſuch an uncontending frankneſs in his countenance, that a ſuperficial obſerver would have ſuppoſed he muſt have been the prey of the firſt plauſible knavery that was practiſed againſt him. Great reaſon have I to remember him with affection!

fection! He was the moſt ardent, and I had almoſt ſaid the laſt of my friends. Nor did I remain in this reſpect in his debt. There was indeed a great congeniality, if I may preſume to ſay ſo, in our characters, except that I cannot pretend to rival the magnitude of his genius, or to compare with, what the world has ſcarcely ſurpaſſed, the correctneſs and untainted purity of his conduct. He heard my ſtory, as far as I thought proper to diſcloſe it, with intereſt, he examined it with ſincere impartiality, and, if at firſt any doubt remained upon his mind, a frequent obſervation of me in my moſt unguarded moments taught him in no long time to place an unreſerved confidence in my innocence.

He talked of the injuſtice of which we were mutually victims without bitterneſs, and predicted that the time would come when the poſſibility of ſuch intolerable oppreſſion would be extirpa-

ted. But this, he ſaid, was a happineſs reſerved for poſterity; it was too late for us to reap the benefit of it. It was ſome conſolation to him, that he could not tell the period in his paſt life, which the beſt judgment of which he was capable would teach him to ſpend better. He could ſay, with as much reaſon as moſt men, he had diſcharged his duty. But he foreſaw that he ſhould not ſurvive his preſent calamity. This was his prediction, while yet in health. He might be ſaid in a certain ſenſe to have a broken heart. But, if that phraſe were in any way applicable to him, ſure never was deſpair more calm, more full of reſignation and ſerenity.

At no time in the whole courſe of my adventures was I expoſed to a ſhock more ſevere than I received from this man's death. The circumſtances of his fate preſented themſelves to my mind in their full complication of iniquity.

From

From him and the execrations with which I loaded the government that could be the inſtrument of his tragedy, I turned to myſelf. I beheld the cataſtrophe of Brightwel with envy. A thouſand times I longed that my corſe had laid in death, inſtead of his. I was only reſerved, as I perſuaded myſelf, for unutterable woe. In a few days he would have been acquitted, his liberty, his reputation reſtored; mankind perhaps, ſtruck with the injuſtice he had ſuffered, would have ſhown themſelves eager to balance his misfortunes and obliterate his diſgrace. But this man died; and I remained alive! I, who, though not leſs wrongfully treated than he, had no hope of reparation, muſt be marked as long as I lived for a villain, and in my death probably held up to the ſcorn and deteſtation of my ſpecies!

Such were ſome of the immediate reflections which the fate of this unfortu-

nate martyr produced in my mind. Yet my intercourſe with Brightwel was not in the review without its portion of comfort. I ſaid, This man has ſeen through the veil of calumny that overſhades me; he has underſtood, and has loved me. Why ſhould I deſpair? May I not meet hereafter with men ingenuous like him, who ſhall do me juſtice and ſympathiſe with my calamity? With that conſolation I will be ſatisfied. I will reſt in the arms of friendſhip, and forget the malignity of the world. Henceforth I will be contented with tranquil obſcurity, with the cultivation of ſentiment and wiſdom, and the exerciſe of benevolence within a narrow circle. It was thus that my mind became excited to the project I was about to undertake.

I had no ſooner meditated the idea of an eſcape, than I determined upon the following method of facilitating the preparations for it. I undertook to ingratiate

tiate myſelf with my keeper. In the world I have generally found ſuch perſons as had been acquainted with the outline of my ſtory, regarding me with a ſort of loathing and abhorrence, which made them avoid me with as much care as if I had been ſpotted with the plague. The idea of my having firſt robbed my maſter, and then endeavoured to clear myſelf by charging him with ſubornation againſt me, placed me in a claſs diſtinct from and infinitely more guilty than that of common felons. But this man was too good a maſter of his profeſſion to entertain averſion againſt a fellow creature upon ſuch a ſcore. He conſidered the perſons committed to his cuſtody merely as ſo many human bodies for whom he was reſponſible that they ſhould be forthcoming in time and place; and the difference of innocence and guilt he looked down upon as an affair beneath his attention. I had not

therefore the prejudices to encounter in recommending myſelf to him, that I have found ſo peculiarly obſtinate in many other caſes. Add to which, the ſame motive, whatever it was, that had made him ſo profuſe in his offers a little before, had probably its influence on the preſent occaſion.

