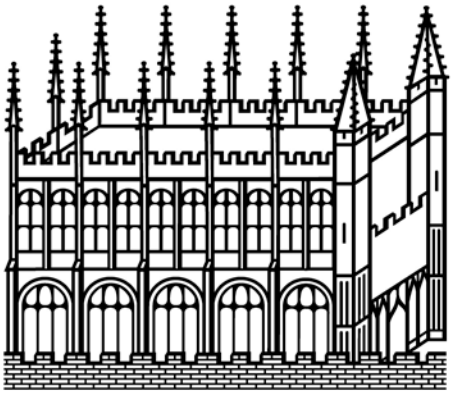

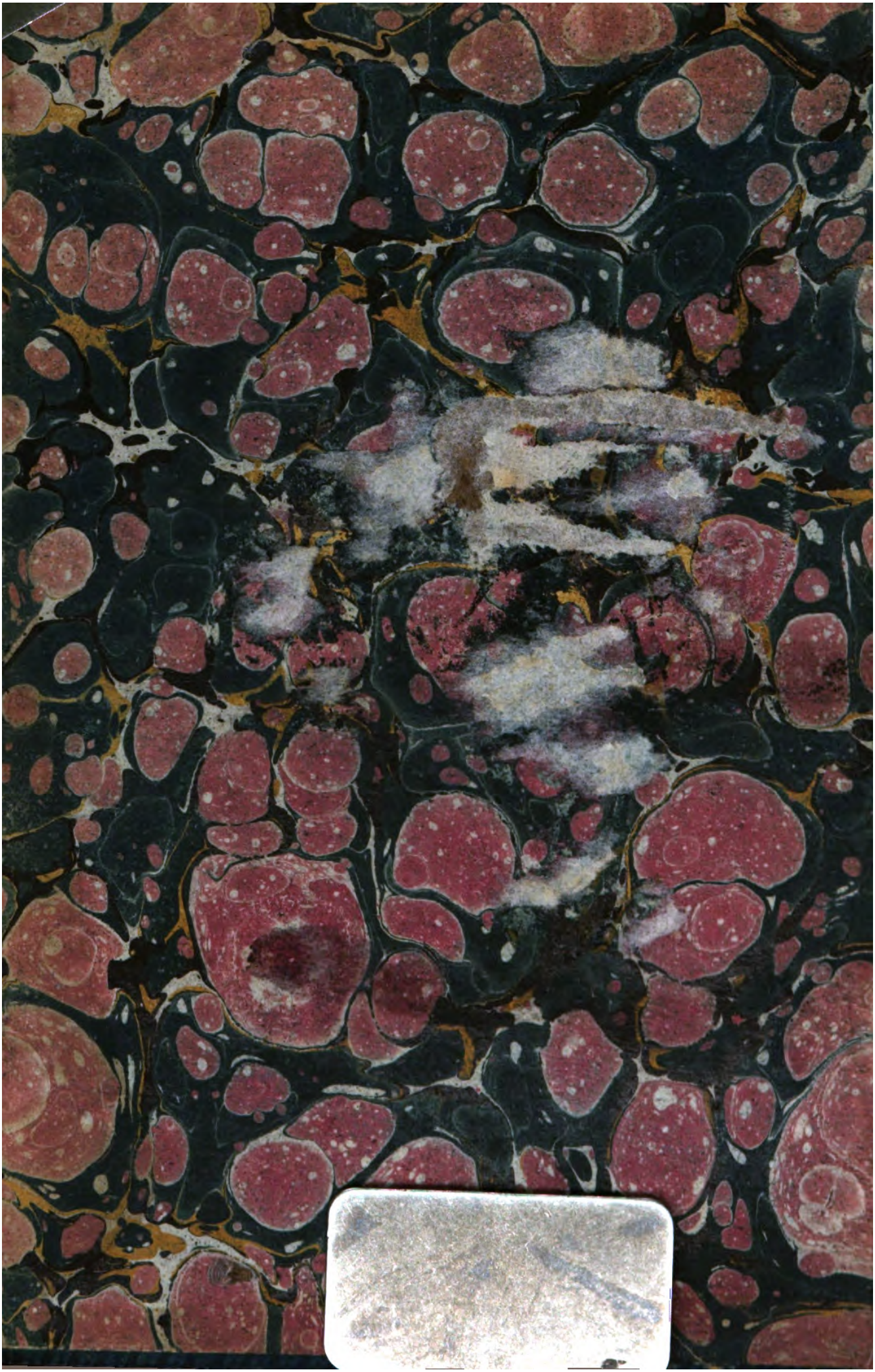

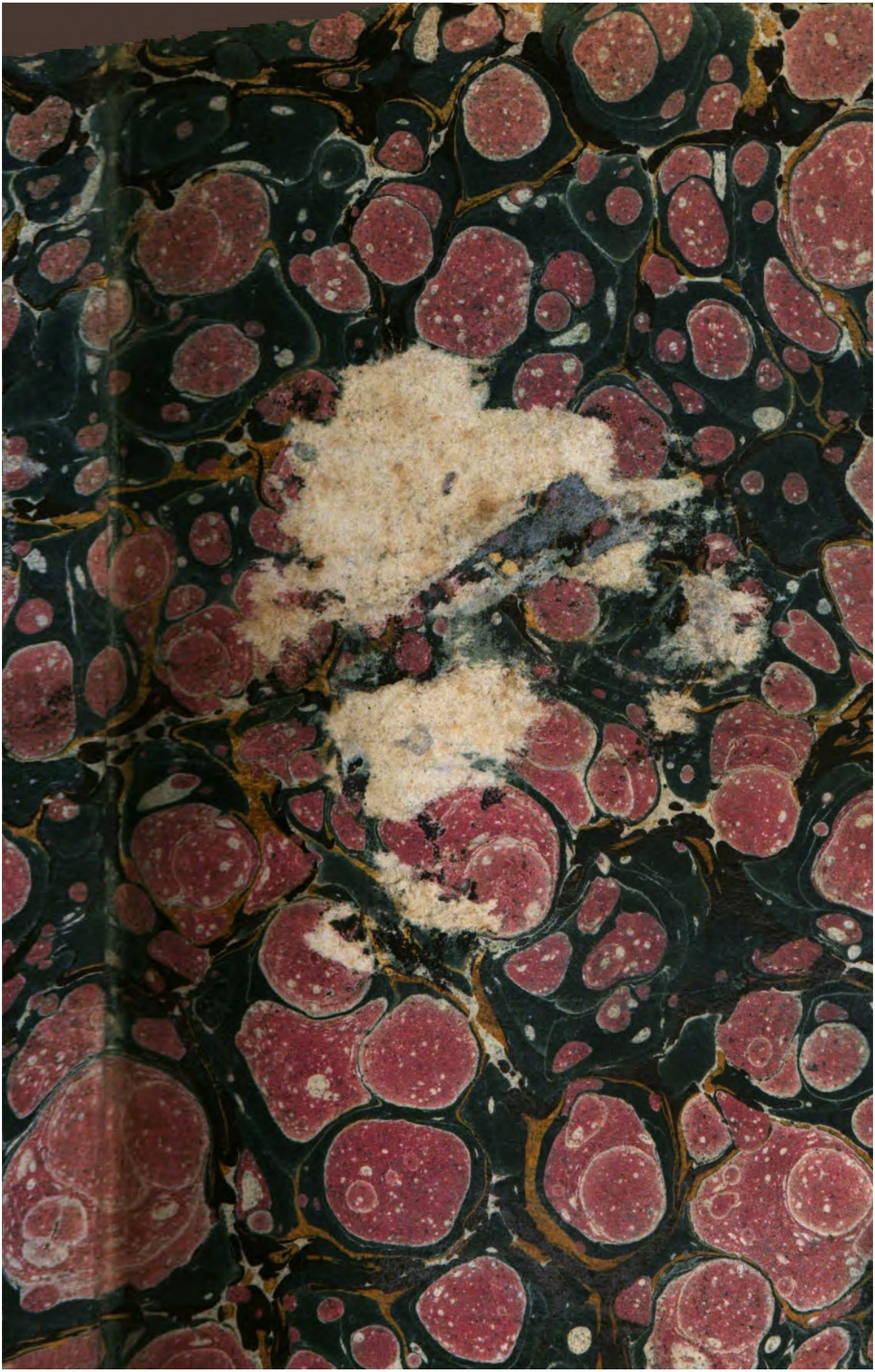

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WITH AN

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BY

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THE

HISTORY OF

RASSELAS,

PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

ALMORAN

AND

HAMET.

AN

ORIENTAL TALE.

BY DR. HAWKESWORTH.

JOHNSON.

HERCULES, it is said, once wielded the distaff; and the Hercules of literature, Dr. Johnson, has not disdained to be the author of a novel. To say the truth, nothing which he has written has more the touch of genius than *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia:* nor do any of his performances bear stronger marks of his peculiar character. It is solemn, melancholy and philosophical. The frame of the story is an elegant and happy exertion of fancy. It was probably suggested to his mind from recollections of the impression made upon his fancy by a book which he translated when he first entered on his literary career, namely, *Father Lobo's Account of a Voyage to Abyssinia.*

In that country, it is said, the younger branches of the royal family, instead of being sacrificed, as in some of the Eastern monarchies, to the jealousy of the reigning sovereign, are secluded from the world in a romantic and beautiful valley, where they are liberally provided with every thing that can gratify their tastes or amuse their solitude. This recess, which Dr. Johnson calls *the happy valley,* he has described with much richness of imagination. It is represented as being shut in by inaccessible mountains, and only to be entered through a cavern closed up with massy gates of iron, which were thrown

open only once a year, on the annual visit of the emperor. At that time artists and teachers of every kind, capable of contributing to the amusement or solace of the princes, were admitted; but once admitted, they were immured for life with the royal captives. Every charm of nature and every decoration of art is supposed to be collected in this charming spot, and that its inhabitants had been, in general, content with the round of amusements provided for them, till at length Rasselas, a young prince of a sprightly and active genius, grows weary of an existence so monotonous, and is seized with a strong desire of seeing the world at large. In pursuance of this project, he contrives to dig a passage through the mountain, and to escape from this paradise with his favourite sister Nekayah and her attendant, and the philosopher who had assisted them in their enterprise, and who, being previously acquainted with the world, is to assist their inexperience. They are all equally disgusted with the languor of sated desires and the inactivity of unvaried quiet, and agree to range the world in order to make their *choice of life*.

The author, having thus stretched his canvass, proceeds to exhibit and to criticize the various situations and modes of human existence; public life and private; marriage and celibacy; commerce, rustic employments, religious retirement, &c., and finds that in all there is something good and something bad—that marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures; that the hermit cannot secure himself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue; that

shepherds are boors, and philosophers—only men. Unable to decide amidst such various appearances of good and evil, and having seen enough of the world to be disgusted with it, they end their search by resolving to return with the first opportunity in order to end their days in the happy valley; and this, to use the author's words in the title of his last chapter, is "the conclusion, in which nothing is concluded."

Such is the philosophic view which Dr. Johnson and many others have taken of life; and such indecision would probably be the consequence of thus narrowly sifting the advantages and disadvantages of every station in this mixt state, if done without that feeling reference to each man's particular position, and particular inclinations, which is necessary to incline the balance. If we choose to imagine an insulated being, detached from all connexions and all duties, it may be difficult for mere reason to direct his choice; but no man is so insulated: we are woven into the web of society, and to each individual it is seldom dubious what *he* shall do. Very different is the search after abstract good, and the pursuit of what a being born and nurtured amidst innumerable ties of kindred and companionship, feeling his own wants, impelled by his own passions, and influenced by his own peculiar associations, finds best for *him*. Except he is indolent or fastidious, he will seldom hesitate upon his choice of life. The same position holds good with regard to duty. We may bewilder ourselves in abstract questions of general good, or puzzle our moral sense with imagi-

nary cases of conscience; but it is generally obvious enough to every man what duty dictates to him, in each particular case, as it comes before him.

The proper moral to be drawn from *Rasselas* is, therefore, not that goods and evils are so balanced against each other that no unmixed happiness is to be found in life,—a deduction equally trite and obvious; nor yet that a reasoning man can make no choice,—but rather that a *merely* reasoning man will be likely to make no choice, —and therefore that it becomes every man to make early that choice to which his particular position, his honest partialities, his individual propensities, his early associations impel him. Often does it happen that, while the over-refined and speculative are hesitating and doubting, the plain honest youth has secured happiness. Without this conclusion, the moral effect of the piece, loaded as it is with the miseries of life, and pointing out no path of action as more eligible than another, would resemble that of *Candide*, where the party, after all their adventures, agree to plant cabbages in their own garden: but the gloomy ideas of the English philosopher are softened and guarded by sound principles of religion.

