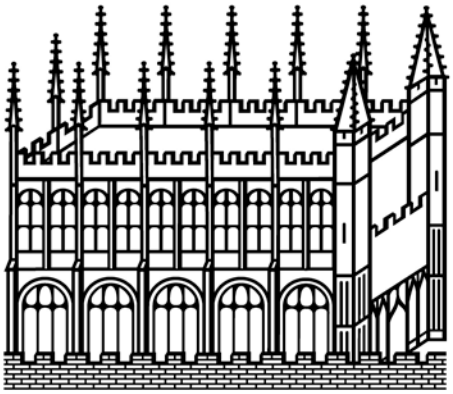

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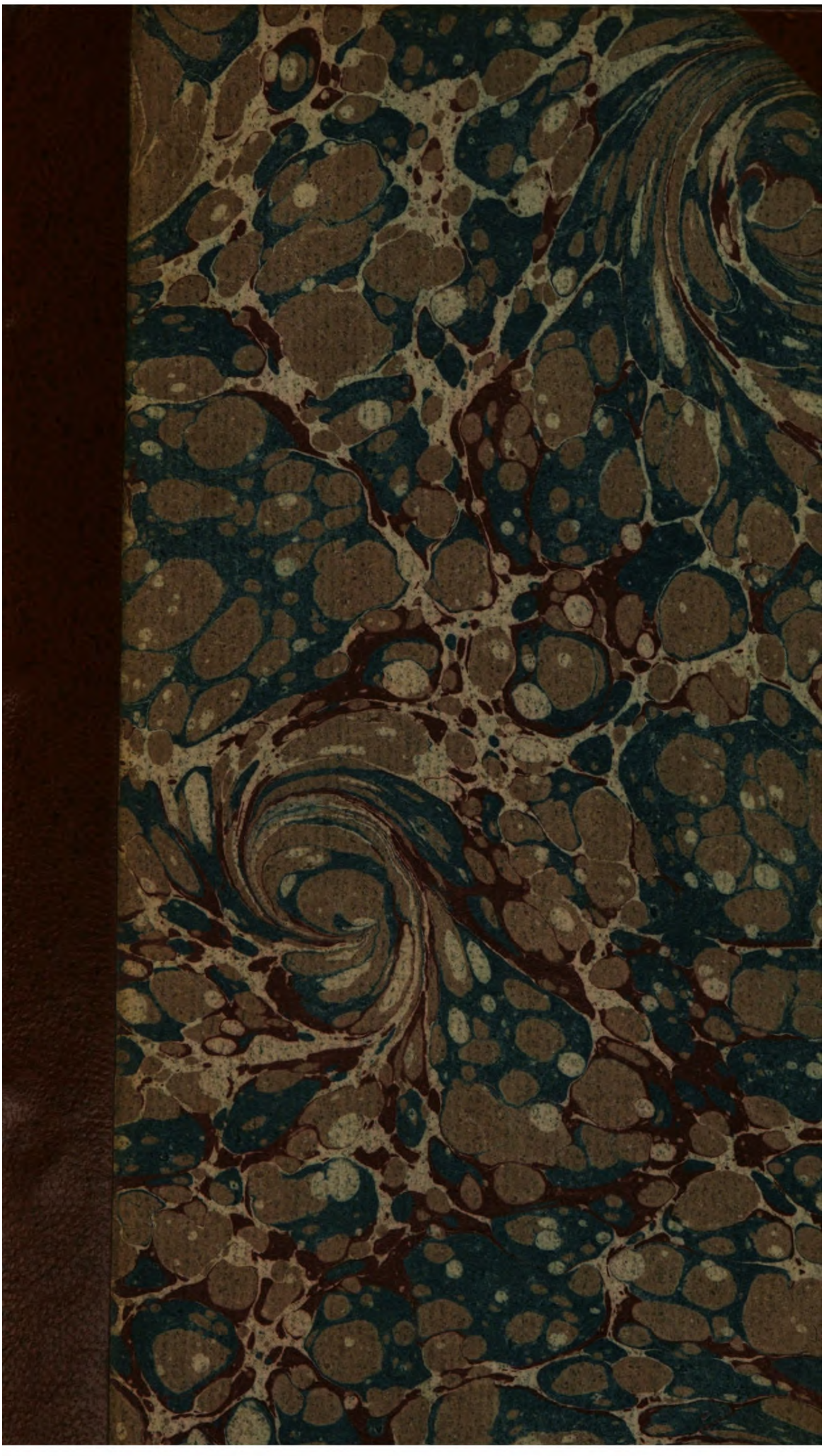

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ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR, THE

ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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:
PRINTED FOR B. CROSBY, STATIONERS-COURT,
LUDGATE-STREET.
1794.

THE

ADVENTURES

OF

CALEB WILLIAMS.

CHAP. I.

I PASSED along the lane I have deſcribed without perceiving or being obſerved by a human being. The doors were ſhut, the window-ſhutters cloſed, and all was ſtill as night. I reached the extremity of the lane unmoleſted. My purſuers, if they immediately followed, would know that the likelihood was ſmall of my having in the interval found ſhelter

in this place; and would proceed without heſitation, as I on my part was obliged to do, from the end neareſt to the priſon to its fartheſt termination.

The face of the country, in the ſpot to which I had thus opened myſelf a paſſage, was rude and uncultivated. It was overgrown with bruſhwood and furze; the ſoil was for the moſt part of a looſe ſand; and the ſurface extremely irregular. I climbed a ſmall eminence, and could perceive not very remote in the diſtance a few cottages thinly ſcattered. This proſpect did not altogether pleaſe me; I conceived that my ſafety would for the preſent be extremely benefited by keeping myſelf from the view of any human being.

I therefore came down again into the valley, and upon a careful examination perceived that it was interſperſed with cavities, ſome deeper than others, but all of them ſo ſhallow as neither to be capable

pable of hiding a man, nor of exciting ſuſpicion as places of poſſible concealment. Meanwhile the day had but juſt begun to dawn; the morning was lowering and drizzly; and, though the depth of theſe caverns was of courſe well known to the neighbouring inhabitants, the ſhadows they caſt were ſo black and impenetrable as might well have produced wider expectations in the mind of a ſtranger. Poor therefore as was the protection they were able to afford, I thought it right to have recourſe to it for the moment as the beſt the emergency would ſupply. It was for my life; and, the greater was the jeopardy to which it was expoſed, the more dear did that life ſeem to become to my affections. The receſs I choſe as moſt ſecure was within little more than a hundred yards of the end of the lane and the extreme buildings of the town.

I had not ſtood up in this manner two minutes, before I heard the ſound of

feet, and preſently ſaw the ordinary turn-key and another paſs by the place of my retreat. They were ſo cloſe to me that, if I had ſtretched out my hand, I believe I could have caught hold of their clothes without ſo much as changing my poſture. As no part of the overhanging earth intervened between me and them, I could ſee them entire, though the deepneſs of the ſhade rendered me almoſt completely inviſible. I heard them ſay to each other, in tones of vehement aſperity, Curſe the raſcal! which way can he be gone? The reply was, Damn him! I wiſh we had him but ſafe once again! Never fear! rejoined the firſt, he cannot have above half a mile the ſtart of us. They were preſently out of hearing; for, as to fight, I dared not advance my body ſo much as an inch to look after them, leſt I ſhould be diſcovered by my purſuers in ſome other direction. From the very ſhort time that elapſed between my

my eſcape and the appearance of theſe men I concluded that they had made their way through the ſame outlet as I had done, it being impoſſible that they could have had time to come from the gate of the priſon and ſo round a conſiderable part of the town, as they muſt otherwiſe have done.

I was ſo alarmed at this inſtance of diligence on the part of the enemy, that for ſome time I ſcarcely ventured to proceed an inch from my place of concealment, or almoſt to change my poſture. The morning, which had been bleak and drizzly, was ſucceeded by a day of heavy and inceſſant rain; and the gloomy ſtate of the air and ſurrounding objects, together with the extreme nearneſs of my priſon, and a total want of food, cauſed me to paſs the hours in no very agreeable ſenſations. This inclemency of the weather however, which generated a feeling of ſtilneſs and ſolitude, encouraged me by de-

grees to change my retreat, for another of the ſame nature, but of ſomewhat greater ſecurity. I hovered with little variation about a ſingle ſpot as long as the ſun continued above the horizon.

Towards evening the clouds began to diſperſe, and the moon ſhone, as on the preceding night, in full brightneſs. I had perceived no human creature during the whole day, except in the inſtance already mentioned. This had perhaps been owing to the nature of the day; at all events I conſidered it as too hazardous an experiment to venture from my hiding-place in ſo clear and fine a night. I was therefore obliged to wait for the ſetting of this luminary, which was not till near five o'clock in the morning. My only relief during this interval was to allow myſelf to ſink to the bottom of my cavern, it being ſcarcely poſſible for me to continue any longer

on my feet. Here I fell into an interrupted and unrefreſhing doze, the conſequence of a laborious night and a tedious, melancholy day; though I rather ſought to avoid ſleep, which, co-operating with the coldneſs of the ſeaſon, would tend more to injury than advantage.

The period of darkneſs which I had determined to uſe for the purpoſe of removing to a greater diſtance from my priſon was in its whole duration ſomething leſs than three hours. When I roſe from my ſeat, I was weak with hunger and fatigue, and, which was worſe, I ſeemed between the dampneſs of the preceding day, and the ſharp, clear froſt of the night, to have loſt the command of my limbs. I ſtood up and ſhook myſelf; I leaned againſt the ſide of the hill, impelling in different directions the muſcles of the extremities; and at length recovered in ſome degree the ſenſe of feeling. This operation was attended with

an incredible aching pain, and required no common ſhare of reſolution to encounter and proſecute it. Having quitted my retreat, I at firſt advanced with weak and tottering ſteps; but, as I proceeded, increaſed my pace. The barren heath which reached to the edge of the town was at leaſt on this ſide without a path; but the ſtars ſhone, and guiding myſelf by them I determined to ſteer as far as poſſible from the hateful ſcene where I had been ſo long confined. The line I purſued was of irregular ſurface, ſometimes obliging me to climb a ſteep aſcent, and at others to go down into a dark and impenetrable dell. I was often compelled by the dangerouſneſs of the way to deviate conſiderably from the direction I wiſhed to purſue. In the mean time I advanced with as much rapidity, as theſe and ſimilar obſtacles would permit me to do. The ſwiftneſs of the motion and the thinneſs of the air reſtored to me my

my alacrity. I forgot the inconveniences under which I laboured, and my mind became lively, ſpirited and enthuſiaſtic.

I had now reached the border of the heath and entered upon what is uſually termed the foreſt. Strange as it may ſeem, it is nevertheleſs true, that, exhauſted as I was with hunger, deſtitute of all proviſion for the future, and ſurrounded with the moſt alarming dangers, my mind ſuddenly became glowing, animated and chearful. I thought that by this time the moſt formidable difficulties of my undertaking were ſurmounted; and I could not believe that, after having effected ſo much, I ſhould find any thing invincible in what remained to be done. I recollected the confinement I had undergone and the fate that had impended over me with horror. Never did man feel more vividly than I felt at that moment the ſweets of liberty. Never did man more ſtrenuouſly prefer poverty

with independence to the artificial allurements of a life of ſlavery. I ſtretched forth my arms with rapture, I clapped my hands one upon the other, and exclaimed, Ah, this is indeed to be a man! Theſe wriſts were lately galled with fetters; all my motions, whether I roſe up or ſat down, were echoed to with the clanking of chains; I was tied down like a wild beaſt, and could not move but in a circle of a few feet in circumference. Now I can run, fleet as a greyhound; and leap like a young roe upon the mountains. Oh, God! (if God there be, that condeſcends to record the lonely beatings of an anxious heart) thou only canſt tell with what delight a priſoner, juſt broke forth from his dungeon, hugs the bleſſings of new found liberty! Sacred and indeſcribable moment, when man regains his rights! But lately I held my life in jeopardy, becauſe one man was unprincipled enough to aſſert

what

what he knew to be falſe; I was deſtined to ſuffer an early and inexorable death from the hands of others, becauſe none of them had penetration enough to diſtinguiſh from falſhood what I uttered with the entire conviction of a full-fraught heart! Strange, that men from age to age ſhould conſent to hold their lives at the breath of another, merely that each in his turn may have a power of acting the tyrant according to law! Oh, God! give me poverty! ſhower upon me all the imaginary hardſhips of human life! I will receive them all with thankfulneſs. Turn me a prey to the wild beaſts of the deſert, ſo I be never again the victim of man dreſſed in the gore-dripping robes of authority! Suffer me at leaſt to call life and the purſuits of life my own! Let me hold it at the mercy of elements, of the hunger of beaſts or the revenge of barbarians, but not of the cold-blooded prudence of monopoliſts

and kings!——How enviable was the enthuſiaſm which could thus furniſh me with energy, in the midſt of hunger, poverty and univerſal deſertion!

I had now walked at leaſt ſix miles. At firſt I carefully avoided the habitations that lay in my way, and feared to be ſeen by any of the perſons to whom they belonged, leſt it ſhould in any degree furniſh a clue to the reſearches of my purſuers. As I went forward, I conceived it might be proper to relax a part of my precaution. At this time I perceived ſeveral perſons coming out of a thicket cloſe to me. I immediately conſidered this circumſtance as rather favourable than the contrary. It was neceſſary for me to avoid entering any of the towns and villages in the vicinity. At the ſame time it was full time that I ſhould procure for myſelf ſome ſpecies of refreſhment; and it was by no means improbable that theſe men might be in ſome

ſome way aſſiſting to me in that reſpect. In my ſituation it appeared to me indifferent what might be their employment or profeſſion. I had little to apprehend from thieves, and I believed that they, as well as honeſt men, could not fail to have ſome compaſſion for a perſon under my circumſtances. I therefore rather threw myſelf in their way than avoided them.

They were thieves. One of the company cried out, Who goes there? ſtand! I accoſted them. Gentlemen, ſaid I, I am a poor traveller, almoſt——While I ſpoke, they came round me, and he that had firſt hailed me ſaid, Damn me, tip us none of your palaver; we have heard that ſtory of a poor traveller any time theſe five years. Come, down with your duſt! let us ſee what you have got! Sir, I replied, I have not a ſhilling in the world, and am more than half ſtarved beſide. Not a ſhilling! anſwered my aſſailant,

aſſailant, what, I ſuppoſe you are as poor as a thief? But, if you have not money, you have clothes, and thoſe you muſt reſign.

My clothes! rejoined I with indignation, you cannot deſire ſuch a thing. Is it not enough that I am pennyleſs? I have been all night upon the open heath. It is now the ſecond day that I have not eaten a morſel of bread. Would you ſtrip me naked to the weather in the midſt of this depopulated foreſt? No, no, you are men! The ſame hatred of oppreſſion that arms you againſt the inſolence of wealth, will teach you to relieve thoſe who are periſhing like me. For God's ſake, give me food! do not ſtrip me of the benefits I ſtill poſſeſs!

While I uttered this apoſtrophe, the unpremeditated eloquence of ſentiment, I could perceive by their geſtures, though the day had not yet begun to dawn, that the feelings of one or two of the company

pany appeared to take my part. The man, who had already undertaken to be their ſpokeſman, perceived the ſame thing; and excited either by the brutality of his temper or the love of command, haſtened to anticipate the diſgrace of a defeat. He bruſhed ſuddenly up to me, and by main force puſhed me ſeveral feet from the place where I ſtood. The ſhock I received drove me upon a ſecond of the gang, not one of thoſe who had liſtened to my expoſtulation; and he repeated the ſame brutality. My indignation was ſtrongly excited by this treatment; and, after being thruſt backward and forward two or three times in this manner, I broke through my aſſailants, and turned round to defend myſelf. The firſt that advanced within my reach was my original enemy. In the preſent moment I liſtened to nothing but the dictates of paſſion, and I laid him at his length on the earth. I was immediately

aſſailed

aſſailed with ſticks and bludgeons on all ſides, and preſently received a blow that almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes. The man I had knocked down was now upon his feet again, and aimed a ſtroke at me with a cutlaſs as I fell, which took place in a deep wound upon my neck and ſhoulder. He was going to repeat his blow. The two who had ſeemed to waver at firſt in their animoſity, afterwards appeared to me to join in the attack, urged either by animal ſympathy or the ſpirit of imitation. One of them however, as I afterwards underſtood, ſeized the arm of the man who was going to ſtrike me a ſecond time with his cutlaſs, and who would otherwiſe probably have put an end to my exiſtence. I could hear the words, Damn it, enough, enough! that is too bad, Jones! How ſo? replied a ſecond voice; he will but pine here upon the foreſt, and die by inches: it is an act of charity in this caſe

to put him out of his pain.—It will be imagined that I was not unintereſted in this ſort of debate. I made an effort to ſpeak; my voice failed me. I ſtretched out one hand with a geſture of intreaty. You ſhall not ſtrike, by God! ſaid one of the voices; why ſhould we be murderers?—The ſide of forbearance at length prevailed. They therefore contented themſelves with ſtripping me of my coat and waiſtcoat, and rolling me into a dry ditch. They then left me, totally regardleſs of my diſtreſſed condition, and the plentiful effuſion of blood which ſtreamed from my wound.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

IN this woful ſituation, though extremely weak, I was not deprived of ſenſe. I tore my ſhirt from my naked body, and with it endeavoured with ſome ſucceſs to make a bandage to ſtanch the flowing of the blood. I then exerted myſelf to crawl up the ſide of the ditch. I had ſcarcely effected the latter, when with equal ſurpriſe and joy I perceived a man advancing at no great diſtance. I called for help as well as I could. The man came towards me with evident ſigns of compaſſion, and the figure I exhibited was indeed ſufficiently calculated to excite it. I had no hat. My hair was diſheveled, and the ends of the locks clotted with blood. My ſhirt was wrapped about my neck and ſhoulder, and was plenti-

plentifully ſtained with red. My body which was naked to my middle was variegated with ſtreams of blood, nor had my breeches which were of leather by any means eſcaped.

For God's ſake, my poor fellow! ſaid he, with a tone of the greateſt imaginable kindneſs, how came you thus? And, ſaying this, he lifted me up, and ſet me on my feet. Can you ſtand? added he doubtfully. Oh, yes, very well, I replied. Having received this anſwer, he quitted me, and began to take off his own coat, that he might cover me from the cold. I had however overrated my ſtrength, and was no ſooner left to myſelf, than I reeled, and fell almoſt at my length upon the ground. But I broke my fall by ſtretching out my ſound arm, and again raiſed myſelf upon my knees. My benefactor now covered me, raiſed me, and bidding me lean upon him told me he would preſently conduct me to a place where

where I ſhould be taken care of. Courage is a capricious property; and, though while I had no one to depend upon but myſelf, I poſſeſſed a mine of ſeemingly inexhauſtible fortitude, yet no ſooner did I find this unexpected ſympathy on the part of another, than my reſolution appeared to give way, and I felt myſelf ready to faint. My charitable conductor perceived this, and he every now and then encouraged me in a manner ſo chearful, ſo good humoured and benevolent, equally free from the harſhneſs of rebuke and the weakneſs of indulgence, that I thought myſelf under the conduct of an angel rather than a man. I could perceive that his behaviour had in it nothing of booriſh rudeneſs, and that he was thoroughly imbued with the principles of affectionate civility.

We walked about three quarters of a mile, and that not towards the open, but the moſt uncouth and unfrequented part

of

of the foreſt. We croſſed a place which had once been a moat, but which was now in ſome parts dry and in others contained a little muddy and ſtagnated water. Within the incloſure of this moat, and among the ſtill viſible foundations of a larger, ancient building, was a cottage, or rather two or three cottages irregularly thrown together, not different from the habitations of the peaſantry in general, except as they were conſtructed for the moſt part of materials ſupplied from this ancient ruin.

My conductor knocked at the door, and was anſwered by a voice from within, which for body and force might have been the voice of a man, but which had a ſort of female ſharpneſs and acidity, with the enquiry, Who is there? Satisfaction was no ſooner given in this point, than I heard two bolts puſhed back and the door unlocked. The apartment opened, and we entered. The interior

of the building by no means correſponded with the appearance of my protector, but on the contrary wore a face of diſcomfort, careleſſneſs and dirt. The only perſon I ſaw within was a woman, rather advanced in life, and whoſe appearance had I know not what of extraordinary and loathſome. Her eyes were red and blood-ſhot; her hair was pendent in matted and ſhaggy treſſes about her ſhoulders; her complexion ſwarthy, and of the conſiſtency of parchment; her form ſpare, and her whole body, her arms in particular, uncommonly vigorous and muſcular. Not the milk of human kindneſs, but the feverous blood of ſavage ferocity ſeemed to flow from her heart; and her whole figure ſuggeſted an idea of unmitigable energy and an appetite gorged in malevolence. This infernal Thaleſtris had no ſooner caſt her eyes upon us as we entered, than ſhe exclaimed in a diſcordant and diſcontented voice,

voice, What have we got here? this is not one of our people! My conductor, without anſwering this apoſtrophe, bid her puſh an eaſy chair which ſtood in one corner, and ſet it directly before the fire. This ſhe did with apparent reluctance, muttering, Ah, you are at your old tricks; I wonder what ſuch folks as we have to do with charity! It will be the ruin of us at laſt, I can ſee that! Hold your tongue, beldam! ſaid he, with a ſtern ſignificance of manner, and fetch one of my beſt ſhirts, a waiſtcoat and ſome dreſſings. Saying this, he at the ſame time put into her hand a ſmall bunch of keys. In a word, he treated me with as much kindneſs as if he had been my father. He examined my wound, waſhed and dreſſed it; at the ſame time that the old woman by his expreſs order prepared for me ſuch nouriſhment as he thought moſt ſuitable to my weak and languid condition.

Theſe

Theſe operations were no ſooner completed, than my benefactor recommended to me to retire to reſt, and preparations were making for that purpoſe, when ſuddenly a trampling of feet was heard, ſucceeded by a knock at the door. The old woman opened the door with the ſame precautions as had been employed upon our arrival, and immediately ſix or ſeven perſons tumultuouſly entered the apartment. Their appearance was different, ſome having the air of mere ruſtics, and others that of a tarniſhed ſort of gentry. All had a feature of boldneſs, inquietude and diſorder, extremely unlike any thing I had before obſerved in ſuch a groupe. But my aſtoniſhment was ſtill increaſed, when upon a ſecond glance I perceived ſomething in the general air of ſeveral of them, and of one in particular, that perſuaded me they were the gang from which I had juſt eſcaped, and this one the antagoniſt

by whoſe animoſity I was ſo near to the having been finally deſtroyed. I inſtantly imagined they had entered our hovel with a hoſtile intention, that my benefactor was upon the point of being robbed, and I probably murdered.

This ſuſpicion however was ſoon removed. They addreſſed my conductor with reſpect under the appellation of captain. They were boiſterous and noiſy in their remarks and exclamations, but their turbulence was tempered by a certain deference to his opinion and authority. I could obſerve in the perſon who had been my active opponent ſome aukwardneſs and irreſolution as he firſt perceived me, which he diſmiſſed with a ſort of effort, exclaiming, Who the devil is here? There was ſomething in the tone of this apoſtrophe that rouſed the attention of my protector. He looked at the ſpeaker with a fixed and penetrating glance, and then ſaid, Nay, Jones, do

you know? Did you ever ſee the perſon before? Curſe it, Jones! interrupted a third, you are damnably out of luck. They ſay dead men walk, and you ſee there is ſome truth in it. Truce with your impertinence, Barton! replied my protector, this is no proper occaſion for a joke. Anſwer me, Jones, were you the cauſe of this young man being left naked and wounded this bitter morning upon the foreſt?

Mayhap I was. What then?

What provocation could induce you to ſo cruel a treament?

Provocation enough. He had no money.

What, did you uſe him thus without ſo much as being irritated by any reſiſtance on his part?

Yes, he did reſiſt. I only huſtled him, and he had the impudence to ſtrike me.

Jones! you are an incorrigible fellow.

Pooh,

Pooh, what ſignifies what I am? You with your compaſſion and your fine feelings will bring us all to the gallows.

I have nothing to ſay to you; I have no hopes of you! Comrades, it is for you to decide upon the conduct of this man as you think proper. You know how repeated his offences have been; you know what pains I have taken to mend him. Our profeſſion is the profeſſion of juſtice. [It is thus that the prejudices of men univerſally teach them to colour the moſt deſperate cauſe, to which they have determined to adhere.] We undertake to counteract the partiality and iniquity of public inſtitutions. We, who are thieves without a licence, are at open war with another ſet of men, who are thieves according to law. If any one diſapprove our proceedings, at leaſt we have this to ſay for ourſelves, we act not by choice, but only as our wiſe governors force us to act. If

any one diſapprove our proceedings, they have this apology in their favour, we riſk our lives when we adopt them, and ſtake our all upon their goodneſs and cogency. Time will one day decide whether we or our oppreſſors be the genuine patriots: for the preſent we are cenſured, only becauſe they are the ſtronger party. With ſuch a cauſe then to bear us out, ſhall we ſtain it with cruelty, malice and revenge? For my own part I glory in the name of a thief; and am firmly perſuaded there is not a more gallant and honourable profeſſion upon the face of the earth, ſo long as it is exerciſed with a generous heart.—A thief is of courſe a man living among his equals; I do not pretend therefore to aſſume any authority among you; act as you think proper; but ſo far as relates to myſelf, I vote that Jones be expelled from among us as a diſgrace to our ſociety.

This propoſition ſeemed to meet the general ſenſe. It was eaſy to perceive that the opinion of the reſt coincided with that of their leader; notwithſtanding which a few of them heſitated as to the conduct to be purſued. In the mean time Jones muttered ſomething in a ſurly and irreſolute way about taking care how they provoked him. This inſinuation inſtantly roûſed the courage of my protector, and his eyes flaſhed with contempt.

Raſcal! ſaid he, do you menace us? Do you think we will be your ſlaves? No, no, do your worſt! Go to the next juſtice of the peace and impeach us; I can eaſily believe you are capable of it. Sir, when we entered into this gang, we were not ſuch fools as not to know that we entered upon a ſervice of danger. One of its dangers conſiſts in the treachery of fellows like you. But we did not enter at firſt, to flinch now. Did

you believe that we would live in hourly fear of you, tremble at your threats, and compromiſe, whenever you ſhould ſo pleaſe, with your inſolence? That would be a bleſſed life indeed! I would rather ſee my fleſh torn piecemeal from my bones! Go, ſir! I defy you! You dare not do it! You dare not ſacrifice all theſe gallant fellows to your rage, and publiſh yourſelf to all the world a traitor and a ſcoundrel! If you do, you will puniſh yourſelf, not us! Begone!

The intrepidity of the leader communicated itſelf to the reſt of the company. Jones eaſily ſaw that there was no hope of bringing them over to a contrary ſentiment. After a ſhort pauſe, he anſwered, I did not mean—No, damn it! I will not ſnivel neither. I was always true to my principles, and a friend to you all. But, ſince you are reſolved to turn me out, why—good bye to you!

The expulſion of this man produced a remarkable

remarkable improvement in the whole gang. Thoſe who were before inclined to humanity, aſſumed new energy in proportion as they ſaw ſuch ſentiments likely to prevail. They had before ſuffered themſelves to be overborne by the boiſterous inſolence of their antagoniſts; but now they adopted and with ſucceſs a different conduct. Thoſe who envied the aſcendancy of their comrade, and therefore imitated his conduct, began to heſitate in their career. Stories were brought forward of the cruelty and brutality of Jones, both to men and animals, which had never before reached the ear of the leader. Theſe ſtories I ſhall not repeat. They could excite only emotions of abhorrence and diſguſt, and ſome of them argued a mind of ſuch a ſtretch of depravity as to many readers would appear utterly incredible. And yet this man had his virtues. He was enterpriſing, perſevering and faithful.

His removal was a conſiderable benefit to me. It would have been no ſmall hardſhip to have been turned adrift immediately under my unfavourable circumſtances, with the additional diſadvantage of the wound I had received; and yet I could ſcarcely have ventured to remain under the ſame roof with a man to whom my appearance was as a guilty conſcience, perpetually reminding him of his own offence and the counteraction of his leader. His profeſſion accuſtomed him to a certain degree of indifference to conſequences, and indulgence to the ſallies of paſſion; and he might eaſily have found his opportunity to inſult or injure me, when I ſhould have had nothing but my own debilitated exertions to protect me.

Freed from this danger, I found my ſituation ſufficiently fortunate for a man under my circumſtances. It was attended with all the advantages for concealment

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my fondeſt imagination could have hoped; and it was by no means deſtitute of the benefits which ariſe from kindneſs and humanity. Nothing could be more unlike than the thieves I had ſeen in —— gaol and the thieves of my new reſidence. The latter were generally full of chearfulneſs and merriment. They could expatiate freely wherever they thought proper. They could form plans and execute them. They conſulted their own inclinations. They did not impoſe upon themſelves the taſk, as is too often the caſe in human ſociety, of ſeeming tacitly to approve that from which they ſuffered moſt; or, which is worſe, of perſuading themſelves that all the wrongs they ſuffered were right; but were at open war with their oppreſſors. On the contrary the impriſoned felons I had lately ſeen were ſhut up like wild beaſts in a cage, deprived of activity, and palſied with indolence. The occaſional demonſtrations

that ſtill remained of their former enterpriſing life, were the ſtarts and convulſions of diſeaſe, not the meditated and conſiſtent exertions of a mind in health. They had no more of hope, of project, of golden and animated dreams, but were reſerved to the moſt diſmal proſpects, and forbidden to think upon any other topic. It is true that theſe two ſcenes were parts of one whole, the one the conſummation, the hourly to be expected ſucceſſor of the other. But the men I now ſaw were wholly inattentive to this, and in that reſpect appeared to have no intercourſe with reflection or reaſon.