I informed him of my ſkill in the profeſſion of a joiner, and offered to make him half a dozen handſome chairs, if he would facilitate my obtaining the tools neceſſary for carrying on my profeſſion in my preſent confinement; for, without his conſent previouſly obtained, it would have been in vain for me to expect that I could quietly exert an induſtry of this kind, even if my exiſtence had depended upon it. He looked at me firſt as aſking himſelf what he was to underſtand by this novel propoſal, and then, his countenance moſt graciouſly relaxing, ſaid, he was glad I was come

off

off a little of my high notions and my buckram, and he would ſee what he could do. Two days after he ſignified his compliance. He ſaid that, as to the matter of the preſent I had offered him, he thought nothing of that, I might do as I pleaſed in it; but I might depend upon every civility from him that he could ſhow with ſafety to himſelf, if ſo be as, when he was civil, I did not offer a ſecond time for to ſnap and take him up ſhort.

Having thus gained my preliminary, I gradually accumulated tools of various ſorts, gimlets, piercers, chiſſels, *et cetera*. I immediately ſet myſelf to work. The nights were long, and the ſordid eagerneſs of my keeper notwithſtanding his oſtentatious generoſity was great; I therefore petitioned and was indulged with a bit of candle that I might amuſe myſelf for an hour or two with my work after I was locked up in my dungeon.

I did not however by any means apply conſtantly to the work I had undertaken, and my jailor betrayed various tokens of impatience. Perhaps he was afraid I ſhould not have finiſhed it before I was hanged. I however inſiſted upon working at my leiſure as I pleaſed, and this he did not venture expreſsly to diſpute. In addition to the advantages thus obtained, I procured ſecretly from miſs Peggy, who now and then came into the jail to make her obſervations of the priſoners, and who ſeemed to have conceived ſome partiality for my perſon, the implement of an iron crow.

In theſe proceedings it is eaſy to trace the vice and duplicity that muſt be expected to grow out of injuſtice. I know not whether my readers will pardon the ſiniſter advantage I extracted from the myſterious conceſſions of my keeper. But I muſt acknowledge my weakneſs

in that reſpect; I am writing my adventures and not my apology; and I was not prepared to maintain the unvaried ſincerity of my manners, at the expence of a ſpeedy cloſe to be put upon my exiſtence.

My plan was now digeſted. I believed that by means of the crow I could eaſily and without much noiſe force the door of my dungeon from its hinges, or, if not, that I could, in caſe of neceſſity, cut away the lock. This door led into a narrow paſſage, bounded on one ſide by the range of dungeons, and on the other by the jailor's and turnkey's apartments, through which was the uſual entrance from the ſtreet. This outlet I dared not attempt for fear of diſturbing the perſons cloſe to whoſe very door I ſhould in that caſe have found it neceſſary to paſs. I determined therefore upon another door at the farther end of the paſſage, which was well barricaded, and

and which led to a ſort of a garden in the occupation of the keeper. This garden I had never entered, but I had had an opportunity of obſerving it from the window of the felons' day room, which looked that way, the room itſelf being immediately over the range of dungeons. I perceived that it was bounded by a wall of conſiderable height, which I was told by my fellow priſoners was the extremity of the jail on that ſide, and beyond which was a back-lane of ſome length that terminated upon the ſkirts of the town. Upon an accurate obſervation and much reflection upon the ſubject I found that I ſhould be able, if once I got into the garden, with my gimlets and piercers inſerted at proper diſtances to make a ſort of ladder, by means of which I could get clear over the wall, and once more take poſſeſſion of the ſweets of liberty. I preferred this wall to that

which immediately ſkirted my dungeon, on the other ſide of which was a populous ſtreet.

I ſuffered about two days to elapſe from the period at which I had thoroughly digeſted my project, and then in the very middle of the night began to ſet about its execution. The firſt door was attended with conſiderable difficulty, but at length this obſtacle was happily removed. The ſecond door was faſtened on the inſide. I was therefore able with perfect eaſe to puſh back the bolts. But the lock, which of courſe was depended upon for the principal ſecurity, and was therefore ſtrong, was double-ſhot, and the key taken away. I endeavoured with my chiſſel to force back the bolt of the lock, but to no purpoſe. I then unſcrewed the box of the lock; and, that being taken away, the door was no longer oppoſed to my wiſhes.