Along with Voltaire, he strongly paints and perhaps exaggerates the miseries of life; but instead of evading their force by laughing at them, or drawing from them a satire against Providence, which *Candide* may be truly said to be, our author turns the mind to the solid consolations of a future state: "All," says he, "that

virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, and a steady prospect of a future state: this may enable us to endure calamity with patience, but remember that patience must suppose pain."

Such is the plan of this philosophical romance, in the progress of which the author makes many just strictures on human life, and many acute remarks on the springs of human passions; but they are the passions of the species, not of the individual. It is life, as viewed at a distance by a speculative man, in a kind of bird's-eye view; not painted with the glow and colouring of an actor in the busy scene: we are not led to say, "This man is painted naturally," but, "Such is the nature of man." The most striking of his pictures is that of the philosopher, who imagined himself to have the command of the weather, and who had fallen into that species of insanity by indulging in the luxury of solitary musing, or what is familiarly called castle-building. His state is strikingly and feelingly described, and no doubt with the peculiar interest arising from what the author had felt and feared in his own mind; for it is well known that at times he suffered under a morbid melancholy near akin to derangement, which occasionally clouded his mighty powers; and no doubt he had often indulged in these unprofitable abstractions of thought, these seducing excursions of fancy.

The following remark ought to startle those who have permitted their mind to feed itself in solitude with its own creations and wishes. "All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity; but while this power is such as we can

control or repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties. In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention, all other intellectual gratifications are rejected. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed; she grows first imperious, and in time despotic; then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes away in dreams of rapture or of anguish."

Rasselas is, perhaps, of all its author's works, that in which his peculiar style best harmonizes with the subject. That pompous flow of diction, that measured harmony of periods, that cadenced prose which Dr. Johnson introduced, though it would appear stiff and cumbrous in the frame of a common novel, is sanctioned by the imitation, or what our authors have agreed to call imitation, of the Eastern style, a style which has been commonly adopted in *Almoran and Hamet*, *Tales of the Genii*, and other works, in which the costume is taken from nations whose remoteness destroys the idea of colloquial familiarity. We silence our reason by the laws we have imposed upon our fancy, and are content that both Nekayah and her female attendant, at the sources of the Nile, or the foot of the Pyramid, should express themselves in language which would appear unnaturally inflated in the mouths of a young lady and her waiting-maid conversing together in London or in Paris. It has been remarked, however, that Nekayah, it is difficult to say why, is more philosophical than her brother.

It has been already mentioned that the frame

of this piece was probably suggested by the author's having some years before translated an account of Abyssinia. It may be remarked by the way, how different an idea of the country and its inhabitants seems to have been entertained at that time, from that which is suggested by the accounts of Bruce and Lord Valentia. Thomson, who probably took his ideas from the voyage-writers of the time, represents the country of "jealous Abyssinia" as a perfect paradise, "a world within itself; disdaining all assault;" and mentions the "palaces, and fanes, and villas, and gardens, and cultured fields" of this innocent and amiable people with poetic rapture. We must suppose that Father Lobo never had the honour of dancing with them on a gala-day.

Rasselas was published in 1759, and was then composed for the purpose of enabling the author to visit his mother in her last illness, and for defraying the expenses of her funeral. It was written with great rapidity; for the author himself has told us that it was composed in the evenings of one week, sent to the press in portions as it was written, and never reperused when finished. It was much read, and has been translated into several languages. Rich indeed must be the stores of that mind which could pour out its treasures with such rapidity, and clothe its thoughts, almost spontaneously, in language so correct and ornamented.

Perhaps the genius of Dr. Johnson has been in some measure mistaken. The ponderosity of his manner has led the world to give him more credit for science, and less for fancy, than

the character of his works will justify. His remarks on life and manners are just and weighty, and show a philosophical mind, but not an original turn of thinking. The novelty is in the style; but originality of style belongs to that dress and colouring of our thoughts in which imagination is chiefly concerned.

In fact, imagination had great influence over him. His ideas of religion were awful and grand, and he had those feelings of devotion which seldom subsist in a strong degree in a cold and phlegmatic mind; but his religion was tinctured with superstition, his philosophy was clouded with partialities and prejudices, his mind was inclined to melancholy.

In the work before us he has given testimony to his belief in apparitions, and has shown a leaning towards monastic institutions. Of his discoveries in any region of science posterity will be able to speak but little; but in his *Ramblers* he will be considered as having formed a new style, and his *Rasselas*, and *Vision of Theodore*, must give him an honourable place among those writers who deck philosophy with the ornamented diction and the flowers of fancy.

It should not be forgotten to be noticed in praise of *Rasselas*, that it is, as well as all the other works of its author, perfectly pure. In describing the happy valley, he has not, as many authors would have done, painted a luxurious bower of bliss, nor once throughout the work awakened any ideas which might be at variance with the moral truths which all his writings are meant to inculcate.

HAWKESWORTH.

THE praise which was universally bestowed on the little Eastern tales which Dr. Hawkesworth had introduced in the papers of his *Adventurer* probably suggested to him the idea of giving a more extended story in the same style, and produced his *Almoran and Hamet*. It is not, however, equal to the beautiful allegory of the *ring*, or the sublime imagery of *Carazan*. In extended compositions of this kind, we miss the captivating richness and wildness of the genuine Eastern tales; and the desire to elicit a moral is commonly too apparent. The style also which is generally adopted in these tales inclines to the turgid, and is apt to become tiresome in a narrative of any length. *Vathek* is the only modern composition which has seized the genuine spirit of the Arabian tales: there is indeed in that fiction so much of the fancy peculiar to the East, that it is difficult to imagine it has not had some genuine tale of that origin for its basis.

Almoran and Hamet may, notwithstanding, be read with a degree of pleasure, especially by

youth, to whom the allegorical mode of writing is generally more agreeable than it is to those of more advanced life. The design is to show that no outward circumstances, even such as may be produced by changing the course of nature, are sufficient to procure happiness, if the mind is not fitted for it by virtuous dispositions. There is merit in the idea of making Almoran, under the form of Hamet, incapable of taking advantage of his transformation in securing the affections of his mistress, which become immediately alienated from that beloved form, when she finds the mind of her supposed lover no longer the same. She despises Almoran under the form of Hamet, and transfers her love to the real Hamet, believing him to be Almoran: but much more might have been made of the frame of the story than is made of it.

Dr. Hawkesworth's genius was not of the first order; but it was elegant, pleasing, and remarkably adapted to those purposes of moral instruction and innocent entertainment to which he uniformly devoted it.

THE

HISTORY

OF

RASSELAS,

PRINCE OF ABISSINIA.

CHAPTER I.

Description of a palace in a valley.

YE who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abissinia.

Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperor, in whose dominions the Father of Waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt.

According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abissinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.

The place, which the wisdom or policy of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abissinian princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Ambara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits overhung the middle part. The only passage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has long been disputed whether it was the work of nature or of human iudustry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood; and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy that no man could, without the help of engines, open or shut them.

From the mountains on every side, rivulets descended that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream which entered a dark cleft of the mountain on the nothern side, and fell with dreadful noise from precipice to precipice till it was heard no more

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or browse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns; the sprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicing in the trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All the diversities of

the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied its inhabitants with the necessaries of life, and all delights and superfluities were added at the annual visit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was open to the sound of music; and during eight days every one that resided in the valley was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity: the musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers shewed their activity before the princes, in hope they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity, to which those only were admitted whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight which this retirement afforded, that they, to whom it was new, always desired that it might be perpetual; and as those, on whom the iron gate had once closed, were never suffered to return, the effect of long experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.

The palace stood on an eminence raised about thirty paces above the surface of the lake. It was divided into many squares or courts, built with greater or less magnificence, according to the rank of those for whom they were designed. The roofs were turned into arches of massy stone, joined by a cement that grew harder by time; and the building stood from century to century deriding the solstitial rains and equinoctial hurricanes, without need of reparation.

This house, which was so large as to be fully known to none but some ancient officers who successively inherited the secrets of the place, was built as if Suspicion herself had dictated the plan. To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper stories by private galleries or by subterranean passages from the lower apartments. Many of the columns had unsuspected cavities, in which a long race of monarchs had reposited their treasures. They then closed up the opening with marble, which was never to be removed but in the utmost exigencies of the kingdom, and recorded their accumulations in a book which was itself concealed in a tower not entered but by the emperor, attended by the prince who stood next in succession.

CHAPTER II.

The discontent of Rasselas in the happy valley.

HERE the sons and daughters of Abissinia lived only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose, attended by all that were skilful to delight, and gratified with whatever the senses can enjoy. They wandered in gardens of fragrace, and slept in the fortresses of security. Every art was practised to make them pleased with their own condition. The sages who instructed them told them of nothing but the miseries of public life, and described all beyond the mountains as regions of calamity, where discord was always raging, and where man preyed upon man.

To heighten their opinion of their own felicity,

they were daily entertained with songs, the subject of which was the *happy valley*. Their appetites were excited by frequent enumerations of different enjoyments; and revelry and merriment was the business of every hour, from the dawn of morning to the close of even.

These methods were generally successful: few of the princes had ever wished to enlarge their bounds, but passed their lives in full conviction that they had all within their reach that art or nature could bestow, and pitied those whom fate had excluded from this seat of tranquillity, as the sport of chance and the slaves of misery.

Thus they rose in the morning and lay down at night, pleased with each other and with themselves, all but Rasselas, who, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, began to withdraw himself from their pastimes and assemblies, and to delight in solitary walks and silent meditation. He often sat before tables covered with luxury, and forgot to taste the dainties that were placed before him: he rose abruptly in the midst of the song, and hastily retired beyond the sound of music. His attendants observed the change, and endeavoured to renew his love of pleasure: he neglected their officiousness, repulsed their invitations, and spent day after day on the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.

This singularity of his humour made him much observed. One of the sages, in whose conversation he had formerly delighted, followed him secretly, in hope of discovering the cause of his disquiet.

Rasselas, who knew not that any one was near him, having for some time fixed his eyes upon the goats that were browsing among the rocks, began to compare their condition with his own.

What, said he, makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays beside me has the same corporeal necessities with myself: he is hungry and crops the grass, he is thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst and hunger are appeased; he is satisfied and sleeps; he rises again, and is hungry; he is again fed, and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty like him, but when thirst and hunger cease I am not at rest: I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fulness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves, where they sit in seeming happiness on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I likewise can call the lutanist and the singer; but the sounds that pleased me yesterday weary me to-day, and will grow yet more wearisome to-morrow. I can discover within me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man surely has some latent sense for which this place affords no gratification, or he has some desires distinct from sense, which must be satisfied before he can be happy.

After this he lifted up his head, and, seeing the moon rising, walked towards the palace. As he passed through the fields, and saw the animals around him, Ye, said he, are happy, and need not envy me that walk thus among you, burdened with myself; nor do I, ye gentle beings, envy your

felicity, for it is not the felicity of man. I have many distresses from which ye are free; I fear pain when I do not feel it; I sometimes shrink at evils recollected, and sometimes start at evils anticipated. Surely the equity of Providence has balanced peculiar sufferings with peculiar enjoyments.

With observations like these the prince amused himself as he returned, uttering them with a plaintive voice, yet with a look that discovered him to feel some complacence in his own perspicacity, and to receive some solace of the miseries of life, from consciousness of the delicacy with which he felt, and the eloquence with which he bewailed them. He mingled cheerfully in the diversions of the evening, and all rejoiced to find that his heart was lightened.

CHAPTER III.

The wants of him that wants nothing.

On the next day his old instructor, imagining that he had now made himself acquainted with his disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted, was not very willing to afford: Why, said he, does this man thus obtrude upon me? Shall I be never suffered to forget those lectures which pleased only while they were new, and to become new again must be forgotten? He then walked into the wood, and composed himself to his usual meditations; when, before his thoughts had taken any settled form, he perceived his pursuer at his side, and was at first

prompted by his impatience to go hastily away; but, being unwilling to offend a man whom he had once reverenced, and still loved, he invited him to sit down with him on the bank.