I might in one view, as I have ſaid, congratulate myſelf upon my preſent reſidence; it anſwered completely the purpoſes of concealment. It was the ſeat of merriment and hilarity; but the hilarity that characteriſed it, produced no correſpondent feelings in my boſom. The perſons who compoſed this ſociety, had each

each of them caſt off all control from eſtabliſhed principle; their trade was terror, and their conſtant object to elude the vigilance of the community. The influence of theſe circumſtances was viſible in their character. I found among them benevolence and kindneſs; they were ſtrongly ſuſceptible of emotions of generoſity. But, as their ſituation was precarious, their diſpoſitions were proportionably fluctuating. Inured to the animoſity of their ſpecies, they were irritable and paſſionate. Accuſtomed to exerciſe harſhneſs towards the ſubject of their depredations, they did not always confine their brutality within that ſcope. They were habituated to conſider wounds, and bludgeons and ſtabbing, as the obvious mode of ſurmounting every difficulty. Uninvolved in the debilitating routine of human affairs, they frequently diſplayed an energy, which from every impartial obſerver would have extorted

veneration. Energy is perhaps of all qualities the moſt invaluable; and a juſt political ſyſtem would poſſeſs the means of extracting from it thus circumſtanced its beneficial qualities, inſtead of conſigning it as now to unlimited deſtruction. We act like the chymiſt who ſhould reject the fineſt ore, and employ none but what was ſufficiently debaſed to fit it immediately for the vileſt uſes. But the energy of theſe men, ſuch as I beheld it, was in the higheſt degree miſapplied, unaſſiſted by any liberal and enlightened views, and directed only to the moſt narrow and contemptible purpoſes.

The reſidence I have been deſcribing might to many perſons have appeared attended with intolerable inconveniences. But, excluſively of its advantages as a field for ſpeculation, it was Elyſium compared with that from which I had juſt eſcaped. Diſpleaſing company, incommodious apartments, filthineſs and riot,

loſt

loſt the circumſtance by which they could moſt effectually diſguſt, when I was not compelled to remain with them. All hardſhips I could patiently endure, in compariſon with the menace of a violent and untimely death. There was no ſuffering that I could not perſuade myſelf to conſider as trivial, except that which flowed from the tyranny, the frigid precaution, or the inhuman revenge of my own ſpecies.

My recovery advanced in the moſt favourable manner. The attention and kindneſs of my protector were inceſſant, and the reſt caught the ſpirit from his example. The old woman who ſuperintended the houſhold, ſtill retained her animoſity. She conſidered me as the cauſe of the expulſion of Jones from the fraternity; Jones had been the object of her particular partiality; and, zealous as ſhe was for the public concern, ſhe thought an old and experienced ſinner for

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a raw probationer but an ill exchange. Add to which, that her habits inclined her to moroſeneſs and diſcontent, and that perſons of her complexion ſeem unable to exiſt without ſome object upon which to employ the ſuperfluity of their gall. She loſt no opportunity upon the moſt trifling occaſion of diſplaying her animoſity, and ever and anon eyed me with a furious glance of canine hunger for my deſtruction. Nothing was more evidently mortifying to her than the procraſtination of her malice; nor could ſhe bear to think that a fierceneſs ſo gigantic and uncontrolable ſhould ſhow itſelf in nothing more terrific than the pigmy ſpite of a chamber-maid. For myſelf, I had been accuſtomed to the warfare of formidable adverſaries and the encounter of alarming dangers; and what I ſaw of her ſpleen had not power ſufficient to diſturb my tranquillity.

As I recovered, I told my ſtory, except

cept ſo far as related to the detection of Mr. Falkland's eventful ſecret, to my protector. That particular I could not as yet prevail upon myſelf to diſcloſe even in a ſituation like this, which ſeemed to preclude the poſſibility of its being made uſe of to the diſadvantage of my perſecutor. My preſent auditor however, whoſe habits of thinking were extremely oppoſite to thoſe of Mr. Foreſter, did not from the obſcurity which flowed from this reſerve, deduce any unfavourable concluſion. His penetration was ſuch as to afford little room for an impoſtor to hope to miſlead him by a fictitious ſtatement, and he confided in that penetration. So confiding, the ſimplicity and integrity of my manner carried conviction to his mind, and inſured his good opinion and friendſhip.

He liſtened to my ſtory with eagerneſs, and commented on the ſeveral parts as I related them. He ſaid that this was only

only one freſh inſtance of the tyranny and perfidiouſneſs exerciſed by the powerful members of the community againſt thoſe who were leſs privileged than themſelves. Nothing could be more clear than their readineſs to ſacrifice the human ſpecies at large to their meaneſt intereſt or wildeſt caprice. Who that ſaw the ſituation in its true light would wait till their oppreſſors thought fit to decree their deſtruction, and not take arms in their defence while it was yet in their power? Which was moſt meritorious, the unreſiſting and daſtardly ſubmiſſion of a ſlave, or the enterpriſe and gallantry of the man who dared to aſſert his claims? Since by the partial adminiſtration of our laws innocence, when power was armed againſt it, had nothing better to hope for than guilt, what man of true courage would fail to ſet theſe laws at defiance, and, if he muſt ſuffer by their injuſtice, at leaſt take care that he had firſt

ſhown

ſhown his contempt of their yoke? For himſelf he ſhould certainly never have embraced his preſent calling, had he not been ſtimulated to it by theſe cogent and irreſiſtible reaſons; and he hoped, as experience had ſo forcibly brought a conviction of this ſort to my mind, that he ſhould for the future have the happineſs to aſſociate me to his purſuits.—It will preſently be ſeen how far theſe hopes were confirmed by the event.

Numerous were the precautions exerciſed by the gang of thieves with whom I now reſided to elude the vigilance of the ſatellites of juſtice. It was one of their rules to commit no depredations but at a conſiderable diſtance from the place of their reſidence, and Jones had tranſgreſſed this regulation, in the attack to which I was indebted for my preſent aſylum. After having poſſeſſed themſelves of any booty, they took care in the ſight of the perſons whom they had robbed to purſue a route

a route as nearly as poſſible oppoſite to that which led to their true haunts. The appearance of their place of reſidence, together with its environs was peculiarly deſolate and forlorn, and it had the reputation of being haunted. The old woman I have deſcribed had long been its inhabitant, and was commonly ſuppoſed to be its only inhabitant; and her perſon well accorded with the rural ideas of a witch. Her lodgers never went out or came in but with the utmoſt circumſpection, and generally by night. The lights which were occaſionally ſeen from various parts of her habitation were by the country people regarded with horror as ſupernatural; and, if the noiſe of revelry at any time ſaluted their ears, it was imagined to proceed from a carnival of devils. With all theſe advantages the thieves did not venture to reſide here but by intervals: ſometimes they abſented themſelves for months, and reſided in a different part of the

the country. The old woman ſometimes attended them in theſe tranſportations, and ſometimes remained; but in all caſes her removal took place either ſooner or later than theirs, ſo that the niceſt obſerver could ſcarcely have traced any connection between her re-appearances and the alarms of depredation that were frequently given; and the feſtival of demons ſeemed to the terrified ruſtics indifferently to take place whether ſhe were preſent or abſent.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

ONE day, while I continued in this ſituation, a circumſtance occurred, which involuntarily attracted my attention. Two of our people had been ſent to a town at ſome diſtance for the purpoſe of procuring us ſome things of which we were in want. After having delivered theſe to our landlady, they retired to one corner of the room, and, one of them pulling a printed paper from his pocket, they mutually occupied themſelves in examining its contents. I was ſitting in an eaſy chair by the fire, being conſiderably better than I had been, though ſtill in a weak and languid ſtate. Having read for a conſiderable time, they looked at me, and then at the paper, and then at me

me again. They then went out of the room together, as if to conſult without interruption upon ſomething which that paper ſuggeſted to them. Some time after they returned, and my protector, who happened to be above ſtairs, entered the room at the ſame inſtant.

Captain! ſaid one of them with an air of pleaſure, look here! we have found a prize! I believe it is as good as a bank note of a hundred guineas.

Mr. Raymond (that was his name) took the paper and read. He pauſed for a moment. He then cruſhed the paper in his hand; and, turning to the perſon from whom he had received it, ſaid with the tone of a man confident in the ſucceſs of his reaſons,

What uſe have you for theſe hundred guineas? Are you in want? Are you in diſtreſs? Can you be contented to purchaſe them at the price of treachery? of violating the laws of hoſpitality?

Faith,

Faith, captain, I do not very well know. After having violated other laws, I do not ſee why we ſhould be frightened at an old ſaw. We pretend to judge for ourſelves, and ought to be above ſhrinking from a bugbear of a proverb. Beſide, this is a good deed, and I ſhould think no more harm of being the ruin of ſuch a thief, than of getting my dinner.

A thief! You talk of thieves!——

Not ſo faſt, if you pleaſe. God defend that I ſhould ſay a word again thieving as a general occupation! But one man ſteals in one way, and another in another. For my part, I go upon the highway, and take from any ſtranger I meet what it is a hundred to one he can very well ſpare. I ſee nothing to be found fault with in that. But I have as much conſcience as another man. Becauſe I laugh at aſſizes and great wigs and the gallows, and becauſe I will not be frightened from an innocent action when the lawyers ſay me

nay, does it follow that I am to have a fellow-feeling for pilferers, and raſcally ſervants, and people that have neither juſtice nor principle? No: I have too much reſpect for the trade, not to be a foe to interlopers and people that ſo much the more deſerve my hatred becauſe the world calls them by my name.

You are wrong, Wilſon! You certainly ought not to employ againſt people that you hate, ſuppoſing your hatred to be reaſonable, the inſtrumentality of that law which in your practice you defy. Be conſiſtent. Either be the friend of law, or its adverſary. Depend upon it that, wherever there are laws at all, there will be laws againſt ſuch people as you and I. Either therefore we all of us deſerve the vengeance of the law, or law is not the proper inſtrument of correcting the miſdeeds of mankind. I tell you this, becauſe I would fain have you aware that an informer or a king's evidence,

a man

a man who takes advantage of the confidence of another in order to betray him, who ſells the life of his neighbour for money, or coward like, upon any pretence calls in the law to do that for him which he cannot or dares not do for himſelf, is the vileſt of raſcals. But in the preſent caſe, if your reaſons were the beſt in the world, they do not apply.

While Mr. Raymond was ſpeaking, the reſt of the gang came into the room. He immediately turned to them and ſaid,

My friends, here is a piece of intelligence that Wilſon has juſt brought in, which with his leave I will lay before you.

Then, pulling the paper from his pocket, he continued: This is the deſcription of a felon with the offer of a hundred guineas for his apprehenſion. Wilſon picked it up at ——. By the time and other circumſtances, but particularly

ticularly by the minute deſcription of his perſon, there can be no doubt but the object of it is our young friend, whoſe life I was a little while ago the inſtrument of ſaving. He is charged here with having taken advantage of the confidence of his patron and benefactor, to rob him of property to a large amount. Upon this charge he was committed to the county jail, from whence he made his eſcape about a fortnight ago without venturing to ſtand his trial, a circumſtance which is ſtated by the advertiſer as tantamount to a confeſſion of his guilt.

My friends, I was acquainted with the particulars of this ſtory ſome time before. This lad let me into his hiſtory at a time that he could not poſſibly have foreſeen that he ſhould ſtand in need of that precaution as an antidote againſt danger. He is not guilty of what is laid to his charge. Which of you is ſo ignorant as to ſuppoſe that his eſcape is any confirmation

of his guilt? Who ever thinks, when he is apprehended for trial, of his innocence or guilt as being at all material to the iſſue? Who ever was fool enough to volunteer a trial, where thoſe who are to decide think more of the horror of the thing of which he is accuſed than whether he was the perſon that did it; and where the nature of our motives is to be collected from a ſet of ignorant witneſſes that no wiſe man would truſt for a fair repreſentation of the moſt indifferent action of his life?

The poor lad's ſtory is a long one, and I will not trouble you with it now. But from that ſtory it is as clear as the day, that, becauſe he wiſhed to leave the ſervice of his maſter, becauſe he had been perhaps a little too inquiſitive in his maſter's concerns, and becauſe, as I ſuſpect, he had been truſted with ſome important ſecrets, his maſter conceived an antipathy againſt him. This antipathy gradually

gradually proceeded to ſuch a length, as to induce the maſter to forge this vile accuſation. He ſeems willing to hang the lad out of the way, rather than ſuffer him to go where he pleaſes or get beyond the reach of his power. Williams has told me the ſtory with ſuch ingenuouſneſs that I am as ſure that he is guiltleſs of what they lay to his charge as that I am ſo myſelf. Nevertheleſs the man's ſervants who were called in to hear the accuſation, and his relation, who as juſtice of the peace made out the mittimus, and who had the folly to think he could be impartial, gave it on his ſide with one voice, and thus afforded Williams a ſample of what he had to expect in the ſequel.

Wilſon, who when he received this paper had no previous knowledge of particulars, was for taking advantage of it for the purpoſe of earning the hundred guineas. Are you of that mind, now you have heard them? Will you for ſo pal-

try a conſideration deliver up the lamb into the jaws of the wolf? Will you abet the purpoſes of this ſanguinary raſcal who, not contented with driving his late dependent from houſe and home, depriving him of character and all the ordinary means of ſubſiſtence, and leaving him almoſt without a refuge, ſtill thirſts for his blood? If no other perſon have the courage to ſet limits to the tyranny of courts of juſtice, ſhall not we? Shall we, who earn our livelihood by generous daring, be indebted for a penny to the vile artifices of the informer? Shall we, againſt whom the whole ſpecies is in arms, refuſe our protection to an individual, more expoſed to, but ſtill leſs deſerving of their perſecution than ourſelves?

The repreſentation of the captain produced an inſtant effect upon the whole company. They all exclaimed, Betray him! No, not for worlds! He is ſafe. We will protect him at the hazard of our lives. If fidelity and honour be

be baniſhed from thieves, where ſhall they find refuge upon the face of the earth? Wilſon in particular thanked the captain for his interference, and ſwore that he would rather part with his right hand, than injure ſo worthy a lad, or aſſiſt ſuch an unheard of villainy. Saying this, he took me by the hand, and bade me fear nothing. Under their roof, no harm ſhould ever befal me; and, even if the underſtrappers of the law ſhould diſcover my retreat, they would to a man die in my defence, ſooner than a hair of my head ſhould be hurt. I thanked him moſt ſincerely for his good will; but I was principally ſtruck with the fervent benevolence of my benefactor. I told them, I found that my enemies were inexorable, and would never be appeaſed but with my blood; and I aſſured them with the moſt ſolemn and earneſt veracity, that I had done nothing to deſerve the perſecution which was exerciſed againſt me.

The ſpirit and energy of Mr. Raymond had been ſuch, as to leave no part for me to perform in repelling this unlooked-for danger. Nevertheleſs, it left a very ſerious impreſſion upon my mind. I had always placed ſome confidence in the returning equity of Mr. Falkland. Though he perſecuted me with bitterneſs, I could not help believing that he did it unwillingly, and I was perſuaded it would not be for ever. A man, whoſe original principles had been ſo full of rectitude and honour, could not fail at ſome time or other to recollect the injuſtice of his conduct, and to remit his aſperity. This idea had been always preſent to me, and had in no ſmall degree conſpired to inſtigate my exertions. I ſaid, I will convince my perſecutor that I am of more value than that I ſhould be ſacrificed purely by way of precaution. Theſe expectations on my part had been encouraged by Mr. Falkland's behaviour upon the

the queſtion of my impriſonment and by various particulars which had occurred ſince.

But this new incident gave to the ſubject a totally different appearance. I ſaw him now, not contented with blaſting my reputation, confining me for a period in jail, and reducing me to the ſituation of a houſeleſs vagabond, but ſtill continuing his purſuit under theſe forlorn circumſtances with unmitigable cruelty. Indignation and reſentment ſeemed now for the firſt time to penetrate my mind. I knew his miſery ſo well, I was ſo fully acquainted with its cauſe, and ſo ſtrongly impreſſed with the idea of its being unmerited, that, while I ſuffered ſo deeply, I ſtill continued to pity, rather than hate my perſecutor. But this incident introduced ſome change into my feelings. I ſaid, Surely he might now believe that he had ſufficiently diſarmed me, and might at length ſuffer me to be at peace. At leaſt

ought he not to be contented to leave me to my fate, the perilous and uncertain condition of an eſcaped felon, inſtead of thus whetting the animoſity and vigilance of my countrymen againſt me? Were his interference on my behalf in oppoſition to the ſtern ſeverity of Mr. Foreſter, and his various acts of kindneſs ſince, a mere part that he played in order to lull me into patience? Was he perpetually haunted with the fear of an ample retaliation, and for that purpoſe did he perſonate remorſe at the very moment that he was ſecretly keeping every engine at play that could ſecure my deſtruction? The very ſuſpicion of ſuch a fact filled me with inexpreſſible horror, and ſtruck a ſudden chill through every fibre of my frame.

Meanwhile my wound was by this time completely healed, and it became abſolutely neceſſary that I ſhould form ſome determination reſpecting the future.

My

My habits of thinking were ſuch as gave me an uncontrolable repugnance to the vocation of my hoſts. I did not indeed feel all that averſion and abhorrence to the men that is commonly entertained. I ſaw and reſpected their good qualities and their virtues. I was by no means inclined to believe them worſe men, or more inimical in their diſpoſitions to the welfare of their ſpecies, than the generality of thoſe that look down upon them with moſt cenſure. But, though I did not ceaſe to love them as individuals, my eyes were perfectly opened to their miſtakes. If I ſhould otherwiſe have been in danger of being miſled, it was my fortune to have ſtudied felons in a jail, before I ſtudied them in their ſtate of comparative proſperity; and this was an infallible antidote to the poiſon. I ſaw that in this profeſſion were exerted uncommon energy, ingenuity and fortitude,

and I could not help recollecting how admirably beneficial ſuch qualities might be made in the great theatre of human affairs; while in their preſent direction they were thrown away upon purpoſes that could ſcarcely in any ſenſe deſerve the appellation of uſeful. Thieves appeared to me to commit a miſtaken treaſon againſt the general welfare; at the ſame time that they were of all men the moſt fooliſh as to their own intereſts. The man who riſks or ſacrifices his life for the public welfare is rewarded with the teſtimony of an approving conſcience; but perſons who wantonly defy the inſtitutions of their country for no public good, and whoſe private intereſt the leaſt degree of ſound judgment might prove to be a thouſand times better promoted in every poſſible inſtance by a more legitimate proceeding, are in the ſame reſpect abſurd and ſelf-neglectful, as a man would

would be who ſhould ſet himſelf up as a mark for a file of muſqueteers to ſhoot at.

Viewing the ſubject in this light, I not only determined that I would have no ſhare in their occupation myſelf, but thought I could not do leſs in return for the benefits I had received from them, than endeavour to diſſuade them from an employment in which they muſt themſelves be the greateſt ſufferers. My expoſtulation met with a various reception. All the perſons to whom it was addreſſed had been tolerably ſucceſsful in perſuading themſelves of the innocence of their calling; and what remained of doubt in their mind was ſmothered, and, ſo to ſpeak, laborioufly forgotten. Some of them laughed at my arguments as a ridiculous piece of miſſionary quixotiſm. Others, and particularly our captain, repelled them with the boldneſs of a man that knows he has got the ſtrongeſt ſide. But

this ſentiment of eaſe and ſelf-ſatisfaction did not long remain. They had been uſed to arguments derived from religion and the venerableneſs of law. They had long ago ſhaken theſe from them as ſo many prejudices. But my view of the ſubject appealed to principles which they could not conteſt, and had by no means the air of that cuſtomary reproof which is for ever dinned in our ears, without finding one reſponſive chord in our hearts. Finding themſelves urged with objections unexpected and cogent, ſome of thoſe to whom I addreſſed them began to grow peeviſh and impatient of the importunate remonſtrance. But this was by no means the caſe with Mr. Raymond. He was poſſeſſed of a candour that I have ſeldom ſeen equalled. He was ſurpriſed to hear objections ſo powerful to that which as a matter of ſpeculation he believed he had examined on all ſides. He revolved them with impartiality and care. He admit-

ted

ted them ſlowly, but he at length fully admitted them. He had now but one rejoinder in reſerve.

Alas, Williams, ſaid he, it would have been fortunate for me if theſe views had been preſented to me previouſly to my embracing my preſent profeſſion. It is now too late. Thoſe very laws, which by a perception of their iniquity drove me to what I am, now preclude my return. God, we are told, judges of men by what they are at the period of judgment, and, whatever be their crimes, if they have ſeen and abjured the folly of thoſe crimes, receives them to favour. But the inſtitutions of countries that profeſs to worſhip this God, admit no ſuch diſtinctions. They leave no room for amendment, and ſeem to have a brutal delight in confounding the demerits of offenders. It ſignifies not what is the character of the individual at the hour of trial. How changed, how ſpotleſs, and how

how uſeful avails him nothing. If they diſcover at the diſtance of fourteen * or of forty years † an action for which the law ordains that his life ſhall be the forfeit, though the interval ſhould have been ſpent with the purity of a ſaint and the devotedneſs of a patriot, they diſdain to enquire into it. What then can I do? Am I not compelled to go on in folly, having once begun?

* Eugene Aram. See Annual Regiſter, for 1759.
† William Andrew Horne. *Ditto, ditto.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

I WAS extremely affected by this plea. I could only anſwer that Mr. Raymond muſt himſelf be the beſt judge of the courſe it became him to hold; I truſted the caſe was not ſo deſperate as he imagined. This ſubject was purſued no farther, and was in ſome degree driven from my thoughts by an incident of a very extraordinary nature. I have already mentioned the animoſity that was entertained againſt me by the infernal portreſs of this ſolitary manſion. Jones, the expelled member of the gang, had been her particular favourite. She ſubmitted to his exile indeed, becauſe her genius felt ſubdued by the energy and inherent greatneſs of Mr. Raymond; but

ſhe

ſhe ſubmitted with murmuring and diſcontent. Not daring to reſent the conduct of the principal in this affair, ſhe collected all the bitterneſs of her ſpirit againſt me. To the unpardonable offence I had thus committed in the firſt inſtance, were added the reaſonings I had lately offered againſt the profeſſion of robbery. Robbery was a fundamental article in the creed of this hoary veteran, and ſhe liſtened to my objections with the ſame unaffected aſtoniſhment and horror, that an old woman of other habits would liſten to one who objected to the agonies and diſſolution of the creator of the world, or to the garment of imputed righteouſneſs prepared to envelop the ſouls of the elect. Like the religious bigot, ſhe was ſufficiently diſpoſed to avenge a hoſtility againſt her opinions with the weapons of ſublunary warfare. Meanwhile I had ſmiled at the impotence of her malice, as an object of contempt,

rather

rather than alarm. She perceived, as I imagine, the ſlight eſtimation in which I held her, and this did not a little increaſe the perturbation of her thoughts.

One day I was left alone with no other perſon in the houſe than this ſwarthy ſybil. The thieves had ſet out upon an expedition about two hours after ſunſet on the preceding evening, and had not returned, as they were accuſtomed to do, before day-break the next morning. This was a circumſtance that ſometimes occurred, and therefore did not produce any extraordinary alarm. At one time the ſcent of prey would lead them beyond the bounds they had preſcribed themſelves, and at another the fear of purſuit; the life of a thief is always uncertain. The old woman had been preparing during the night for the meal to which they would expect to ſit down, as ſoon as might be after their return.

For myſelf I had learned from their habits

habits to be indifferent to the regular return of the different parts of the day, and in ſome degree to turn day into night, and night into day. I had been now ſeveral weeks in this reſidence, and the ſeaſon was conſiderably advanced. I had paſſed ſome hours during the night in ruminating on my ſituation. The character and manners of the men among whom I lived were diſguſting to me. Their brutal ignorance, their ferocious habits and their coarſe behaviour, inſtead of becoming more tolerable by cuſtom, hourly added force to my original averſion. The uncommon vigour of their minds and acuteneſs of their invention in the buſineſs they purſued, compared with the odiouſneſs of that buſineſs and their habitual depravity, awakened in me ſenſations too painful to be endured. Moral diſapprobation, at leaſt in a mind unſubdued by philoſophy, I found to be one of the moſt fertile ſources of diſquiet and

uneaſineſs.

uneaſineſs. From this pain the ſociety of Mr. Raymond by no means relieved me. He was indeed eminently ſuperior to the vices of the reſt; but I did not leſs exquiſitely feel how much he was out of his place, how diſproportionably aſſociated, or how contemptibly employed. I had attempted to counteract the errors under which he and his companions laboured; but I had found the obſtacles that preſented themſelves, much greater than I had imagined.

What was I to do? Was I to wait the iſſue of this my miſſionary undertaking, or was I to withdraw myſelf immediately? When I withdrew, ought that to be done privately, or with an open avowal of my deſign, and an endeavour to ſupply by the force of example what was deficient in my arguments? It was certainly improper, as I declined all participation in the purſuits of theſe men,

did

did not contribute with my perſon to the riſk by which they ſubſiſted, and had no congeniality with their habits, that I ſhould continue to reſide with them any longer than was abſolutely neceſſary. There was one circumſtance that rendered this deliberation particularly preſſing. They intended in a few days removing from their preſent habitation, to a haunt to which they were accuſtomed in a diſtant county. If I did not propoſe to continue with them, it would perhaps be wrong to accompany them in this removal. The ſtate of calamity to which my inexorable perſecutor had reduced me, had made the encounter even of a den of robbers a very fortunate adventure. But the time that had ſince elapſed, had probably been ſufficient to relax the keenneſs of the queſt that was made after me. I ſighed for that ſolitude and obſcurity, that retreat from the vexations

tions of the world and the voice even of common fame, which I had propoſed to myſelf when I broke my priſon.

Such were the meditations which now occupied my mind. At length I grew fatigued with continued contemplation, and to relieve myſelf I pulled out a pocket Horace, the legacy of my beloved Brightwel! I read with avidity the epiſtle in which he ſo beautifully deſcribes to Fuſcus the grammarian, the pleaſures of rural tranquillity and independence. By this time the ſun roſe from behind the eaſtern hills, and I opened my caſement to contemplate it. The day commenced with peculiar brilliancy, and was accompanied with all thoſe charms, which the poets of nature, as they have been ſtyled, have ſo much delighted to deſcribe. There was ſomething in this ſcene, particularly as ſucceeding to the active exertions of intellect, that ſoothed the mind to compoſure. Inſenſibly a con-

fuſed reverie invaded my faculties, I withdrew from the window, threw myſelf upon the bed, and fell aſleep.

I do not recollect the preciſe images which in this ſituation paſſed through my thoughts, but I know that they concluded with the idea of ſome perſon, the agent of Mr. Falkland, approaching to aſſaſſinate me. This thought had probably been ſuggeſted, by the project I meditated of entering once again into the world, and throwing myſelf within the ſphere of his poſſible vengeance. I imagined that the deſign of the murderer was to come upon me by ſurpriſe, that I was aware of this deſign, and yet by ſome faſcination had no thought of evading it. I heard the ſteps of the murderer as he cautiouſly approached. I ſeemed to liſten to his conſtrained, yet audible breathings. He came up to the corner where I was placed, and then ſtopped. The idea became too terrible, I ſtarted, opened

opened my eyes, and beheld the execrable hag before mentioned ſtanding over me with a butcher's hatchet. I ſhifted my ſituation with a ſpeed that ſeemed too ſwift for volition, and the blow already aimed at my ſcull, ſunk impotent upon the bed. Before ſhe could wholly recover her poſture I ſprung upon her, ſeized hold of the weapon, and had nearly wreſted it from her. But in a moment ſhe reſumed her ſtrength and her deſperate purpoſe, and we had a furious ſtruggle, ſhe impelled by inveterate malice, and I reſiſting for my life. Her vigour was truly Amazonian, and at no time had I ever occaſion to contend with a more formidable opponent. Her glance was ſudden and exact, and the ſhock with which from time to time ſhe impelled her whole frame, inconceivably vehement. At length I was victorious, took from her her inſtrument of death, and threw her upon the ground. Till

now the ſobriety of her exertions had curbed her rage; but now ſhe gnaſhed with her teeth, her eyes ſeemed as if ſtarting from their ſockets, and her body heaved with uncontrolable inſanity.

Raſcal! devil! ſhe exclaimed, what do you mean to do to me?

Till now the ſcene had paſſed uninterrupted by a ſingle word.

Nothing, I replied: begone, infernal witch! and leave me to myſelf.

Leave you! No: I will thruſt my fingers through your ribs, and drink your blood!—You conquer me?—Ha, ha!—Yes, yes! you ſhall!—I will ſit upon you, and preſs you to hell! I will roaſt you with brimſtone, and daſh your entrails into your eyes!—Ha, ha!—ha!