Thus far I had proceeded with the happieſt

pieſt ſucceſs, but cloſe on the other ſide of the door there was a kennel with a large maſtiff dog, of which I had not the ſmalleſt previous knowledge. Though I ſtepped along in the moſt careful manner, this animal was diſturbed, and began to bark. I was extremely diſconcerted, but immediately applied myſelf to ſoothe the animal, in which I preſently ſucceeded. I then returned along the paſſage to liſten whether any body had been diſturbed by the noiſe of the dog; reſolved, if that were the caſe, that I would return to my dungeon, and endeavour to replace every thing in its former ſtate. But the whole appeared perfectly quiet, and I was encouraged to proceed in my operation.

I now got to the wall, and had nearly gained half the aſcent, when I heard a voice at the garden door, crying, Hulloa! who is there? who opened the door? The man received no anſwer, and the

the night was too dark for him to diſtinguiſh objects at any diſtance. He therefore returned, as I judged, into the houſe for a light. Meantime the dog, underſtanding the key in which theſe interrogations were uttered, began barking again more violently than ever. I had now no poſſibility of retreat, and I was not without hopes that I might yet accompliſh my object, and clear the wall. Meanwhile a ſecond man came out, while the other was getting his lanthorn, and, by that time I had got to the top of the wall, was able to perceive me. He immediately ſet up a ſhout, and threw a large ſtone which grazed me in its flight. Alarmed at my ſituation, I was obliged to deſcend on the other ſide without taking the neceſſary precautions, and in my fall nearly diſlocated my ancle.

There was a door in the wall, of which I was not previouſly appriſed; and, this being

being opened, the two men with the lanthorn were on the other ſide in an inſtant. They had then nothing to do but to run along the lane to the place from which I had deſcended. I endeavoured to riſe after my fall, but the pain was ſo intenſe that I was ſcarcely able to ſtand, and, after having limped a few paces, I twiſted my foot under me, and fell down again. I had now no remedy, and quietly ſuffered myſelf to be retaken.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

I WAS conducted to the keeper's room for that night, and the two men ſat up with me. I was accoſted with many interrogatories, to which I gave little anſwer, but complained of the hurt in my leg. To this I could obtain no reply except, Curſe you, my lad! if that be all, we will give you ſome ointment for that; we will anoint it with a little cold iron. They were indeed exceſſively ſulky with me, for having broken their night's reſt and given them all this trouble. In the morning they were as good as their word, fixing a pair of fetters upon both my legs, regardleſs of the ancle which was now ſwelled to a conſiderable ſize, and then faſtening me with a padlock to a ſtaple in the floor of

of my dungeon. I expoſtulated with warmth upon this treatment, told them that I was a man upon whom the law had as yet paſſed no cenſure, and who therefore in the eye of the law was innocent. But they bid me keep ſuch fudge as that for people who knew no better; that they knew what they did, and would anſwer it to any court in England.

The pain of the fetter was intolerable. I endeavoured in various ways to relieve it, and even privily to free my leg; but the more it was ſwelled, the more was this rendered impoſſible. I then reſolved to bear it with patience; ſtill the longer it continued, the worſe it grew. After two days and two nights I intreated the turnkey to go and aſk the ſurgeon who uſually attended the priſon to look at it, for, if it continued longer as it was, I was convinced it would mortify. But he glared ſurlily at me, and ſaid,

ſaid, Damn my blood! I ſhould like to ſee that day. To die of a mortification is too good an end for ſuch a raſcal! At the time that he thus addreſſed me, the whole maſs of my blood was already fevered by the anguiſh I had undergone, my patience was wholly exhauſted, and I was ſilly enough to be irritated beyond bearing by his impertinence and vulgarity. Look you, Mr. turnkey, ſaid I, there is one thing that ſuch fellows as you are ſet over us for, and another thing that you are not. You are to take care we do not eſcape, but it is no part of your office to call us names and abuſe us. If I were not chained down to my ſeat, you dare as well eat your fingers as uſe ſuch language; and, take my word for it, you ſhall yet live to repent of your inſolence.

While I thus ſpoke, the man ſtared at me with aſtoniſhment. He was ſo little accuſtomed to ſuch retorts that at

firſt he could ſcarcely believe his ears; and ſuch was the firmneſs of my manner that he ſeemed to forget for a moment that I was not at large. But, as ſoon as he had time to recollect himſelf, he did not deign even to be angry. His face relaxed into a ſmile of contempt, he ſnapped his fingers at me, and, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, Well ſaid, my cock! Crow away! Have a care you do not burſt! and, as he ſhut the door upon me, mimicked the voice of the animal he mentioned.