The old man, thus encouraged, began to lament the change which had been lately observed in the prince, and to inquire why he so often retired from the pleasures of the palace to loneliness and silence. I fly from pleasure, said the prince, because pleasure has ceased to please; I am lonely because I am miserable, and am unwilling to cloud with my presence the happiness of others.—You, sir, said the sage, are the first who has complained of misery in the *happy valley*. I hope to convince you that your complaints have no real cause. You are here in full possession of all that the emperor of Abissinia can bestow: here is neither labour to be endured nor danger to be dreaded; yet here is all that labour or danger can procure or purchase. Look round, and tell me which of your wants is without supply: if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?

That I want nothing, said the prince, or that I know not what I want, is the cause of my complaint: if I had any known want, I should have a certain wish: that wish would excite endeavour, and I should not then repine to see the sun move so slowly towards the western mountain, or lament when the day breaks, and sleep will no longer hide me from myself. When I see the kids and the lambs chasing one another, I fancy that I should be happy if I had something to pursue. But, possessing all that I can want, I find one day and one hour exactly like another, except that the latter is still more tedious than the former. Let your experience inform me how the day may now seem as short as in my childhood, while nature was yet

fresh, and every moment showed me what I never had observed before. I have already enjoyed too much: give me something to desire.

The old man was surprised at this new species of affliction, and knew not what to reply, yet was unwilling to be silent. Sir, said he, if you had seen the miseries of the world, you would know how to value your present state.—Now, said the prince, you have given me something to desire: I shall long to see the miseries of the world, since the sight of them is necessary to happiness.

CHAPTER IV.

The prince continues to grieve and muse.

At this time the sound of music proclaimed the hour of repast, and the conversation was concluded. The old man went away sufficiently discontented, to find that his reasonings had produced the only conclusion which they were intended to prevent. But in the decline of life, shame and grief are of short duration; whether it be, that we bear easily what we have borne long, or that, finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others, or, that we look with slight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.

The prince, whose views were extended to a wider space, could not speedily quiet his emotions. He had been before terrified at the length of life which nature promised him, because he considered that in a long time much must be endured: he now rejoiced in his youth, because in many years much might be done.

This first beam of hope that had been ever darted into his mind, rekindled youth in his cheeks, and doubled the lustre of his eyes. He was fired with the desire of doing something, though he knew not yet with distinctness either end or means.

He was now no longer gloomy and unsocial; but considering himself as master of a secret stock of happiness, which he could enjoy only by concealing it, he affected to be busy in all schemes of diversion, and endeavoured to make others pleased with the state of which he himself was weary. But pleasures never can be so multiplied or continued, as not to leave much of life unemployed: there were many hours, both of the night and day, which he could spend without suspicion in solitary thought. The load of life was much lightened: he went eagerly into the assemblies, because he supposed the frequency of his presence necessary to the success of his purposes: he retired gladly to privacy, because he had now a subject of thought.

His chief amusement was to picture to himself that world which he had never seen; to place himself in various conditions; to be entangled in imaginary difficulties, and to be engaged in wild adventures: but his benevolence always terminated his projects in the relief of distress, the detection of fraud, the defeat of oppression, and the diffusion of happiness.

Thus passed twenty months of the life of Rasselas. He busied himself so intensely in visionary bustle, that he forgot his real solitude; and, amidst hourly preparations for the various incidents of human affairs, neglected to consider by what means he should mingle with mankind.

One day, as he was sitting on a bank, he feigned to himself an orphan virgin, robbed of her little portion by a treacherous lover, and crying after him for restitution and redress. So strongly was the image impressed upon his mind, that he started up in the maid's defence, and ran forward to seize the plunderer, with all the eagerness of real pursuit. Fear naturally quickens the flight of guilt. Rasselas could not catch the fugitive with his utmost efforts; but, resolving to weary by perseverance, him whom he could not surpass in speed, he pressed on till the foot of the mountain stopped his course.

Here he recollected himself, and smiled at his own useless impetuosity. Then raising his eyes to the mountain, This, says he, is the fatal obstacle, that hinders at once the enjoyment of pleasure and the exercise of virtue. How long is it that my hopes and wishes have flown beyond this boundary of my life, which yet I never have attempted to surmount!

Struck with this reflection, he sat down to muse; and remembered, that since he first resolved to escape from his confinement, the sun had passed twice over him in his annual course. He now felt a degree of regret, with which he had never been before acquainted. He considered how much might have been done in the time which had passed, and left nothing real behind it. He compared twenty months with the life of man. In life, said he, is not to be counted the ignorance of infancy, or imbecility of age. We are long before we are able to think, and we soon cease from the power of acting. The true period of human existence may be reasonably estimated at forty years, of which I have mused away the four and twentieth part. What I have lost was certain, for I have certainly possessed

it; but of twenty months to come, who can assure me?

The consciousness of his own folly pierced him deeply, and he was long before he could be reconciled to himself.

The rest of my time, said he, has been lost by the crime or folly of my ancestors, and the absurd institutions of my country; I remember it with disgust, yet without remorse: but the months that have passed since new light darted into my soul, since I formed a scheme of reasonable felicity, have been squandered by my own fault. I have lost that which can never be restored: I have seen the sun rise and set for twenty months, an idle gazer on the light of heaven: in this time the birds have left the nest of their mother, and committed themselves to the woods and to the skies; the kid has forsaken the teat, and learned by degrees to climb the rocks, in quest of independent sustenance. I only have made no advances, but am still helpless and ignorant. The moon, by more than twenty changes, admonished me of the flux of life; the stream that rolled before my feet upbraided my inactivity. I sat feasting on intellectual luxury, regardless alike of the examples of the earth, and the instructions of the planets. Twenty months are passed; who shall restore them?

These sorrowful meditations fastened upon his mind: he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves, and was awakened to more vigorous exertion, by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup, remark, that what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted.

This was obvious, and Rasselas reproached himself that he had not discovered it; having not known, or not considered, how many useful hints are obtained by chance, and how often the mind, hurried by

her own ardour to distant views, neglects the truths that lie open before her. He, for a few hours, regretted his regret, and from that time bent his whole mind upon the means of escaping from the valley of happiness.

CHAPTER V.

The prince meditates his escape.

He now found that it would be very difficult to effect that which it was very easy to suppose effected. When he looked round about him, he saw himself confined by the bars of nature which had never yet been broken, and by the gate through which none that once had passed it were ever able to return. He was now impatient as an eagle in a grate. He passed week after week in clambering the mountains, to see if there was any aperture which the bushes might conceal, but found all the summits inaccessible by their prominence. The iron gate he despaired to open; for it was not only secured with all the power of art, but was always watched by successive sentinels, and was, by its position, exposed to the perpetual observation of all the inhabitants.

He then examined the cavern through which the waters of the lake were discharged; and, looking down at a time when the sun shone strongly upon its mouth, he discovered it to be full of broken rocks, which, though they permitted the stream to flow through many narrow passages, would stop any body of solid bulk. He returned discouraged and dejected; but having now known the blessing of hope, resolved never to despair.

In these fruitless searches he spent ten months. The time, however, passed cheerfully away: in the morning he rose with new hope, in the evening applauded his own diligence, and in the night slept sound after his fatigue. He met a thousand amusements, which beguiled his labour, and diversified his thoughts. He discerned the various instincts of animals, and properties of plants, and found the place replete with wonders, of which he purposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight; rejoicing that his endeavours, though yet unsuccessful, had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible inquiry.

But his original curiosity was not yet abated: he resolved to obtain some knowledge of the ways of men. His wish still continued, but his hope grew less. He ceased to survey any longer the walls of his prison, and spared to search by new toils for interstices which he knew could not be found, yet determined to keep his design always in view, and lay hold on any expedient that time should offer.

CHAPTER VI.

A dissertation on the art of flying.

AMONG the artists that had been allured into the happy valley, to labour for the accommodation and pleasure of its inhabitants, was a man eminent for his knowledge of the mechanic powers, who had contrived many engines both of use and recreation. By a wheel, which the stream turned, he forced the water into a tower, whence it was distributed to all

the apartments of the palace. He erected a pavilion in the garden, around which he kept the air always cool by artificial showers. One of the groves, appropriated to the ladies, was ventilated by fans, to which the rivulet that ran through it gave a constant motion: and instruments of soft music were placed at proper distances, of which some played by the impulse of the wind, and some by the power of the stream.

This artist was sometimes visited by Rasselas, who was pleased with every kind of knowledge, imagining that the time would come when all his acquisitions should be of use to him in the open world. He came one day to amuse himself in his usual manner, and found the master busy in building a sailing chariot: he saw that the design was practicable on a level surface, and with expressions of great esteem solicited its completion. The workman was pleased to find himself so much regarded by the prince, and resolved to gain yet higher honours. Sir, said he, you have seen but a small part of what the mechanic sciences can perform. I have been long of opinion, that instead of the tardy conveyance of ships and chariots, man might use the swifter migration of wings; that the fields of air are open to knowledge, and that only ignorance and idleness need crawl upon the ground.

This hint rekindled the prince's desire of passing the mountains. Having seen what the mechanist had already performed, he was willing to fancy that he could do more; yet resolved to inquire further, before he suffered hope to afflict him by disappointment. I am afraid, said he, to the artist, that your imagination prevails over your skill, and that you now tell me rather what you wish, than what you know. Every animal has his element assigned him: the birds have the air, and man and

beasts the earth. So, replied the mechanist, fishes have the water, in which yet beasts can swim by nature, and men by art. He that can swim needs not despair to fly: to swim is to fly in a grosser fluid, and to fly is to swim in a subtler. We are only to proportion our power of resistance to the different density of matter through which we are to pass. You will be necessarily upborne by the air, if you can renew any impulse upon it, faster than the air can recede from the pressure.

But the exercise of swimming, said the prince, is very laborious: the strongest limbs are soon wearied. I am afraid the act of flying will be yet more violent; and wings will be of no great use, unless we can fly further than we can swim.

The labour of rising from the ground, said the artist, will be great, as we see it in the heavier domestic fowls; but as we mount higher, the earth's attraction, and the body's gravity, will be gradually diminished, till we shall arrive at a region, where the man will float in the air, without any tendency to fall: no care will then be necessary but to move forwards, which the gentlest impulse will effect. You, sir, whose curiosity is so extensive, will easily conceive with what pleasure a philosopher, furnished with wings, and hovering in the sky, would see the earth, and all its inhabitants, rolling beneath him, and presenting to him successively, by its diurnal motion, all the countries within the same parallel. How must it amuse the pendent spectator, to see the moving scene of land and ocean, cities, and deserts! To survey with equal security the marts of trade, and the fields of battle; mountains infested by barbarians, and fruitful regions gladdened by plenty, and lulled by peace! How easily shall we then trace the Nile through all his passage; pass over to distant regions,

and examine the face of nature, from one extremity of the earth to the other.

All this, said the prince, is much to be desired; but I am afraid that no man will be able to breathe in these regions of speculation and tranquillity. I have been told, that respiration is difficult upon lofty mountains; yet, from these precipices, though so high as to produce great tenuity of air, it is very easy to fall: therefore I suspect, that from any height, where life can be supported, there may be danger of too quick descent.

Nothing, replied the artist, will ever be attempted, if all possible objections must be first overcome. If you will favour my project, I will try the first flight at my own hazard. I have considered the structure of all volant animals, and find the folding continuity of the bat's wing most easily accommodated to the human form. Upon this model I shall begin my task to-morrow, and in a year expect to tower into the air beyond the malice and pursuit of man. But I will work only on this condition, that the art shall not be divulged, and that you shall not require me to make wings for any but ourselves.

Why, said Rasselas, should you envy others so great an advantage? All skill ought to be exerted for universal good: every man has owed much to others, and ought to repay the kindness that he has received.

If men were all virtuous, returned the artist, I should with great alacrity teach them all to fly. But what would be the security of the good, if the bad could at pleasure invade them from the sky? Against an army sailing through the clouds, neither walls, nor mountains, nor seas, could afford any security. A flight of northern savages might hover in the wind, and light at once, with irresistible violence,

upon the capital of a fruitful region, that was rolling under them. Even this valley, the retreat of princes, the abode of happiness, might be violated by the sudden descent of some of the naked nations, that swarm on the coast of the southern sea.

The prince promised secrecy, and waited for the performance, not wholly hopeless of success. He visited the work from time to time, observed its progress, and remarked many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength. The artist was every day more certain that he should leave vultures and eagles behind him, and the contagion of his confidence seized upon the prince.