Saying this, ſhe ſprung up, and prepared to attack me with redoubled fury. I ſeized her hands, and compelled her to ſit upon the bed. Thus reſtrained, ſhe continued to expreſs the tumult of her thoughts

thoughts by grinning, by certain furious motions of her head, and by occaſional vehement efforts to diſengage herſelf from my graſp. Theſe contortions and ſtarts were of the nature of thoſe fits, in which the patients are commonly ſuppoſed to need three or four perſons to hold them. But I found by experience that, under the circumſtances in which I was placed, my ſingle ſtrength was ſufficient. The ſpectacle of her emotions was inconceivably frightful. Her violence at length however began to abate, and ſhe became perſuaded of the hopeleſſneſs of the conteſt.

Let me go! ſaid ſhe. Why do you hold me? I will not be held!

I wanted you gone from the firſt, replied I. Are you contented to go now?

Yes, I tell you, miſbegotten villain! Yes, raſcal!

I immediately looſed my hold. She flew to the door, and, holding it in her

hand, ſaid, I will be the death of you yet: you ſhall not be your own man twenty-four hours longer! With theſe words ſhe ſhut the door, and locked it upon me. An action ſo totally unexpected ſtartled me. Whither was ſhe gone? What was it ſhe intended? To periſh by the machinations of ſuch a hag as this, was a thought not to be endured. Death in any form, brought upon us by ſurpriſe, and for which the mind has had no time to prepare, is inexpreſſibly terrible. My thoughts wandered in breathleſs horror and confuſion, and all within was uproar. I endeavoured to break the door, but in vain. I went round the room in ſearch of ſome tool to aſſiſt me. At length I ruſhed againſt it with a deſperate effort, to which it yielded, and had nearly thrown me from the top of the ſtairs to the bottom.

I deſcended with all poſſible caution and vigilance. I entered the kitchen, but

but it was deſerted. I ſearched every other apartment in vain. I went out of the houſe; ſtill I diſcovered nothing of my late aſſailant. It was extraordinary: what could be become of her? what was I to conclude from her diſappearance? I reflected on her parting menace. "I ſhould not be my own man twenty-four hours longer." It was myſterious; it did not ſeem to be the menace of aſſaſſination.

Suddenly the recollection of the hand bill brought to us by Wilſon ruſhed upon my memory. Was it poſſible that ſhe alluded to that in her parting words? Would ſhe ſet out upon ſuch an expedition by herſelf? Was it not dangerous to the whole fraternity, if without the ſmalleſt precaution ſhe ſhould bring the officers of juſtice into the midſt of them? It was perhaps improbable ſhe would engage in an undertaking thus deſperate. It was not however eaſy to anſwer for the

conduct of a perſon in her ſtate of mind. Should I wait, and riſk the preſervation of my liberty upon the iſſue?

To this queſtion I returned an immediate negative. I had reſolved in a very ſhort time to quit my preſent ſituation, and the difference of a little ſooner or a little later could not be very material. It promiſed to be neither agreeable nor prudent, for me to remain under the roof with a perſon who had manifeſted ſuch a fierce and inexpiable hoſtility. But the conſideration which had inexpreſſibly the moſt weight with me, belonged to the ideas of impriſonment, trial and death. The longer they had formed the ſubject of my contemplation, the more forcibly was I impelled to avoid them. I had entered upon a ſyſtem of action for that purpoſe; I had already made many ſacrifices; and I believed that I would never miſcarry in this project through any neglect of mine. The thought of what was

reſerved

reſerved for me by my perſecutors ſickened my very ſoul; and the more intimately I was acquainted with oppreſſion and injuſtice, the more deeply was I penetrated with the abhorrence to which they are entitled.

Such were the reaſons that determined me, inſtantly, abruptly, without leave-taking or acknowledgment for the peculiar and repeated favours I had received, to quit a habitation to which for ſix weeks I had apparently been indebted for protection from trial, conviction and an ignominious death. I had come hither pennyleſs; I quitted my abode with the ſum of a few guineas in my poſſeſſion, Mr. Raymond having inſiſted upon my taking a ſhare, at the time that each man received his dividend from the common ſtock. Though I had reaſon to ſuppoſe that the heat of the purſuit againſt me would be ſomewhat remitted by the time that had elapſed, the mag-

nitude of the miſchief that in an unfavourable event might fall on me, determined me to neglect no imaginable precaution. I recollected the hand bill which was the ſource of my preſent alarm, and conceived that one of the principal dangers that threatened me was the recognition of my perſon, either by ſuch as had previouſly known me, or even by ſtrangers. It ſeemed prudent therefore to diſguiſe it as effectually as I could. For this purpoſe I had recourſe to a parcel of tattered garments that lay in one corner of our habitation. The diſguiſe I choſe was that of a beggar. Upon this plan I threw off my ſhirt. I tied a handkerchief about my head, with which I took care to cover one of my eyes. Over this I drew a piece of an old woollen nightcap. I ſelected the worſt apparel I could find, and this I reduced to a ſtill more deplorable condition, by rents that I purpoſely made in various

various places. Thus equipped, I ſurveyed myſelf in a looking-glaſs. I had rendered my appearance complete, nor would any one have ſuſpected that I was not one of the fraternity to which I aſſumed to belong. I ſaid, This is the form in which tyranny and injuſtice oblige me to ſeek for refuge; but better, a thouſand times better is it, thus to incur contempt with the dregs of mankind, than to truſt to the tender mercies of our ſuperiors!

CHAP. V.

THE only rule that I laid down to myſelf in traverſing the foreſt was to take a direction as oppoſite as poſſible to that which led to the ſcene of my late impriſonment. After about two hours walking I arrived at the termination of this ruder ſcene, and reached that part of the county which is incloſed and cultivated. Here I ſat down by the ſide of a brook, and, pulling out a cruſt of bread which I had brought away with me, reſted and refreſhed myſelf. While I continued in this place, I began to ruminate upon the plan I ſhould lay down for my future proceedings; and my propenſity now led me, as it had done in a former inſtance, to fix upon the capital, which

which I believed, beſide its other recommendations, would prove the ſafeſt place for concealment. During theſe thoughts I ſaw a couple of peaſants paſſing at a ſmall diſtance, and enquired of them reſpecting the London road. By their deſcription I underſtood that the moſt immediate way would be to repaſs a part of the foreſt, and that it would be neceſſary to approach conſiderably nearer to the county town than I was at the ſpot which I had at preſent reached. I did not imagine that this could be a circumſtance of conſiderable importance. My diſguiſe appeared to be a ſufficient ſecurity againſt momentary danger; and I therefore took a path, though not the moſt direct one, which led towards the point they ſuggeſted.

The occurrences of the day were not very remarkable. As I paſſed along a road which lay in my way for a few miles, I ſaw a carriage advancing in the

oppoſite direction. I debated with myſelf for a moment, whether I ſhould paſs it without notice, or ſhould take this occaſion by voice or geſture of making an eſſay of my trade. This idle diſquiſition was however ſpeedily driven from my mind when I perceived that the carriage was Mr. Falkland's. The ſuddenneſs of the encounter ſtruck me with terror, though perhaps it would have been difficult for calm reflection to have diſcovered any conſiderable danger. I withdrew from the road, and ſkulked behind a hedge till it ſhould have completely gone by. I was too much occupied with my own feelings to venture to examine whether or no the terrible adverſary of my peace were in the carriage. I perſuaded myſelf that he was. I looked after the equipage, and exclaimed, There you may ſee the luxurious accommodations and appendages of guilt, and here the forlornneſs that waits upon innocence!

nocence!—I was to blame to imagine that my caſe was ſingular in that reſpect. I only mention it to ſhow how the moſt trivial circumſtance contributes to embitter the cup to the man of adverſity. The thought however was a tranſient one. I had learned this leſſon from my ſufferings, not to indulge in the luxury of diſcontent. As my mind recovered its tranquillity, I began to enquire whether the phenomenon I had juſt ſeen could have any relation to myſelf. But, though my mind was extremely inquiſitive and verſatile in this reſpect, I could diſcover no ſufficient ground upon which to build any judgment in the caſe.

At night I entered a little public houſe at the extremity of a village, and, ſeating myſelf in a corner of the kitchen, aſked for ſome bread and cheeſe. While I was ſitting at my repaſt, three or four labourers came in for a little refreſhment after their work. Ideas reſpecting

the inequality of rank pervade every order in ſociety; and, as my appearance was meaner and more contemptible than theirs, I found it expedient to give way to theſe gentry of a village alehouſe, and remove to an obſcurer ſtation. I was ſurpriſed and not a little ſtartled to find them fall almoſt immediately into converſation about my hiſtory, whom with a ſlight variation of circumſtances they ſtyled the notorious houſebreaker, Kit Williams.

Damn the fellow, ſaid one of them, one never hears of any thing elſe. O' my life, I think he makes talk for the whole county.

That is very true, replied another. I was at the market town to-day to ſell ſome oats for my maſter, and there was a hue and cry, ſome of them thought they had got him, but it was a falſe alarm.

That hundred guineas is a fine thing, rejoined

rejoined the firſt. I ſhould be glad if ſo be as how it fell in my way.

For the matter of that, ſaid the traveller, I ſhould like a hundred guineas as well as another. But I cannot be of your mind for all that. I ſhould never think money would do me any good, that had been the means of bringing a Chriſtian creature to the gallows.

Poh, that is all my granny! Some folks muſt be hanged to keep the wheels of our ſtate folks a-going. Beſide, I could forgive the fellow all his other robberies, but that he ſhould have been ſo hardened as to break the houſe of his own maſter at laſt, that is too bad.

Lord, lord, replied the other, I ſee you know nothing of the matter! I will tell you how it was, as I learned it at the town. I queſtion whether he ever robbed his maſter at all. But hark you! you muſt know as how that ſquire Falkland was once tried for murder——

Yes,

Yes, yes, we know that.

Well, he was as innocent as the child unborn. But I ſuppoſes as how he is a little ſoft or ſo. And ſo Kit Williams—Kit is a deviliſh cunning fellow, you may judge that from his breaking priſon no leſs than five times,——ſo, I ſay, he threatened to bring his maſter to trial at the 'ſizes all over again, and ſo frightened him, and got money from him at divers times. Till at laſt one ſquire Foreſter, a relation of t'other, found it all out. And he made the hell of a rumpus, and ſent away Kit to priſon in a twinky, and I believe he would have been hanged; for when two ſquires lay their heads together, they do not much matter law, you know; or elſe they twiſt the law to their own ends, I cannot exactly ſay which; but it is much at one, when the poor fellow's breath is out of his body.

Though this ſtory was very circumſtantially

ſtantially told and with a ſufficient detail of particulars, it did not paſs unqueſtioned. Each man maintained the juſtneſs of his own ſtatement, and the diſpute was long and obſtinately purſued. Hiſtorians and commentators at length withdrew together. The terrors with which I was ſeized when this converſation began, were extreme. I ſtole a ſidelong glance to one quarter and another, to obſerve if any man's attention were turned upon me. I trembled as if in an ague fit; and at firſt felt continual impulſes to quit the houſe and take to my heels. I drew cloſer in my corner, held aſide my head, and ſeemed from time to time to undergo a total revolution of the animal economy.

At length the tide of ideas turned. Perceiving they paid no attention to me, the recollection of the full ſecurity my diſguiſe afforded recurred ſtrongly to my thoughts, and I began inwardly to exult, though

though I did not venture to obtrude myſelf to examination. By degrees I began to be amuſed at the abſurdity of their tales, and the variety of the falſehoods I heard aſſerted around me. My ſoul ſeemed to expand; I felt a pride in the ſelf-poſſeſſion and lightneſs of heart with which I could liſten to the ſcene; and I determined to prolong and heighten the enjoyment. Accordingly, when they were withdrawn, I addreſſed myſelf to our hoſteſs, a buxom, bluff, good-humoured widow, and aſked what ſort of a man this Kit Williams might be? She replied that, as ſhe was informed, he was as handſome, likely a lad, as any in four counties round; and that ſhe loved him for his cleverneſs, by which he outwitted all the keepers they could ſet over him, and made his way through ſtone walls, as if they were ſo many cob-webs. I obſerved that the county was ſo thoroughly alarmed, that I did not think

think it poſſible he ſhould eſcape the purſuit that was ſet up after him. This idea excited her immediate indignation; ſhe ſaid ſhe hoped he was far enough away by this time, but, if not, ſhe wiſhed the curſe of God might light on them that betrayed ſo noble a fellow to a fatal end!—Though ſhe little thought that the perſon of whom ſhe ſpoke was ſo near her, yet the ſincere and generous warmth with which ſhe intereſted herſelf in my behalf, gave me conſiderable pleaſure. With this ſenſation to ſweeten the fatigues of the day and the calamities of my ſituation, I retired from the kitchen to a neighbouring barn, laid myſelf down upon ſome ſtraw, and fell into a profound ſleep.

The next day about noon as I was purſuing my journey, I was overtaken by two men on horſeback who ſtopped me to enquire reſpecting a perſon that they ſuppoſed might have paſſed along

that

that road. As they proceeded in their deſcription I perceived with aſtoniſhment and terror that I was myſelf the perſon to whom their queſtions related. They entered into a tolerably accurate detail of the various characteriſtics by which my perſon might beſt be diſtinguiſhed. They ſaid, they had good reaſon to believe that I had been ſeen at a place in that county the very day before. While they were ſpeaking, a third perſon who had fallen behind came up, and my alarm was greatly increaſed upon ſeeing that this perſon was the ſervant of Mr. Foreſter, who had viſited me in priſon about a fortnight before my eſcape. My beſt reſource in this criſis was compoſure and apparent indifference. It was fortunate for me that my diſguiſe was ſo complete, that the eye of Mr. Falkland itſelf could ſcarcely have penetrated it. I had been aware for ſome time before that this was a refuge which events might

might make neceſſary, and had endeavoured to arrange and methodiſe my ideas upon the ſubject. From my youth I had poſſeſſed a conſiderable facility in the art of imitation; and, when I quitted my retreat under the roof of Mr. Raymond, I adopted along with my beggar's attire a peculiar ſlouching and clowniſh gait to be uſed whenever there ſhould appear the leaſt chance of my being obſerved, together with an Iriſh brogue which I had had an opportunity of ſtudying in my priſon. Such are the miſerable expedients and ſo great the ſtudied artifice, which man, who never deſerves the name of manhood but in proportion as he is erect and independent, may find it neceſſary to employ, for the purpoſe of eluding the inexorable animoſity and unfeeling tyranny of his fellow man! I had made uſe of this brogue, though I have not thought it neceſſary to write it down in my narrative, in the

conver-

converſation of the village alehouſe. Mr. Foreſter's ſervant as he came up obſerved that his companions were engaged in converſation with me; and, gueſſing at the ſubject, aſked whether they had gained any intelligence. He added to the information at which they had already hinted, that a reſolution was taken to ſpare neither diligence nor expence for my diſcovery and apprehenſion, and that they were ſatisfied that, if I were above ground and in the kingdom, it would be impoſſible for me to eſcape them.

Every new incident that had occurred to me, thus tended t impreſs upon my mind the extreme danger to which I was expoſed. I could almoſt have imagined that I was the ſole ſubject of general attention, and that the whole world was in arms to exterminate me. The very idea tingled through every fibre of my frame. But, terrible

as it appeared to my imagination, it did but give new energy to my purpoſe; and I determined that I would not voluntarily reſign the field, that is properly ſpeaking my neck to the cord of the executioner, notwithſtanding the greateſt ſuperiority in my aſſailants. But the incidents which had befallen me, though they did not change my purpoſe, induced me to examine over again the means by which that purpoſe might be effected. The conſequence of this reviſal was to determine me to bend my courſe to the neareſt ſea-port on the weſt ſide of the iſland, and tranſport myſelf to Ireland. I cannot now tell what it was that inclined me to prefer this ſcheme to that which I had originally formed. Perhaps the latter, which had been for ſome time preſent to my imagination, for that reaſon appeared the more obvious of the two; and I found an appearance of complexity, which the mind did not ſtay

to explain to itſelf, in ſubſtituting the other in its ſtead.

I arrived without farther impediment at the place from which I intended to ſail, enquired for a veſſel which I found ready to put to ſea in a few hours, and agreed with the captain for my paſſage. Ireland had to me the diſadvantage of being a dependency of the Britiſh government, and therefore a place of leſs ſecurity than moſt other countries which are divided from it by the ocean. To judge from the diligence with which I ſeemed to be purſued in England, it was not improbable that the zeal of my perſecutors might follow me to the other ſide of the channel. It was however ſufficiently agreeable to my mind that I was upon the point of being removed one ſtep farther from the danger which was ſo grievous to my imagination.

Could there be any peril in the ſhort interval that was to elapſe before the veſ-

ſel was to weigh anchor, and quit the Engliſh ſhore? Probably not. A very ſhort time had intervened between my determination for the ſea and my arrival at this place; and, if any new alarm had been given to my perſecutors, it proceeded from the old woman a very few days before. I hoped I had anticipated their diligence. Meanwhile that I might neglect no reaſonable precaution, I went inſtantly on board, reſolved that I would not unneceſſarily, by walking the ſtreets of the town, expoſe myſelf to any untoward accident.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE time was now nearly elapſed that was preſcribed for our ſtay, and orders for weighing anchor were every moment expected, when we were hailed by a boat from the ſhore with two other men in it beſide thoſe that rowed. They entered our veſſel in an inſtant. They were officers of juſtice. The paſſengers, five perſons beſide myſelf, were ordered upon deck for examination. I was inexpreſſibly diſturbed at the occurrence of ſuch a circumſtance in ſo unſeaſonable a moment. I took it for granted that it was of me that they were in ſearch. Was it poſſible that by any unaccountable accident they ſhould have got an intimation of my diſguiſe? It was infinitely more diſtreſſing

diſtreſſing to encounter them upon this narrow ſtage and under theſe pointed circumſtances, than, as I had before encountered my purſuers, under the appearance of an indifferent perſon. My recollection however did not forſake me. I confided in my conſcious diſguiſe and my Iriſh brogue, as a rock of dependence againſt all accidents.

No ſooner did we appear upon deck than to my great conſternation I could obſerve the attention of our gueſts principally turned upon me. They aſked a few frivolous queſtions of ſuch of my fellow paſſengers as happened to be neareſt to them; and then turning to me enquired my name, who I was, whence I came, and what had brought me there? I had ſcarcely opened my mouth to reply, when with one conſent they laid hold of me, ſaid I was their priſoner, and declared that my accent, together with the correſpondence of my perſon, would be ſuf-

ficient to convict me before any court in England. I was hurried out of the veſſel into the boat in which they came, and ſeated between them, as if by way of precaution leſt I ſhould ſpring overboard and by any means eſcape them.

I now took it for granted that I was once more in the power of Mr. Falkland, and the idea was inexpreſſibly mortifying and afflictive to my imagination. Eſcape from his purſuit, freedom from his tyranny, were objects upon which my whole ſoul was bent; could no human ingenuity and exertion effect them? Did his power reach through all ſpace, and his eye penetrate every concealment? Was he like that myſterious being, to protect us from whoſe fierce revenge mountains and hills we are told might fall on us in vain? No idea is more heart-ſickening and tremendous than this. But in my caſe it was not a ſubject of reaſoning or of faith; I could derive no comfort

fort either openly from unbelief, or ſecretly from the remoteneſs and incomprehenſibility of the conception; it was an affair of ſenſe; I felt the fangs of the tyger ſtriking deep into my heart.

But, though this impreſſion were at firſt exceedingly ſtrong, and accompanied with its uſual attendants in dejection and puſillanimity of ſpirit, yet my mind ſoon began as it were mechanically, to turn upon the conſideration of the diſtance between this ſea-port and my county priſon, and the various opportunities of eſcape that might offer themſelves in the interval. My firſt duty was to avoid betraying myſelf more than it might afterwards appear I was betrayed already. It was poſſible that, though apprehended, my apprehenſion might have been determined on upon ſome ſlight ſcore, and that by my dexterity I might render my diſmiſſion as ſudden as my arreſt had been. It was even poſſible that I had been ſeized

through a miſtake, and that the preſent meaſure might have no connection with Mr. Falkland's affair. Upon every ſuppoſition it was my buſineſs to gain information, and not to communicate it.

I ſoon found the benefits of this reſolution. In my paſſage from the ſhip to the town I did not utter a word. My conductors commented on my ſulkineſs, but remarked that it would avail me nothing, I ſhould infallibly ſwing, as it was never known that any body got off, who was tried for robbing his majeſty's mail. It is eaſy to conceive the lightneſs of heart which was communicated to me by theſe words: I perſiſted however in the ſilence I had meditated. From the reſt of their converſation, which was ſufficiently voluble, I learned that the mail from Edinburgh to London had been robbed about ten days before by two Iriſhmen, that one of them was already ſecured, and that I was taken up upon ſuſpicion of being the other.

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They had a deſcription of his perſon which, though, as I afterwards found, it diſagreed from mine in ſeveral material articles, appeared to them to tally to the minuteſt tittle. The intelligence that the whole proceeding againſt me was founded in a miſtake, took an oppreſſive load from my mind. I believed that I ſhould immediately be able to eſtabliſh my innocence to the ſatisfaction of any magiſtrate in the kingdom; and, though croſſed in my plans, and thwarted in my deſign of quitting the iſland even after I was already at ſea, this was but a trifling inconvenience compared with what I had had but too much reaſon to fear.

As ſoon as we came aſhore I was conducted to the houſe of a juſtice of peace, a man who had formerly been the captain of a collier, but who, having been ſucceſsful in the world, had quitted this wandering life, and for ſome years had

had the honour to repreſent his majeſty's perſon. We were detained for ſome time in a ſort of anti-room, waiting his reverence's leiſure. The perſons by whom I had been taken up were experienced in their trade, and inſiſted upon employing this interval in ſearching me, in preſence of two of his worſhip's ſervants. They found upon me fifteen guineas and ſome ſilver. They required me to ſtrip myſelf perfectly naked, that they might examine whether I had bank notes concealed any where about my perſon. They took up the detached parcels of my miſerable attire as I threw it from me, and felt them one by one to diſcover whether the articles of which they were in ſearch might by any device be ſewn up in them. To all this I ſubmitted without murmuring. It might probably come to the ſame thing at laſt, and ſummary juſtice was ſufficiently coincident with my views, my principal

principal object being to get as ſoon as poſſible out of the clutches of the reſpectable perſons who now had me in cuſtody.

This operation was ſcarcely completed, before we were directed to be uſhered into his worſhip's apartment. My accuſers opened the charge, and told him that they had been ordered to this town upon an intimation that one of the perſons who robbed the Edinburgh mail was to be found here; and that they had taken me on board a veſſel which was by this time under ſail for Ireland. Well, ſays his worſhip, that is your ſtory; now let us hear what account the gentleman gives of himſelf. What is your name, ha, ſirrah? and from what part of Tipperary are you pleaſed to come? I had already taken my determination upon this article; and, the moment I learned the particulars of the charge againſt me, reſolved, for the preſent at leaſt, to lay aſide my Iriſh accent, and ſpeak my na-

tive tongue. This I had done in the very few words I had ſpoken to my conductors in the anti-room; they ſtared at the metamorphoſis, but they had gone too far for it to be poſſible they ſhould retract in conſiſtence with their honour. I now told the juſtice that I was no Iriſhman, nor had ever been in that country: I was a native of England. This occaſioned a conſulting of the depoſition in which my perſon was ſuppoſed to be deſcribed, and which my conductors had brought along with them for their direction. To be ſure that required that the offender ſhould be an Iriſhman.

Obſerving his worſhip heſitate, I thought this was the time to puſh the matter a little farther. I referred to the paper, and ſhewed him that the deſcription neither tallied as to height nor complexion. But then it did as to years and the colour of the hair; and it was not this gentleman's habit, as he informed me,

me, to ſquabble about trifles, or to let a man's neck out of the halter for a pretended flaw of a few inches in his ſtature. If a man were too ſhort, he ſaid, there was no remedy like a little ſtretching. The miſcalculation in my caſe happened to be the oppoſite way, but his reverence did not think proper to loſe his jeſt. Upon the whole he was ſomewhat at a loſs how to proceed.

My conductors obſerved this, and began to tremble for the reward, which two hours ago they thought as good as in their own pocket. To retain me in cuſtody they judged to be a ſafe ſpeculation; if it turned out a miſtake at laſt, they felt little apprehenſion of a ſuit for falſe impriſonment from a poor man accoutred as I was in rags. They therefore urged his worſhip to comply with their views. They told him that to be ſure the evidence againſt me did not prove ſo ſtrong, as for their part they

heartily wiſhed it had, but that there were a number of ſuſpicious circumſtances reſpecting me. When I was brought up to them upon the deck of the veſſel, I ſpoke as fine an Iriſh brogue as one ſhall hear in a ſummer's day; and now all at once there was not the leaſt particle of it left. In ſearching me they had found upon me fifteen guineas; how ſhould a poor beggar lad, ſuch as I appeared, come honeſtly by fifteen guineas? Beſide, when they had ſtripped me naked, though my dreſs was ſo ſhabby, my ſkin had all the ſleekneſs of a gentleman. In fine, for what purpoſe could a poor beggar, who had never been in Ireland in his life, want to tranſport himſelf to that country? It was as clear as the ſun that I was no better than I ſhould be. This reaſoning, together with ſome ſignificant winks and geſtures between the juſtice and the plaintiffs, brought him over to their way of thinking. He ſaid,

I muſt

I muſt go to Warwick, where it ſeems the other robber was at preſent in cuſtody, and be confronted with him; and if then every thing appeared fair and ſatisfactory, I ſhould be diſcharged.

No intelligence could be more terrible than that which was contained in theſe words. That I, who had found the whole country in arms againſt me, who was expoſed to a purſuit ſo peculiarly vigilant and penetrating, ſhould now be dragged to the very centre of the kingdom, without power of accommodating myſelf to circumſtances, and under the immediate cuſtody of the officers of juſtice, ſeemed to my ears almoſt the ſame thing as if they had pronounced upon me a ſentence of death! I ſtrenuouſly urged the injuſtice of this proceeding. I obſerved to the magiſtrate that it was impoſſible I ſhould be the perſon at whom the deſcription pointed. It required an Iriſhman; I was no Iriſhman. It de-

ſcribed a perſon ſhorter than I; a circumſtance of all others the leaſt capable of being counterfeited. There was not the ſlighteſt reaſon for detaining me in cuſtody. I had been already diſappointed of my voyage and loſt the money I had paid down through the officiouſneſs of theſe gentlemen in apprehending me. I aſſured his worſhip that every delay under my circumſtances was of the utmoſt importance to me. It was impoſſible to deviſe a greater injury to be inflicted on me, than the propoſal that, inſtead of being permitted to proceed upon my voyage, I ſhould be ſent under arreſt into the heart of the kingdom.

My remonſtrances were in vain. The juſtice was by no means inclined to digeſt the being expoſtulated with in this manner by a perſon in the habiliments of a beggar. In the midſt of my addreſs he would have ſilenced me for my impertinence, but that I ſpoke with an earneſt-

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neſs with which he was wholly unable to contend. When I had finiſhed, he told me that it was all to no purpoſe, and that it might have been better for me if I had ſhown myſelf leſs inſolent. It was clear that I was a vagabond and a ſuſpicious perſon. The more earneſt I ſhowed myſelf to get off, the more reaſon there was he ſhould keep me faſt. Perhaps after all I ſhould turn out to be the felon in queſtion. But, if I was not that, he had no doubt I was worſe; a poacher, or for what he knew a murderer. He had a kind of a notion that he had ſeen my face before about ſome ſuch affair; out of all doubt I was an old offender. He had it in his choice to ſend me to hard labour as a vagrant upon the ſtrength of my appearance and the contradictions in my ſtory, or to order me to Warwick; and out of the ſpontaneous goodneſs of his diſpoſition he choſe the milder alternative. He could aſſure me I ſhould not ſlip through his

his fingers. It was of more benefit to his majeſty's government to hang one ſuch fellow as he ſuſpected me to be, than out of miſguided tenderneſs to concern oneſelf for the good of all the beggars in the nation.

Finding that it was impoſſible to work on a man, ſo fully impreſſed with his own dignity and importance and my utter inſignificance, in the way I deſired, I claimed that at leaſt the money taken from my perſon ſhould be reſtored to me. This was granted. His worſhip perhaps ſuſpected that he had ſtretched a point in what he had already done, and was therefore the leſs unwilling to relax in this incidental circumſtance. My conductors did not oppoſe themſelves to this indulgence, for a reaſon that will appear in the ſequel. The juſtice however enlarged upon his clemency in this proceeding. He did not know whether he was not exceeding the ſpirit of his commiſſion in complying with my demand. So much

money in my poſſeſſion could not be honeſtly come by. But it was his temper to ſoften, as far as could be done with propriety, the ſtrict letter of the law.

There were cogent reaſons why the gentlemen who had originally taken me into cuſtody, choſe that I ſhould continue in their cuſtody when my examination was over. Every man is in his different mode ſuſceptible to a ſenſe of honour; and they did not chooſe to encounter the diſgrace that would accrue to them if juſtice had been done. Every man is in ſome degree influenced by the love of power; and they were willing I ſhould owe any benefit I received, to their ſovereign grace and benignity, and not to the mere reaſon of the caſe. It was not however an unſubſtantial honour and barren power that formed the object of their purſuit: no, their views were deeper than that. In a word, though they choſe that I ſhould retire from the ſeat of juſtice as

I had

I had come before it, a priſoner, yet the tenour of my examination had obliged them in ſpite of themſelves to ſuſpect, that I was innocent of the charge they alleged againſt me. Apprehenſive therefore that the hundred guineas that had been offered as a reward for taking the robber, was completely out of the queſtion in the preſent buſineſs, they were contented to ſtrike at ſmaller game. Having conducted me to an inn, and given directions reſpecting a vehicle for the journey, they took me aſide, while one of them addreſſed me in the following manner:

You ſee, my lad, how the caſe ſtands; heigh for Warwick is the word! and, when we are got there, what may happen then I will not pretend for to ſay. Whether you are innocent or no is no buſineſs of mine; but you are not ſuch a chicken as to ſuppoſe, if ſo be as you are innocent, that that will make your game altogether

ſure.