This rejoinder brought me to myſelf in a moment, and ſhowed me the impotence of the reſentment I was expreſſing. But, though he thus put an end to the violence of my ſpeech, the torture of my body continued as great as ever. I was determined to change my mode of attack. The ſame turnkey returned in a few minutes; and, as he approached me to put down ſome food he had brought,

brought, I ſlipped a ſhilling into his hand, ſaying at the ſame time, My good fellow, for God's ſake, go to the ſurgeon: I am ſure you do not wiſh me to periſh for want of aſſiſtance. The fellow put the ſhilling in his pocket, looked hard at me, and then with one nod of his head, and without uttering a ſingle word, went away. The ſurgeon preſently after made his appearance; and, finding the part in a high ſtate of inflammation, ordered certain applications, and gave peremptory directions that the fetter ſhould not be replaced upon that leg, till a cure had been effected. It was a full month before the leg was perfectly healed, and made equally ſtrong and flexible with the other.

The condition in which I was now placed was totally different from that which had preceded this attempt. I was chained all day in my dungeon, except that the door was regularly opened for

for a few hours, at which time ſome of the priſoners occaſionally came and ſpoke to me, particularly one, who, though he could ill replace my beloved Brightwel, was innocent, guileleſs and benevolent. This was no other than the individual whom Mr. Falkland had ſome months before diſmiſſed upon an accuſation of murder. My manual labours were now at an end; my dungeon was ſearched every night, and every kind of tool carefully kept from me. The ſtraw which had been hitherto allowed me was removed, under pretence that it was adapted for concealment; and the only conveniences with which I was indulged were a chair and a blanket.

A proſpect of ſome alleviation in no long time opened upon me; but this my uſual ill fortune rendered abortive. The keeper once more made his appearance, and with his former unconſtitutional and ambiguous humanity.

He

He pretended to be ſurpriſed at my want of every accommodation. He reprehended in ſtrong terms my attempt to eſcape, and obſerved that there muſt be an end of civility from people in his ſituation, if gentlemen after all would not know when they were well. It was neceſſary in caſes the like of this to let the law take its courſe, and it would be ridiculous in me to complain, if after a regular trial things ſhould go hard with me. He was deſirous of being in every reſpect my friend, if I would let him—In the midſt of this circumlocution and preamble, he was called away from me for ſomething relating to the buſineſs of his office. In the mean time I ruminated upon his overtures; and, deteſting as I did the ſource from which I conceived them to flow, I could not help reflecting how far it would be poſſible to extract from them the means of eſcape. But my meditations in this caſe were vain.

The keeper returned no more during the remainder of that day, and on the next an incident occurred which put an end to all expectations from his kindneſs.

An active mind, which has once been forced into any particular train, can ſcarcely be perſuaded to deſert it as hopeleſs. I had ſtudied my chains during the extreme anguiſh that I endured from the preſſure of the fetter upon the ancle which had been ſprained; and, though from the ſwelling and acute ſenſibility of the part I had found all attempts at relief in that inſtance impracticable, I obtained from the cloſeneſs of my inveſtigation another and apparently ſuperior advantage. During the night my dungeon was in a ſtate of complete darkneſs; but, when the door was open, the caſe was ſomewhat different. The paſſage indeed into which it opened was ſo narrow, and the oppoſite dead wall ſo near,

near, that it was but a glimmering and melancholy light that entered my apartment, even at full noon, and when the door was at its wideſt extent. But my eyes, after a practice of two or three weeks, accommodated themſelves to this circumſtance, and I learned to diſtinguiſh the minuteſt objects. One day, as I was alternately meditating and examining the objects around me, I chanced to obſerve a nail trodden into the mud floor at no great diſtance from me. I immediately conceived the deſire of poſſeſſing myſelf of this implement; but, for fear of ſurpriſe, people paſſing perpetually to and fro, I contented myſelf for the preſent with remarking its ſituation ſo accurately, that I might eaſily find it again in the dark. Accordingly, as ſoon as my door was ſhut, I ſeized upon this new treaſure, and, having contrived to faſhion it to my purpoſe, found that I could unlock with it the padlock that

faſtened me to the ſtaple in the floor. This I regarded as no inconſiderable advantage, ſeparately from the uſe I might derive from it in relation to my principal object. My chain permitted me to move only about eighteen inches to the right or left; and, having borne this confinement for ſeveral weeks, my very heart leaped at the pitiful conſolation of being able to range without conſtraint, the miſerable coop in which I was immured. This incident had occurred ſeveral days previous to the laſt viſit of my keeper.