In a year the wings were finished, and, on a morning appointed, the maker appeared furnished for flight on a little promontory: he waved his pinions awhile to gather air, then leaped from his stand, and in an instant dropped into the lake. His wings, which were of no use in the air, sustained him in the water, and the prince drew him to land, half dead with terror and vexation.

CHAPTER VII.

The prince finds a man of learning.

THE prince was not much afflicted by this disaster, having suffered himself to hope for a happier event only because he had no other means of escape in view. He still persisted in his design to leave the happy valley by the first opportunity.

His imagination was now at a stand: he had no prospect of entering into the world; and, notwith-

standing all his endeavours to support himself, discontent by degrees preyed upon him; and he began again to lose his thoughts in sadness, when the rainy season, which in these countries is periodical, made it inconvenient to wander in the woods.

The rain continued longer and with more violence than had been ever known: the clouds broke on the surrounding mountains, and the torrents streamed into the plain on every side, till the cavern was too narrow to discharge the water. The lake overflowed its banks, and all the level of the valley was covered with the inundation. The eminence on which the palace was built, and some other spots of rising ground, were all that the eye could now discover. The herds and flocks left the pastures, and both the wild beasts and the tame retreated to the mountains.

This inundation confined all the princes to domestic amusements, and the attention of Rasselas was particularly seized by a poem, which Imlac rehearsed, upon the various conditions of humanity. He commanded the poet to attend him in his apartment, and recite his verses a second time; then, entering into familiar talk, he thought himself happy in having found a man who knew the world so well, and could so skilfully paint the scenes of life. He asked a thousand questions about things to which, though common to all other mortals, his confinement from childhood had kept him a stranger. The poet pitied his ignorance, and loved his curiosity, and entertained him from day to day with novelty and instruction, so that the prince regretted the necessity of sleep, and longed till the morning should renew his pleasure.

As they were sitting together, the prince commanded Imlac to relate his history, and to tell by what accident he was forced, or by what motive in-

duced, to close his life in the happy valley. As he was going to begin his narrative, Rasselas was called to a concert, and obliged to restrain his curiosity till the evening.

CHAPTER VIII.

The history of Imlac.

THE close of the day is, in the regions of the torrid zone, the only season of diversion and entertainment; and it was therefore midnight before the music ceased, and the princesses retired. Rasselas then called for his companion, and required him to begin the story of his life.

Sir, said Imlac, my history will not be long; the life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by events. To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire, and answer inquiries, is the business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself.

I was born in the kingdom of Goiama, at no great distance from the fountain of the Nile. My father was a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Afric and the ports of the Red Sea. He was honest, frugal, and diligent, but of mean sentiments and narrow comprehension: he desired only to be rich, and to conceal his riches, lest he should be spoiled by the governors of the province.

Surely, said the prince, my father must be negligent of his charge, if any man in his dominions dares take that which belongs to another. Does he

not know that kings are accountable for injustice permitted as well as done? If I were emperor, not the meanest of my subjects should be oppressed with impunity. My blood boils when I am told that a merchant durst not enjoy his honest gains for fear of losing them by the rapacity of power. Name the governor who robbed the people, that I may declare his crimes to the emperor.

Sir, said Imlac, your ardour is the natural effect of virtue animated by youth. The time will come when you will acquit your father, and perhaps hear with less impatience of the governor. Oppression is, in the Abissinian dominions, neither frequent nor tolerated; but no form of government has been yet discovered by which cruelty can be wholly prevented. Subordination supposes power on one part, and subjection on the other; and if power be in the hands of men, it will sometimes be abused. The vigilance of the supreme magistrate may do much, but much will still remain undone. He can never know all the crimes that are committed, and can seldom punish all that he knows.

This, said the prince, I do not understand; but I had rather hear thee than dispute. Continue thy narration.

My father, proceeded Imlac, originally intended that I should have no other education than such as might qualify me for commerce; and discovering in me great strength of memory and quickness of apprehension, often declared his hope that I should be some time the richest man in Abissinia.

Why, said the prince, did thy father desire the increase of his wealth, when it was already greater than he durst discover or enjoy? I am unwilling to doubt thy veracity, yet inconsistencies cannot both be true.

Inconsistencies, answered Imlac, cannot both be

right; but, imputed to man, they both may be true. Yet diversity is not inconsistency. My father might expect a time of greater security. However, some desire is necessary to keep life in motion; and he, whose real wants are supplied, must admit those of fancy.

This, said the prince, I can in some measure conceive. I repent that I interrupted thee.

With this hope, proceeded Imlac, he sent me to school; but when I once found the delight of knowledge, and felt the pleasure of intelligence and the pride of invention, I began silently to despise riches, and determined to disappoint the purpose of my father, whose grossness of conception raised my pity. I was twenty years old before his tenderness would expose me to the fatigue of travel, in which time I had been instructed, by successive masters, in all the literature of my native country. As every hour taught me something new, I lived in a continual course of gratifications; but, as I advanced towards manhood, I lost much of the reverence with which I had been used to look on my instructors; because, when the lesson was ended, I did not find them wiser or better than common men.

At length my father resolved to initiate me in commerce, and opening one of his subterranean treasuries, counted out ten thousand pieces of gold. This, young man, said he, is the stock with which you must negociate. I began with less than the fifth part, and you see how diligence and parsimony have increased it. This is your own to waste or to improve. If you squander it by negligence or caprice, you must wait for my death before you will be rich: if, in four years, you double your stock, we will thenceforward let subordination cease, and live together as friends and partners; for he shall

always be equal with me, who is equally skilled in the art of growing rich.

We laid our money upon camels, concealed in bales of cheap goods, and travelled to the shore of the Red Sea. When I cast my eye on the expanse of waters, my heart bounded like that of a prisoner escaped. I felt an unextinguishable curiosity kindle in my mind, and resolved to snatch this opportunity of seeing the manners of other nations, and of learning sciences unknown in Abissinia.

I remembered that my father had obliged me to the improvement of my stock, not by a promise which I ought not to violate, but by a penalty which I was at liberty to incur, and therefore determined to gratify my predominant desire, and, by drinking at the fountains of knowledge, to quench the thirst of curiosity.

As I was supposed to trade without connection with my father, it was easy for me to become acquainted with the master of a ship, and procure a passage to some other country. I had no motives of choice to regulate my voyage: it was sufficient for me that, wherever I wandered, I should see a country which I had not seen before: I therefore entered a ship bound for Surat, having left a letter for my father declaring my intention.

CHAPTER IX.

The history of Imlac continued.

WHEN I first entered upon the world of waters, and lost sight of land, I looked round about me with pleasing terror, and, thinking my soul en-

larged by the boundless prospect, imagined that I could gaze round for ever without satiety; but, in a short time, I grew weary of looking on barren uniformity, where I could only see again what I had already seen. I then descended into the ship, and doubted for a while whether all my future pleasures would not end, like this, in disgust and disappointment. Yet, surely, said I, the ocean and the land are very different: the only variety of water is rest and motion, but the earth has mountains and valleys, deserts and cities; it is inhabited by men of different customs and contrary opinions; and I may hope to find variety in life, though I should miss it in nature.

With this thought I quieted my mind, and amused myself during the voyage, sometimes by learning from the sailors the art of navigation, which I have never practised, and sometimes by forming schemes for my conduct in different situations, in not one of which I have been ever placed.

I was almost weary of my naval amusements, when we landed safely at Surat. I secured my money, and purchasing some commodities for shew, joined myself to a caravan that was passing into the inland country. My companions, for some reason or other, conjecturing that I was rich, and, by my inquiries and admiration, finding that I was ignorant, considered me as a novice whom they had a right to cheat, and who was to learn at the usual expence the art of fraud. They exposed me to the theft of servants and the exaction of officers, and saw me plundered upon false pretences, without any advantage to themselves, but that of rejoicing in the superiority of their own knowledge.

Stop a moment, said the prince. Is there such depravity in man, as that he should injure another

without benefit to himself? I can easily conceive that all are pleased with superiority; but your ignorance was merely accidental, which, being neither your crime nor your folly, could afford them no reason to applaud themselves; and the knowledge which they had, and which you wanted, they might as effectually have shewn by warning, as betraying you.

Pride, said Imlac, is seldom delicate: it will please itself with very mean advantages: and envy feels not its own happiness, but when it may be compared with the misery of others. They were my enemies, because they grieved to think me rich; and my oppressors, because they delighted to find me weak.

Proceed, said the prince: I doubt not of the facts which you relate, but imagine that you impute them to mistaken motives.

In this company, said Imlac, I arrived at Agra, the capital of Indostan, the city in which the great Mogul commonly resides. I applied myself to the language of the country, and in a few months was able to converse with the learned men; some of whom I found morose and reserved, and others easy and communicative; some were unwilling to teach another what they had with difficulty learned themselves, and some showed that the end of their studies was to gain the dignity of instructing.

To the tutor of the young princess I recommended myself so much, that I was presented to the emperor as a man of uncommon knowledge. The emperor asked me many questions concerning my country and my travels; and though I cannot now recollect any thing that he uttered above the power of a common man, he dismissed me astonished at his wisdom, and enamoured of his goodness.

My credit was now so high, that the merchants, with whom I had travelled, applied to me for recommendations to the ladies of the court. I was surprised at their confidence of solicitation, and gently reproached them with their practices on the road. They heard me with cold indifference, and shewed no tokens of shame or sorrow.

They then urged their request with the offer of a bribe. But what I would not do for kindness, I would not do for money; and refused them, not because they had injured me, but because I would not enable them to injure others; for I knew they would have made use of my credit to cheat those who should buy their wares.

Having resided at Agra till there was no more to be learned, I travelled into Persia, where I saw many remains of ancient magnificence, and observed many new accommodations of life. The Persians are a nation eminently social, and their assemblies afforded me daily opportunities of remarking characters and manners, and of tracing human nature through all its variations.

From Persia I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions.

CHAPTER X.

Imlac's history continued. A dissertation upon poetry.

WHEREVER I went, I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with

a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the angelic nature. And yet it fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best. Whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation, surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent, which it received by accident at first: or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them, but transcription of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art: that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors. I could never describe what I had not seen: I could not hope to move those with delight or terror, whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw every thing with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts

for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety: for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth; and he who knows most, will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study, and every country which I have surveyed has contributed something to my poetical powers.

In so wide a survey, said the prince, you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived till now, within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something which I had never beheld before, or never heeded.

The business of a poet, said Imlac, is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances. He does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recal the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked,

and another have neglected, for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.

But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet: he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition; observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind, as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same. He must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name, contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature, and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place.

His labour is not yet at an end: he must know many languages and many sciences; and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony.

CHAPTER XI.

Imlac's narrative continued. A hint on pilgrimage.

IMLAC now felt the enthusiastic fit, and was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession, when the prince cried out, Enough! thou hast convinced me that no human being can ever be a poet. Proceed with thy narration.

To be a poet, said Imlac, is indeed very difficult. So difficult, returned the prince, that I will at present hear no more of his labours. Tell me whither you went when you had seen Persia.

From Persia, said the poet, I travelled through Syria, and for three years resided in Palestine, where I conversed with great numbers of the northern and western nations of Europe; the nations which are now in possession of all power and all knowledge, whose armies are irresistible, and whose fleets command the remotest parts of the globe. When I compared these men with the natives of our own kingdom, and those that surround us, they appeared almost another order of beings. In their countries it is difficult to wish for any thing that may not be obtained: a thousand arts, of which we never heard, are continually labouring for their convenience and pleasure: and whatever their own climate has denied them, is supplied by their commerce.

By what means, said the prince, are the Europeans thus powerful; or why, since they can so easily visit Asia and Africa for trade or conquest, cannot the Asiatics and Africans invade their coasts, plant colonies in their ports, and give laws to their natural princes? The same wind that carries them back would bring us thither.

They are more powerful, sir, than we, answered Imlac, because they are wiser: knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. But why their knowledge is more than ours, I know not what reason can be given, but the unsearchable will of the Supreme Being.

When, said the prince, with a sigh, shall I be able to visit Palestine, and mingle with this mighty confluence of nations? Till that happy moment shall arrive, let me fill up the time with such representations as thou canst give me. I am not ignorant of the motive that assembles such numbers in that place, and cannot but consider it as the centre of wisdom and piety, to which the best and wisest men of every land must be continually resorting.