ſure. You ſay, your buſineſs calls you another way, and as how you are in haſte: I have not the heart to croſs any man in his concerns, if I can help it. If therefore you will give us them there fifteen ſhiners, why ſnug is the word. They are of no uſe to you; a beggar, you know, is always at home. For the matter of that we could have had them in the way of buſineſs as you ſaw at the juſtice's. But I am a man of principle; I loves to do things above board, and ſcorns to extort a ſhilling from any man.

He who is tinctured with principles of moral diſcrimination, is apt upon occaſion to be run away with by his feelings in that reſpect, and to forget the immediate intereſt of the moment. I confeſs that the firſt ſentiment excited in my mind by this overture was that of indignation. I was irreſiſtibly impelled to give utterance to this feeling, and poſtpone for a moment the conſideration of the

the future. I replied with the ſeverity which ſo baſe a proceeding appeared to deſerve. My bear-leaders were conſiderably ſurpriſed with my firmneſs, but ſeemed to think it beneath them to conteſt with me the principles I delivered. He who had made the overture contented himſelf with replying, Well, well, my lad, do as you will; you are not the firſt man that has been hanged rather than part with a few guineas. His words did not paſs unheeded by me. They were ſtrikingly applicable to my ſituation, and I was determined not to ſuffer the occaſion to eſcape me unimproved.

The pride of theſe gentlemen however was too great to admit of farther parley for the preſent. They left me abruptly; having firſt ordered an old man, the father of the landlady, to ſtay in the room with me while they were abſent. The old man they ordered for ſecurity to lock the door and put the key in his pocket, at

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the ſame time mentioning below ſtairs the ſtation in which they had left me, that the people of the houſe might have an eye upon what went forward, and not ſuffer me to eſcape. What was the intention of this manœuvre I am unable certainly to pronounce. Probably it was a ſort of compromiſe between their pride and their avarice, being deſirous for ſome reaſon or other to drop me as ſoon as convenient, and therefore determining to wait the reſult of my private meditations on the propoſal they had made.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

THEY were no ſooner withdrawn than I caſt my eye upon the old man, and found ſomething extremely venerable and intereſting in his appearance. His form was above the middle ſize. It indicated that his ſtrength had once been conſiderable; nor was it at this time by any means annihilated. His hair was in conſiderable quantity, and was as white as the driven ſnow. His complexion was healthful and ruddy, at the ſame time that his face was furrowed with wrinkles. In his eye there was remarkable vivacity, and his whole countenance was ſtrongly expreſſive of good nature. The booriſhneſs of his rank in ſociety was loſt, in the cultivation

cultivation his mind had derived from habits of ſenſibility and benevolence.

The view of his figure immediately introduced a train of ideas into my mind reſpecting the advantage to be drawn from the preſence of ſuch a perſon. The attempt to take any ſtep without his conſent was hopeleſs, for, though I ſhould ſucceed with regard to him, he could eaſily give the alarm to other perſons who would no doubt be within call. Add to which, I could ſcarcely have prevailed on myſelf to offer any offence to a perſon whoſe firſt appearance ſo ſtrongly engaged my affection and eſteem. In reality my thoughts were turned into a different channel. I was impreſſed with an ardent wiſh, to be able to call this man my benefactor. Purſued by a train of ill-fortune, I could no longer conſider myſelf as a member of ſociety. I was a ſolitary being, cut off from the expectation of ſympathy, kindneſs and the good-

will of mankind. I was ſtrongly impelled by the ſituation in which the preſent moment placed me, to indulge in a luxury which my deſtiny ſeemed to have denied. I could not conceive of the ſmalleſt compariſon between the idea of deriving my liberty from the ſpontaneous kindneſs of a worthy and excellent mind, and that of being indebted for it to the ſelfiſhneſs and baſeneſs of the worſt members of ſociety. It was thus that I allowed myſelf in the wantonneſs of refinement even in the midſt of deſtruction.

Guided by theſe ſentiments, I requeſted his attention to the circumſtances by which I had been brought into my preſent ſituation. He immediately ſignified his aſſent, and ſaid he would chearfully liſten to any thing I thought proper to communicate. I told him the perſons who had juſt left me in charge with him, had come to this town for the purpoſe of apprehending ſome perſon who had been guilty

guilty of robbing the mail; that they had choſen to take me up under this warrant, and had conducted me before a juſtice of the peace; that they had ſoon detected their miſtake, the perſon in queſtion being an Iriſhman, and differing from me both in country and ſtature; but that by colluſion between them and the juſtice they were permitted to retain me in cuſtody, and pretended to undertake to conduct me to Warwick to confront me with my accomplice; that in ſearching me at the juſtice's they had found a ſum of money in my poſſeſſion which excited their cupidity, and that they had juſt been propoſing to me to give me my liberty upon condition of my ſurrendering this ſum into their hands. Under theſe circumſtances I requeſted him to conſider whether he would wiſh to render himſelf the inſtrument of their extortion. I put myſelf into his hands, and ſolemnly averred the truth of the facts I had juſt

ſtated.

ſtated. If he would aſſiſt me in my eſcape, it could have no other effect than to diſappoint the baſe paſſions of my conductors. I would upon no account expoſe him to any real inconvenience; but I was well aſſured that the ſame generoſity that prompted him to a good deed, would enable him effectually to vindicate it when done; and that thoſe who detained me, when they had loſt ſight of their prey, would feel covered with confuſion, and not dare to take another ſtep in the affair.

The old man liſtened to what I related with curioſity and intereſt. He ſaid that he had always felt an abhorrence to the ſort of people who had me in their hands, that he had an averſion to the taſk they had juſt impoſed upon him, but that he could not refuſe ſome little diſagreeable offices to oblige his daughter and ſon in law. He had no doubt, from my countenance and manner, of the truth of what

I had

I had aſſerted to him. It was an extraordinary requeſt I had made, and he did not know what had induced me to think him the ſort of perſon to whom it might properly be made. In reality however his habits of thinking were uncommon, and he felt more than half inclined to act as I deſired. One thing at leaſt he would deſire of me in return, which was to be faithfully informed in ſome degree reſpecting the perſon he was aſked to oblige. What was my name?

The queſtion came upon me unprepared. But, whatever might be the conſequences, I could not bear to deceive the perſon by whom it was put, and in the circumſtances under which it was put. The practice of perpetual falſhood is too painful a taſk. I replied that my name was Williams.

He pauſed. His eye was fixed upon me. I ſaw his complexion alter at the

repetition of that word. He proceeded with viſible anxiety.

My chriſtian name?

Caleb.

Good God! it could not be ——— ——?
He conjured me by every thing that was ſacred to anſwer him faithfully to one queſtion more. I was not?—no, it was impoſſible—the perſon who had formerly lived ſervant with Mr. Falkland of ——?

I told him that, whatever might be the meaning of his queſtion, I would anſwer him truly. I was the individual he mentioned.

As I uttered theſe words, the old man roſe from his ſeat. He was ſorry that fortune had been ſo unpropitious to him, as for him ever to have ſet eyes upon me! I was a monſter with whom the very earth groaned!

I intreated that he would ſuffer me to explain

explain this new miſapprehenſion, as he had done in the former inſtance. I had no doubt that I ſhould do it equally to his ſatisfaction.

No! no! no! he would upon no conſideration admit that his ears ſhould ſuffer ſuch contamination. This caſe and the other were very different. There was no criminal upon the face of the earth, no murderer, half ſo deteſtable, as the perſon who could prevail upon himſelf to utter the charges I had done by way of recrimination againſt ſo generous a maſter.—The old man was in a perfect agony with the recollection.

At length he calmed himſelf enough to ſay he ſhould never ceaſe to grieve that he had held a moment's parley with me. He did not know what was the conduct that ſevere juſtice required of him; but, ſince he had come into the knowledge of who I was only by my own confeſſion, it was irreconcilably repugnant to his feel-

ings to make uſe of that knowledge to my injury. Here therefore all relation between us ceaſed; as indeed it would be an abuſe of words to conſider me in the light of a human creature. He would do me no miſchief; but then on the other hand he would not for the world be in any way aſſiſting and abetting me.

I was inexpreſſibly affected at the abhorrence this good and benevolent creature expreſſed againſt me. I could not be ſilent; I endeavoured once and again to prevail upon him to hear me. But his determination was unalterable. Our conteſt laſted for ſome time, and he at length terminated it by ringing the bell, and calling up the waiter. A very little while after this my conductors entered, and theſe two other perſons withdrew.

It was a part of the ſingularity of my fate that it hurried me from one ſpecies of anxiety and diſtreſs to another, too rapidly

pidly to ſuffer any one of them to ſink deeply into my mind. I am apt to believe in the retroſpect that half the calamities I was deſtined to endure would infallibly have overwhelmed and deſtroyed me. But, as it was, I had no leiſure to chew the cud upon croſs accidents as they befel me, but was under the neceſſity of forgetting them to guard againſt peril that the next moment ſeemed ready to cruſh me. The behaviour of this incomparable and amiable old man cut me to the heart. It was a dreadful prognoſtic for all my future life. But, as I have juſt obſerved, my conductors entered, and another ſubject called imperiouſly upon my attention. I could have been content, mortified as I was at this inſtant, to have been ſhut up in ſome impenetrable ſolitude, and to have wrapped myſelf up in inconſolable miſery. But the grief I endured had not ſuch power over me, as that I could be content to

riſk the being led to the gallows. The love of life, and ſtill more a hatred againſt oppreſſion, ſteeled my heart againſt that ſpecies of inertion. In the ſcene that had juſt paſſed I had indulged, as I have ſaid, in a wantonneſs and luxury of refinement. It was time that that indulgence ſhould be brought to a period. It was dangerous to trifle any more upon the brink of fate; and, penetrated as I was with ſadneſs by the reſult of my laſt attempt, I was little diſpoſed to any unneceſſary circumambulation. I was exactly in the temper in which the gentlemen who had me in their power, would have deſired to find me. Accordingly we entered upon immediate buſineſs; and, after ſome chaffering, they agreed to accept eleven guineas as the price of my freedom. To preſerve however the chaſtineſs of their reputation, they inſiſted upon conducting me with them for a few miles on the outſide of a ſtage

a ſtage coach. They then pretended that the road they had to travel lay in a croſs-country direction; and, having quitted the vehicle, they ſuffered me, almoſt as ſoon as it was out of ſight, to ſhake off this troubleſome aſſociation, and follow my own inclinations. It may be worth remarking by the way, that theſe fellows outwitted themſelves at their own trade. They had laid hold of me at firſt under the idea of a prize of a hundred guineas; they had ſince been glad to accept a compoſition of eleven; but, if they had retained me a little longer in their poſſeſſion, they would have found the poſſibility of acquiring the ſum that had originally excited their purſuit, upon a different ſcore.

The miſchances that had befallen me in my late attempt to eſcape from my purſuers by having recourſe to the ſea, deterred me from the thought of repeating the ſame experiment. I therefore

once more returned to the ſuggeſtion of hiding myſelf, at leaſt for the preſent, amidſt the crowds of the metropolis. Meanwhile I by no means thought proper to venture by the direct route, and the leſs ſo as that was the courſe which would be ſteered by my late conductors; but took my road along the borders of Wales. The only incident worth relating in this place, occurred in a project I thought proper to adopt for croſſing the Severn in a particular point. The mode of croſſing was by a ferry; and by ſome ſtrange inadvertence I loſt my way ſo completely that I was wholly unable that night to reach the ferry, and arrive at the town which I had deſtined for my repoſe.

It was by a ſingular fatality that this petty diſappointment, in the midſt of the overwhelming conſiderations that might have been expected to engroſs every thought of my mind, was borne by me with

with particular impatience. I was that day uncommonly fatigued. Previouſly to the time when I miſtook, or at leaſt was aware of the miſtake of the road, the ſky had become exceedingly black and lowering, and ſoon after the clouds burſt down in ſheets of rain. I was then in the midſt of a heath, without tree or covering of any ſort to ſhelter me. I was thoroughly drenched in a moment. In this uncomfortable ſtate I proceeded with a ſort of ſullen determination. By and by the rain gave place to a ſtorm of hail. The hail-ſtones were large and frequent. I was ill defended from them by the miſerable covering I wore, and they ſeemed to cut me in a thouſand directions. The hail-ſtorm ſubſided, and was again ſucceeded by a heavy rain. It was at this time I perceived that I had totally deviated from my way. I could diſcover neither man, nor beaſt, nor habitation of any kind. I walked

on, conſulting at every turn the path it would be proper for me to purſue, and in no inſtance able to diſcern a ſufficient reaſon for rejecting the one and preferring the other. My mind was in a moſt diſconſolate and repining ſtate. I muttered imprecations and murmuring, as I paſſed along. I was full of loathing and abhorrence againſt life, and every thing that life carries in its train. After wandering without any certain direction for two hours, I was overtaken by the night, and obliged to take up my reſt for the preſent in a ſolitary ſhed.

In a corner of the ſhed which I had choſen for my retreat I found ſome clean ſtraw. I threw off my rags, placing them in a ſituation where they would beſt be dried, and buried myſelf amidſt this friendly warmth. Through fatigue of mind and body it happened in this inſtance, though in general my repoſe was remark-

remarkably ſhort, that I ſlept till almoſt noon of the next day. When I roſe, I found that I was at no great diſtance from the ferry, which I croſſed, and entered the town where I intended to have reſted the preceding night.

It was market day. As I paſſed near the croſs, I obſerved two people look at me with great earneſtneſs, after which one of them exclaimed, I will be damned, if I do not think that is the very fellow thoſe men were enquiring for, who ſet off an hour ago by the coach for ——. I was extremely alarmed at this information; and, quickening my pace, turned ſharp down a narrow lane. The moment I was out of ſight I ran with all the ſpeed I could exert, and did not think myſelf ſafe till I was ſeveral miles diſtant from the place where this information had reached my ears. I have always believed that the men to whom it related were the very perſons who had

apprehended me on board the ſhip in which I had embarked for Ireland, that by ſome accident they had met with the deſcription of my perſon as publiſhed on the part of Mr. Falkland, and that from putting together the circumſtances they had been led to believe that this was the very individual who had lately been in their cuſtody. Indeed it was a piece of infatuation in me for which I am now unable to account, that, after the various indications which had occurred in that affair proving to them that I was a man in very critical and peculiar circumſtances, I ſhould have perſiſted in wearing the ſame diſguiſe without the ſmalleſt alteration. My eſcape in the preſent caſe was eminently fortunate. If I had not loſt my way in conſequence of the hail-ſtorm of the preceding night, or if I had not ſo greatly overſlept myſelf this very morning, I muſt almoſt infallibly have fallen into

the hands of theſe infernal blood-hunters.

The town they had choſen for their next ſtage, the name of which I had thus caught in the market-place, was the very town to which, but for this intimation, I ſhould have immediately proceeded. As it was, I determined to take a road as wide of it as poſſible. In the firſt place to which I came, in which it was practicable to do ſo, I bought a great coat which I drew over my beggar's weeds, and a better hat. The hat I ſlouched over my face, and covered one of my eyes with a green ſilk ſhade. The handkerchief, which I had hitherto worn about my head, I now tied about the lower part of my viſage, ſo as to cover my mouth. By degrees I diſcarded every part of my former dreſs, and wore for my upper garment a kind of carman's frock, which, being of the better ſort, made me look like the ſon of a reputable farmer

farmer of the lower claſs. Thus equipped, I proceeded on my journey, and, after a thouſand alarms, precautions, and circuitous deviations from the direct path, arrived ſafely in London.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

HERE then was the termination of an immenſe ſeries of labours, upon which no man could have looked back without aſtoniſhment, or forward without a ſentiment bordering on deſpair. It was at a price which defies eſtimation that I had purchaſed this reſting-place; whether we conſider the efforts it had coſt me to eſcape from the walls of my priſon, or the dangers and anxieties to which I had been a prey from that hour to the preſent.

But why do I call the point at which I was now arrived a reſting place? Alas, it was diametrically the reverſe! It was my firſt and immediate buſineſs to review all the projects of diſguiſe I had hitherto conceived, to derive every improvement

provement I could invent from the practice to which I had been ſubjected, and to manufacture a veil of concealment more impenetrable than ever. This was an effort to which I could ſee no end. In ordinary caſes the hue and cry after a ſuppoſed offender is a matter of temporary operation; but ordinary caſes formed no ſtandard for the coloſſal intelligence of Mr. Falkland. For the ſame reaſon, London, which appears an inexhauſtible reſervoir of concealment to the majority of mankind, brought no ſuch conſolatory ſentiment to my mind. Whether life were worth my accepting on ſuch terms I cannot pronounce. I only know that I perſiſted in this exertion of my faculties, through a ſort of parental love that men are accuſtomed to entertain for their intellectual offſpring; the more thought I had expended in rearing it to its preſent perfection, the leſs did I find myſelf diſpoſed to abandon

abandon it. Another motive not leſs ſtrenuouſly exciting me to perſeverance, was the ever-growing repugnance I felt to injuſtice and arbitrary power.

The firſt evening of my arrival in town I ſlept at an obſcure inn in the borough of Southwark, chooſing that ſide of the metropolis on account of its lying entirely wide of the part of England from which I came. I entered the inn in the evening in my countryman's frock; and, having paid for my lodging before I went to bed, equipped myſelf next morning as differently as my wardrobe would allow, and left the houſe before day. The frock I made up into a ſmall packet; and, having carried it to a diſtance as great as I thought neceſſary, I dropped it in the corner of an alley through which I paſſed. My next care was to furniſh myſelf with another ſuit of apparel totally different from any to which I had hitherto had recourſe. The exterior which I was now induced

induced to aſſume was that of a Jew. One of the gang of thieves upon —— foreſt had been of that race; and, by the talent of mimicry, which I have already ſtated myſelf to poſſeſs, I could copy their pronunciation of the Engliſh language, ſufficiently to anſwer ſuch occaſions as were likely to preſent themſelves. One of the preliminaries I adopted was to repair to a quarter of the town in which great numbers of this people reſide, and ſtudy their complexion and countenance. Having made ſuch proviſion as my prudence ſuggeſted to me, I retired for that night to an inn on the ſide of Mile End and Wapping. Here I accoutred myſelf in my new habiliments; and, having employed the ſame precautions as before, retired from my lodging at a time leaſt expoſed to obſervation. It is unneceſſary to deſcribe all the particulars of my new equipage. Suffice it to ſay, that one of my cares

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was to diſcolour my complexion, and give it the dun and ſallow hue which is in moſt inſtances characteriſtic of the tribe to which I aſſumed to belong; and that, when my metamorphoſis was finiſhed, I could not upon the ſtricteſt examination conceive, that any one could have traced out the perſon of Caleb Williams in this new diſguiſe.

Thus far advanced in the execution of my project, I deemed it adviſable to procure a lodging, and change my late wandering life for a ſtationary one. In this lodging I conſtantly ſecluded myſelf from the riſing to the ſetting of the ſun; the periods I allowed for exerciſe and air were few, and thoſe few by night. I was even careful of ſo much as approaching the window of my apartment, though upon the attic ſtory; a principle I laid down to myſelf was, not wantonly and unneceſſarily to expoſe myſelf to riſk, however ſlight that riſk might appear. Thus I had

had ſeemingly attained a ſituation of obſcurity, ſecluded from the haunts and intercourſe of men. It had however little reſemblance to that obſcurity to which my imagination had looked forward with delight, while I was yet in—jail. There is an immeaſurable difference between that rural ſolitude, where a man reſts his head in the lap of verdure and tranquillity; and that retirement in the very ſeat of action, whoſe conſtant attendant is diſquietude, and in which a man ſhrinks with alarm from the eye of his fellow.

I might have thought myſelf ſtill more ſecure, if I had been in poſſeſſion of money upon which to ſubſiſt. The neceſſity of a man's earning for himſelf the means of exiſtence is in moſt inſtances a merely imaginary evil; but in mine certainly tended to thwart the plan of ſecrecy to which I was condemned. Whatever labour I adopted, or deemed myſelf qualified to diſcharge, it was firſt to be con-

conſidered how I was to be provided with employment, and where I was to find an employer or purchaſer for my commodities. In the mean time I had no alternative. The little money with which I had eſcaped from the blood-hunters was almoſt wholly expended.

After the minuteſt conſideration I was able to beſtow upon this queſtion, I determined that literature ſhould be the field of my firſt experiment. I had read much of money being acquired in this way, and of prices given by the ſpeculators in this ſort of ware to its proper manufacturers. My qualifications I eſtimated at a ſlender valuation. I was not without a conviction that experience and practice muſt pave the way to excellent production. But, though of theſe I was utterly deſtitute, my propenſities had always led me in this direction; and my early thirſt of knowledge had conducted me to a more intimate acquaintance with books,

books, than could perhaps have been expected under my circumſtances. If my literary pretenſions were ſlight, the demand I intended to make upon them was not great. I only deſired a ſubſiſtence, and I was perſuaded few perſons could ſubſiſt upon ſlenderer means than myſelf. I alſo conſidered that this was a temporary expedient, neceſſary only till by accident or time I could place myſelf in a more eligible ſituation. The reaſons that principally determined me in my choice, were that this employment called upon me for the leaſt preparation, and could, as I thought, be exerciſed with leaſt obſervation.

There was a ſolitary woman of middle age, who tenanted a chamber in this houſe upon the ſame floor with my own. I had no ſooner determined upon the deſtination of my induſtry, than I caſt my eye upon her as the poſſible inſtrument for diſpoſing of my productions. Excluded

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as I was from all intercourſe with my ſpecies in general, I found pleaſure in the occaſional exchange of a few words with this inoffenſive and good-humoured creature, who was already of an age to preclude ſcandal. She lived upon a very ſmall annuity allowed her by a diſtant relation, a woman of quality, who, poſſeſſed of thouſands herſelf, had no other anxiety with reſpect to this perſon, than that ſhe ſhould not contaminate her alliance by the exertion of honeſt induſtry. This humble creature was of a uniformly chearful and active diſpoſition, unacquainted alike with the cares of wealth, and the preſſure of misfortune. Though her pretenſions were ſmall, and her information ſlender, ſhe was by no means deficient in penetration. She ſaw the faults and follies of mankind with a judging eye; but her temper was of ſo mild and forgiving a caſt, as would have induced moſt perſons to believe that ſhe

perceived nothing of the matter. Her heart overflowed with the milk of kindneſs. She was ſincere and ardent in her attachments, and never did ſhe omit a ſervice which ſhe perceived herſelf able to render to a human being. I found her willing and alert to enter into the buſineſs I propoſed to her. That I might anticipate occaſions of ſuſpicion, I frankly told her that, for reaſons which I wiſhed to be excuſed from relating, but which, if related, I was ſure would not deprive me of her good opinion, I found it neceſſary for the preſent to keep myſelf private. With this ſtatement ſhe readily acquieſced, and told me that ſhe had no deſire for any farther information than I found it expedient to give.

My firſt productions were of the poetical kind. After having finiſhed two or three, I directed this generous friend to take them to the office of a newſpaper; but they were rejected with contempt by the

the Ariſtarchus of that place, who, having beſtowed on them a ſuperficial glance, told her that ſuch matters were not at all in his way. I cannot help mentioning in this place that the countenance of Mrs. Marney (that was the name of my ambaſſadreſs) was in all caſes a perfect indication of her ſucceſs, and rendered explanation by words wholly unneceſſary. She intereſted herſelf ſo unreſervedly in what ſhe undertook, that ſhe felt either miſcarriage or good fortune much more exquiſitely than I did. I had an unheſitating confidence in my own reſources, and, occupied as I was in the meditation of more intereſting concerns, regarded theſe matters as altogether trivial.

I quietly took the pieces back, and laid them upon my table. Upon reviſal I altered and tranſcribed one of them, and, joining it with two others, diſpatched them together to the editor of a maga-

zine. He deſired they might be left with him till the day after to-morrow. When that day came, he told my friend they ſhould be inſerted; but, Mrs. Marney aſking reſpecting the price, he replied, it was their conſtant rule to give nothing for poetical compoſitions, the letter-box being always full of writings of that ſort; but, if the gentleman would try his hand in proſe, a ſhort eſſay or a tale, he would ſee what he could do for him.

With the requiſition of my literary dictator I immediately complied. I attempted a paper in the ſtyle of Addiſon's Spectators, which was accepted. In a ſhort time I was upon an eſtabliſhed footing in this quarter. I however diſtruſted my reſources in the way of moral diſquiſition, and ſoon turned my thoughts to his other ſuggeſtion, a tale. His demands upon me were now frequent, and to facilitate my labour I bethought myſelf of the reſource of tranſlation. I had

ſcarcely any convenience with reſpect to the procuring of books; but, as my memory was very retentive, I frequently tranſlated or modelled my narratives upon a reading of ſome years before. By a fatality for which I do not well know how to account, my thoughts frequently led me to the hiſtories of celebrated robbers; and I retailed from time to time incidents and anecdotes of Cartouche, Guſman d'Alfarache and other memorable worthies, whoſe carreer was terminated upon the gallows or the ſcaffold.

CHAP. IX.

WHILE I was thus endeavouring to occupy and provide for the intermediate period till the violence of the purſuit after me might be a little abated, a new ſource of danger opened upon me of which I had no previous ſuſpicion. Jones, the thief who had been expelled from captain Raymond's gang, had fluctuated during the laſt years of his life, between the two profeſſions of a violator and a miniſter of executive juſtice. I believe he had originally devoted himſelf to the firſt, and probably his initiation in the myſteries of thieving qualified him to be peculiarly expert in the profeſſion of a thief-taker, a profeſſion he had adopted not from choice, but neceſſity. In this employment his reputation was great, though perhaps not

not equal to his merits; for it happens here, as in all the other departments of human ſociety, that, however the ſubalterns may furniſh wiſdom and ſkill, the principals run away with the eclat. He was exerciſing this art in a very proſperous manner, when it happened by ſome accident, that one or two of his atchievements, previouſly to his having ſhaken off the dregs of unlicenſed depredation, were in danger of becoming ſubjects of public attention. Having had repeated intimations of this, he thought it prudent to decamp, and it was during this period of his retreat that he entered into the—gang.

Such was the hiſtory of this man antecedently to his being placed in the ſituation in which I had firſt encountered him. At the time of that encounter he was a veteran of captain Raymond's gang; for, thieves being a ſhort-lived race, the character of veteran coſts the

leſs time in acquiring. Upon his expulſion from this community he returned once more to his lawful profeſſion, and by his old comrades was received with congratulation as a loſt ſheep. In the vulgar claſſes of ſociety no length of time is ſufficient to expiate a crime; but among the fraternity of thief-takers it is a rule never to bring one of their own brethren to a reckoning, when it can with any propriety be avoided. Another rule obſerved by thoſe who have paſſed through the ſame gradations as Jones had done, and which was adopted by Jones himſelf, was always to reſerve ſuch as had been the accomplices of their depredations to the laſt, and on no account to aſſail them without great neceſſity or powerful temptation. For this reaſon captain Raymond and his confederates were, according to Jones's ſyſtem of tactics, ſafe, as he would have termed it, from his retaliation.

But,

But, though Jones was in this ſenſe of the term a man of ſtrict honour, my caſe unfortunately did not fall within the laws of honour he acknowledged. Misfortune had overtaken me, and I was on all ſides without protection or ſhelter. The perſecution to which I was expoſed was founded upon the ſuppoſition of my having committed felony to an immenſe amount. But in this Jones had had no participation; he was careleſs whether the ſuppoſition were true or falſe, and hated me as much as if my innocence had been eſtabliſhed beyond the reach of ſo much as a whiſper of ſuſpicion. The blood hunters who had taken me into cuſtody at ——, related, as uſual, among their fraternity a part of their adventure, and told of the reaſon which inclined them to ſuppoſe, that the individual who had paſſed through their cuſtody, was the very Caleb Williams for whoſe apprehenſion a reward had been

offered of a hundred guineas. Jones, whoſe acuteneſs was eminent in the way of his profeſſion, by comparing facts and dates was induced to ſuſpect in his own mind that Caleb Williams was the perſon he had huſtled and wounded upon —— foreſt. Againſt that perſon he entertained the bittereſt averſion. I had been the innocent occaſion of his being expelled with diſgrace from captain Raymond's gang; and Jones, as I afterwards underſtood, was intimately perſuaded that there was no compariſon between the liberal and manly profeſſion of a robber, from which I had driven him, and the ſordid and mechanical occupation of a blood-hunter, to which he was obliged to return. He no ſooner received the information I have mentioned, than he vowed revenge. He determined to leave all other objects, and conſecrate every faculty of his mind to the unkenneling me from my hiding place. The offered

reward,

reward, which his vanity made him conſider as aſſuredly his own, appeared as the complete indemnification of his labour and expence. Thus I had to encounter the ſagacity he poſſeſſed in the way of his profeſſion, whetted and ſtimulated by a ſentiment of vengeance in a mind that knew no reſtraint from conſcience or humanity.