From this time it had been my conſtant practice to liberate myſelf every night, and not to replace things in their former ſituation, till I awoke in the morning, and expected ſhortly to perceive the entrance of the turnkey. Security breeds negligence. It was on the morning ſucceeding my conference with the jailor that, whether I overſlept myſelf,

or

or the turnkey went his round earlier than uſual, I was rouſed from my ſleep by the noiſe he made in opening the cell next to my own; and, though I exerted the utmoſt diligence, yet having to grope for my materials in the dark, I was unable to faſten the chain to the ſtaple, before he entered as uſual with his lanthorn. He was extremely ſurpriſed to find me thus diſengaged, and immediately ſummoned the principal keeper. I was queſtioned reſpecting my method of proceeding; and, as I believed concealment could lead to nothing but a ſeverer ſearch and a more accurate watch, I readily acquainted them with the exact truth. The illuſtrious perſonage whoſe function it was to control the inhabitants of theſe walls, was by this laſt inſtance completely exaſperated againſt me. Artifice and fair ſpeaking were at an end. His eyes ſparkling with fury, he exclaimed, that he was now convinced

of the folly of ſhowing kindneſs to raſcals, the ſcum of the earth, ſuch as I was; and, damn him, if any body ſhould catch him at that again towards any one. I had cured him effectually! He was aſtoniſhed that the laws had not provided ſome terrible retaliation for thieves that attempted to deceive their jailors. Hanging was a thouſand times too good for me!

Having vented his indignation, he proceeded to give ſuch orders as the united inſtigations of anger and alarm ſuggeſted to his mind. My apartment was changed. I was conducted to a room called the ſtrong room, the door of which opened into the middle cell of the range of dungeons. It was underground as they were, and had over it the day room for felons already deſcribed. It was ſpacious and dreary. The door had not been opened for years; the air was putrid; and the walls hung

hung round with damps and mildew. The fetters, the padlock, and the ſtaple were employed as in the former caſe, in addition to which they put on me a pair of hand-cuffs. For my firſt proviſion the keeper ſent me nothing but a bit of bread, mouldy and black, and ſome dirty and ſtinking water. I know not indeed whether this is to be regarded as gratuitous tyranny on the part of the jailor; the law having providently directed in certain caſes, that the water to be adminiſtered to the priſoners, ſhall be taken from "the next ſink or puddle neareſt to the jail*." It was farther ordered that one of the turnkeys ſhould ſleep in the cell that formed a ſort of antichamber to my apartment. Though every convenience was provided, to render this chamber fit for the reception of a perſonage, of a dignity ſo ſuperior to the felon he was appointed to guard, he expreſſed much diſſatisfaction

* State Trials, Vol. I, *anno* 1615.

at the mandate: but there was no alternative.

The ſituation to which I was thus removed was apparently the moſt undeſirable that could be imagined; but I was not diſcouraged. I had for ſome time learned not to judge by appearances. The apartment was dank and unwholeſome; but I had acquired the ſecret of counteracting theſe influences. My door was kept continually ſhut, and the other priſoners were debarred acceſs to me. But, if the intercourſe of our fellow men has its pleaſures, ſolitude on the other hand is not without its advantages. In ſolitude we can purſue our own thoughts undiſturbed; and I was able to call up at will the moſt pleaſing avocations. Beſide which, to one who meditated ſuch deſigns as now filled my mind, ſolitude had peculiar recommendations. I was ſcarcely left to myſelf before I tried an experiment the idea

idea of which I conceived while they were fixing my hand-cuffs; and, with my teeth only, diſengaged myſelf from this reſtraint. The hours at which I was viſited by the keepers were regular, and I took care to be provided for them. Add to which, I had a narrow grated window near the cieling, about nine inches in perpendicular, and a foot and a half in width, which, though ſmall, admitted a much ſtronger light, than that to which I had been accuſtomed for ſeveral weeks. Thus circumſtanced, I ſcarcely ever found myſelf in total darkneſs, and was better provided againſt ſurpriſes, than I had been in my preceding ſituation. Such were the ſentiments which this change of abode immediately ſuggeſted.