There are some nations, said Imlac, that send few visitants to Palestine; for many numerous and learned sects in Europe concur to censure pilgrimage as superstitious, or deride it as ridiculous.

You know, said the prince, how little my life has made me acquainted with diversity of opinions: it will be too long to hear the arguments on both sides; you that have considered them, tell me the result.

Pilgrimage, said Imlac, like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journeys in search of truth are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety; for it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and

I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the Supreme Being may be more easily propitiated in one place than in another, is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will justify. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine, will, perhaps, find himself mistaken; yet he may go thither without folly: he who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, dishonours at once his reason and religion.

These, said the prince, are European distinctions. I will consider them another time. What have you found to be the effect of knowledge? Are those nations happier than we?

There is so much infelicity, said the poet, in the world, that scarce any man has leisure from his own distresses to estimate the comparative happiness of others. Knowledge is certainly one of the means of pleasure, as is confessed by the natural desire which every mind feels of increasing its ideas. Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced: it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction; and, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget. I am therefore inclined to conclude, that if nothing counteracts the natural consequence of learning, we grow more happy as our minds take a wider range.

In enumerating the particular comforts of life, we shall find many advantages on the side of the Europeans. They cure wounds and diseases with which we languish and perish. We suffer inclemencies of weather, which they can obviate. They have engines for the dispatch of many laborious works, which we must perform by manual industry. There

is such communication between distant places, that one friend can hardly be said to be absent from another. Their policy removes all public inconveniences: they have roads cut through their mountains, and bridges laid upon their rivers. And if we descend to the privacies of life, their habitations are more commodious, and their possessions are more secure.

They are surely happy, said the prince, who have all these conveniencies, of which I envy none so much as the facility with which separated friends interchange their thoughts.

The Europeans, answered Imlac, are less unhappy than we, but they are not happy. Human life is every where a state in which much is to be endured, and little to be enjoyed.

CHAPTER XII.

The story of Imlac continued.

I AM not yet willing, said the prince, to suppose that happiness is so parsimoniously distributed to mortals; nor can believe but that, if I had the choice of life, I should be able to fill every day with pleasure. I would injure no man, and should provoke no resentment: I would relieve every distress, and should enjoy the benedictions of gratitude: I would choose my friends among the wise, and my wife among the virtuous; and therefore should be in no danger from treachery or unkindness. My children should, by my care, be learned and pious, and would repay to my age what their childhood had received. What would dare to molest him who might call on every side to thousands enriched by his bounty, or assisted

by his power? And why should not life glide quietly away in the soft reciprocation of protection and reverence? All this may be done without the help of European refinements, which appear, by their effects, to be rather specious than useful. Let us leave them, and pursue our journey.

From Palestine, said Imlac, I passed through many regions of Asia; in the more civilized kingdoms as a trader, and among the barbarians of the mountains as a pilgrim. At last I began to long for my native country, that I might repose after my travels and fatigues, in the places where I had spent my earliest years, and gladden my old companions with the recital of my adventures. Often did I figure to myself those with whom I had sported away the gay hours of dawning life, sitting round me in its evening, wondering at my tales, and listening to my counsels.

When this thought had taken possession of my mind, I considered every moment as wasted which did not bring me nearer to Abissinia. I hastened into Egypt; and, notwithstanding my impatience, was detained ten months in the contemplation of its ancient magnificence, and in inquiries after the remains of its ancient learning. I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations: some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living after their own manner without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes: for in a city populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain, at the same time, the gratifications of society, and the secrecy of solitude.

From Cairo I travelled to Suez, and embarked on the Red Sea, passing along the coast, till I arrived at the port from which I had departed twenty years before. Here I joined myself to a caravan, and reentered my native country.

I now expected the caresses of my kinsmen, and the congratulations of my friends, and was not without hope that my father, whatever value he had set upon riches, would own with gladness and pride a son who was able to add to the felicity and honour of the nation. But I was soon convinced that my thoughts were vain. My father had been dead fourteen years, having divided his wealth among my brothers, who were removed to some other provinces. Of my companions the greater part was in the grave: of the rest, some could with difficulty remember me; and some considered me as one corrupted by foreign manners.

A man used to vicissitudes is not easily dejected. I forgot, after a time, my disappointment, and endeavoured to recommend myself to the nobles of the kingdom: they admitted me to their tables, heard my story, and dismissed me. I opened a school, and was prohibited to teach. I then resolved to sit down in the quiet of domestic life, and addressed a lady that was fond of my conversation, but rejected my suit, because my father was a merchant.

Wearied at last with solicitation and repulses, I resolved to hide myself for ever from the world, and depend no longer on the opinion or caprice of others. I waited for the time when the gate of the *happy valley* should open, that I might bid farewel to hope and fear. The day came; my performance was distinguished with favour, and I resigned myself with joy to perpetual confinement.

Hast thou here found happiness at last? said Rasselas. Tell me without reserve, art thou content with thy condition; or dost thou wish to be again wandering and inquiring? All the inhabitants of this valley celebrate their lot, and, at the annual visit of the emperor, invite others to partake of their felicity.

Great prince, said Imlac, I shall speak the truth.

I know not one of all your attendants who does not lament the hour when he entered this retreat. I am less unhappy than the rest, because I have a mind replete with images, which I can vary and combine at pleasure. I can amuse my solitude by the renovation of the knowledge which begins to fade from my memory, and by recollection of the accidents of my past life. Yet all this ends in the sorrowful consideration, that my acquirements are now useless, and that none of my pleasures can be again enjoyed. The rest, whose minds have no impression but of the present moment, are either corroded by malignant passions, or sit stupid in the gloom of perpetual vacancy.

What passions can infest those, said the prince, who have no rivals? We are in a place where impotence precludes malice, and where all envy is repressed by community of enjoyments.

There may be community, said Imlac, of material possessions, but there can never be community of love or of esteem. It must happen that one will please more than another: he that knows himself despised, will always be envious; and still more envious and malevolent, if he is condemned to live in the presence of those who despise him. The invitations, by which they allure others to a state which they feel to be wretched, proceed from the natural malignity of hopeless misery. They are weary of themselves, and of each other, and expect to find relief in new companions. They envy the liberty which their folly has forfeited, and would gladly see all mankind imprisoned like themselves.

From this crime, however, I am wholly free. No man can say that he is wretched by my persuasion. I look with pity on the crowds who are annually soliciting admission to captivity, and wish that it were lawful for me to warn them of their danger.

My dear Imlac, said the prince, I will open to

thee my whole heart. I have long meditated an escape from the Happy Valley. I have examined the mountain on every side, but find myself insuperably barred: teach me the way to break my prison; thou shalt be the companion of my flight, the guide of my rambles, the partner of my fortune, and my sole director in the *choice of life*.

Sir, answered the poet, your escape will be difficult, and, perhaps, you may soon repent your curiosity. The world, which you figure to yourself smooth and quiet as the lake in the valley, you will find a sea foaming with tempests, and boiling with whirlpools: you will be sometimes overwhelmed by the waves of violence, and sometimes dashed against the rocks of treachery. Amidst wrongs and frauds, competitions and anxieties, you will wish a thousand times for these seats of quiet, and willingly quit hope to be free from fear.

Do not seek to deter me from my purpose, said the prince: I am impatient to see what thou hast seen; and since thou art thyself weary of the valley, it is evident that thy former state was better than this. Whatever be the consequence of my experiment, I am resolved to judge, with mine own eyes, of the various conditions of men, and then to make deliberately my *choice of life*.

I am afraid, said Imlac, you are hindered by stronger restraints than my persuasions; yet, if your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill.

CHAPTER XIII.

Rasselas discovers the means of escape.

THE prince now dismissed his favourite to rest, but the narrative of wonders and novelties filled his mind with perturbation. He revolved all that he had heard, and prepared innumerable questions for the morning.

Much of his uneasiness was now removed. He had a friend to whom he could impart his thoughts, and whose experience could assist him in his designs. His heart was no longer condemned to swell with silent vexation. He thought that even the *happy valley* might be endured with such a companion, and that if they could range the world together, he should have nothing further to desire.

In a few days the water was discharged, and the ground dried. The prince and Imlac then walked out together to converse without the notice of the rest. The prince, whose thoughts were always on the wing, as he passed by the gate, said, with a countenance of sorrow, Why art thou so strong, and why is man so weak?

Man is not weak, answered his companion: knowledge is more than equivalent to force. The master of mechanics laughs at strength. I can burst the gate, but cannot do it secretly. Some other expedient must be tried.

As they were walking on the side of the mountain, they observed that the conies, which the rain had driven from their burrows, had taken shelter among the bushes, and formed holes behind them, tending upwards in an oblique line. It has been the opinion of antiquity, said Imlac, that human reason borrowed many arts from the instinct of animals: let us

therefore, not think ourselves degraded by learning from the coney. We may escape by piercing the mountain in the same direction. We will begin where the summit hangs over the middle part, and labour upward till we shall issue up beyond the prominence.

The eyes of the prince, when he heard this proposal, sparkled with joy. The execution was easy, and the success certain.

No time was now lost. They hastened early in the morning to choose a place proper for their mine. They clambered with great fatigue among crags and brambles, and returned without having discovered any part that favoured their design. The second and the third day were spent in the same manner and with the same frustration; but, on the fourth, they found a small cavern, concealed by a thicket, where they resolved to make their experiment.

Imlac procured instruments proper to hew stone and remove earth; and they fell to their work on the next day with more eagerness than vigour. They were presently exhausted by their efforts, and sat down to pant upon the grass. The prince, for a moment, appeared to be discouraged. Sir, said his companion, practice will enable us to continue our labour for a longer time. Mark, however, how far we have advanced, and you will find that our toil will some time have an end. Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance: yonder palace was raised by single stones, yet you see its height and spaciousness. He that shall walk with vigour three hours a day, will pass in seven years a space equal to the circumference of the globe.

They returned to their work day after day, and, in a short time, found a fissure in the rock, which enabled them to pass far with very little obstruction.

This Rasselas considered as a good omen. Do not disturb your mind, said Imlac, with other hopes or fears than reason may suggest: if you are pleased with prognostics of good, you will be terrified likewise with tokens of evil, and your whole life will be a prey to superstition. Whatever facilitates our work is more than an omen: it is a cause of success. This is one of those pleasing surprises which often happen to active resolution. Many things difficult to design prove easy to performance.

CHAPTER XIV.

Rasselas and Imlac receive an unexpected visit.

THEY had now wrought their way to the middle, and solaced their toil with the approach of liberty, when the prince, coming down to refresh himself with air, found his sister Nekayah standing before the mouth of the cavity. He started and stood confused, afraid to tell his design, yet hopeless to conceal it. A few moments determined him to repose on her fidelity, and secure her secrecy by a declaration without reserve.

Do not imagine, said the princess, that I came hither as a spy: I had long observed from my window that you and Imlac directed your walk every day towards the same point, but I did not suppose you had any better reason for the preference than a cooler shade, or more fragrant bank; nor followed you with any other design than to partake of your conversation. Since, then, not suspicion but fondness has detected you, let me not lose the advantage of my discovery. I am equally weary of confinement with yourself, and not less desirous of knowing what

is done or suffered in the world. Permit me to fly with you from this tasteless tranquillity, which will yet grow more loathsome when you have left me. You may deny me to accompany you, but cannot hinder me from following.

The prince, who loved Nekayah above his other sisters, had no inclination to refuse her request, and grieved that he had lost an opportunity of shewing his confidence by a voluntary communication. It was therefore agreed that she should leave the valley with them; and that, in the mean time, she should watch lest any other straggler should, by chance or curiosity, follow them to the mountain.

At length their labour was at an end; they saw light beyond the prominence, and, issuing to the top of the mountain, beheld the Nile, yet a narrow current, wandering beneath them.

The prince looked round with rapture, anticipated all the pleasures of travel, and in thought was already transported beyond his father's dominions. Imlac, though very joyful at his escape, had less expectation of pleasure in the world, which he had before tried, and of which he had been weary.

Rasselas was so much delighted with a wider horizon, that he could not soon be persuaded to return into the valley. He informed his sister that the way was open, and that nothing now remained but to prepare for their departure.

CHAPTER XV.

The prince and princess leave the valley, and see many wonders.

THE prince and princess had jewels sufficient to make them rich whenever they came into a place of commerce, which, by Imlac's direction, they hid in their clothes, and, on the night of the next full moon, all left the valley. The princess was followed only by a single favourite, who did not know whither she was going.