The firſt ſtep he purſued in execution of his project, was to ſet out for the ſeaport town where I had formerly been apprehended. From thence he traced me to the banks of the Severn, and from the banks of the Severn to London. It is ſcarcely neceſſary to obſerve that this is always practicable, unleſs the precautions of the fugitive be in the higheſt degree both judicious in the conception and fortunate in the execution,—provided the purſuer have motives ſtrong enough to excite him to perſeverance. Jones indeed in the courſe of his purſuit was

often obliged to double his ſteps; and, like the harrier, an apt emblem of a man engaged in this ſanguinary occupation, whenever he was at a fault, returned to the place where he had laſt perceived the ſcent of the animal whoſe death he had decreed. He ſpared neither pains nor time in the gratification of the paſſion which choice had made his ruling one.

Upon my arrival in town he for a moment loſt all trace of me, London being a place in which, on account of the magnitude of its dimenſions, it might well be ſuppoſed that an individual could remain hidden and unknown. But no difficulty could diſcourage this new adverſary. He went from inn to inn, reaſonably ſuppoſing that there was no private houſe to which I could immediately repair, till he found, by the deſcription he gave, and the ſentiments he excited, that I had ſlept for one night in the borough of Southwark. But he could get no farther information.

The

The people of the inn had no knowledge what had become of me the next morning. This however did but render him more eager in his purſuit. The deſcribing me was now more difficult, on account of the partial change of my dreſs I had made the ſecond day of my being in town. But Jones at length overcame the obſtacle from that quarter. Having traced me to my ſecond inn, he was here furniſhed with a more copious information. I had been a ſubject of ſpeculation for the leiſure hours of ſome of the perſons belonging to this inn. An old woman of a moſt curious and loquacious diſpoſition who lived oppoſite to it, and who that morning roſe early to her waſhing, had eſpied me from her window by the light of a large lamp which hung over the inn, as I iſſued from the gate. She had but a very imperfect view of me, but ſhe thought there was ſomething Jewiſh in my appearance. She was accuſtomed to hold a conference every morning with the

landlady of the inn, ſome of the waiters and chambermaids occaſionally aſſiſting at it. In the courſe of the dialogue of this morning ſhe aſked ſome queſtions about the Jew who had ſlept there the night before. No Jew had ſlept there. The curioſity of the landlady was excited in her turn. By the time of the morning it could be no one but me. It was very ſtrange! They compared notes reſpecting my appearance and dreſs. No two things could be more diſſimilar. The Jew-Chriſtian, upon any dearth of ſubjects of intelligence, repeatedly furniſhed matter for their diſcourſe.

The information thus afforded to Jones, appeared exceedingly material. But the performance did not for ſome time keep pace with the promiſe. He could not enter every private houſe into which lodgers were ever admitted, in the ſame manner that he had treated the inns. He walked the ſtreets, and examined with a curious and inquiſitive

quiſitive eye the countenance of every Jew about my ſtature; but in vain. He repaired to Duke's Place and the ſynagogues. It was not here that in reality he could calculate upon finding me; but he reſorted to theſe means in deſpair and as a laſt hope. He was more than once upon the point of giving up the purſuit; but he was recalled to it by an inſatiable and reſtleſs appetite for revenge.

It was during this perturbed and fluctuating ſtate of his mind that he chanced to pay a viſit to a brother of his who was the head-workman of a printing office. There was little intercourſe between theſe two perſons, their diſpoſitions and habits of life being extremely diſſimilar. The printer was induſtrious, ſober, and of a propenſity to accumulation. He was extremely diſſatisfied with the character and purſuits of his brother, and had made ſome ineffectual attempts to reclaim him. But, though they by no means agreed in their

their habits of thinking, they ſometimes ſaw each other. Jones loved to boaſt of as many of his atchievements as he dared venture to mention; and his brother was one more hearer, in addition to the ſet of his uſual aſſociates. The printer was amuſed, with the blunt ſagacity of remark and novelty of incident that characteriſed Jones's converſation. He was ſecretly pleaſed, in ſpite of all his ſober and church-going prejudices, that he was brother to a man of ſo much ingenuity and fortitude.

After having liſtened for ſome time upon this occaſion to the wonderful ſtories which Jones in his rugged way condeſcended to tell, the printer felt an ambition to entertain his brother in his turn. He began to retail ſome of my ſtories of Cartouche and Guſman d'Alfarache. The attention of Jones was excited. His firſt emotion was wonder; his ſecond was envy and averſion. Where did the printer

printer get theſe ſtories? This queſtion was anſwered. I will tell you what, ſaid the printer, we none of us know what to make of the writer of theſe articles. He writes poetry and morality and hiſtory: I am a printer and corrector of the preſs, and may pretend without vanity to be a tolerably good judge of theſe matters: he writes them all to my mind extremely fine, and yet he is no more than a Jew. [To my honeſt printer this ſeemed as ſtrange as if they had been written by a Cherokee chieftain at the falls of the Miſſiſippi.]

A Jew! How do you know? Did you ever ſee him?

No; the matter is always brought to us by a woman. But my maſter hates all myſteries; he likes to ſee his authors themſelves. So he plagues and plagues the old woman; but he can never get any thing out of her, except that one day ſhe happened to drop that the young gentleman was a Jew.

A Jew!

A Jew! a young gentleman! a perſon who did every thing by proxy, and made a ſecret of all his motions! Here was abundant matter for the ſpeculations and ſuſpicions of Jones. He was confirmed in them, without adverting to the proceſs of his own mind, by the ſubject of my lucubrations, men who died by the hands of the executioner. He ſaid little more to his brother, except aſking, as if caſually, what ſort of an old woman this was? of what age ſhe might be? and whether ſhe often brought him materials of this kind? and ſoon after took occaſion to leave him.

It was with vaſt pleaſure that Jones had liſtened to this unhoped for information. Having collected from his brother ſufficient hints relative to the perſon and appearance of Mrs. Marney, and underſtanding that he expected to receive ſomething from me the next day, Jones took his ſtand in the ſtreet early that he

might not riſk miſcarriage by negligence. He waited ſeveral hours, but not without ſucceſs. Mrs. Marney came; he watched her into the houſe; and after about twenty minutes delay ſaw her return. He dogged her from ſtreet to ſtreet; obſerved her finally enter the door of a private houſe; and congratulated himſelf upon having at length arrived at the conſummation of his labours.

The houſe ſhe entered was not her own habitation. By a ſort of miraculous accident ſhe had obſerved Jones following her in the ſtreet. As ſhe went home, ſhe ſaw a woman who had fallen down in a fainting fit. Moved by the compaſſion that was ever alive in her, ſhe approached her in order to render her aſſiſtance. Preſently a crowd collected round them. Mrs. Marney having done what ſhe was able, once more proceeded homewards. Obſerving the crowd round her, the idea of pickpockets occurred to her mind;

mind; ſhe put her hands to her ſides, and at the ſame time looked round upon the populace. She had left the circle ſomewhat abruptly; and Jones, who had been obliged to come nearer leſt he ſhould loſe her in the confuſion, was at that moment ſtanding exactly oppoſite to her. His viſage was of the moſt extraordinary kind; habit had written the characters of malignant cunning and dauntleſs effrontery in every line of his face; and Mrs. Marney, who was neither philoſopher nor phyſiognomiſt, was nevertheleſs ſtruck. This good woman, like moſt perſons of her notable character, had a peculiar way of going home, not through the open ſtreets, but by narrow lanes and alleys, with intricate inſertions and ſudden turnings. In one of theſe by ſome accident ſhe once again caught a glance of her purſuer. This circumſtance, together with the ſingularity of his appearance, awakened her conjectures.

Could

Could he be following her? It was the middle of the day, and ſhe could have no fears for herſelf. But could this circumſtance have any reference to me? She recollected the precautions and ſecrecy I practiſed, and had no doubt that I had reaſons for what I did. She recollected that ſhe had always been upon her guard reſpecting me; but had ſhe been ſufficiently ſo? She thought that, if ſhe ſhould be the means of any miſchief to me, ſhe ſhould be miſerable for ever. She determined therefore by way of precaution in caſe of the worſt, to call at a friend's houſe, and ſend me word of what had occurred. Having inſtructed her friend, ſhe went out immediately upon a viſit to a perſon in the exactly oppoſite direction, and deſired her friend to proceed upon the errand to me, five minutes after ſhe left the houſe. By this prudence ſhe completely extricated me from the preſent danger.

Meantime

Meantime the intelligence that was brought me by no means aſcertained the greatneſs of the danger. For any thing I could diſcover in it, the circumſtance might be perfectly innocent, and the fear ſolely proceed from the over caution and kindneſs of this benevolent and excellent woman. Yet ſuch was the miſery of my ſituation, that I had no choice. For this menace or no menace, I was obliged to deſert my habitation at a minute's warning, taking with me nothing but what I could carry in my hand; to ſee my generous benefactreſs no more; to quit my little arrangements and proviſion; and to ſeek once again in ſome forlorn retreat new projects and, if of that I could have any rational hope, a new friend: I deſcended into the ſtreet with a heavy, not an irreſolute heart. It was broad day. I ſaid, Perſons are at this moment ſuppoſed to be roaming the ſtreet in ſearch of me: I muſt not truſt to the chance of their

their purſuing one direction, and I another. I traverſed half a dozen ſtreets, and then dropped into an obſcure houſe of entertainment for perſons of ſmall expence. In this houſe I took ſome refreſhment, paſſed ſeveral hours of active, but melancholy thinking, and at laſt procured a bed. As ſoon however as it was dark, I went out (for this was indiſpenſible) to purchaſe the materials of a new diſguiſe. Having adjuſted it as well as I could during the night, I left this aſylum with the ſame precautions that I had employed in former inſtances.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

I PROCURED a new lodging. I became more cautious, and went out ſeldomer than ever. By ſome bias of the mind it may be, gratifying itſelf with images of peril, I inclined upon the whole to believe that Mrs. Marney's alarm had not been without foundation. I was however unable to conjecture through what means danger had approached me; and had therefore only the unſatisfactory remedy of redoubling my watch upon all my actions. Still I had the joint conſiderations preſſing upon me of ſecurity and ſubſiſtence. I had ſome ſmall remains of the produce of my former induſtry; but this was but ſmall, for my employer was in arrear with me, and I did

did not chooſe in any method to apply to him for payment. The anxieties of my mind in ſpite of all my ſtruggles preyed upon my health. I did not conſider myſelf as in ſafety for an inſtant. My appearance was waſted to a ſhadow; and I ſtarted at every ſound that was unexpected. Sometimes I was half tempted to reſign myſelf into the hands of the law, and brave its worſt; but reſentment and indignation at thoſe times ſpeedily flowed back upon my mind, and re-animated my perſeverance.

I knew no better reſource with reſpect to ſubſiſtence, than that I had employed in the former inſtance, of ſeeking ſome third perſon to ſtand between me and the diſpoſal of my induſtry. I might find an individual ready to undertake this office in my behalf, but where ſhould I find the benevolent ſoul of Mrs. Marney? The perſon I fixed upon was a Mr. Spurrel, a man who took in work from the watch-

watch-makers, and had an apartment upon our ſecond floor. I examined him two or three times with irreſolute glances, as we paſſed upon the ſtairs, before I would venture to accoſt him. He obſerved this, and at length kindly invited me into his apartment.

Being ſeated, he condoled with me upon my ſeeming bad health, and the ſolitary mode of my living, and wiſhed to know whether he could be of any ſervice to me. From the firſt moment he ſaw me, he had conceived an affection for me. In my preſent diſguiſe I appeared twiſted and deformed, and in other reſpects by no means an object of attraction. But it ſeemed, Mr. Spurrel had loſt an only ſon about ſix months before, and I was the very picture of him. If I had put off my counterfeited uglineſs, I ſhould probably have loſt all hold upon his affections. He was now an old man, as he obſerved, juſt dropping into the grave,

and

and this ſon had been his only conſolation. The poor lad was always ailing, but he had been a nurſe to him; and the more care he required while he was alive, the more he miſſed him now he was dead. Now he had not a friend, nor any body that cared for him in the whole world. If I pleaſed, I ſhould be inſtead of that ſon to him, and he would treat me in all reſpects with the ſame attention and care.

I expreſſed my ſenſe of theſe benevolent offers; but told him that I ſhould be ſorry to be in any way burthenſome to him. My ideas at preſent led me to a private and ſolitary life, and my chief difficulty was to reconcile this with ſome mode of earning neceſſary ſubſiſtence. If he would condeſcend to lend me his aſſiſtance in ſmoothing this difficulty, it would be the greateſt benefit he could confer on me. I told him that my mind had always had a mechanical and induſtrious

turn, and that I did not doubt of ſoon maſtering any craft to which I ſeriouſly applied myſelf. I had not been brought up to any trade; but, if he would favour me with his inſtructions, I would work with him as long as he pleaſed for a bare ſubſiſtence. I knew that I was aſking of him an extraordinary kindneſs, but I was urged on the one hand by extreme and unmitigable neceſſity, and encouraged on the other by the perſuaſiveneſs of his friendly profeſſions.

The old man dropped ſome tears over my apparent diſtreſs, and readily conſented to every thing I propoſed. Our agreement was ſoon made, and I entered upon my functions accordingly. My new friend was a man of a ſingular turn of mind. Love of money and a charitable officiouſneſs of demeanour were his leading characteriſtics. He lived in the moſt penurious manner, and denied himſelf almoſt every indulgence. I entitled myſelf

ſelf almoſt immediately, as he frankly acknowledged, to ſome remuneration for my labours, and accordingly he inſiſted upon my being paid. He did not however, as ſome perſons would have done under the circumſtances I have deſcribed, pay me the whole amount of my earnings, but profeſſed to ſubtract from them twenty per cent, as an equitable conſideration for inſtruction and commiſſion-money in procuring me a channel for my induſtry. Yet he frequently ſhed tears over me, was uneaſy in every moment of our indiſpenſible ſeparation, and exhibited perpetual tokens of attachment and fondneſs.

I had not been long in this new ſituation, before an incident occurred which filled me with greater alarm and apprehenſion than ever. I was walking out one evening for an hour's exerciſe and air, an indulgence in which I now ſcarcely ever allowed myſelf, when my ear was

ſtruck with two or three caſual ſounds from the mouth of a hawker who was bawling his wares. I ſtood ſtill to inform myſelf more exactly, when to my utter aſtoniſhment and confuſion I heard him deliver himſelf nearly in theſe words. "Here you have the Moſt Wonderful and Surpriſing Hiſtory, and Miraculous Adventures of Caleb Williams! you are informed how he firſt robbed, and then brought falſe accuſations againſt his maſter; as alſo of his attempting divers times to break out of priſon, till at laſt he effected his eſcape in the moſt wonderful and uncredible manner; as alſo of his travelling the kingdom in various diſguiſes, and the robberies he committed with a moſt deſperate and daring gang of thieves; and of his coming up to London, where it is ſuppoſed he now lies concealed; with a true and faithful copy of the hue and cry printed and publiſhed by one of his majeſty's moſt

principal

principal ſecretaries of ſtate, offering a reward of one hundred guineas for apprehending him. All for the price of one halfpenny."

Petrified as I was at theſe amazing and dreadful ſounds, I had the temerity to go up to the man and purchaſe one of his papers, deſperately reſolved to know the exact ſtate of the fact, and what I had to depend upon. I carried it with me a little way, till, no longer able to endure my impatience, I contrived to make out the chief part of its contents by the help of a lamp, at the upper end of a narrow paſſage. I found it contain a greater number of circumſtances than could have been expected in this ſpecies of publication. I was equalled to the moſt notorious houſe-breaker in the art of penetrating through walls and doors, and to the moſt accompliſhed ſwindler in plauſibleneſs, duplicity and diſguiſe. The hand-bill which Wilſon had firſt brought

to us upon the foreſt, was printed at length. All my diſguiſes, previouſly to the laſt alarm that had been given me by the providence of Mrs. Marney, were faithfully enumerated; and the public was warned to be upon their watch againſt a perſon of an uncouth and extraordinary appearance, and who lived in a recluſe and ſolitary manner. I alſo learned from this paper that my former lodgings had been ſearched on the very evening of my eſcape, and that Mrs. Marney had been ſent to Newgate upon a charge of miſpriſion of felony.—This laſt circumſtance affected me deeply. It was a moſt cruel and intolerable idea, if I were not only myſelf to be an object of unrelenting perſecution, but my very touch were to be infectious, and every one that ſuccoured me to be involved in the common ruin. I could almoſt have conſented to undergo the utmoſt malice of my enemies, could I by that means have ſaved this excellent

woman

woman from an hour's diſtreſs.—I afterwards learned that Mrs. Marney was delivered from confinement by the interpoſition of her noble relation.

This paper was the conſummation of my misfortune. Nothing could happen beyond it but the actual apprehenſion with which I was menaced. Diſguiſe was no longer of uſe to me. A numerous claſs of individuals, through every department, almoſt every houſe of the metropolis, would be induced to look with a ſuſpicious eye upon every ſtranger, eſpecially every ſolitary ſtranger, that fell under their obſervation. The prize of one hundred guineas was held out to excite their cupidity, and ſharpen their penetration. It was no longer Bow-Street, it was a million of men, in arms againſt me. Neither had I the refuge, which few men have been ſo miſerable as to want, of one ſingle individual with whom to repoſe my alarms, and who

might ſhelter me from the gaze of indiſcriminate curioſity. I inſtantly ſaw that London was no place for my abode, at the ſame time that I apprehended increaſe of peril in any attempt to withdraw from it. I reſolved however that I would no longer ſubmit to this ſtate of terrific alarm. I reſolved that I would not remain quieſcent, till miſchief ſhould overtake and devour me. I could ſcarcely reduce things to a more miſerable paſs. "To be worſe than this, were not to be at all."

Filled with reflections of this nature, I carefully and deliberately deſtroyed the paper I had been reading, by tearing it in a thouſand pieces. I did not return home, but went inſtantly to the waterſide. I found that the cheapeſt paſſage I could procure was in a veſſel, moored near the Tower, and which was to ſail in a few days for Middleburg in Holland. I would have gone inſtantly on board

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and endeavoured to prevail with the captain to let me remain there till he ſailed; but that unfortunately I had not money enough in my pocket to defray my paſſage. It was worſe than this. I had not money enough in the world. I however paid the captain half his demand, and promiſed to return with the reſt. I knew not in what manner it was to be procured, but I believed that I would not fail to procure it. I had ſome idea of borrowing it of Mr. Spurrel. Surely he would not refuſe me? He appeared to love me with parental affection, and I thought I might truſt myſelf for a moment in his hands.

I approached my own home with a heavy and foreboding heart. Mr. Spurrel was not at home; and I was obliged to wait for his return. I had work of his in my trunk, which had been delivered out to me that very morning, to five times the amount I wanted. I even

canvaſſed for a moment whether I ſhould make uſe of this property as if it were my own; but I rejected the idea with diſdain. I had never in the ſmalleſt degree merited the reproaches that were caſt upon me; and I was determined I never would merit them. It was extraordinary that Mr. Spurrel ſhould be abroad at this hour; I had never known it happen before. His bed-time was between nine and ten. Ten o'clock came, eleven o'clock, but not Mr. Spurrel. At midnight I heard his knock at the door. Every ſoul in the houſe was in bed. Mr. Spurrel, on account of his regular hours, was unprovided with a key to open for himſelf. A gleam of gaiety and the ſocial ſpirit came over my heart. I flew nimbly down the ſtairs, and opened the door to him myſelf.

I could perceive by the little taper in my hand ſomething extraordinary written in his countenance. I had not time

to

to ſpeak, before I ſaw two other men follow him. At the firſt glance I was ſufficiently aſſured what ſort of perſons they were. At the ſecond I perceived that one of them was no other than Jones himſelf. I had underſtood formerly that he had been of this profeſſion, and I was not much ſurpriſed to find him in it again. Though I had for ſome hours made up my mind as it were, to the unavoidable neceſſity of my once more falling into the hands of the officers of law, yet I could not ſee them enter without feeling my very heart ache in my boſom. I was beſide not a little ſurpriſed at the time and manner of their entrance, and deſirous to learn whether Mr. Spurrel could be baſe enough to have been their introducer.

I was not long held in perplexity. He no ſooner ſaw his two followers properly within the door, than he exclaimed with convulſive eagerneſs, There, there, that

is your man! thank God! thank God! Jones looked eagerly in my face, with a countenance expreſſive alternately of hope and doubt, and anſwered, By God, and I do not know whether it be or no! I am afraid we are in the wrong box! then recollecting himſelf, We will go into the houſe, and examine farther however. We all went up ſtairs into Mr. Spurrel's room; I ſet down the candle upon the table. I had hitherto been ſilent; but now, with a calm and deliberate manner, in my feigned voice, one of the characteriſtics of which was liſping, I aſked, And pray, gentlemen, what may be your pleaſure with me? Why, ſaid Jones, our errand is with one Caleb Williams, and a precious raſcal he is! I ought to know the chap well enough; but they ſay he has as many faces as there are days in the year. So you pleaſe to pull off your face; or if you cannot do that, at leaſt you can put off your clothes,

clothes, and let us ſee what your hump is made of.

I remonſtrated, but in vain. I ſtood detected in part of my artifice; and Jones, though ſtill uncertain, was every moment more and more confirmed in his ſuſpicions. Mr. Spurrel perfectly gloted, with eyes that ſeemed ready to devour every thing that paſſed. As my impoſture gradually appeared more palpable, he repeated his exclamation, Thank God! thank God! At laſt, tired with this ſcene of mummery, and diſguſted beyond meaſure with the baſe and hypocritical figure I ſeemed to exhibit, I exclaimed, Well, I am Caleb Williams; conduct me wherever you pleaſe! And now, Mr. Spurrel——! He gave a violent ſtart. The inſtant I declared myſelf his tranſport had been at the higheſt, and was, to any power he was able to exert, abſolutely uncontrolable. But the unexpectedneſs of my addreſs, and the

the tone in which I ſpoke, electrified him.——Is it poſſible, continued I, that you ſhould have been the wretch to betray me? What had I done to deſerve this treatment? Is this the kindneſs you profeſſed? the affection that was perpetually in your mouth? to be the death of me!

My poor boy! my dear creature! cried Spurrel, whimpering, and in a tone of the humbleſt expoſtulation, indeed I could not help it! I would have helped it, if I could! I hope they will not hurt my darling! I am ſure, I ſhall die if they do!

Miſerable driveller! interrupted I, with a ſtern voice, do you betray me into the gore-dripping fangs of the law, and then talk of my not being hurt? I know my ſentence, and am prepared to meet it! You have fixed the halter upon my neck, and at the ſame price would have done ſo to your only ſon! Go, count

your accurſed guineas! My life would have been ſafer in the hands of one I had never ſeen, than in yours, whoſe mouth and whoſe eyes for ever ran over with crocodile affection!

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

SAYING this, I left him with ineffable contempt, unable to utter a word. Jones and his companion attended me. It is unneceſſary to repeat all the inſolence of this man. He alternately triumphed in the completion of his revenge, and regretted the loſs of the reward to the ſhrivelled old curmudgeon we had juſt quitted, whom however he ſwore he would cheat of it, if he could. He equally regretted the imperfect way in which his ſkill had been cut off; boaſtfully recounting how he had ferreted me thus far, and bitterly lamenting that the whole had not been left to him, which in a day or two he would infallibly have accompliſhed.

I paid

I paid but little attention to his ſtory. It ſtruck upon my ſenſe, and I was able to recollect it at my neareſt leiſure, though I thought not of it at the time. For the preſent I was buſily employed reflecting on my new ſituation, and the conduct to be obſerved in it. My proſpects were particularly gloomy and diſcouraging. How much labour had I exerted, firſt to extricate myſelf from priſon, and next to evade the diligence of my purſuers; and the reſult of all, after months of anxiety and diligence, was, to be brought back to the point from which I began! I had gained fame indeed, the miſerable fame to have my ſtory bawled forth by hawkers and ballad mongers, to have my praiſes as an active and ſurpriſing villain celebrated among footmen and chambermaids; but I was neither an Eroſtratus nor an Alexander, to die contented with that ſpecies of eulogium. With reſpect to all that

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was ſolid and deſirable, what chance could I aſcribe to new exertions of a ſimilar nature; which, if undertaken at all, muſt be undertaken with infinitely more unfavourable auſpices?

They were conſiderations like theſe that dictated my reſolution. My mind had been gradually weaning from Mr. Falkland, till its feelings roſe to ſomething like abhorrence. I had long cheriſhed a reverence for him, which not even animoſity and perſecution on his part could readily deſtroy. But I now aſcribed a character ſo inhumanly ſanguinary to his mind; I ſaw ſomething ſo fiend-like in the thus hunting me round the world, and determining to be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than my blood, while at the ſame time he knew my innocence, my innoxiouſneſs, nay I might add my virtues; that henceforth I trampled reverence and the recollection of former eſteem under my feet. I loſt all regard

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to his intellectual greatneſs, and all pity for the torture and agonies of his ſoul. I alſo would abjure forbearance. I would ſhow myſelf bitter and inflexible as he had done. Was it wiſe in him to compel me into extremity and madneſs? Had he no fears for his own ſecret and atrocious offences?

I went before the magiſtrates to whoſe office Jones and his comrade conducted me, fully determined to publiſh thoſe aſtoniſhing ſecrets, of which I had hitherto been the faithful depoſitory; and once for all to turn the tables upon my accuſer. It was time that the real criminal ſhould be the ſufferer, and not that innocence ſhould for ever labour under the oppreſſion of guilt. I had been obliged to ſpend the remainder of the night upon which I had been apprehended in priſon. During the interval I had thrown off every veſtige of diſguiſe, and appeared the next morning in my own

own perſon. I was of courſe eaſily identified; and, this being the whole with which the magiſtrates before whom I now ſtood thought themſelves concerned, they were proceeding to make out an order for my being conducted back to my own county. I ſuſpended the diſpatch of this meaſure by obſerving that I had ſomething to diſcloſe. This is an overture to which men appointed for the adminiſtration of criminal juſtice never fail to attend.

I ſaid that I had always proteſted my innocence, and muſt now repeat the proteſt.

In that caſe, retorted the ſenior magiſtrate abruptly, what can you have to diſcloſe? If you are innocent, that is no buſineſs of ours! We act officially.

I always declared, continued I, that I was the perpetrator of no guilt, but that the guilt wholly belonged to my accuſer. He privately conveyed theſe effects among my

my property, and then charged me with the robbery. I now declare more than that, that this man is a MURDERER, that I detected his criminality, and that for that reaſon he is determined to deprive me of life. I preſume, gentlemen, that you do conſider it as your buſineſs to take this declaration. I am perſuaded you will be by no means diſpoſed actively or paſſively to contribute to the atrocious injuſtice under which I ſuffer, to the impriſonment and condemnation of an innocent man in order that a murderer may go free. I ſuppreſſed this ſtory as long as I could. I was extremely averſe to be the author of the unhappineſs or the death of a human being. But all patience and ſubmiſſion have their limits.

Give me leave, ſir, rejoined the magiſtrate with an air of affected moderation, to aſk you two queſtions. Were you any way aiding, abetting or contributing to this murder?

No.

No.

And pray, ſir, who is this Mr. Falkland, and what may have been the nature of your connection with him?

Mr. Falkland is a gentleman of ſix thouſand per annum. I lived with him as his ſecretary.

In other words you were his ſervant?

As you pleaſe.

Very well, ſir, that is quite enough for me. Firſt I have to tell you as a magiſtrate, that I can have nothing to do with your declaration. If you had been concerned in the murder you talk of, that would alter the caſe. But it is out of all reaſonable rule for a magiſtrate to take an information from a felon, except againſt his accomplices. Next I think it right to obſerve to you in my own proper perſon, that you appear to me to be the moſt impudent raſcal I ever ſaw. Why, are you ſuch an aſs as to ſuppoſe, that the ſort of ſtory you have been telling,

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can be of any ſervice to you, either here, or at the aſſizes, or any where elſe? A fine time of it indeed it would be, if, when gentlemen of ſix thouſand a year take up their ſervants for robbing them, thoſe ſervants could trump up ſuch accuſations as theſe, and could get any magiſtrate or court of juſtice to liſten to them! Whether or no the felony with which you ſtand charged would have brought you to the gallows, I will not pretend to ſay. But I am ſure this ſtory will. There would be a ſpeedy end to all order and good government, if fellows that trample upon ranks and diſtinctions in this atrocious ſort, were upon any conſideration ſuffered to get off.

And do you refuſe, ſir, to attend to the particulars of the charge I allege?

Yes, ſir, I do.—But, if I did not, pray what witneſſes have you of the murder?

This queſtion ſtaggered me.

None.—But I believe I can make out a cir-

a circumſtantial proof of a nature to force attention from the moſt indifferent hearer.

I thoughtſo.—Officers, take him from the bar!

Such was the ſucceſs of this ultimate reſort on my part, upon which I had built with ſuch undoubting confidence. Till now I had conceived that the unfavourable ſituation in which I was placed was prolonged by my own forbearance; and I was determined to endure all that human nature could ſupport, rather than have recourſe to this extreme recrimination. That idea ſecretly conſoled me under all my calamities: a voluntary ſacrifice is chearfully made. I regarded myſelf as allied to the army of martyrs and confeſſors; I applauded my own fortitude and ſelf-denial; and I pleaſed myſelf with the idea, that I had the power, though I hoped never to employ it, by an unrelenting diſplay of all my reſources to

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put an end at once to my ſufferings and perſecutions.