I had been a very little time removed, when I received an unexpected viſit from Thomas, Mr. Falkland's valet, whom I have already more than once mentioned in the courſe of my narrative. A ſer-

vant of Mr. Foreſter happened to come to the town where I was impriſoned, a few weeks before, while I was confined with the hurt in my ancle, and had called in to ſee me. The account he gave of what he obſerved had been the ſource of many an uneaſy ſenſation to Thomas. The former viſit was a matter of mere curioſity, but Thomas was of the better order of ſervants. He was conſiderably ſtruck at the ſight of me. Though my mind was now ſerene, and my health ſufficiently good, yet the floridneſs of my complexion was gone, and there was a rudeneſs in my phyſiognomy, the conſequence of hardſhip and fortitude, extremely unlike the ſleekneſs of my better days. Thomas looked alternately in my face, at my hands and my feet; and then fetched a deep ſigh. After a pauſe:

Lord bleſs us! ſaid he, in a voice in which commiſeration was ſufficiently perceptible, is this you?

Why

Why not, Thomas? You knew I was ſent to priſon, did not you?

Priſon! and muſt people in priſon be ſhackled and bound of that faſhion?—And where do you lay of nights?

Here.

Here? Why there is no bed!

No, Thomas, I am not allowed a bed. I had ſtraw formerly, but that is taken away.

And do they take off them there things of nights?

No; I am expected to ſleep juſt as you ſee.

Sleep? Why I thought this was a Chriſtian country; but this uſage is too bad for a dog.

You muſt not ſay ſo, Thomas. It is what the wiſdom of government has thought fit to provide.

Zounds, how I have been chouſed! They told me what a fine thing it was to be an Engliſhman, and about liberty

and property, and all that there; and I find it is all a flam. Lord, what fools we be! Things are done under our very noſes, and we know nothing of the matter; and a parcel of fellows with grave faces ſwear to us that ſuch things never happen but in France, and other countries the like of that. Why, you han't been tried, ha' you?

No.

And what ſignifies being tried, when they do worſe than hang a man, and all beforehand? Well, maſter Williams, you have been very wicked to be ſure, and I thought it would have done me good to ſee you hanged. But, I do not know how it is, one's heart melts, and pity comes over one, if we take time to cool. I know that ought not to be; but, damn it, when I talked of your being hanged, I did not think of your ſuffering all this into the bargain.

Soon after this converſation Thomas left

left me. The idea of the long connexion of our families ruſhed upon his memory, and he felt more for my ſufferings at the moment than I did for myſelf. In the afternoon I was ſurpriſed to ſee him again. He ſaid, that he could not get the thought of me out of his mind, and therefore he hoped I would not be diſpleaſed at his coming once more to take leave of me. I could perceive that he had ſomething upon his mind, which he did not know how to diſcharge. One of the turnkeys had each time come into the room with him, and continued as long as he ſtaid. Upon ſome avocation however, a noiſe I believe in the paſſage, the turnkey went as far as the door to ſatisfy his curioſity; and Thomas, watching the opportunity, ſlipt into my hand a chiſſel, a file, and a ſaw, exclaiming at the ſame time with a ſorrowful tone, I know I am doing wrong; but, if they hang me too, I cannot

not help it: I cannot do no other. For Chriſt's ſake, get out of this place; I cannot bear the thoughts of it!—I received the implements with great joy, and thruſt them into my boſom; and, as ſoon as he was gone, concealed them in the ruſhes of my chair. Meanwhile he had accompliſhed the object for which he came, and preſently after bade me farewel.

The next day the keepers, I know not for what reaſon, were more than uſually induſtrious in their ſearch, ſaying, though without aſſigning any ground for their ſuſpicion, that they were ſure I had ſome tool in my poſſeſſion that I ought not; but the depoſitory I had choſen eſcaped them.

I waited from this time the greater part of a week that I might have the benefit of a bright moon light. It was neceſſary that I ſhould work in the night; it was neceſſary that my operations ſhould

be performed between the laſt viſit of the keepers at night and their firſt in the morning, that is, between nine in the evening and ſeven. In my dungeon, as I have already ſaid, I paſſed fourteen or ſixteen hours of the four and twenty undiſturbed; but, ſince I had acquired a character for mechanical ingenuity, a particular exception with reſpect to me was made from the general rules of the priſon.