They clambered through the cavity, and began to go down on the other side. The princess and her maid turned their eyes towards every part, and, seeing nothing to bound their prospect, considered themselves as in danger of being lost in a dreary vacuity. They stopped and trembled. I am almost afraid, said the princess, to begin a journey of which I cannot perceive an end, and to venture into this immense plain, where I may be approached on every side by men whom I never saw. The prince felt nearly the same emotions, though he thought it more manly to conceal them.

Imlac smiled at their terrors, and encouraged them to proceed; but the princess continued irresolute till she had been imperceptibly drawn forward too far to return.

In the morning they found some shepherds in the field, who set milk and fruits before them. The princess wondered that she did not see a palace ready for her reception, and a table spread with delicacies; but being faint and hungry, she drank the milk and ate the fruits, and thought them of a higher flavour than the produce of the valley.

They travelled forward by easy journeys, being

all unaccustomed to toil or difficulty, and knowing, that though they might be missed, they could not be pursued. In a few days they came into a more populous region, where Imlac was diverted with the admiration which his companions expressed at the diversity of manners, stations, and employments.

Their dress was such as might not bring upon them the suspicion of having any thing to conceal; yet the prince, wherever he came, expected to be obeyed, and the princess was frighted, because those who came into her presence did not prostrate themselves before her. Imlac was forced to observe them with great vigilance, lest they should betray their rank by their unusual behaviour, and detained them several weeks in the first village, to accustom them to the sight of common mortals.

By degrees the royal wanderers were taught to understand that they had for a time laid aside their dignity, and were to expect only such regard as liberality and courtesy could procure. And Imlac, having, by many admonitions, prepared them to endure the tumults of a port, and the ruggedness of the commercial race, brought them down to the sea-coast.

The prince and his sister, to whom every thing was new, were gratified equally at all places, and therefore remained for some months at the port without any inclination to pass further. Imlac was content with their stay, because he did not think it safe to expose them, unpractised in the world, to the hazards of a foreign country.

At last he began to fear lest they should be discovered, and proposed to fix a day for their departure. They had no pretensions to judge for themselves, and referred the whole scheme to his direction. He therefore took passage in a ship to Suez; and, when the time came, with great difficulty prevailed on the

princess to enter the vessel. They had a quick and prosperous voyage, and from Suez travelled by land to Cairo.

CHAPTER XVI.

They enter Cairo, and find every man happy.

As they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, This, said Imlac to the prince, is the place where travellers and merchants assemble from all corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation. Commerce is here honourable: I will act as a merchant, and you shall live as strangers, who have no other end of travel than curiosity. It will soon be observed that we are rich: our reputation will procure us access to all whom we shall desire to know: you will see all the conditions of humanity, and enable yourself at leisure to make your *choice of life.*

They now entered the town, stunned by the noise, and offended by the crowds. Instruction had not yet so prevailed over habit, but that they wondered to see themselves pass undistinguished along the streets, and met by the lowest of the people without reverence or notice. The princess could not at first bear the thought of being levelled with the vulgar, and, for some days, continued in her chamber, where she was served by her favourite Pekuah, as in the palace of the valley.

Imlac, who understood traffic, sold part of the jewels the next day, and hired a house, which he adorned with such magnificence, that he was immediately considered as a merchant of great wealth.

His politeness attracted many acquaintance, and his generosity made him courted by many dependants. His table was crowded by men of every nation, who all admired his knowledge, and solicited his favour.—His companions, not being able to mix in the conversation, could make no discovery of their ignorance or surprise, and were gradually initiated in the world as they gained knowledge of the language.

The prince had, by frequent lectures, been taught the use and nature of money; but the ladies could not, for a long time, comprehend what the merchants did with small pieces of gold and silver, or why things of so little use should be received as equivalent to the necessaries of life.

They studied the language two years, while Imlac was preparing to set before them the various ranks and conditions of mankind. He grew acquainted with all who had any thing uncommon in their fortune or conduct. He frequented the voluptuous and the frugal, the idle and the busy, the merchants and the men of learning.

The prince being now able to converse with fluency, and having learned the caution necessary to be observed in his intercourse with strangers, began to accompany Imlac to places of resort, and to enter into all assemblies, that he might make his *choice of life.*

For some time he thought choice needless, because all appeared to him equally happy. Whereever he went he met gaiety and kindness, and heard the song of joy or the laugh of carelessness. He began to believe that the world overflowed with universal plenty, and that nothing was withheld either from want or merit; that every hand showered liberality, and every heart melted with benevolence:

And who, then, says he, will be suffered to be wretched?

Imlac permitted the pleasing delusion, and was unwilling to crush the hope of inexperience, till one day, having sat a while silent, I know not, said the prince, what can be the reason that I am more unhappy than any of our friends. I see them perpetually and unalterably cheerful, but feel my own mind restless and uneasy. I am unsatisfied with those pleasures which I seem most to court. I live in the crowds of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself, and am only loud and merry to conceal my sadness.

Every man, said Imlac, may, by examining his own mind, guess what passes in the minds of others: when you feel that your own gaiety is counterfeit, it may justly lead you to suspect that of your companions not to be sincere. Envy is commonly reciprocal. We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself. In the assembly, where you passed the last night, there appeared such sprightliness of air, and volatility of fancy, as might have suited beings of an higher order, formed to inhabit serener regions, inaccessible to care or sorrow: yet, believe me, prince, there was not one who did not dread the moment when solitude should deliver him to the tyranny of reflection.

This, said the prince, may be true of others, since it is true of me; yet, whatever be the general infelicity of man, one condition is more happy than another, and wisdom surely directs us to take the least evil in the *choice of life*.

The causes of good and evil, answered Imlac, are so various and uncertain, so often entangled with

each other, so diversified by various relations, and so much subject to accidents which cannot be foreseen, that he who would fix his condition upon incontestable reasons of preference, must live and die inquiring and deliberating.

But surely, said Rasselas, the wise men, to whom we listen with reverence and wonder, chose that mode of life for themselves which they thought most likely to make them happy.

Very few, said the poet, live by choice. Every man is placed in his present condition by causes which acted without his foresight, and with which he did not always willingly co-operate; and therefore you will rarely meet one who does not think the lot of his neighbour better than his own.

I am pleased to think, said the prince, that my birth has given me at least one advantage over others, by enabling me to determine for myself. I have here the world before me: I will review it at leisure: surely happiness is somewhere to be found.

CHAPTER XVII.

The prince associates with young men of spirit and gaiety.

RASSELAS rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life. Youth, cried he, is the time of gladness; I will join myself to the young men, whose only business is to gratify their desires, and whose time is all spent in a succession of enjoyments.

To such societies he was readily admitted; but

a few days brought him back weary and disgusted. Their mirth was without images; their laughter without motive; their pleasures were gross and sensual, in which the mind had no part: their conduct was at once wild and mean; they laughed at order and at law; but the frown of power dejected, and the eye of wisdom abashed them.

The prince soon concluded, that he should never be happy in a course of life of which he was ashamed. He thought it unsuitable to a reasonable being to act without a plan, and to be sad or cheerful only by chance. Happiness, said he, must be something solid and permanent, without fear and without uncertainty.

But his young companions had gained so much of his regard by their frankness and courtesy, that he could not leave them without warning and remonstrance. My friends, said he, I have seriously considered our manners and our prospects, and find that we have mistaken our own interest. The first years of man must make provision for the last. He that never thinks never can be wise. Perpetual levity must end in ignorance; and intemperance, though it may fire the spirits for an hour, will make life short or miserable. Let us consider that youth is of no long duration, and that in maturer age, when the enchantments of fancy shall cease, and phantoms of delight dance no more about us, we shall have no comforts but the esteem of wise men, and the means of doing good. Let us, therefore, stop while to stop is in our power: let us live as men who are some time to grow old, and to whom it will be the most dreadful of all evils to count their past years by follies, and to be reminded of their former luxuriance of health only by the maladies which riot has produced.

They stared a while in silence one upon another, and at last drove him away by a general chorus of continued laughter.

The consciousness that his sentiments were just, and his intentions kind, was scarcely sufficient to support him against the horror of derision. But he recovered his tranquillity, and pursued his search.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The prince finds a wise and happy man.

As he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building, which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter: he followed the stream of people, and found it a hall or school of declamation, in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a sage raised above the rest, who discoursed with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He showed, with great strength of sentiment, and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased, when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when Fancy, the parent of Passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against Reason, their lawful sovereign. He compared Reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and Fancy to a meteor, of bright but

transitory lustre, irregular in its motion, and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear, nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief; but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immoveable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience; concluding, that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in every one's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superior being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

I have found, said the prince, at his return to Imlac, a man who can teach all that is necessary to be known, who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction closes his periods. This man shall be my future guide: I will learn his doctrines, and imitate his life.

Be not too hasty, said Imlac, to trust, or to admire, the teachers of morality: they discourse like angels, but they live like men.

Rasselas, who could not conceive how any man could reason so forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philosopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes misty, and his face pale. Sir, said he, you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless: what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes are at an end: I am now a lonely being, disunited from society.

Sir, said the prince, mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised: we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected.—Young man, answered the philosopher, you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation.—Have you then forgot the precepts, said Rasselas, which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom no strength to arm the heart against calamity? Consider that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same.—What comfort, said the mourner, can truth and reason afford me? Of what effect are they now, but to tell me, that my daughter will not be restored?

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sounds, and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences.

CHAPTER XIX.

A glimpse of pastoral life.

He was still eager upon the same inquiry; and having heard of a hermit, that lived near the lowest cataract of the Nile, and filled the whole country with the fame of his sanctity, resolved to visit his retreat, and inquire whether that felicity, which public life could not afford, was to be found in solitude; and whether a man, whose age and virtue made him venerable, could teach any peculiar art of shunning evils or enduring them?

Imlac and the princess agreed to accompany him, and, after the necessary preparations, they began their journey. Their way lay through the fields, where shepherds tended their flocks, and the lambs were playing upon the pasture.

This, said the poet, is the life which has been often celebrated for its innocence and quiet. Let us pass the heat of the day among the shepherds' tents, and know whether all our searches are not to terminate in pastoral simplicity.

The proposal pleased them; and they induced the shepherds, by small presents and familiar questions, to tell their opinion of their own state. They were so rude and ignorant, so little able to compare the good with the evil of the occupation, and so indistinct in their narratives and descriptions, that very little could be learned from them. But it was evident, that their hearts were cankered with discontent; that they considered themselves as condemned to labour for the luxury of the rich, and looked up with stupid malevolence toward those that were placed above them.

The princess pronounced with vehemence, that

she would never suffer these envious savages to be her companions, and that she should not soon be desirous of seeing any more specimens of rustic happiness; but could not believe that all the accounts of primeval pleasures were fabulous; and was in doubt, whether life had any thing that could be justly preferred to the placid gratifications of fields and woods. She hoped that the time would come, when, with a few virtuous and elegant companions, she should gather flowers planted by her own hand, fondle the lambs of her own ewe, and listen, without care, among brooks and breezes, to one of her maidens reading in the shade.

CHAPTER XX.

The danger of prosperity.

On the next day they continued their journey, till the heat compelled them to look round for shelter. At a small distance they saw a thick wood, which they no sooner entered than they perceived that they were approaching the habitations of men. The shrubs were diligently cut away to open walks where the shades were darkest; the boughs of opposite trees were artificially interwoven; seats of flowery turf were raised in vacant spaces, and a rivulet, that wantoned along the side of a winding path, had its banks sometimes opened into small basons, and its streams sometimes obstructed by little mounds of stone heaped together to increase its murmurs.

They passed slowly through the wood, delighted with such unexpected accommodations, and entertained each other with conjecturing what, or who, he could be, that, in those rude and unfrequented

regions, had leisure and art for such harmless luxury.

As they advanced they heard the sound of music, and saw youths and virgins dancing in the grove; and, going still farther, beheld a stately palace built upon a hill surrounded with woods. The laws of eastern hospitality allowed them to enter, and the master welcomed them like a man liberal and wealthy.

He was skilful enough in appearances soon to discern that they were no common guests, and spread his table with magnificence. The eloquence of Imlac caught his attention, and the lofty courtesy of the princess excited his respect. When they offered to depart he entreated their stay, and was the next day more unwilling to dismiss them than before. They were easily persuaded to stop, and civility grew up in time to freedom and confidence.