And this at laſt was the juſtice of mankind. A man under certain circumſtances ſhall not be heard in the detection of a crime, becauſe he has not been a participator of it! The ſtory of a flagitious murder ſhall be liſtened to with indifference, while an innocent man is hunted like a wild beaſt to the fartheſt corners of the earth! Six thouſand a year ſhall protect a man from accuſation; and the validity of an impeachment ſhall be ſuperſeded, becauſe the author of it is a ſervant!

I was conducted back to the very priſon from which a few months before I had made my eſcape. My proſpects were more gloomy, and my ſituation apparently more irremediable than ever. I was expoſed again, if that were of any account, to the inſolence and tyranny that are uniformly exerciſed within thoſe

walls. Why ſhould I repeat the loathſome tale of all that was endured by me, and is endured by every man who is unhappy enough to fall under the government of theſe conſecrated miniſters of national juriſprudence? The ſufferings I had already experienced, my anxieties, my flight, the perpetual expectation of being diſcovered, worſe than the diſcovery itſelf, would perhaps have been enough to ſatisfy the moſt inſenſible individual in the court of his own conſcience, if I had even been the felon I was pretended to be. But the law has neither eyes, nor ears, nor bowels of humanity; and it turns into marble the hearts of all thoſe that are nurſed in its principles.

Yet I was not caſt down. I reſolved that, while I had life, I would never deſpair. Oppreſſed, annihilated I might be; but, if I died, I would die reſiſting. What uſe, what advantage, what pleaſurable ſentiment could ariſe from a tame

ſurrender? There is no man that is ignorant, that to humble yourſelf at the feet of the law is a bootleſs taſk; in her courts there is no room for amendment and reformation.

My fortitude may to ſome perſons appear above the ſtandard of human nature. But, if I draw back the veil from my heart, they will readily confeſs their miſtake. My heart bled at every pore. My reſolution was not the calm ſentiment of philoſophy and reaſon. It was a gloomy and deſperate purpoſe; the creature, not of hope, but of a mind auſterely held to its deſign, that thought itſelf ſatisfied with the naked effort, and prepared to give ſucceſs or miſcarriage to the winds. It was to this miſerable condition, which might awaken ſympathy in the moſt hardened boſom, that Mr. Falkland had reduced me.

I anticipated the event of my trial. I was determined once more to eſcape from

my priſon, nor did I doubt of my ability to effect at leaſt this firſt ſtep towards my future preſervation. The aſſizes however were near, and there were certain conſiderations, unneceſſary to be detailed, that perſuaded me there might be benefit in waiting till my trial ſhould actually be terminated, before I made my attempt. It ſtood upon the liſt as one of the lateſt to be brought forward. I was therefore extremely ſurpriſed to find it called out of its order early on the morning of the ſecond day. But, if this were unexpected, how much greater was my aſtoniſhment, when my proſecutor was called, to find neither Mr. Falkland, nor Mr. Foreſter, nor a ſingle individual of any deſcription appear againſt me! The recognizances into which my proſecutors had entered were ordered to be forfeited, and I was diſmiſſed without further impediment from the bar.

The effect which this incredible reverſe produced

produced upon my mind was as if I had fallen from the elevation of the moſt diſtant planet in the ſyſtem upon our earth in a moment. I, who had come to that bar with the ſentence of death already in idea ringing in my ears, to be told that I was free to tranſport myſelf whitherſoever I pleaſed! Was it for this that I had broken through ſo many locks, and bolts, and the adamantine walls of my priſon; that I had paſſed ſo many anxious days, and ſleepleſs, ſpectre-haunted nights; that I had racked my invention for expedients of evaſion and concealment; that my mind had been rouſed to an energy of which I could ſcarcely have believed it capable; that my exiſtence had been enthralled to an ever-living torment ſuch as I could hardly have ſuppoſed it in man to endure? Great God! what is man? Is he thus blind to the future, thus totally unſuſpecting of what is to occur in the next moment of his exiſtence? I

have ſomewhere read that heaven in mercy hides from us the future incidents of our life. My own experience does not well accord with this aſſertion. In this inſtance at leaſt I ſhould have been ſaved from inſupportable labour and undeſcribable anguiſh, could I have foreſeen the cataſtrophe of this moſt intereſting tranſaction.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

IT was not long before I took my everlaſting leave of this deteſted and miſerable ſcene. My heart was for the preſent too full of aſtoniſhment and exultation in this unexpected deliverance, to admit of anxiety about the future. I withdrew from the town. I rambled with a ſlow and thoughtful pace, now burſting with exclamation, and now buried in profound and undefinable reverie. Accident led me towards the very heath which had firſt ſheltered me, when upon a former occaſion I broke out of my priſon. I wandered among its cavities and its vallies. It was a forlorn and deſolate ſolitude. I continued here I know not how long. Night at length overtook me unper-

ceived, and I prepared to return for the preſent to the town I had quitted.

It was now perfectly dark, when two men whom I had not previouſly obſerved ſprung upon me from behind. They ſeized me by the arms, and threw me upon the ground. I had no time for reſiſtance or recollection. I could however perceive that one of them was the diabolical Jones. They blindfolded, gagged me, and hurried me I knew not whither. As we paſſed along in ſilence, I endeavoured to conjecture what could be the meaning of this extraordinary violence. I was ſtrongly impreſſed with the idea that, after the event of this morning, the moſt ſevere and painful part of my hiſtory was paſt; nor could I perſuade myſelf to ſhrink with alarm at this unexpected attack. It might however be ſome new project ſuggeſted by the brutal temper and unrelenting animoſity of Jones.

I pre-

I preſently found that we were returned into the town I had juſt quitted. They led me into a houſe, and, as ſoon as they had taken poſſeſſion of a room, freed me from the reſtraints they had before impoſed. Here Jones informed me with a malicious grin, that no harm was intended me, and therefore I ſhould ſhow moſt ſenſe in keeping myſelf quiet. I perceived that we were in an inn; I overheard company in a room at no great diſtance from us, and therefore was myſelf as thoroughly aware as he could be, that there was at preſent little reaſon to ſtand in fear of any ſpecies of violence, and that it would be time enough to reſiſt, when they attempted to conduct me from the inn in the ſame manner that they had brought me into it. I was not without ſome curioſity to ſee the concluſion that was to follow upon ſo extraordinary a commencement.

The preliminaries I have deſcribed

were ſcarcely completed, before Mr. Falkland entered the room. I remember Collins, when he firſt communicated to me the particulars of our patron's hiſtory, obſerved that he was totally unlike the man he had once been. I had no means of aſcertaining the truth of that obſervation. But it was ſtrikingly applicable to the ſpectacle which now preſented itſelf to my eyes, though, when I laſt beheld this unhappy man, he had been a victim to the ſame paſſions, a prey to the ſame undying remorſe as now. Miſery was at that time inſcribed in legible characters upon his countenance. But now he appeared like nothing that had ever been viſible in human ſhape. His viſage was haggard, emaciated and fleſhleſs. His complexion was a dun and tarniſhed red, the colour uniform through every region of the face, and ſuggeſted the idea of its being burnt and parched by the eternal fire that burned within him.

him. His eyes were red, quick, wandering, full of ſuſpicion and rage. His hair was neglected, ragged and floating. His whole figure was thin to a degree that ſuggeſted the idea rather of a ſkeleton than a perſon actually alive. Life ſeemed hardly to be the capable inhabitant of ſo woe-begone and ghoſt-like a figure. The taper of wholeſome life was expired; but paſſion and fierceneſs and frenzy were able for the preſent to ſupply its place.

I was to the utmoſt degree aſtoniſhed and ſhocked at the ſight of him.—He ſternly commanded my conductors to leave the room.

Well, ſir, I have this day ſucceſsfully exerted myſelf to ſave your life from the gallows. A fortnight ago you did what you were able to bring my life to that ignominious cloſe.

Were you ſo ſtupid and undiſtinguiſhing as not to know that the preſervation

of your life was the uniform object of my exertions? Did not I maintain you in priſon? Did not I endeavour to prevent your being ſent thither? Could you miſtake the bigoted and obſtinate conduct of Foreſter in offering a hundred guineas for your apprehenſion, for mine?

I had my eye upon you in all your wanderings. You have taken no material ſtep through their whole courſe with which I have not been acquainted. I meditated to do you good. I have ſpilled no blood but that of Tyrrel: that was in the moment of paſſion, and it has been the ſubject of my uninterrupted and hourly remorſe. I have connived at no man's fate but that of the Hawkinses: they could no otherwiſe have been ſaved than by my acknowledging myſelf a murderer. The reſt of my life has all been ſpent in acts of benevolence.

I meditated to do you good. For that reaſon I was willing to prove you.

You pretended to act towards me with conſideration and forbearance. If you had perſiſted in that to the end, I would yet have found a way to reward you. I left you to your own diſcretion. You might ſhow the impotent malignity of your own heart, but in the circumſtances in which you were then placed I knew you could not hurt me. Your forbearance has proved, as I all along ſuſpected, empty and treacherous. You have attempted to blaſt my reputation. You have ſought to diſcloſe the ſelect and eternal ſecret of my ſoul. Becauſe you have done that, I will never forgive you. I will remember it to my lateſt breath. The memory ſhall ſurvive me, when my exiſtence is no more. Do you think you are out of the reach of my power, becauſe a court of juſtice has acquitted you?

While Mr. Falkland was ſpeaking, a ſudden diſtemper came over his counte-

nance,

nance, his whole frame was ſhaken by an inſtantaneous convulſion, and he ſtaggered to a chair. In about three minutes he recovered.

Yes, ſaid he, I am ſtill alive. I ſhall live for days and months and years, the power that made me, of whatever kind it be, can only determine how long. I live the guardian of my reputation. That, and to endure a miſery ſuch as man never endured, are the only ends to which I live. But, when I am no more, my fame ſhall ſtill ſurvive. My character ſhall be revered as ſpotleſs and unimpeachable by all poſterity, as long as the name of Falkland ſhall be repeated in the moſt diſtant region of the many-peopled globe.

Having ſaid this, he returned to the diſcourſe which more immediately related to my future condition and happineſs.

There is one condition, ſaid he, upon which you may obtain ſome mitigation of

of your future calamity. It is for that purpoſe that I have ſent for you. Liſten to my propoſal with deliberation and ſobriety! Remember, that the inſanity is not leſs to trifle with the reſolved determination of my ſoul, than it would be to pull a mountain upon your head that hung trembling upon the edge of the mighty Appenine!

I inſiſt then upon your ſigning a paper declaring in the moſt ſolemn manner that I am innocent of murder, and that the charge you alleged at the office in Bow-Street is falſe, malicious and groundleſs. Perhaps you may ſcruple out of a regard to truth. Is truth then entitled to adoration for its own ſake, and not for the ſake of the happineſs it is calculated to produce? Will a reaſonable man ſacrifice to barren truth, when benevolence, humanity and every conſideration that is dear to the human heart require that it ſhould be ſuperſeded? It is probable that

that I may never make uſe of this paper, but I require it as the only practicable reparation to the honour you have aſſailed. This is what I had to propoſe. I expect your anſwer.

Sir, anſwered I, I have heard you to an end, and I ſtand in need of no deliberation to enable me to anſwer you in the negative. You took me up a raw and inexperienced boy, capable of being moulded to any form you pleaſed. But you have communicated to me volumes of experience in a very ſhort period. I am no longer irreſolute and pliable. What is the power you retain over my fate I am unable to diſcover. You may deſtroy me; but you cannot make me tremble. I am not concerned to enquire whether what I have ſuffered flowed from you by deſign or otherwiſe, whether you were the author of my miſeries or only connived at them. This I know, that I have ſuffered too exquiſitely on your account,

count, for me to feel the leaſt remaining claim on your part to my making any voluntary ſacrifice.

You ſay that benevolence and humanity require this ſacrifice of me. No. It would only be a ſacrifice to your mad and miſguided love of fame, to that paſſion which has been the ſource of all your miſeries, of the moſt tragical calamities to others, and of every misfortune that has happened to me. I have no forbearance to exerciſe towards that paſſion. If you be not yet cured of this tremendous and ſanguinary folly, at leaſt I will do nothing to cheriſh it. I know not whether from my youth I was deſtined for a hero; but I may thank you for having taught me a leſſon of inſurmountable fortitude.

What is it that you require of me? That I ſhould ſign away my own reputation for the better maintaining of yours. Where is the equality of that? What is it that caſts

caſts me at ſuch an immenſe diſtance below you, as to make every thing that relates to me wholly unworthy of conſideration? You have been educated in the prejudice of birth. I abhor that prejudice. You have made me deſperate, and I utter what that deſperation ſuggeſts.

You will tell me perhaps that I have no reputation to loſe, that, while you are eſteemed faultleſs and unblemiſhed, I am univerſally reputed a thief, a ſuborner and a calumniator. Be it ſo. I will never do any thing to countenance thoſe imputations. The more I am deſtitute of the eſteem of mankind, the more careful I will be to preſerve my own. I will never from fear or any other miſtaken motive do any thing of which I ought to be aſhamed.

You are determined to be for ever my enemy. I have in no degree deſerved this eternal abhorrence. I have always

eſteemed

eſteemed and pitied you. For a conſiderable time I rather choſe to expoſe myſelf to every kind of misfortune, than diſcloſe the ſecret that was ſo dear to you. I was not deterred by your menaces, (What could you make me ſuffer more than I actually ſuffered?) but by the humanity of my own heart; in which, and not in means of violence, you ought to have repoſed your confidence. What is the myſterious vengeance that you can yet execute againſt me? You menaced me before; you can menace no worſe now. You are wearing out the ſprings of terror. Do with me as you pleaſe! You teach me to hear you with an unſhrinking and deſperate firmneſs. Recollect yourſelf! I did not proceed to the act with which you reproach me till I was apparently urged to the very laſt extremity. I am now ſorry that that ſtep was ever adopted. But it ſeemed that I was treated with unrelenting rigour; and,

urged

urged to exaſperation by unintermitted ſufferings, I had no time to cool or to deliberate. Even at preſent I cheriſh no vengeance againſt you. All that is reaſonable, all that can really contribute to your ſecurity, I will readily concede; but I will not be driven to an act repugnant to all reaſon, integrity, and juſtice.

Mr. Falkland liſtened to me with aſtoniſhment and impatience. He had entertained no previous conception of the firmneſs I diſplayed. Several times he was convulſed with the fury that laboured in his breaſt. Once and again he betrayed an intention to interrupt; but he was reſtrained by the collectedneſs of my manner, and perhaps by a deſire to be acquainted with the entire ſtate of my mind. Finding that I had concluded, he pauſed for a moment; his paſſion ſeemed gradually to enlarge, till it was no longer capable of control.

It is well! ſaid he, gnaſhing his teeth, and

and ſtamping upon the ground. You refuſe the compoſition I offer! I have no power to perſuade you to compliance! You defy me! At leaſt I have a power reſpecting you, and that power I will exerciſe; a power that ſhall grind you into atoms. I condeſcend to no more expoſtulation. I know what I am, and what I can be. I know what you are, and what fate is reſerved for you!

Saying this he quitted the room.

Such were the particulars of this memorable ſcene. The impreſſion it has left upon my underſtanding is indelible. The figure and appearance of Mr. Falkland, his death-like weakneſs and decay, his more than mortal energy and rage, the words that he ſpoke, the motives that animated him, produced one compounded effect upon my mind that nothing of the ſame nature could ever parallel. The idea of his miſery thrilled through my frame. How weak in compariſon of it

is

is the imaginary hell, which the great enemy of mankind is repreſented as carrying every where about with him!

From this conſideration my mind preſently turned to the menaces he had vented againſt myſelf. They were all myſterious and undefined. He had talked of power, but had given no hint from which I could collect in what he imagined it to conſiſt. He had talked of miſery, but had not dropped a ſyllable reſpecting the nature of the miſery to be inflicted.

I ſat ſtill for ſome time ruminating on theſe thoughts. Neither Mr. Falkland, nor any other perſon appeared, to diſturb my meditations. I roſe, went out of the room, and from the inn into the ſtreet. No one offered to moleſt me. It was ſtrange! What was the nature of this power from which I was to apprehend ſo much, yet which ſeemed to leave me at perfect liberty? I began to imagine that

all

all I had heard from this dreadful adverſary was mere madneſs and extravagance, that he was at length deprived of the uſe of reaſon, which had long ſerved him only as a medium of torment. Yet was it likely in that caſe that he ſhould be able to employ Jones and his aſſociate, who had juſt been his inſtruments of violence upon my perſon?

I proceeded along the ſtreets with conſiderable caution. I looked before me and behind me, as well as the darkneſs would allow me to do, that I might not again be hunted in ſight by ſome man of ſtratagem and violence without my perceiving it. I was not as before beyond the limits of the town, but conſidered the ſtreets, the houſes and the inhabitants as affording ſome degree of ſecurity. I was ſtill walking with my mind thus full of ſuſpicion and forecaſt, when I diſcovered Thomas, that ſervant of Mr. Falkland whom I have already more than once had occaſion

occaſion to mention. He advanced towards me with an air ſo blunt and direct, as inſtantly to remove from me the idea of any thing inſidious in his purpoſe; beſide that I had always felt the character of Thomas, ruſtic and uncultivated as it was, to be entitled to a more than common portion of eſteem.

Thomas, ſaid I, as he advanced, I hope you are willing to give me joy that I am at length delivered from the dreadful danger which for many months haunted me ſo unmercifully.

No, rejoined Thomas roughly, I be not at all willing. I do not know what to make of myſelf in this affair. While you were in priſon in that miſerable faſhion, I felt all at one almoſt as if I loved you: and, now that that is over, and you are turned out looſe in the world to do your worſt, my blood riſes at the very ſight of you. To look at you, you are almoſt that very lad Williams for whom

whom I could with pleaſure as it were have laid down my life; and yet behind that ſmiling face there lie robbery, and lying, and every thing that is ungrateful and murderous. Your laſt action was worſe than all the reſt. How could you find in your heart to revive that cruel ſtory about Mr. Tyrrel, which every body had agreed out of regard to the ſquire never to mention again, and of which I know and you know he is as innocent as the child unborn? There are cauſes and reaſons, or elſe I could have wiſhed from the bottom of my ſoul never to have ſet eyes on you again!

And you ſtill perſiſt in your hard thoughts of me!

Worſe! I think worſe of you than ever! Before, I thought you as bad as man could be. I wonder from my ſoul what you are to do next. But you make good the old ſaying, When a man is once in ———.

And ſo there is never to be an end of my misfortunes. What can Mr. Falkland contrive for me worſe than the ill opinion and enmity of all mankind?

Mr. Falkland contrive? He is the beſt friend you have in the world, though you are the baſeſt traitor to him. Poor man! it makes one's heart ache to look at him; he is the very image of grief. And it is not clear to me that it is not all owing to you. At leaſt you have given the finiſhing blow in behalf of the diſeaſe that already had him in its clutches. There have been the devil and all to pay between him and ſquire Foreſter. The ſquire is right raving mad with my maſter, for having outwitted him in the matter of the trial, and ſaved your life. He ſwears that you ſhall be taken up and tried all over again at the next aſſizes; but my maſter is ſo reſolute, that I believe he will carry it his own way. To ſee him ordering every thing for your benefit,

benefit, and taking all your maliciouſneſs as mild and innocent as a lamb, and then to think of your vile proceedings againſt him, is a ſight one ſhall not ſee again, if one was to go all the world over. For God's ſake, repent of your reprobate doings, and make what little reparation is in your power! Think of your poor ſoul, before you awake, as to be ſure one of theſe days you will, in fire and brimſtone everlaſting!

Saying this, he held out his hand, and took hold of mine. The action ſeemed ſtrange, but I at firſt thought of it as the unpremeditated reſult of his ſolemn and well-intended adjuration. I felt however that he put ſomething into my hand. The next moment he quitted his hold, and haſtened from me with the ſwiftneſs of an arrow. What he had thus given me was a bank-note of twenty pounds. I had no doubt that he had been charged to deliver it to me from Mr. Falkland.

What was I to infer? What light did it throw upon the intentions of my inexorable perſecutor? His animoſity againſt me was as great as ever; that I had juſt had confirmed to me from his own mouth. Yet his animoſity appeared to be ſtill tempered with the remains of humanity. He preſcribed to it a line wide enough to embrace the gratification of his views, and within the boundaries of that line it ſtopped. But this diſcovery carried no conſolation to my mind. I knew not what portion of calamity I was fated to endure, before his jealouſy of diſhonour and inordinate thirſt of fame would deem themſelves ſatisfied.

Another queſtion offered itſelf. Was I to receive the money which had juſt been put into my hands? the money of a man, who had inflicted upon me injuries, leſs than thoſe which he had entailed upon himſelf, but the greateſt that one man can inflict upon another? who ha[illegible]

blaſted

blaſted my youth, who had deſtroyed my peace, who had held me up to the abhorrence of mankind, and rendered me an outcaſt upon the face of the earth? who had forged of me the baſeſt and moſt atrocious falſhoods, and urged them with a ſerioufneſs and perſeverance which produced univerſal belief? who an hour before had vowed againſt me inexorable enmity, and ſworn to entail upon me miſery without end? Would not this conduct on my part betray a baſe and abject ſpirit, that crouched under tyranny, and kiſſed the hands that were embrued in my blood?

If theſe reaſons appeared ſtrong, neither was the other ſide without reaſons in reply. I wanted the money: not for any purpoſe of vice or ſuperfluity, but for thoſe purpoſes without which life cannot ſubſiſt. Man ought to be able, wherever placed, to find for himſelf the means of exiſtence; but I was to open a new

ſcene of life, to remove to ſome diſtant ſpot, to be prepared againſt the ill-will of mankind, and the unexplored projects of hoſtility of a moſt accompliſhed foe. The actual means of exiſtence are the property of all. What ſhould hinder me from taking that of which I was really in want, when in taking it I riſked no vengeance and perpetrated no violence? The property in queſtion will be beneficial to me, and the voluntary ſurrender of it is accompanied with no injury to its late proprietor; what other condition can be neceſſary to render the uſe of it on my part a duty? He that lately poſſeſſed it has injured me; does that alter its value as a medium of exchange? He will boaſt perhaps of the imaginary obligation he has conferred on me: Surely to ſhrink from a thing in itſelf right, from any ſuch apprehenſion, can be the reſult only of puſillanimity and cowardice.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

INFLUENCED by theſe reaſonings, I determined to retain what had thus been put into my hands. My next care was in regard to the ſcene I ſhould chooſe as the retreat of that life which I had juſt ſaved from the graſp of the executioner. The danger to which I was expoſed of forcible interruption in my purſuits was probably in ſome reſpects leſs now, than it had been previouſly to this criſis. Beſide, that I was conſiderably influenced in this deliberation by the ſtrong loathing I conceived for the ſituations in which I had lately been engaged. I knew not in what mode Mr. Falkland intended to exerciſe his vengeance againſt me; but I was ſeized with ſo unconquerable an averſion

to diſguiſe and the idea of ſpending my life in the perſonating a fictitious character, that I could not for the preſent at leaſt reconcile my mind to any thing of that nature. The ſame kind of diſguſt I had conceived for the metropolis, where I had ſpent ſo many hours of artifice and terror. I therefore decided in favour of the project which had formerly proved amuſing to my imagination, of withdrawing to ſome diſtant, rural ſcene, a ſcene of calmneſs and obſcurity, where for a few years at leaſt, perhaps during the life of Mr. Falkland, I might be hidden from the world, recover the wounds my mind had received in this fatal connexion, methodiſe and improve the experience which had been accumulated, cultivate the faculties I in any degree poſſeſſed, and employ the intervals of theſe occupations in ſimple induſtry and the intercourſe of guileleſs, uneducated, kind-intentioned minds. The menaces of my

perſecutor

perſecutor ſeemed to forebode the inevitable interruption of this ſyſtem. But I deemed it wiſe to put theſe menaces out of my conſideration. I compared them to death, which muſt infallibly overtake us, we know not when; but the poſſibility of whoſe arrival next year, next week, tomorrow, muſt be left out of the calculation of him who would enter upon any important or well concerted undertaking.

Such were the ideas that determined my choice. Thus did my youthful mind delineate the ſyſtem of diſtant years, even when the threats of inſtant calamity ſtill ſounded in my ears. I was inured to the apprehenſion of miſchief, till at laſt the hoarſe roarings of the beginning tempeſt had no power to diſturb my tranquillity. I however thought it neceſſary, while I was apparently within the ſphere of the enemy, to exert every practicable degree of vigilance. I was care-

ful not to incur the hazards of darkneſs and ſolitude. When I left the town, it was with the ſtage-coach, an obvious ſource of protection againſt glaring and enormous violence. Meanwhile I found myſelf no more expoſed to moleſtation in my progreſs, than the man in the world who ſhould have had the leaſt reaſon for apprehenſions of this nature. As the diſtance increaſed, I relaxed ſomething in my precaution, though ſtill awake to a ſenſe of danger, and conſtantly purſued with the image of my foe. I fixed upon an obſcure market-town in Wales as the choſen ſeat of my operations. This place recommended itſelf to my obſervation, as I was wandering in queſt of an abode. It was clean, chearful and of great ſimplicity of appearance. It was at a diſtance from any public and frequented road, and had nothing which could deſerve the name of trade. The face of nature around

it

it was agreeably diverſified, being partly wild and romantic, and partly rich and abundant in production.

Here I ſolicited employment in two profeſſions; the firſt that of a watch-maker, in which though the inſtructions I had received were but few, they were eked out and aſſiſted by a mind fruitful in mechanical invention; the other that of an inſtructor in mathematics and its practical application, geography, aſtronomy, land-ſurveying and navigation. Neither of theſe was a very copious ſource of emolument in the obſcure retreat I had choſen for myſelf: but, if my receipts were ſlender, my diſburſements were ſtill fewer. In this little town I became acquainted with the vicar, the apothecary, the lawyer, and the reſt of the perſons who time out of mind had been regarded as the top gentry of the place. Each of theſe centred in himſelf a variety of occupations. There

was little in the appearance of the vicar that reminded you of his profeſſion except on the recurring Sunday. At other times he condeſcended with his evangelical hand to guide the plough, or to drive the cows from the field to the farmyard for the milking. The apothecary occaſionally officiated as a barber, and the lawyer was the village ſchoolmaſter.

By all theſe perſons I was received with kindneſs and hoſpitality. Among people thus remote from the buſtle of human life there is an open ſpirit of confidence, by means of which, a ſtranger eaſily finds acceſs to their benevolence and goodwill. My manners had never been greatly debauched, by the ſcenes through which I had paſſed, from the ſimplicity of rural life; and the hardſhips I had endured gave additional mildneſs to my character. In the theatre upon which I was now placed I had no

rival,

rival. My mechanical occupation had hitherto been a non-reſident; and the ſchoolmaſter, who did not aſpire to the ſublime heights of ſcience I profeſſed to diſcover, was very willing to admit me as a partner in the taſk of civilizing the unpoliſhed manners of the inhabitants. For the parſon, civiliſation was no part of his trade; his buſineſs was with the things of a better life, not with the carnal concerns of this material ſcene; in truth, his thoughts were principally occupied with his oatmeal and his cows.

This ſcene had perhaps a more powerful handle upon my affections, than it would have had upon thoſe of almoſt any other perſon with my degree of intellectual cultivation. I had had a profound experience, though a ſhort one, of ſociety ſuch as ranks and regulations have conſtituted it. The ſimple ſcene of which I was now an inmate, the abode of groſs and unſuſpecting ignorance, bore a kind

a kind of rude reſemblance to that ſimplicity which ſeems to be the goal of elevated and comprehenſive reaſon. I bore with its groſſneſs, the narrowneſs of its proſpects and the uniformity of its impreſſions, in behalf of its freedom from malignity and deceit. How long I ſhould have ſat down contented with theſe defects in conſideration of theſe advantages I am unable to pronounce. For the preſent, ſore with perſecution and diſtreſs, and bleeding at almoſt every vein, there was nothing I ſo much coveted as reſt and tranquillity. It ſeemed as if my faculties were, at leaſt for the time, exhauſted by the late preternatural and vice-derived intenſity of their exertions, and that they ſtood indiſpenſibly in need of a period of comparative ſuſpenſion.

In this ſtate, ſo grateful to my feelings, week after week glided away without interruption and alarm. Every day contributed to my progreſs in the eſteem

of my guileleſs neighbours. At firſt they looked upon me with wonder as a ſort of non deſcript; but they were pleaſed to find upon farther acquaintance that I fell in for the moſt part with their habits and manners; and that, though I was able, if ſolicited, to inform them upon ſubjects extremely remote from their uſual occupations, yet my ſuperior knowledge gave me no inclination to dictate or domineer. The peculiarities in which I differed from them generated no averſion. My habits were more ſolitary and ſedentary than thoſe of any of my neighbours: but I ſtate the ſimple and unornamented fact when I affirm, that my univerſal character among them was that of a perſon of great learning and knowledge, mild, even-tempered, and that would not hurt ſo much as a worm.