It was ten o'clock when I entered on my undertaking. The room in which I was confined was ſecured with a double door. This was totally ſuperfluous for the purpoſe of my detention, ſince there was a centinel planted on the outſide. But it was very fortunate for my plan, becauſe theſe doors prevented the eaſy communication of ſound, and afforded me tolerable ſatisfaction that with a little care in my mode of proceeding I might be ſecure againſt the danger of being overheard. I firſt took off my hand-cuffs. I then filed

filed through my fetters; and next performed the ſame ſervice to three of the iron bars that ſecured my window, to which I climbed partly by the aſſiſtance of my chair and partly by means of certain irregularities in the wall. All this was the work of more than two hours. When the bars were filed through, I eaſily forced them a little from the perpendicular, and then drew them one by one out of the wall, into which they were ſunk about three inches, perfectly ſtrait, and without any precaution to prevent their being removed. But the ſpace thus obtained was by no means wide enough to admit the paſſing of my body. I therefore applied myſelf partly with my chiſſel, and partly with one of the iron bars, to the looſening the brick work; and, when I had thus diſengaged four or five bricks, I got down and piled them upon the floor. This operation I repeated three or four times.

The

The ſpace was now ſufficient for my purpoſe, and having crept through the opening, I ſtepped upon a ſort of ſhed on the outſide.

I was now in a kind of rude area between two dead walls, that ſouth of the felon's day room the windows of which were at the eaſt end, and the wall of the priſon. But I had not, as formerly, any inſtruments to aſſiſt me in ſcaling the wall which was of a conſiderable height. There was of conſequence no reſource for me but that of effecting a practicable breach in the lower part of the wall, which was of no contemptible ſtrength, being of ſtone on the outſide, with a facing of brick within. The rooms for the debtors were at right angles with the building from which I had juſt eſcaped; and, as the night was extremely bright, I was in momentary danger, particularly in caſe of the leaſt noiſe, of being diſcovered by them, ſeveral of their windows

windows commanding the area. Thus circumſtanced, I determined to make the ſhed anſwer the purpoſe of concealment. It was locked; but, with the broken link of my fetters, which I had had the precaution to bring with me, I found no great difficulty in opening the lock. I had now got a ſufficient means of hiding my perſon while I proceeded in my work, attended with no other diſadvantage, than that of being obliged to leave the door through which I had thus broken, a little open for the ſake of light. After ſome time I had removed a conſiderable part of the brick work of the outer wall; but, when I came to the ſtone, I found the undertaking infinitely more difficult. The mortar which bound together the building, was by length of time nearly petrified, and appeared to my firſt efforts one ſolid rock of the hardeſt adamant. I had now been ſix hours inceſſantly engaged in incredible