The prince now saw all the domestics cheerful, and all the face of nature smiling round the place, and could not forbear to hope that he should find here what he was seeking: but when he was congratulating the master upon his possessions, he answered with a sigh, My condition has indeed the appearance of happiness. But appearances are delusive. My prosperity puts my life in danger: the bassa of Egypt is my enemy, incensed only by my wealth and popularity. I have been hitherto protected against him by the princes of the country; but, as the favour of the great is uncertain, I know not how soon my defenders may be persuaded to share the plunder with the bassa. I have sent my treasures into a distant country, and, upon the first alarm, am prepared to follow them. Then will my enemies riot in my mansion, and enjoy the gardens which I have planted.

They all joined in lamenting his danger, and deprecating his exile: and the princess was so much disturbed with the tumult of grief and indignation, that she retired to her apartment. They continued with their kind inviter a few days longer, and then went to find the hermit.

CHAPTER XXI.

The happiness of solitude. The hermit's history.

THEY came on the third day, by the direction of the peasants, to the hermit's cell: it was a cavern in the side of a mountain, overshadowed with palm-trees; at such a distance from the cataract, that nothing more was heard than a gentle uniform murmur, such as composes the mind to pensive meditation, especially when it was assisted by the wind whistling among the branches. The first rude essay of nature had been so much improved by human labour, that the cave contained several apartments appropriated to different uses, and often afforded lodging to travellers, whom darkness or tempests happened to overtake.

The hermit sat on a bench at the door, to enjoy the coolness of the evening. On one side lay a book with pens and paper; on the other, mechanical instruments of various kinds. As they approached him unregarded, the princess observed that he had not the countenance of a man that had found, or could teach, the way to happiness.

They saluted him with great respect, which he repaid like a man not unaccustomed to the forms of courts. My children, said he, if you have lost your way, you shall be willingly supplied with such

conveniencies for the night as this cavern will afford. I have all that nature requires, and you will not expect delicacies in a hermit's cell.

They thanked him, and, entering, were pleased with the neatness and regularity of the place. The hermit set flesh and wine before them, though he fed only upon fruits and water. His discourse was cheerful without levity, and pious without enthusiasm. He soon gained the esteem of his guests, and the princess repented her hasty censure.

At last Imlac began thus: I do not now wonder that your reputation is so far extended: we have heard at Cairo of your wisdom, and came hither to implore your direction for this young man and maiden in the *choice of life*.

To him that lives well, answered the hermit, every form of life is good; nor can I give any other rule for choice, than to remove from all apparent evil.

He will most certainly remove from evil, said the prince, who shall devote himself to that solitude which you have recommended by your example.

I have indeed lived fifteen years in solitude, said the hermit, but have no desire that my example should gain any imitators. In my youth I professed arms, and was raised by degrees to the highest military rank. I have traversed wide countries at the head of my troops, and seen many battles and sieges. At last, being disgusted by the preferments of a younger officer, and feeling that my vigour was beginning to decay, I resolved to close my life in peace, having found the world full of snares, discord, and misery. I had once escaped from the pursuit of the enemy by the shelter of this cavern, and therefore chose it for my final residence. I employed artificers to form it into chambers, and stored it with all that I was likely to want.

For some time after my retreat, I rejoiced like a tempest-beaten sailor at his entrance into the harbour, being delighted with the sudden change of the noise and hurry of war to stillness and repose. When the pleasure of novelty went away, I employed my hours in examining the plants which grow in the valley, and the minerals which I collected from the rocks. But that inquiry is now grown tasteless and irksome. I have been for some time unsettled and distracted: my mind is disturbed with a thousand perplexities of doubt, and vanities of imagination, which hourly prevail upon me, because I have no opportunities of relaxation or diversion. I am sometimes ashamed to think that I could not secure myself from vice, but by retiring from the exercise of virtue, and begin to suspect that I was rather impelled by resentment, than led by devotion, into solitude. My fancy riots in scenes of folly, and I lament that I have lost so much, and have gained so little. In solitude, if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good. I have been long comparing the evils with the advantages of society, and resolve to return into the world to-morrow. The life of a solitary man will be certainly miserable, but not certainly devout.

They heard his resolution with surprise; but, after a short pause, offered to conduct him to Cairo. He dug up a considerable treasure which he had hid among the rocks, and accompanied them to the city; on which, as he approached it, he gazed with rapture.

CHAPTER XXII.

The happiness of a life led according to nature.

RASSELAS went often to an assembly of learned men, who met at stated times to unbend their minds, and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat course; but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute; though sometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertist remembered upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them: every one was desirous to dictate to the rest, and every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion, that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him an hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labour of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion of duty. Others readily allowed, that there was a time when the claims of the public were satisfied, and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life, and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely, that the hermit would, in a few years, go back to his retreat, and, perhaps, if shame did not restrain, or death intercept him, return once more from his

retreat into the world: For the hope of happiness, said he, is so strongly impressed, that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it may be, we feel, and are forced to confess, the misery; yet, when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come, when desire will no longer be our torment, and no man shall be wretched but by his own fault.

This, said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come, when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to inquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny—not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope, or importunities of desire: he will receive and reject with equability of temper, and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions, or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means: let them observe the hind of the forest, and the linnet of the grove: let them consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide, and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the incumbrance of precepts which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible

maxim, That deviation from nature is deviation from happiness.

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. Sir, said the prince, with great modesty, as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse: I doubt not the truth of a position which a man so learned has so confidently advanced. Let me only know what it is to live according to nature.

When I find young men so humble and so docile, said the philosopher, I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to nature, is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things.

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent; and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied, and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The prince and his sister divide between them the work of observation.

RASSELAS returned home full of reflections, doubtful how to direct his future steps. Of the way to happiness he found the learned and simple equally ignorant; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that he had time remaining for more experiments, and farther inquiries. He communicated to Imlac his observations and his doubts, but was answered by him with new doubts, and remarks that gave him no comfort. He therefore discoursed more frequently and freely with his sister, who had yet the same hope with himself, and always assisted him to give some reason why, though he had been hitherto frustrated, he might succeed at last.

We have hitherto, said she, known but little of the world: we have never yet been either great or mean. In our own country, though we had royalty, we had no power, and in this we have not yet seen the private recesses of domestic peace. Imlac favours not our search, lest we should in time find him mistaken. We will divide the task between us: you shall try what is to be found in the splendour of courts; and I will range the shades of humbler life. Perhaps command and authority may be the supreme blessings, as they afford most opportunities of doing good: or, perhaps, what this world can give may be found in the modest habitations of middle fortune; too low for great designs, and too high for penury and distress.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The prince examines the happiness of high stations.

RASSELAS applauded the design, and appeared next day with a splendid retinue at the court of the bassa. He was soon distinguished for his magnificence, and admitted, as a prince whose curiosity had brought him from distant countries, to an intimacy with the great officers, and frequent conversation with the bassa himself.

He was at first inclined to believe, that the man must be pleased with his own condition, whom all approached with reverence, and heard with obedience, and who had the power to extend his edicts to a whole kingdom. There can be no pleasure, said he, equal to that of feeling at once the joy of thousands all made happy by wise administration. Yet since, by the law of subordination, this sublime delight can be in one nation but the lot of one, it is surely reasonable to think, that there is some satisfaction more popular and accessible, and that millions can hardly be subjected to the will of a single man, only to fill his particular breast with incommunicable content.

These thoughts were often in his mind, and he found no solution of the difficulty. But as presents and civilities gained him more familiarity, he found that almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest, and was hated by them, and that their lives were a continual succession of plots and detections, stratagems and escapes, faction and treachery. Many of those who surrounded the bassa were sent only to watch and report his conduct; every tongue was muttering censure, and every eye was searching for a fault.

At last, the letters of revocation arrived; the

bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more.

What are we now to think of the prerogatives of power? said Rasselas to his sister. Is it without any efficacy to good; or is the subordinate degree only dangerous, and the supreme safe and glorious? Is the sultan the only happy man in his dominions; or is the sultan himself subject to the torments of suspicion, and the dread of enemies?

In a short time the second bassa was deposed. The sultan, that had advanced him was murdered by the Janisaries, and his successor had other views or different favourites.

CHAPTER XXV.

The princess pursues her inquiry with more diligence than success.

THE princess, in the mean time, insinuated herself into many families; for there are few doors, through which liberality, joined with good humour, cannot find its way. The daughters of many houses were airy and cheerful; but Nekayah had been too long accustomed to the conversation of Imlac and her brother, to be much pleased with childish levity, and prattle which had no meaning. She found their thoughts narrow, their wishes low, and their merriment often artificial. Their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation. They were always jealous of the beauty of each other; of a quality to which solicitude can add nothing, and from which detraction can take nothing away. Many were in

love with triflers like themselves, and many fancied that they were in love, when in truth they were only idle. Their affection was not fixed on sense or virtue, and therefore seldom ended but in vexation. Their grief, however, like their joy, was transient: every thing floated in their mind unconnected with the past or future; so that one desire easily gave way to another, as a second stone cast into the water effaces and confounds the circles of the first.

With these girls she played as with inoffensive animals, and found them proud of her countenance and weary of her company.

But her purpose was to examine more deeply, and her affability easily persuaded the hearts that were swelling with sorrow to discharge their secrets in her ear: and those whom hope flattered, or prosperity delighted, often courted her to partake their pleasure.

The princess and her brother commonly met in the evening in a private summer-house on the banks of the Nile, and related to each other the occurrences of the day. As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. Answer, said she, great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint?

You are, then, said Rasselas, not more successful in private houses than I have been in courts. I have, since the last partition of our provinces, said the princess, enabled myself to enter familiarly into many families, where there was the fairest shew of prosperity and peace, and know not one house

that is not haunted by some fury that destroys their quiet.

I did not seek ease among the poor, because I concluded that there it could not be found. But I saw many poor whom I had supposed to live in affluence. Poverty has in large cities very different appearances: it is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind to conceal their indigence from the rest: they support themselves by temporary expedients, and every day is lost in contriving for the morrow.

This, however, was an evil, which, though frequent, I saw with less pain, because I could relieve it. Yet some have refused my bounties; more offended with my quickness to detect their wants, than pleased with my readiness to succour them: and others, whose exigencies compelled them to admit my kindness, have never been able to forgive their benefactress. Many, however, have been sincerely grateful, without the ostentation of gratitude, or the hope of other favours.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The princess continues her remarks upon private life.

NEKAYAH, perceiving her brother's attention fixed, proceeded in her narrative.—

In families, where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly discord: if a kingdom be, as Imlac tells us, a great family, a family likewise is a little kingdom, torn with factions, and exposed to revolutions. An unpractised observer expects the love of parents and children to be constant and

equal; but this kindness seldom continues beyond the years of infancy: in a short time, the children become rivals to their parents: benefits are allayed by reproaches, and gratitude debased by envy.

Parents and children seldom act in concert. Each child endeavours to appropriate the esteem or fondness of the parents; and the parents, with yet less temptation, betray each other to their children: thus, some place their confidence in the father, and some in the mother; and by degrees the house is filled with artifices and feuds.

The opinions of children and parents, of the young and the old, are naturally opposite, by the contrary effects of hope and despondence, of expectation and experience, without crime or folly on either side. The colours of life in youth and age appear different, as the face of nature in spring and winter. And how can children credit the assertions of parents, which their own eyes shew them to be false?

Few parents act in such a manner as much to enforce their maxims by the credit of their lives. The old man trusts wholly to slow contrivance and gradual progression: the youth expects to force his way by genius, vigour, and precipitance. The old man pays regard to riches, and the youth reverences virtue. The old man defies prudence: the youth commits himself to magnanimity and chance. The young man, who intends no ill, believes that none is intended, and therefore acts with openness and candour: but his father, having suffered the injuries of fraud, is impelled to suspect, and too often allured to practise it. Age looks with anger on the temerity of youth, and youth with contempt on the scrupulosity of age. Thus parents and children, for the greatest part, live on to love

less and less: and, if those whom nature has thus closely united are the torments of each other, where shall we look for tenderness and consolation?

Surely, said the prince, you must have been unfortunate in your choice of acquaintance: I am unwilling to believe, that the most tender of all relations is thus impeded in its effects by natural necessity?

Domestic discord, answered she, is not inevitably and fatally necessary; but yet it is not easily avoided. We seldom see that a whole family is virtuous. The good and the evil cannot well agree; and the evil can yet less agree with one another: even the virtuous fall sometimes to variance, when their virtues are of different kinds, and tending to extremes. In general, those parents have most reverence who most deserve it: for he that lives well cannot be despised.