Thus tranquil, there were moments in which I even forgot there was ſuch a perſon

perſon as Mr. Falkland in the world. The ſituation in which I was now placed was not very different from that in which I had ſpent my earlier years; and I began to look back upon the intervening period as upon a diſtempered and tormenting dream; or rather perhaps my feelings were like thoſe of a man recovered from ſix months raging delirium, from ideas of horror, confuſion, flight, perſecution, agony and deſpair! When I recollected what I had undergone, it was not without ſome ſatisfaction as the recollection of a thing that was paſt; every day augmented my hope that it was never to return. Surely the dark and terrific menaces of Mr. Falkland were rather the perturbed ſuggeſtions of his angry mind, than the final reſult of a deliberate and digeſted ſyſtem! How happy ſhould I feel beyond what ordinarily falls to the lot of man, if, after the terrors and alarms I had undergone, I found

found myſelf thus unexpectedly reſtored to the immunities of a human being!

While I was thus ſoothing my mind with fond imaginations, it happened that a few bricklayers and their labourers came over from a diſtance of five or ſix miles, to work upon ſome additions to one of the better ſort of houſes in the town which had changed its tenant. No incident could be more trivial than this, had it not been for a ſtrange coincidence of time between this circumſtance and a change which introduced itſelf into my ſituation. This firſt manifeſted itſelf in a ſort of ſhyneſs with which I was treated firſt by one perſon and then another of my new-formed acquaintance. They were backward to enter into converſation with me, and anſwered my enquiries with an aukward and embarraſſed air. When they met me in the ſtreet or the field, their countenance contracted a cloud, and they endeavoured to ſhun me.

me. My ſcholars quitted me one after another, and I had no longer any employment in my mechanical profeſſion. It is impoſſible to deſcribe the ſenſations which the gradual, but uninterrupted progreſs of this revolution produced in my mind. It ſeemed as if I had ſome contagious diſeaſe, from which every man ſhrunk with alarm, and left me to periſh unaſſiſted and alone. I aſked one man and another to explain to me the meaning of theſe appearances; but every one avoided the taſk, and anſwered in an evaſive and ambiguous manner. I ſometimes ſuppoſed that it was all a deluſion of the imagination; till the repetition of the ſenſation, and ſtill more the decay of my projected modes of ſubſiſtence, brought the reality too painfully home to my apprehenſion. There are few things that give a greater ſhock to the mind than a phenomenon in the conduct of our fellow men, of great importance

portance to our concerns, and for which we are unable to aſſign any plauſible reaſon. I was like a tree ſtruck with ſome fatal blight, from which one branch falls off after another, and leaves the naked trunk a monument of calamity and ſcorn. Incapable of aſſigning the cauſe of my diſgrace, I was at times half inclined to believe that the change was not in other men, but that ſome alienation of my own underſtanding generated the horrid viſion. I endeavoured to awake from my dream, and return to my former ſtate of enjoyment and happineſs; but in vain. To the ſame conſideration it may be aſcribed, that unacquainted with the ſource of the evil, obſerving its perpetual increaſe, and finding it ſo far as I could perceive entirely arbitrary in its nature, I was unable to aſcertain its limits, or the degree in which it would finally overwhelm me.

In the midſt however of the wonder-

ful

ful and ſeemingly inexplicable nature of this ſcene, there was one idea that inſtantly intruded itſelf, and that I could never after baniſh from my mind. It is Falkland! In vain I ſtruggled againſt the ſeeming improbability of the ſuppoſition. In vain I ſaid, Mr. Falkland, wiſe as he is and pregnant in reſources, acts by human and not by ſupernatural means. He may overtake me by ſurpriſe and in a manner of which I have no previous expectation; but he cannot produce a great and notorious effect without ſome viſible agency, however difficult it may be to trace that agency to its abſolute author. He cannot, like thoſe inviſible perſonages who are ſuppoſed from time to time to interfere in human affairs, ride in the whirlwind, ſhroud himſelf in clouds and impenetrable darkneſs, and ſcatter deſtruction upon the earth from his ſecret habitation. Thus it was that I bribed my imagination, and endeavoured

voured to perſuade myſelf that my preſent unhappineſs originated in a different ſource from my former. All evils appeared trivial to me, in compariſon of the recollection and perpetuation of my parent misfortune. I was little better than diſtracted between the incoherence of my ideas as to my preſent ſituation excluding from it the machinations of Mr. Falkland, and the horror I conceived at the bare poſſibility of again encountering his animoſity, after a ſuſpenſion of many weeks, a ſuſpenſion as I had hoped for ever. An interval of weeks was an age to a perſon in the calamitous ſituation I had ſo long experienced. But, in ſpite of all my efforts, I could not baniſh from my mind the dreadful idea. My original conceptions of the genius and the perſeverance of Mr. Falkland had been ſuch, that I could with difficulty think that any thing was impoſſible to him. I knew not how to ſet up my own opinions

of material cauſes and the powers of the human mind as the limits of exiſtence. Mr. Falkland had always been to my imagination an object of wonder, and that which excites our wonder we ſcarcely ever ſuppoſe ourſelves competent to analyſe.

I was in this ſtate of mind, and had already been compelled by the ſituation of my affairs to meditate the removing myſelf to a different reſidence, when a new circumſtance occurred, that tended in part to diſſipate the miſt which hung over my underſtanding. In reality, nothing at this time appeared more neceſſary to me than information. Without ſome conception of the cauſe of my preſent misfortune I could neither tell whither to remove, nor what precautions my intereſt obliged me to adopt. I was ſaved by the incident to which I allude from the neceſſity of proceeding entirely at random.

I returned one evening from a pedeſtrian

trian excurſion among the mountains. It is probable that my return was ſomewhat ſooner than was uſual with me upon ſimilar occaſions. Be that as it will, I found upon entering the houſe an apartment of which I occupied, that it was totally deſerted of its uſual inhabitants. The woman and her children were gone out to enjoy the freſhneſs of the breeze. The huſband was engaged in his uſual without-door occupations. I opened for myſelf, and went into the kitchen of the family. Here, as I looked round, my eyes accidentally glanced upon a paper lying in one corner, which by ſome aſſociation I was unable to explain, rouſed in me a ſtrong ſenſation of ſuſpicion and curioſity. I eagerly went towards it, caught it up, and found it to be the very paper of the Wonderful and Surpriſing Hiſtory of Caleb Williams, the diſcovery of which towards the cloſe of my reſidence

ſidence in London had produced in me ſuch exquiſite pain.

This diſcovery at once cleared up all the myſtery that had hung upon my late tranſactions. Abhorred and intolerable certainty ſucceeded to the doubts which had haunted my mind. It ſtruck me with the rapidity and irreſiſtible effect of lightning. I was like a man blaſted, his head bare and expoſed to the fury of the elements.

Was there no hope that remained to me? Was acquittal uſeleſs? Was there no period, paſt or in proſpect, that could give relief to my ſufferings? Was the odious and atrocious falſhood that had been invented againſt me, deſtined to follow me wherever I went, to ſtrip me of character, to deprive me of the ſympathy and good will of mankind, to wreſt from me the very bread by which life muſt be ſuſtained?

For

For the ſpace perhaps of half an hour the agony I felt, from this termination to my late tranquillity, and the expectation it excited of that enmity which would follow me through every retreat, was ſo great as to bereave me of all conſiſtent thinking and of the power of coming to any reſolution. As ſoon as this hurricane of the mind ſubſided, and the winds that impelled me this way and that were ſtill, one ſtiff and maſter gale took its turn of aſcendancy, and drove me to an inſtant deſertion of this once cheriſhed retreat. I had no patience to enter into remonſtrance and explanation with the uninſtructed inhabitants of my preſent reſidence. I had ſeen too much of the reign of triumphant falſhood to have that ſanguine confidence in the effects of my innocence, which would have ſuggeſted itſelf to the mind of any other perſon of my propenſities and my age. I could not endure the thought of oppoſing the

venom that was thus ſcattered againſt me, in detail and through its minuter particles. If ever it ſhould be neceſſary for me to encounter it, if I were purſued like a wild beaſt till I could no longer avoid turning upon my hunters, I would then turn upon the true author of this unprincipled attack. I would encounter the calumny in its ſtrong hold, I would rouſe myſelf to an exertion hitherto uneſſayed, and, by the firmneſs, intrepidity and unalterable conſtancy I ſhould diſplay, would yet compel mankind to believe that Mr. Falkland was a ſuborner and a murderer.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

I HASTEN to the concluſion of my melancholy ſtory. I began to write ſoon after the period to which I have now conducted it. It has ſerved me as a ſource of avocation for ſeveral years. For ſome time I had a melancholy conſolation in writing. I was better pleaſed to repaſs in my mind the particulars of calamities that had formerly afflicted me, than to look forward, as at other times I was too apt to do, to thoſe by which I might hereafter be overtaken. I conceived that my ſtory faithfully digeſted would carry in it an impreſſion of truth that few men would be able to reſiſt; or at worſt that, by leaving it behind me when I

ſhould no longer continue to exiſt, poſterity might be induced to do me juſtice, and, ſeeing in my example what ſort of evils are entailed upon mankind by ſociety as it is at preſent conſtituted, might be inclined to turn their attention upon the fountain from which ſuch bitter waters have been accuſtomed to flow. But theſe motives have diminiſhed in their influence. I have contracted ſomething too like a loathing for life and all its appendages. Writing, which was at firſt a pleaſure, is changed into a burthen. I ſhall compreſs into a ſmall compaſs what yet remains to be told.

I found out not long after the period of which I am ſpeaking the preciſe cauſe of the myſterious reverſe I had experienced in my reſidence in Wales, and included in that cauſe what it was I had to look for in my future adventures. Mr. Falkland had taken the infernal Jones into his pay, a man in three reſpects moſt critically

critically qualified for the ſervice in which he was now engaged; by the unfeeling brutality of his temper, by the habits of his mind at once audacious and artful, and by the peculiar animoſity and vengeance he had conceived againſt me. The employment to which this man was hired was that of following me from place to place for the purpoſe of blaſting my reputation, and preventing me from the chance, by continuing long in one reſidence, of acquiring a character of integrity that might give new weight to any accuſation I might at a future time be induced to prefer. He had come to the ſeat of my reſidence with the bricklayers and labourers I have mentioned; and, while he took care to keep out of ſight ſo far as related to me, was induſtrious in diſſeminating that which in the eye of the world ſeemed to amount to a demonſtration of the profligacy and deteſtableneſs of my character. It was, no doubt, from him

that the deteſted ſcroll had been procured, which I had found in my habitation immediately prior to my quitting it. In all this Mr. Falkland, reaſoning upon his principles, was only employing a neceſſary precaution. There was ſomething in the temper of his mind that impreſſed him with averſion to the idea of violently putting an end to my exiſtence; at the ſame time that unfortunately he could never deem himſelf ſufficiently ſecured againſt my recrimination, ſo long as I remained alive. As to the fact of Jones being retained by him for this tremendous purpoſe, he by no means deſired that it ſhould become generally known; but then neither did he look upon the poſſibility of its being known with terror. It was already too notorious for his wiſhes, that I had advanced the moſt odious charges againſt him. If he regarded me with abhorrence as the great adverſary of his fame, thoſe perſons who had had occaſion

caſion to be at all acquainted with our hiſtory, did not entertain leſs abhorrence againſt me for my own ſake. If they knew all the pains he exerted in cauſing my evil reputation to follow me, they would conſider it as an act of impartial juſtice, perhaps as a generous anxiety to prevent other men from being impoſed upon and injured, as he had been.

What expedient was I to employ for the purpoſe of counteracting the meditated and barbarous prudence, which was thus deſtined in all changes of ſcene to deprive me of the benefits and conſolations of human ſociety? There was one expedient againſt which I was abſolutely determined, diſguiſe. I had experienced ſo many mortifications and ſuch intolerable reſtraint when I had formerly had recourſe to it, it was aſſociated in my underſtanding with ſenſations of ſuch acute anguiſh, that my mind was thus far entirely convinced: Life was not

worth purchaſing at ſo high a price! But, though in this reſpect I was wholly reſolved, there was another point that did not appear to me ſo material, and in which therefore I was willing to accommodate myſelf to circumſtances. I was contented, if that would inſure my peace, to ſubmit to the otherwiſe unmanly expedient of paſſing by a different name.

But the change of my name, the abruptneſs with which I removed from place to place, the remoteneſs and the obſcurity which I propoſed to myſelf in the choice of my abode, were all inſufficient to elude the ſagacity of Jones, or the unrelenting conſtancy with which Mr. Falkland incited my tormentor to purſue me. Whitherſoever I removed myſelf, it was not long before I had occaſion to perceive this deteſted adverſary in my rear. No words can enable me to do juſtice to the ſenſations which this circumſtance produced in me. It was like what has

has been deſcribed of the eye of omniſcience purſuing the guilty ſinner, and darting a ray that awakens him to new ſenſibility, at every moment when otherwiſe exhauſted nature would lull him into a temporary oblivion of the reproaches of his conſcience. Sleep fled from my eyes. No walls could hide me from the diſcernment of this hated foe. Every where his induſtry was unwearied to create for me new diſtreſs. Reſt I had none: relief I had none: never could I count upon an inſtant's ſecurity: never could I wrap myſelf for a moment in the ſhroud of oblivion. The minutes in which I did not actually perceive him, were contaminated and blaſted with the certain expectation of his ſpeedy interference. In my firſt retreat I had paſſed ſome weeks of deluſive tranquillity, but never after was I happy enough to attain ſo much as that ſhadowy gratification. I ſpent ſome years in this

dreadful viciſſitude of pain. My ſenſations at certain periods partook of inſanity.

It has already appeared that I was not of a temper to endure calamity without endeavouring by every means I could deviſe to elude and diſarm it. Recollecting, as I was habituated to do, the various projects by which my ſituation could be meliorated, the queſtion in one inſtance occurred to me: Why ſhould I be haraſſed by the purſuit of this Jones; why, man to man, may I not by the powers of my mind attain the aſcendancy over him? at preſent he appears to be the perſecutor and I the perſecuted: is not this difference the mere creature of the imagination? May I not employ my ingenuity to vex him with difficulties and laugh at the endleſs labour to which he will be condemned?

Alas, this is a ſpeculation for a mind at eaſe! It is not the perſecution; but the

the cataſtrophe which is annexed to it, that makes the difference between the tyrant and the ſufferer! In mere corporal exertion the hunter perhaps is upon a level with the miſerable animal he purſues! But could it be forgotten by either of us, that at every ſtage Jones was to gratify his malignant paſſions by diſſeminating charges of the moſt infamous nature and exciting againſt me the abhorrence of every honeſt boſom, while I was to ſuſtain the ſtill repeated annihilation of my peace, my character and my bread? Could I by any refinement of my reaſon convert this dreadful ſeries into ſport? I had no philoſophy that qualified me for ſo extraordinary an effort. If under other circumſtances I could even have entertained ſo ſtrange an imagination, I was reſtrained in the preſent inſtance by the neceſſity of providing for myſelf the means of ſubſiſtence, and the fetters which

through that neceſſity the forms of human ſociety impoſed upon my exertions.

In one of thoſe changes of reſidence to which my miſerable fate repeatedly compelled me, I met, upon a road which I was obliged to traverſe, the friend of my youth, my earlieſt and beſt beloved friend, the venerable Collins. It was one of thoſe misfortunes which ſerved to accumulate my diſtreſs, that this man had quitted the iſland of Great Britain only a very few weeks before that fatal reverſe of fortune which had ever ſince purſued me with unrelenting eagerneſs. Mr. Falkland, in addition to the large eſtate he poſſeſſed in England, had a very valuable plantation in the Weſt Indies. This property had been greatly miſmanaged by the perſon who had the direction of it on the ſpot; and, after various promiſes and evaſions on his part, which, however they might ſerve to beguile

guile the patience of Mr. Falkland, had been attended with no ſalutary fruits, it was reſolved that Mr. Collins ſhould go over in perſon to rectify the abuſes which had ſo long prevailed. There had even been ſome idea of his reſiding ſeveral years, if not ſettling finally, upon the plantation. From that hour to the preſent I had never received the ſmalleſt intelligence reſpecting him.

I had always conſidered the circumſtance of his critical abſence as one of my ſevereſt misfortunes. Mr. Collins had been one of the firſt perſons even in the period of my infancy to conceive hopes of me as of ſomething above the common ſtandard, and had contributed more than any other to encourage and aſſiſt my juvenile ſtudies. He had been the executor of the little property of my father, who had fixed upon him for that purpoſe in conſideration of the mutual affection that exiſted between us; and I ſeemed

on

on every account to have more claim upon his protection than upon that of any other human being. I had always believed that, had he been preſent in the criſis of my fortune, he would have felt conviction of my innocence; and, convinced himſelf, would by means of the venerableneſs and energy of his character have interpoſed ſo effectually, as to have ſaved me the greater part of my ſubſequent misfortunes.

No ſight therefore could give me a purer delight than that which now preſented itſelf to my eyes. It was ſome time however before either of us recogniſed the perſon of the other. Mr. Collins looked at leaſt ten years older than he had done when I laſt ſaw him, in addition to which he was in his preſent appearance pale, ſickly and thin. Theſe unfavourable effects had been produced by the change of climate, particularly trying to perſons in an advanced period of life.

Add

Add to which, I ſuppoſed him to be at that moment in the Weſt Indies. I was probably as much altered in the period that had elapſed as he had been. I was the firſt to recollect him. He was on horſeback; I on foot. I had ſuffered him to paſs me. In a moment the full idea of who he was ruſhed upon my mind; I ran; I called with an impetuous voice; I was unable to reſtrain the vehemence of my emotions.

The ardour of my feelings diſguiſed my uſual tone of ſpeaking, which otherwiſe Mr. Collins would infallibly have recogniſed. His ſight was already dim; he pulled up his horſe till I ſhould overtake him; and then ſaid, Who are you? I do not know you.

My father! exclaimed I, embracing one of his knees with fervour and delight, I am your ſon! once your little Caleb, whom you a thouſand times loaded with your kindneſs!

The unexpected repetition of my name gave a kind of ſhuddering emotion to my friend, which was however checked by his age, and the calm and benevolent philoſophy that formed one of the moſt conſpicuous of his habits.

I did not expect to ſee you! replied he.—I did not wiſh it!

My beſt, my oldeſt friend! anſwered I, reſpect blending itſelf with my impatience, Do not ſay ſo! I have not a friend any where in the whole world, but you! In you at leaſt let me find ſympathy and reciprocal affection! If you knew how anxiouſly I have thought of you during the whole period of your abſence, you would not thus grievouſly diſappoint me in your return!

How is it, ſaid Mr. Collins gravely, that you have been reduced to this forlorn condition? Was it not the inevitable conſequence of your own actions?

The actions of others, not mine! Does

not your heart tell you that I am innocent?

No. My obſervation of your early character taught me that you would be extraordinary. But unhappily all extraordinary men are not good men; that ſeems to be a lottery, dependent on circumſtances apparently the moſt trivial.

Will you hear my juſtification? I am as ſure as I am of my exiſtence that I can convince you of my purity.

Certainly, if you wiſh it, I will hear you. But that muſt not be juſt now. I could have been glad to decline it wholly. At my age I am not fit for the ſtorm, and I am not ſo ſanguine as you in my expectation of the reſult. Of what would you convince me? That Mr. Falkland is a ſuborner and a murderer?

I made no anſwer. My ſilence was an affirmative to this queſtion.

And what benefit will reſult from this conviction? I have known you a promiſing

ſing boy, whoſe character might turn to one ſide or the other as events ſhould decide. I have known Mr. Falkland in his maturer years, and have always admired him as the living model of liberality and goodneſs. If you could change all my ideas, and ſhow me that there was no criterion by which vice might be prevented from being miſtaken for virtue, what benefit would ariſe from that? I muſt part with all my interior conſolation, and all my external connections. And for what? What is it you propoſe? The death of Mr. Falkland by the hands of the hangman?

No. I will not hurt a hair of his head, unleſs compelled to it by a principle of defence. But ſurely you owe me juſtice?

What juſtice? The juſtice of proclaiming your innocence? You know what conſequences are annexed to that. But I do not believe I ſhall find you innocent. If you even ſucceed in perplexing

ing my underſtanding, you will not ſucceed in enlightening it. Such is the ſtate of mankind, that innocence when involved in circumſtances of ſuſpicion can ſcarcely ever make out a demonſtration of its purity, and guilt can often make us feel an inſurmountable reluctance to the pronouncing it guilt. Meanwhile for the purchaſe of this uncertainty I muſt ſacrifice all the remaining comforts of my life. I believe Mr. Falkland to be virtuous, but I know him to be prejudiced. He would never forgive me even this accidental parley, if by any means he ſhould come to be acquainted with it.

Oh, argue not the conſequences that are poſſible to reſult! anſwered I impatiently. I have a right to your kindneſs; I have a right to your aſſiſtance!

You have them. You have them to a certain degree; and it is not likely by any proceſs of examination you can have them

them entire. You know my habits of thinking. I regard you as vicious; but I do not conſider the vicious as proper objects of indignation and ſcorn. I conſider you as a machine: you are not conſtituted, I am afraid, to be greatly uſeful to your fellow men; but you did not make yourſelf; you are juſt what circumſtances irreſiſtibly compelled you to be. I am ſorry for your ill properties; but I entertain no enmity againſt you, nothing but benevolence. Conſidering you in the light in which I at preſent conſider you, I am ready to contribute every thing in my power to your real advantage, and would gladly aſſiſt you, if I knew how, in detecting and extirpating the errors that have miſled you. You have diſappointed me, but I have no reproaches to utter: it is more neceſſary for me to feel compaſſion for you, than that I ſhould accumulate your misfortune by my cenſures.

What

What could I ſay to ſuch a man as this? Amiable, incomparable man! Never was my mind more painfully divided than at that moment. The more he excited my admiration, the more imperiouſly did my heart command me, whatever were the price it ſhould coſt, to extort his friendſhip. I was perſuaded that ſevere duty required of him, that he ſhould reject all perſonal conſiderations, that he ſhould proceed reſolutely to the inveſtigation of the truth, and that, if he found the reſult terminating in my favour, he ſhould reſign all his advantages, and, deſerted as I was by the world, make a common cauſe, and endeavour to compenſate the general injuſtice. But was it for me to force this conduct upon him, if, now in his declining years, his own fortitude ſhrunk from it? Alas, neither he nor I foreſaw the dreadful cataſtrophe that was ſo cloſely impending!

Other-

Otherwiſe I am well aſſured, that no tenderneſs for his remaining tranquillity would have withheld him from a compliance with my wiſhes! On the other hand, could I pretend to know what evils might reſult to him from his declaring himſelf my advocate? Might not his integrity be brow-beaten and defeated as mine had been? Did the imbecility of his grey hairs afford no advantage to my terrible adverſary in the conteſt? Might not Mr. Falkland reduce him to a condition as wretched and low as mine? After all, was it not vice in me to deſire to involve another man as my champion? If he could protect me, had I not yet energy and wiſdom and conſcious purity enough to protect myſelf?

Influenced by theſe conſiderations, I aſſented to his views. I aſſented to be thought hardly of by the man in the world whoſe eſteem I moſt ardently deſired, rather than involve him in poſſible calamity.

calamity. I aſſented to the reſigning what appeared to me at that moment as the laſt practicable comfort of my life, a comfort upon the thought of which, while I ſurrendered it, my mind dwelt with undeſcribable longings. Mr. Collins was deeply affected with the apparent ingenuouſneſs with which I expreſſed my feelings. The ſecret ſtruggle of his mind was, Can this be hypocriſy? The individual with whom I am conferring, if virtuous, is one of the moſt diſintereſtedly virtuous perſons in the world. We tore ourſelves from each other. Mr. Collins promiſed, as far as he was able, to have an eye upon my viciſſitudes, and to aſſiſt me in every reſpect that was at all conſiſtent with a juſt recollection of conſequences. Thus I parted as it were with my right arm; and voluntarily conſented, thus maimed and forlorn, to encounter all the evils that were yet in ſtore for me.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

HAVING made an experiment of various ſituations, all of them with one uniform reſult, I at length determined to remove myſelf, if poſſible, from the reach of my perſecutor, by going into voluntary baniſhment from my native ſoil. But it ſeemed this ſlender conſolation was to be denied to me by the inexorable Falkland. At the time that the project was formed by me I was at no great diſtance from the eaſt coaſt of the iſland, and I determined to take ſhip at Harwich, and paſs immediately into Holland. I accordingly repaired to that place, and went almoſt as ſoon as I arrived to the port. But there was no veſſel juſt at that time ready to ſail. I left the port, and withdrew

drew to an inn, where after ſome time I retired to a chamber. I was ſcarcely there, before the door of the room was opened, and the man, whoſe countenance was of all others moſt hateful to my eyes, Jones, entered the apartment. He ſhut the door again as ſoon as he entered.

Youngſter, ſaid he, I have a little private intelligence to communicate to you. I come as a friend, and that I may ſave you a labour-in-vain trouble. If you conſider what I have to ſay in that light, it will be the better for you. It is my buſineſs now, do you ſee, for want of a better, to ſee that you do not break out of bounds. Not that I much matter having one man for my employer, or dancing attendance after another's heels; but I have a ſpecial kindneſs for you, for ſome good turns that you wot of, and therefore I do not ſtand upon ceremonies! You have led me a very pretty round already; and, out of the love I

bear you, you ſhall lead me as much farther, if you will. But beware the ſalt ſeas! They are out of my orders. You are a priſoner at preſent, and I believe all your life will remain ſo. Thanks to the milk-and-water ſoftneſs of your former maſter! if I had the ordering of theſe theſe things, it ſhould go with you in another faſhion. As long as you think proper, you are a priſoner within the rules; and the rules with which the ſoft-hearted ſquire indulges you are all England, Scotland and Wales. But you are not to go out of theſe climates. The ſquire is determined you ſhall never paſs the reach of his diſpoſal. He has therefore given orders that, whenever you attempt ſo to do, you ſhall be converted from a priſoner at large to a priſoner in the properer meaning of the word. A friend of mine followed you juſt now to the harbour; I was within call; and, if there had been any appearance of your ſetting

your

your foot from land, we ſhould have been with you in a trice, and laid you faſt by the heels. I would adviſe you for the future to keep at a proper diſtance from the ſea, for fear of the worſt. You ſee I tell you all this for your good. For my part I ſhould be better ſatisfied, if you were in limbo, with a rope about your neck, and a comfortable bird's eye proſpect to the gallows: but I do as I am directed; and ſo, good night to you!

The intelligence thus conveyed to me occaſioned an inſtantaneous revolution in both my intellectual and animal ſyſtem. I diſdained to anſwer or take the ſmalleſt notice of the fiend by whom it was delivered. It is now three days ſince I received it, and from that moment to the preſent my blood has been in a perpetual ferment. My thoughts wander from one idea of horror to another with incredible rapidity. I have had no ſleep. I have ſcarcely remained in one poſture for a

minute together. It has been with the utmoſt difficulty that I have been able to command myſelf far enough to add a few pages to my ſtory. But, uncertain as I am of the events of each ſucceeding hour, I thought it right to force myſelf to the performance of this taſk. All is not right within me. How it will terminate God knows. I ſometimes fear that I ſhall be wholly deſerted of my reaſon.

What—dark, myſterious, unfeeling, unrelenting tyrant!—is it come to this? —When Nero and Caligula ſwayed the Roman ſceptre, it was a fearful thing to offend theſe bloody rulers. The empire had already ſpread itſelf from climate to climate, and from ſea to ſea. If their unhappy victim fled to the riſing of the ſun, where the luminary of day ſeems to us firſt to aſcend from the waves of the ocean, the power of the tyrant was ſtill behind him. If he withdrew to the weſt,

weſt, to Heſperian darkneſs, and the ſhores of barbarian Thule, ſtill he was not ſafe from his gore-drenched foe.—Falkland! art thou the offspring in whom the lineaments of theſe tyrants are faithfully preſerved? Was the world with all its climates made in vain for thy helpleſs, unoffending victim?

Tremble!

Tyrants have trembled ſurrounded with whole armies of their Janiſſaries! What ſhould make thee inacceſſible to my fury?—No, I will uſe no daggers! I will unfold a tale—! I will ſhow thee for what thou art to the world, and all the men that live ſhall confeſs my truth! —Didſt thou imagine that I was altogether paſſive, a mere worm, organized to feel ſenſations of pain, but no emotion of reſentment? Didſt thou imagine that there was no danger in inflicting on me pains however great, miſeries however dreadful? Didſt thou believe me impo-

tent, imbecil and idiot-like, with no underſtanding to contrive thy ruin, and no energy to perpetrate it?

I will tell a tale—! The juſtice of the country ſhall hear me! The elements of nature in univerſal uproar ſhall not interrupt me! I will ſpeak with a voice more fearful than thunder!—Why ſhould I be ſuppoſed to ſpeak from any diſhonourable motive? I am under no proſecution now! I ſhall not now appear to be endeavouring to remove a criminal indictment from myſelf, by throwing it back on its author!—Shall I regret the ruin that will overwhelm thee! Too long have I been tender-hearted and forbearing! What benefit has ever reſulted from my miſtaken clemency? There is no evil thou haſt ſcrupled to accumulate upon me! Neither will I be more ſcrupulous! Thou haſt ſhown no mercy; and thou ſhalt receive none!—I muſt be calm! Bold as a lion, yet collected!