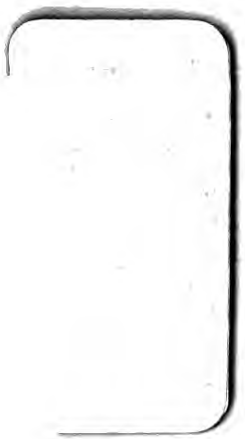
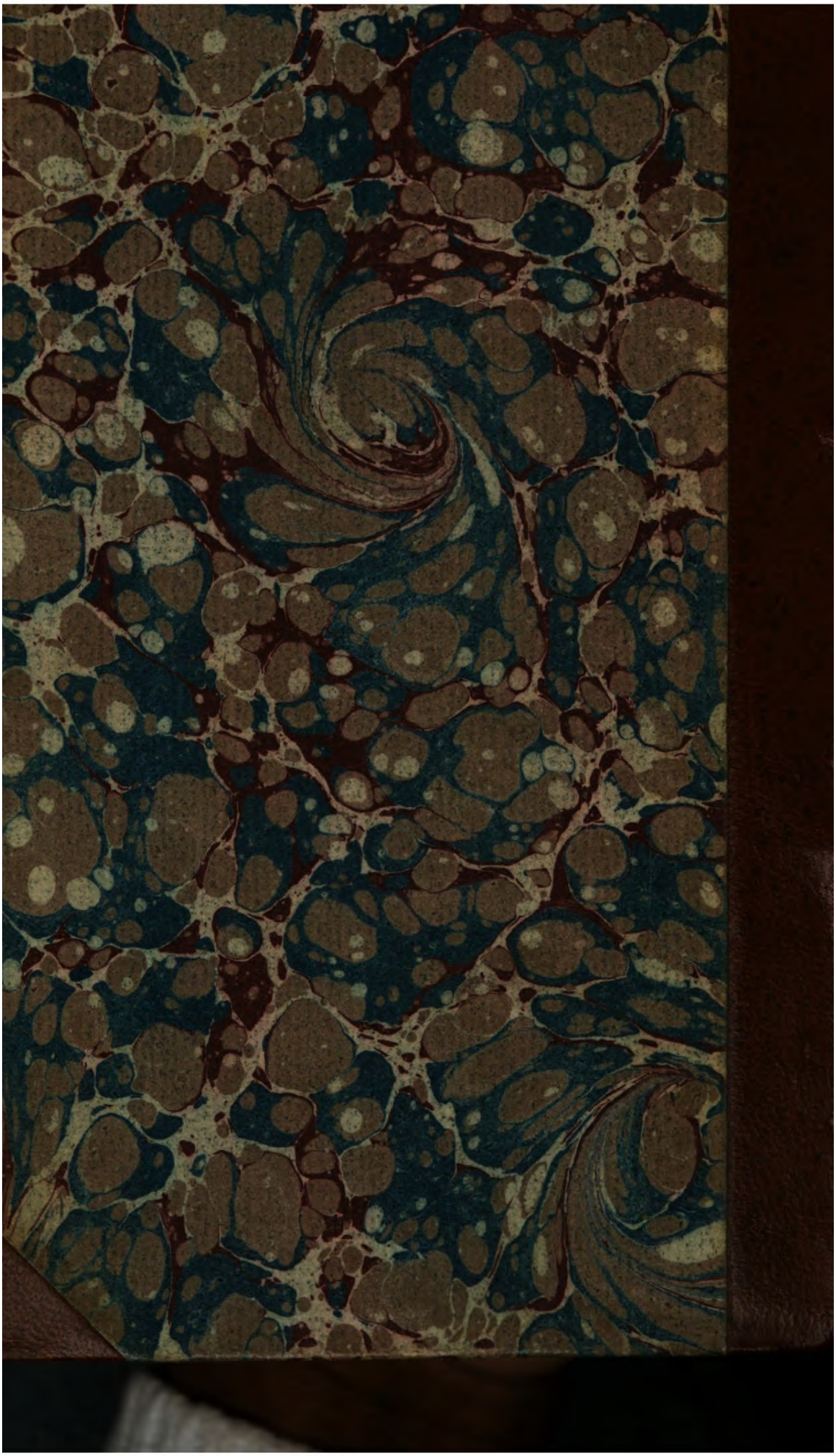
incredible labour; my chiſſel broke in the firſt attempt upon this new obſtacle, and between fatigue already endured, and the ſeemingly invincible difficulty before me, I concluded that I muſt remain where I was, and that all I had hitherto effected would prove uſeleſs. At the ſame time the moon, whoſe light had till now been of the greateſt uſe to me, ſet, and I was left in total darkneſs.

After a reſpite of ten minutes however, I returned to the attack with new vigour. It could not be leſs than two hours before the firſt ſtone was looſened from the edifice. In one hour more the ſpace was ſufficient to admit of my eſcape. The pile of bricks I had left in the ſtrong room was conſiderable. But it was a mole hill compared with the ruins I had forced from the outer wall. I am fully aſſured that the work I had thus performed would have been to a common labourer with every advantage

of

of tools the buſineſs of two or three days.

But my difficulties, inſtead of being ended, ſeemed to be only begun. The day broke before I had completed the opening, and in ten minutes more the keepers would probably enter my apartment, and perceive the devaſtation I had left. The lane, which connected the ſide of the priſon through which I had eſcaped with the adjacent country, was formed chiefly by two dead walls, with here and there a ſtable, a few warehouſes and ſome mean habitations tenanted by the lower order of people. My beſt ſecurity lay in clearing the town as ſoon as poſſible, and depending upon the open country for protection. My arms were intolerably ſwelled and bruiſed with my labour, and my ſtrength ſeemed wholly exhauſted with fatigue. Speed I was nearly unable to exert for any continuance; and, if I could, with the enemy

enemy ſo cloſe at my heels, ſpeed would too probably have been uſeleſs. It appeared as if I were now in almoſt the ſame ſituation, as that in which I had been placed five or ſix weeks before, in which after having completed my eſcape I was obliged to yield myſelf up without reſiſtance to my purſuers. I was not however diſabled as then; I was capable of exertion to what preciſe extent I could not aſcertain; and I was well aware that every inſtance in which I ſhould fail of my purpoſe, would contribute to enhance the difficulty of any future attempt. Such were the conſiderations that preſented themſelves in relation to my eſcape; and, even if that were effected, I had to reckon among my difficulties that, at the time I quitted my priſon, I was deſtitute of every reſource, and had not a ſhilling remaining in the world.

END OF VOL. II.