This

This is a moment pregnant with fate. I know—I think I know—that I will be triumphant, and cruſh my ſeemingly omnipotent foe. But ſhould it be otherwiſe, at leaſt he ſhall not be every way ſucceſsful. His fame ſhall not be immortal as he thinks. Theſe papers ſhall preſerve the truth: they ſhall one day be publiſhed, and then the world ſhall do juſtice on us both. Recollecting that, I ſhall not die wholly without conſolation. It is not to be endured that falſhood and tyranny ſhould reign for ever.

How impotent are the precautions of man againſt the eternally exiſting laws of the intellectual world? This Falkland has invented againſt me every ſpecies of foul accuſation? He has hunted me from city to city. He has drawn his lines of circumvallation round me that I may not eſcape. He has kept his ſcenters of human prey for ever at my heels. He may hunt me out of the

world.—In vain! With this engine, this little pen I defeat all his machinations; I ſtab him in the very point he was moſt ſolicitous to defend!

Collins! I now addreſs myſelf to you. I have conſented that you ſhould yield me no aſſiſtance in my preſent terrible ſituation. I am content to die rather than do any thing injurious to your felicity.—But, remember,—you are my father ſtill!—I conjure you, by all the love you ever bore me, by the benefits you have conferred on me, by the forbearance and kindneſs towards you that now penetrates my ſoul, by my innocence—for, if theſe be the laſt words I ſhall ever write, I die proteſting my innocence!—by all theſe or whatever tie more ſacred has influence on your ſoul, I conjure you, liſten to my laſt requeſt! Preſerve theſe papers from deſtruction, and preſerve them from Falkland! It is all I aſk! I have taken care to provide a ſafe

mode

mode of conveying them into your poſſeſſion; and I have a firm confidence which I will not ſuffer to depart from me, that by ſome means or other they will one day find their way to the public!

The pen lingers in my trembling fingers!—Is there any thing I have left unſaid?—The contents of the fatal cheſt from which originated all my misfortunes I have never been able to aſcertain. I once thought it contained ſome murderous inſtrument or relique connected with the fate of the unhappy Tyrrel. I am now perſuaded that the ſecret it incloſed was a faithful narrative of that and its concomitant tranſactions to be reſerved in caſe of the worſt, that, if by any unforeſeen event the guilt of Falkland ſhould ever come to be fully diſcloſed, it might contribute to redeem the wreck of his reputation. But it is no matter. If Falkland ſhall never be detected to the ſatisfaction of the world, ſuch a narrative

will probably never ſee the light. In that caſe this ſtory of mine may amply, ſeverely perhaps ſupply its place.

I know not what it is that renders me thus ſolemn. I have a ſecret foreboding as if I ſhould never again be maſter of myſelf. If I ſucceed in what I now meditate reſpecting Falkland, my precaution in removing theſe papers will have been unneceſſary; I ſhall no longer be reduced to artifice and evaſion. If I fail, the precaution will appear to be wiſely choſen.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

ALL is over. I have carried into execution my meditated attempt. My ſituation is totally changed; I now ſit down to give an account of it. For ſeveral weeks after the completion of this dreadful buſineſs, my mind was in too tumultuous a ſtate to permit me to write. I think I ſhall now be able to arrange my thoughts ſufficiently for that purpoſe. Great God! how wondrous, how terrible are the events that have intervened ſince I was laſt employed in a ſimilar manner! It is no wonder that my thoughts were ſolemn, and my mind filled with horrible forebodings!

Having formed my reſolution I ſet out from Harwich for the metropolitan town

of the county in which Mr. Falkland reſided. Jones I well knew was in my rear. That was of no conſequence to me. He might wonder at the direction I purſued, but he could not tell with what purpoſe I purſued it. My deſign was a ſecret carefully locked up in my own breaſt. It was not without a ſentiment of terror that I entered a town which had been the ſcene of my long impriſonment. I proceeded to the houſe of the chief magiſtrate the inſtant I arrived, that I might give no time to my adverſary to counterwork my proceeding.

I told him who I was, and that I was come from a diſtant part of the kingdom for the purpoſe of rendering him the medium of a charge of murder againſt my former maſter. My name was already familiar to him. He anſwered that he could not take cognizance of my depoſition, that I was an object of univerſal execration in that part of the world,

and

and he was determined upon no account to be the vehicle of my depravity.

I warned him to conſider well what he was about. I called upon him for no favour; I only applied to him in the regular exerciſe of his function. Would he take upon him to ſay that he had a right at his pleaſure to ſuppreſs a charge of this complicated nature? I had to accuſe Mr. Falkland of repeated murders. The perpetrator knew that I was in poſſeſſion of the truth upon the ſubject; and, knowing that, I went perpetually in danger of my life from his malice and revenge. I was determined to go through with the buſineſs, if juſtice were to be obtained from any court in England. Upon what pretence did he refuſe my depoſition? I was in every reſpect a competent witneſs. I was of age to underſtand the nature of an oath; I was in my perfect ſenſes; I was untarniſhed by the verdict of any jury, or the ſentence of any judge. His private

private opinion of my character could not alter the law of the land. I demanded to be confronted with Mr. Falkland, and I was well aſſured I ſhould ſubſtantiate the charge to the ſatisfaction of the whole world. If he did not think proper to apprehend him upon my ſingle teſtimony, I ſhould be ſatisfied if he only ſent him notice of the charge and ſummoned him to appear.

The magiſtrate finding me thus reſolute, thought proper a little to lower his tone. He no longer abſolutely refuſed to comply with my requiſition, but condeſcended to expoſtulate with me. He repreſented to me Mr. Falkland's health which had for ſome years been exceedingly indifferent, his having been already once brought to trial, upon the ſame accuſation, the diabolical malice in which alone my proceeding muſt have originated, and the tenfold ruin it would bring down upon my own head. I

ſhould

ſhould be pilloried for perjury, if not hanged for the robbery, in relation to which Mr. Falkland had ſo generouſly ſpared me upon a former occaſion. To all theſe repreſentations my anſwer was ſhort. I was determined to go on, and would abide the conſequences. A ſummons was at length granted, and notice ſent to Mr. Falkland of the charge preferred againſt him.

Three days elapſed before any farther ſtep could be taken in this buſineſs. This interval in no degree contributed to tranquilliſe my mind. The thought of preferring a capital accuſation againſt, and haſtening the death of ſuch a man as Mr. Falkland, was by no means an opiate to reflexion. At one time I commended the action, either as juſt revenge (for the benevolence of my nature was in a great degree turned to ſour), or as neceſſary ſelf-defence, or as that which in an impartial and philanthropical eſtimate included

included the ſmalleſt evil. At another time I was haunted with doubts. But, ſpite of theſe variations of ſentiment, I uniformly determined to perſiſt; I felt as if impelled by an unconquerable neceſſity. The conſequences were ſuch as might well appal the ſtouteſt heart. Either the ignominious execution of a man whom I had once ſo deeply venerated, and whom now I ſometimes ſuſpected not to be without his claims to veneration; or a confirmation, perhaps an increaſe, of the calamities I had ſo endured. Yet theſe I preferred to a ſtate of uncertainty. I deſired to know the worſt; to put an end to the hope, however faint, which had been ſo long my torment; and above all to exhauſt and finiſh the catalogue of expedients that were within my diſpoſition. My mind was worked up to a ſtate little ſhort of frenzy. My body was in a burning fever with the agitation of my thoughts.

When

When I laid my hand upon my boſom or my head, it ſeemed to ſcorch them with the fervency of its heat. I could not ſit ſtill for a moment. I panted with inceſſant deſire that the dreadful criſis I had ſo eagerly invoked were come, and were over.

After an interval of three days I met Mr. Falkland in the preſence of the magiſtrate to whom I had applied upon the ſubject. I had only two hours notice to prepare myſelf, Mr. Falkland ſeeming as eager as I to have the queſtion brought to a criſis, and laid at reſt for ever. I had an opportunity before the examination to learn that Mr. Foreſter was gone upon ſome buſineſs on an excurſion to the continent, and that Collins, whoſe health when I ſaw him was in a very precarious ſtate, was at this time confined with alarming illneſs. His conſtitution had been wholly broken with his Weſt Indian voyage. The audience

dience I met at the houſe of the magiſtrate conſiſted of ſeveral gentlemen and others ſelected for the purpoſe, the plan being to find a medium between the ſuſpicious air of a private examination, and the indelicacy as it was ſtyled of an examination expoſed to the remark of every accidental ſpectator.

I can conceive of no ſhock greater than that I received from the ſight of Mr. Falkland. His appearance on the laſt occaſion on which we met, had been haggard, ghoſt-like and wild, energy in his geſtures and frenzy in his aſpect. It was now the appearance of a corpſe. He was brought in in a chair unable to ſtand, fatigued and almoſt deſtroyed by the journey he had juſt taken. His viſage was colourleſs; his limbs deſtitute of motion, almoſt of life. His head reclined upon his boſom, except that now and then he lifted it up and opened his eyes with a languid glance, immediately

diately after which he ſunk back into his former apparent inſenſibility. He ſeemed not to have three hours to live. He had kept his chamber for ſeveral weeks; but the ſummons of the magiſtrate had been delivered to him at his bed-ſide; his orders reſpecting letters and written papers being ſo peremptory that no one dared to diſobey them. Upon reading the paper he was ſeized with a very dangerous fit; but, as ſoon as he recovered, he inſiſted upon being conveyed with all practicable expedition to the place of appointment. Falkland in the moſt helpleſs ſtate was ſtill Falkland, firm in command, and capable to extort obedience from every one that approached him.

What a ſight was this to me! Till the moment that Falkland was preſented to my view, my breaſt was ſteeled to pity. I thought that I had coolly entered into the reaſon of the caſe (paſſion in a ſtate

a ſtate of ſolemn and omnipotent vehemence always appears to be coolneſs to him in whom it domineers); and that I had determined impartially and juſtly. I believed that, if Mr. Falkland were permitted to perſiſt in his ſchemes, we muſt both of us be completely wretched. I believed that it was in my power by the reſolution I had formed to throw my ſhare of this wretchedneſs from me, and that his could ſcarcely be increaſed. It appeared therefore to my mind to be a mere piece of equity and juſtice, ſuch as an impartial ſpectator would deſire, that one perſon ſhould be miſerable in preference to two, that one perſon rather than two ſhould be incapacitated from acting his part, and contributing his ſhare to the general good. I thought that in this buſineſs I had riſen ſuperior to perſonal conſiderations, and judged with a total neglect of the miſerable ſuggeſtions of ſelf-regard. It is true Mr. Falkland

Falkland was mortal: but, notwithſtand- his apparent decay, he might live long. Ought I to ſubmit to waſte the beſt years of my life in my preſent wretched ſituation? He had declared that his reputation ſhould be for ever inviolate; this was his ruling paſſion, the thought that worked his ſoul to madneſs. He would probably therefore leave a legacy of perſecution to be received by me from the hands of Jones or ſome other villain equally atrocious, when he ſhould himſelf be no more. Now or never was the time for me to redeem my future life from endleſs woe.

But all theſe fine-ſpun reaſonings vaniſhed before the object that was now exhibited to me. Shall I trample upon a man thus dreadfully reduced? Shall I point my animoſity againſt one whom the ſyſtem of nature has brought down to the grave? Shall I poiſon with ſounds the moſt intolerable to his ears the laſt moments of a man like Falkland? It is impoſſible.

There

There muſt have been ſome dreadful miſtake in the train of argument that perſuaded me to be the author of this hateful ſcene. There muſt have been a better and more magnanimous remedy to the evils under which I groaned.

It was too late. The miſtake I had committed was now gone paſt all power of recal. Here was Falkland ſolemnly brought before a magiſtrate to anſwer a charge of murder. Here I ſtood, having already declared myſelf the author of the charge, gravely and ſacredly pledged to ſupport it. This was my ſituation; and, thus ſituated, I was called upon immediately to act. My whole frame ſhook. I would eagerly have conſented that that moment ſhould have been the laſt of my exiſtence. I however believed that the conduct now moſt indiſpenſibly incumbent on me, was to lay the emotions of my ſoul naked before my hearers. I looked firſt at Mr. Falkland, and then at the magiſtrate and attendants,

attendants, and then at Mr. Falkland again. My voice was ſuffocated with agony. I began:

Why cannot I recall the four laſt days of my life? How was it poſſible for me to be ſo eager, ſo obſtinate in a purpoſe ſo diabolical? Oh, that I had liſtened to the expoſtulations of the magiſtrate that hears me, or ſubmitted to the well-meant deſpotiſm of his authority! Hitherto I have only been miſerable; henceforth I ſhall account myſelf baſe! Hitherto, though hardly treated by mankind, I ſtood acquitted at the bar of my own conſcience. I had not filled up the meaſure of my wretchedneſs!

Would to God it were poſſible for me to retire from this ſcene without uttering another word! I would brave the conſequences—I would ſubmit to any imputation of cowardice, falſhood and profligacy, rather than add to the weight of miſfortune with which Mr. Falkland is

overwhelmed. But the ſituation and the demands of Mr. Falkland himſelf forbid me. He, in compaſſion for whoſe fallen ſtate I would willingly forget every intereſt of my own, would compel me to accuſe, that he might enter upon his juſtification.—I will confeſs every ſentiment of my heart.

No penitence, no anguiſh can expiate the folly and the cruelty of this laſt act I have perpetrated. But Mr. Falkland well knows—I affirm it in his preſence—how unwillingly I have proceeded to this extremity. I have reverenced him; he was worthy of reverence: I have loved him; he was endowed with qualities that partook of divine.

From the firſt moment I ſaw him, I conceived for him the moſt ardent admiration. He condeſcended to encourage me; I attached myſelf to him with all the fulneſs of affection. He was unhappy; I exerted myſelf with youthful cu-

rioſity to diſcover the ſecret of his woe. This was the beginning of misfortune.

What ſhall I ſay?—He was indeed the murderer of Tyrrel; he ſuffered the Hawkinses to be executed, knowing that they were innocent, and that he alone was guilty. After ſucceſſive ſurmiſes, after various indiſcretions on my part and indications on his, he at length confided to me at full the fatal tale!

Mr. Falkland! I moſt ſolemnly conjure you to recollect yourſelf! Did I ever prove myſelf unworthy of your confidence? The ſecret was a moſt painful burthen to me; it was the extremeſt folly that led me unthinkingly to gain poſſeſſion of it; but I would have died a thouſand deaths rather than betray it. It was the jealouſy of your own thoughts, and the weight that hung upon your mind, that led you to watch my motions, and conceive alarm from every particle of my conduct.

You began in confidence; why did you not continue in confidence? The evil that reſulted from my original imprudence, would then have been comparatively little. You threatened me: did I then betray you? A word from my lips at that time would have freed me from your threats for ever. I bore them for a conſiderable period, and at laſt quitted your ſervice, and threw myſelf a fugitive upon the world in ſilence. Why did you not ſuffer me to depart? You brought me back by ſtratagem and violence, and wantonly accuſed me of an enormous felony; did I then mention a ſyllable of the murder, the ſecret of which was in my poſſeſſion?

Where is the man that has ſuffered more from the injuſtice of ſociety than I have done? I was accuſed of a villainy that my heart abhorred. I was ſent to jail. I will not enumerate the horrors of my priſon, the lighteſt of which would

make the heart of humanity ſhudder. I looked forward to the gallows! Young, ambitious, fond of life, innocent as the child unborn, I looked forward to the gallows! I believed that one word of reſolute accuſation againſt my maſter would deliver me, yet I was ſilent, I armed myſelf with patience, uncertain whether it were better to accuſe or to die. Did this ſhew me a man unworthy to be truſted?

I determined to break out of priſon. With infinite difficulty and repeated miſcarriages I at length effected my purpoſe. Inſtantly a proclamation with a hundred guineas reward was iſſued for apprehending me. I was obliged to take refuge among the ſcum of mankind, in the midſt of a gang of thieves. I encountered the moſt imminent peril of my life when I entered into this retreat, and when I quitted it. Immediately after I travelled almoſt the whole length of the kingdom

in poverty and diſtreſs, in hourly danger of being retaken and manacled like a felon. I would have fled my country; I was prevented. I had recourſe to various diſguiſes; I was innocent, and yet was compelled to as many arts and ſubterfuges as could have been entailed on the worſt of villains. In London I was as much harraſſed and as repeatedly alarmed, as I had been in my flight through the country. Did all theſe perſecutions perſuade me to put an end to my ſilence? No: I ſuffered them with patience and ſubmiſſion; I did not make one attempt to retort them upon their author.

I fell at laſt into the hands of the miſcreants that are nouriſhed with human blood. In this terrible ſituation I for the firſt time attempted by turning informer to throw the weight from myſelf. Happily for me the London magiſtrate liſtened to my tale with inſolent contempt.

I ſoon and long repented of my raſh-

neſs and rejoiced in my miſcarriage. I acknowledge that in various ways Mr. Falkland ſhewed humanity towards me during this period. He would have prevented my going to priſon at firſt; he contributed to my ſubſiſtence during my detention; he had no ſhare in the purſuit that had been ſet on foot againſt me; he at length procured my diſcharge when brought forward for trial. But a great part of his forbearance was unknown to me; I ſuppoſed him to be my unrelenting purſuer. I could not forget that, whoever heaped calamities on me in the ſequel, they all originated in his forged accuſation.

The proſecution againſt me for felony was now at end. Why were not my ſufferings permitted to terminate then, and I allowed to hide my weary head in ſome obſcure yet tranquil retreat? Had I not ſufficiently proved my conſtancy and fidelity? Would not a compromiſe in

this ſituation have been moſt wiſe and moſt ſecure? But the reſtleſs and jealous anxiety of Mr. Falkland would not permit him to repoſe the leaſt atom of confidence. The only compromiſe that he propoſed was, that with my own hand I ſhould ſign myſelf a villain. I refuſed this propoſal, and have ever ſince been driven from place to place, deprived of peace, of honeſt fame, even of bread. For a long time I perſiſted in the reſolution that no emergency ſhould convert me into the aſſailant. In evil hour I at laſt liſtened to my reſentment and impatience, and the hateful miſtake into which I fell has produced the preſent ſcene.

I now ſee that miſtake in all its enormity. I am ſure that, if I had opened my heart to Mr. Falkland, if I had told to him privately the tale that I have now been telling, he could not have reſiſted my reaſonable demand. After all his precautions, he muſt ultimately have depended

pended upon my forbearance. Could he be ſure that, if I were at laſt worked up to diſcloſe every thing I knew, and to inforce it with all the energy I could exert, I ſhould obtain no credit? If he muſt in every caſe be at my mercy, in which mode ought he to have ſought his ſafety, in conciliation or in inexorable cruelty?

Mr. Falkland is of a noble nature. Yes; in ſpite of the cataſtrophe of Tyrrel, of the miſerable end of the Hawkinses, and of all that I have myſelf ſuffered, I affirm that he has qualities of the moſt admirable kind. It is therefore impoſſible that he could have reſiſted a frank and fervent expoſtulation, the frankneſs and the fervour in which the whole ſoul was poured out. I deſpaired, while it was yet time to have made the juſt experiment; but my deſpair was criminal, was treaſon againſt the ſovereignty of truth.

I have told a plain and unadulterated tale. I came hither to curſe, but I remain to bleſs. I came to accuſe, but am compelled to applaud. I proclaim to all the world that Mr. Falkland is a man worthy of affection and kindneſs, and that I am myſelf the worſt of villains! Never will I forgive myſelf the iniquity of this day. The memory will always haunt me, and embitter every hour of my exiſtence. In thus acting I have been a murderer, a cool, deliberate, unfeeling murderer.—I have ſaid what my accurſed precipitation has obliged me to ſay. Do with me as you pleaſe! I aſk no favour. Death would be a kindneſs, compared to what I feel!

Such were the accents dictated by my remorſe. I poured them out with uncontrolable impetuoſity, for my heart was pierced, and I was compelled to give vent to its anguiſh. Every one that heard me was petrified with aſtoniſh-

ment.

ment. Every one that heard me was melted into tears. They could not reſiſt the ardour with which I praiſed the great qualities of Falkland; they manifeſted their ſympathy in the tokens of my penitence.

How ſhall I deſcribe the feelings of this unfortunate man? Before I began, he ſeemed ſunk and debilitated, incapable of any ſtrenuous impreſſion. When I mentioned the murder, I could perceive in him an involuntary ſhuddering, though it was counteracted partly by the feebleneſs of his frame, and partly by the energy of his mind. This was an allegation he expected, and he had endeavoured to prepare himſelf for it. But there was much of what I ſaid, of which he had had no previous conception. When I expreſſed the anguiſh of my mind, he ſeemed at firſt ſtartled and alarmed leſt this ſhould be a new expedient to gain credit to my tale. His indignation againſt

me was great for having retained all my reſentment towards him thus, as it might be, in the laſt hour of his exiſtence. It was increaſed, when he diſcovered me, as he ſuppoſed, uſing a pretence of liberality and ſentiment, to give new edge to my hoſtility. But, as I went on, he could no longer reſiſt. He ſaw my ſincerity; he was penetrated with my grief and compunction. He roſe from his ſeat ſupported by the attendants, and—to my infinite aſtoniſhment—threw himſelf into my arms!

Williams, ſaid he, you have conquered! I ſee too late the greatneſs and elevation of your mind. I adore the qualities that you now diſplay, though to thoſe qualities I owe my ruin. I could have reſiſted any plan of malicious accuſation you might have brought againſt me. But I ſee that the artleſs and manly ſtory you have told, has carried conviction to every hearer. All my proſpects are concluded. All that I moſt ardently deſired is for ever

ever fruſtrated. I have ſpent a life of the baſeſt cruelty to cover one act of momentary vice and to protect myſelf againſt the prejudices of my ſpecies. I ſtand now completely detected. My name will be conſecrated to infamy, while your heroiſm, your patience and your virtues will be for ever admired. You have inflicted on me the moſt fatal of all miſchiefs, but I bleſs the hand that wounds me. And now,—turning to the magiſtrate—and now, do with me as you pleaſe. I am prepared to ſuffer all the vengeance of the law. You cannot inflict on me more than I deſerve. You cannot hate me more than I hate myſelf. I am the moſt execrable of all villains. I have for years (I know not how long) dragged on a miſerable exiſtence in inſupportable pain. I am at laſt, in recompenſe for all my labours and my crimes, diſmiſſed from it, with the diſappointment of my only remaining hope, the deſtruction

deſtruction of that for the ſake of which alone I conſented to exiſt. It was worthy of ſuch a life, that it ſhould continue juſt long enough to witneſs this final overthrow. If however you wiſh to puniſh me, you muſt be ſpeedy in your juſtice; for, as reputation was the blood that warmed my heart, ſo I feel that death and infamy muſt ſeize me together.

I record the praiſes beſtowed on me by Falkland, not becauſe I deſerve them, but becauſe they ſerve to aggravate the baſeneſs of my cruelty. He ſurvived but three days this dreadful ſcene. I have been his murderer. It was fit that he ſhould praiſe my patience, who has fallen a victim, life and fame, to my precipitation! It would have been merciful in compariſon, if I had planted a dagger in his heart. He would have thanked me for my kindneſs. But, atrocious, execrable wretch that I have been! I wantonly inflicted on him an anguiſh a thouſand

ſand times worſe than death. Meanwhile I endure the penalty of my crime. His figure is ever in imagination before me. Waking or ſleeping I ſtill behold him. He ſeems mildly to expoſtulate with me for my unfeeling behaviour. I live the devoted victim of conſcious reproach. Alas! I am the ſame Caleb Williams that but ten days before boaſted, that, however great were the calamities I endured, I was ſtill innocent.

Such has been the reſult of a project I formed for delivering myſelf from the evils that had ſo long attended me. I thought that, if Falkland were dead, I ſhould return once again to all that makes life worth poſſeſſing. I thought that, if the guilt of Falkland were eſtabliſhed, fortune and the world would ſmile upon my efforts. Both theſe events are accompliſhed; and it is only now that I am truly miſerable.

Why ſhould my reflections perpetually centre

centre upon myſelf? ſelf, an overweening regard to which has been the ſource of my errors! Falkland, I will think only of thee, and from that thought will draw ever-freſh nouriſhment for my ſorrows! One generous, one diſintereſted tear I will conſecrate to thy aſhes! A nobler ſpirit lived not among the ſons of men. Thy intellectual powers were truly ſublime, and thy boſom burned with a godlike ambition. But of what uſe are talents and ſentiments in the corrupt wilderneſs of human ſociety? It is a rank and rotten ſoil from which every finer ſhrub draws poiſon as it grows. All that in a happier field and a purer air would expand into virtue and germinate into general uſefulneſs, is thus converted into henbane and deadly nightſhade.

Falkland! thou ſettedſt out in thy carreer with the pureſt and moſt laudable intentions. But thou imbibedſt the poiſon of chivalry with thy earlieſt youth; and

and the baſe and low-minded envy that met thee on thy return to thy native ſeats, operated with this poiſon to hurry thee into madneſs. Soon, too ſoon, by this fatal coincidence were the blooming hopes of thy youth blaſted forever! From that moment thou only continuedſt to live to the phantom of departed honour. From that moment thy benevolence was in a great part turned into rankling jealouſy and inexorable precaution. Year after year didſt thou ſpend in this miſerable project of impoſture; and only at laſt continuedſt to live long enough to ſee, by my miſjudging and abhorred intervention, thy cloſing hope diſappointed, and thy death accompanied with the foulеſt diſgrace!

I began theſe memoirs with the idea of vindicating my own character. I have now no character that I wiſh to vindicate: but I will finiſh them that thy ſtory may be fully underſtood; and that,

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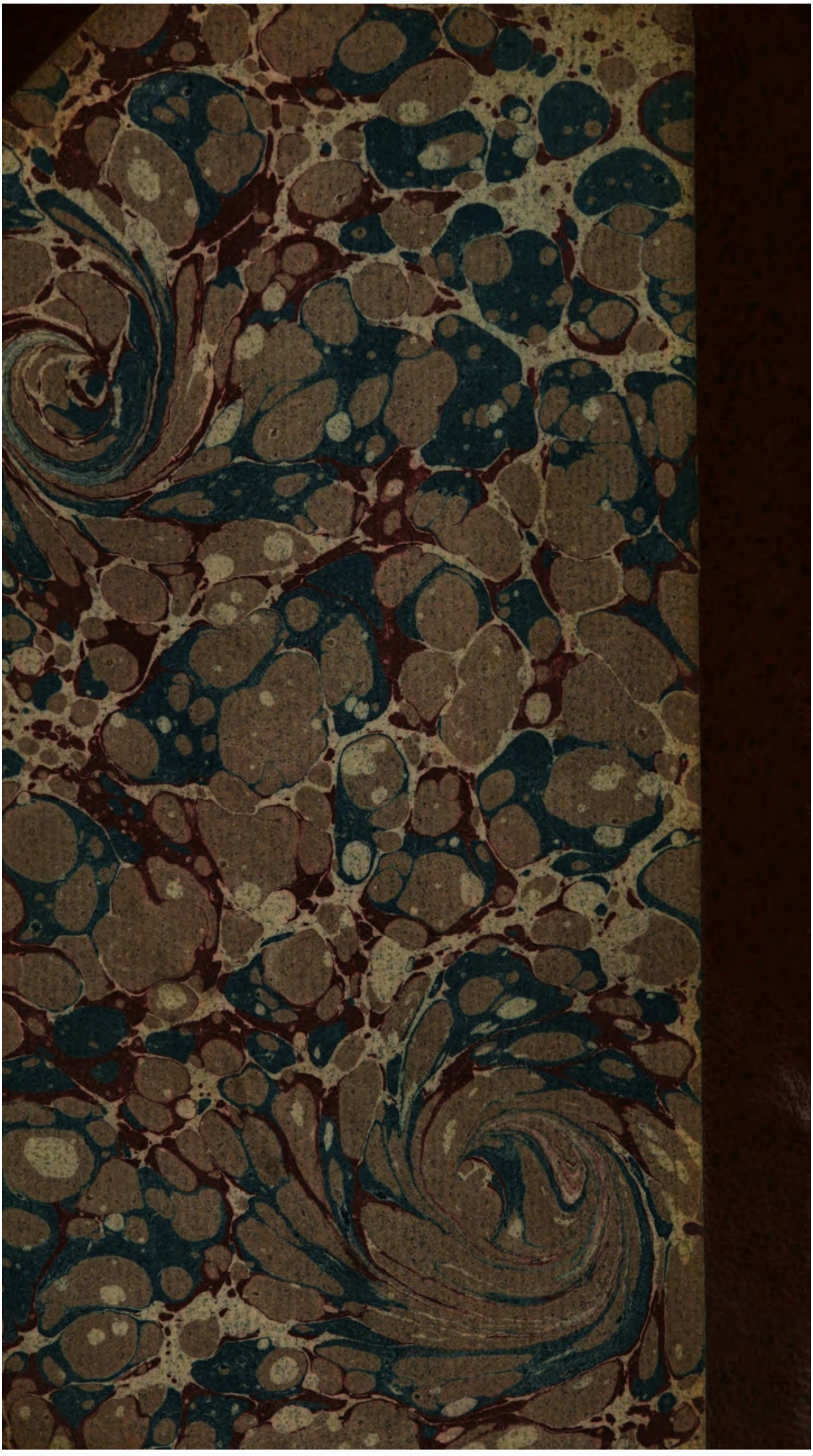
if thoſe errors of thy life be known which thou ſo ardently deſiredſt to conceal, the world may at leaſt not hear and repeat a half-told and mangled tale.

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