Many other evils infest private life. Some are the slaves of servants whom they have trusted with their affairs. Some are kept in continual anxiety by the caprice of rich relations, whom they cannot please and dare not offend. Some husbands are imperious, and some wives perverse; and, as it is always more easy to do evil than good, though the wisdom or virtue of one can very rarely make many happy, the folly or vice of one may often make many miserable.

If such be the general effect of marriages, said the prince, I shall, for the future, think it dangerous to connect my interest with that of another, lest I should be unhappy by my partner's fault.

I have met, said the princess, with many who live single for that reason: but I never found that their prudence ought to raise envy. They dream away their time without friendship, without

fondness, and are driven to rid themselves of the day for which they have no use, by childish amusements, or vicious delights. They act as beings under the constant sense of some known inferiority, that fills their minds with rancour, and their tongues with censure. They are peevish at home, and malevolent abroad; and, as the outlaws of human nature, make it their business and their pleasure to disturb that society which debars them from its privileges. To live without feeling or exciting sympathy, to be fortunate without adding to the felicity of others, or afflicted without tasting the balm of pity, is a state more gloomy than solitude: it is not retreat, but exclusion from mankind. Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasures.

What then is to be done? said Rasselas. The more we inquire, the less we can resolve. Surely he is most likely to please himself that has no other inclination to regard.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Disquisition upon greatness.

THE conversation had a short pause. The prince, having considered his sister's observations, told her that she had surveyed life with prejudice, and supposed misery where she did not find it. Your narrative, says he, throws yet a darker gloom upon the prospects of futurity: the predictions of Imlac were but faint sketches of the evils painted by Nekayah. I have been lately convinced that Quiet is not the daughter of grandeur, or of power: that her presence is not to be bought by wealth, nor

enforced by conquest. It is evident, that as any man acts in a wider compass, he must be more exposed to opposition from enmity, or miscarriage from chance. Whoever has many to please or to govern, must use the ministry of many agents; some of whom will be wicked, and some ignorant: by some he will be misled, and by others betrayed. If he gratifies one, he will offend another; those that are not favoured, will think themselves injured; and, since favours can be conferred but upon few, the greater number will be always discontented.

The discontent, said the princess, which is thus unreasonable, I hope that I shall always have spirit to despise, and you power to repress.

Discontent, answered Rasselas, will not always be without reason under the most just and vigilant administration of public affairs. None, however attentive, can always discover that merit which indigence or faction may happen to obscure; and none, however powerful, can always reward it. Yet, he that sees inferior desert advanced above him, will naturally impute that preference to partiality or caprice; and, indeed, it can scarcely be hoped that any man, however magnanimous by nature or exalted by condition, will be able to persist for ever in the fixed and inexorable justice of distribution: he will sometimes indulge his own affections, and sometimes those of his favourites: he will permit some to please him who can never serve him. He will discover, in those whom he loves, qualities which in reality they do not possess; and to those, from whom he receives pleasure, he will in his turn endeavour to give it. Thus will recommendations sometimes prevail, which were purchased by money, or by the more destructive bribery of flattery and servility.

He that has much to do will do something wrong, and of that wrong must suffer the consequences; and, if it were possible that he should always act rightly, yet when such numbers are to judge of his conduct, the bad will censure and obstruct him by malevolence, and the good sometimes by mistake.

The highest stations cannot therefore hope to be the abodes of happiness, which I would willingly believe to have fled from thrones and palaces to seats of humble privacy and placid obscurity. For what can hinder the satisfaction or intercept the expectations of him whose abilities are adequate to his employments, who sees with his own eyes the whole circuit of his influence, who chooses by his own knowledge all whom he trusts, and whom none are tempted to deceive by hope or fear? Surely he has nothing to do but to love and to be loved, to be virtuous and to be happy.

Whether perfect happiness would be procured by perfect goodness, said Nekayah, this world will never afford an opportunity of deciding. But this, at least, may be maintained, that we do not always find visible happiness in proportion to visible virtue. All natural, and almost all political evils, are incident alike to the bad and good: they are confounded in the misery of a famine, and not much distinguished in the fury of a faction: they sink together in a tempest, and are driven together from their country by invaders. All that virtue can afford is quietness of conscience, and a steady prospect of a happier state. This may enable us to endure calamity with patience: but remember that patience must suppose pain.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Rasselas and Nekayah continue their conversation.

DEAR princess, said Rasselas, you fall into the common errors of exaggeratory declamation, by producing, in a familiar disquisition, examples of national calamities, and scenes of extensive misery, which are found in books rather than in the world, and which, as they are horrid, are ordained to be rare. Let us not imagine evils which we do not feel, nor injure life by misrepresentations. I cannot bear that querulous eloquence which threatens every city with a siege like that of Jerusalem, that makes famine attend on every flight of locusts, and suspends pestilence on the wing of every blast that issues from the south.

On necessary and inevitable evils, which overwhelm kingdoms at once, all disputation is vain: when they happen, they must be endured. But it is evident, that these bursts of universal distress are more dreaded than felt: thousands and ten thousands flourish in youth, and wither in age, without the knowledge of any other than domestic evils, and share the same pleasures and vexations, whether their kings are mild or cruel, whether the armies of their country pursue their enemies, or retreat before them. While courts are disturbed with intestine competitions, and ambassadors are negociating in foreign countries, the smith still plies his anvil, and the husbandman drives his plough forward; the necessaries of life are required and obtained; and the successive business of the seasons continues to make its wonted revolutions.

Let us cease to consider what, perhaps, may never happen, and what, when it shall happen,

will laugh at human speculation. We will not endeavour to modify the motions of the elements, or to fix the destiny of kingdoms. It is our business to consider what beings like us may perform; each labouring for his own happiness, by promoting within his circle, however narrow, the happiness of others.

Marriage is evidently the dictate of nature: men and women were made to be the companions of each other; and therefore I cannot be persuaded but that marriage is one of the means of happiness.

I know not, said the princess, whether marriage be more than one of the innumerable modes of human misery. When I see and reckon the various forms of connubial infelicity, the unexpected causes of lasting discord, the diversities of temper, the oppositions of opinion, the rude collisions of contrary desire, where both are urged by violent impulses, the obstinate contests of disagreeable virtues, where both are supported by consciousness of good intention, I am sometimes disposed to think with the severer casuists of most nations, that marriage is rather permitted than approved, and that none, but by the instigation of a passion too much indulged, entangle themselves with indissoluble compacts.

You seem to forget, replied Rasselas, that you have, even now, represented celibacy as less happy than marriage. Both conditions may be bad, but they cannot both be worst. Thus it happens, when wrong opinions are entertained, that they mutually destroy each other, and leave the mind open to truth.

I did not expect, answered the princess, to hear that imputed to falsehood which is the consequence only of frailty. To the mind, as to the eye, it is

difficult to compare with exactness objects vast in their extent, and various in their parts. When we see or conceive the whole at once, we readily note the discriminations, and decide the preference: but of two systems, of which neither can be surveyed by any human being in its full compass of magnitude and multiplicity of complication, where is the wonder, that, judging of the whole by parts, I am alternately affected by one and the other, as either presses on my memory or fancy? We differ from ourselves just as we differ from each other, when we see only part of the question, as in the multifarious relations of politics and morality; but when we perceive the whole at once, as in numerical computations, all agree in one judgment, and none ever varies in his opinion.

Let us not add, said the prince, to the other evils of life, the bitterness of controversy, nor endeavour to vie with each other in subtleties of argument. We are employed in a search, of which both are equally to enjoy the success, or suffer by the miscarriage. It is therefore fit that we assist each other. You surely conclude too hastily, from the infelicity of marriage, against its institution: will not the misery of life prove equally that life cannot be the gift of Heaven? The world must be peopled by marriage, or peopled without it.

How the world is to be peopled, returned Nekayah, is not my care, and needs not be yours. I see no danger that the present generation should omit to leave successors behind them. We are not now inquiring for the world, but for ourselves.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The debate on marriage continued.

THE good of the whole, says Rasselas, is the same with the good of all its parts. If marriage be best for mankind, it must be evidently best for individuals, or a permanent and necessary duty must be the cause of evil, and some must be inevitably sacrificed to the convenience of others. In the estimate which you have made of the two states, it appears that the incommodities of a single life are, in a great measure, necessary and certain, but those of the conjugal state accidental and avoidable.

I cannot forbear to flatter myself, that prudence and benevolence will make marriage happy. The general folly of mankind is the cause of general complaint. What can be expected but disappointment and repentance from a choice made in the immaturity of youth, in the ardour of desire, without judgment, without foresight, without inquiry after conformity of opinions, similarity of manners, rectitude of judgment, or purity of sentiment?

Such is the common process of marriage. A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home and dream of one another. Having little to divert attention, or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy when they are apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry, and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed: they wear out life in altercations, and charge nature with cruelty.

From those early marriages proceeds likewise

the rivalry of parents and children: the son is eager to enjoy the world before the father is willing to forsake it, and there is hardly room at once for two generations. The daughter begins to bloom before the mother can be content to fade; and neither can forbear to wish for the absence of the other.

Surely all these evils may be avoided by that deliberation and delay which prudence prescribes to irrevocable choice. In the variety and jollity of youthful pleasures, life may be well enough supported without the help of a partner. Longer time will increase experience, and wider views will allow better opportunities of inquiry and selection: one advantage, at least, will be certain; the parents will be visibly older than their children.

What reason cannot collect, said Nekayah, and what experiment has not yet taught, can be known only from the report of others. I have been told that late marriages are not eminently happy. This is a question too important to be neglected; and I have often proposed it to those whose accuracy of remark, and comprehensiveness of knowledge, made their suffrages worthy of regard. They have generally determined that it is dangerous for a man and woman to suspend their fate upon each other, at a time when opinions are fixed and habits are established; when friendships have been contracted on both sides; when life has been planned into method, and the mind has long enjoyed the contemplation of its own prospects.

It is scarcely possible that two travelling through the world under the conduct of chance, should have been both directed to the same path; and it will not often happen that either will quit the track which custom has made pleasing. When the desultory levity of youth has settled into regularity,

it is soon succeeded by pride ashamed to yield, or obstinacy delighting to contend. And even though mutual esteem produces mutual desire to please, time itself, as it modifies unchangeably the external mien, determines likewise the direction of the passions, and gives an inflexible rigidity to the manners. Long customs are not easily broken: he that attempts to change the course of his own life, very often labours in vain; and how shall we do that for others, which we are seldom able to do for ourselves.

But, surely, interposed the prince, you suppose the chief motive of choice forgotten or neglected. Whenever I shall seek a wife, it shall be my first question, whether she be willing to be led by reason?

Thus it is, said Nekayah, that philosophers are deceived. There are a thousand familiar disputes which reason never can decide; questions that elude investigation, and make logic ridiculous; cases where something must be done, and where little can be said. Consider the state of mankind, and inquire how few can be supposed to act upon any occasions whether small or great, with all the reasons of action present to their minds. Wretched would be the pair, above all names of wretchedness, who should be doomed to adjust by reason, every morning, all the minute detail of a domestic day.

Those who marry at an advanced age, will probably escape the encroachments of their children: but, in diminution of this advantage, they will be likely to leave them, ignorant and helpless, to a guardian's mercy; or, if that should not happen, they must at least go out of the world before they see those whom they love best either wise or great.

From their children, if they have less to fear, they have less also to hope; and they lose, without equivalent, the joys of early love, and the conve-

nience of uniting with manners pliant, and minds susceptible of new impressions, which might wear away their dissimilitudes by long cohabitation, as soft bodies, by continual attrition, conform their surfaces to each other.

I believe it will be found that those who marry late are best pleased with their children, and those who marry early with their partners.

The union of these two affections, said Rasselas, would produce all that could be wished. Perhaps there is a time when marriage might unite them—a time neither too early for the father, nor too late for the husband.

Every hour, answered the princess, confirms my prejudice in favour of the position so often uttered by the mouth of Imlac: "That nature sets her gifts on the right hand and on the left." Those conditions, which flatter hope and attract desire, are so constituted, that, as we approach one, we recede from another. There are goods so opposed that we cannot seize both; but, by too much prudence, may pass between them at too great a distance to reach either. This is often the fate of long consideration: he does nothing who endeavours to do more than is allowed to humanity. Flatter not yourself with contrarieties of pleasure. Of the blessings set before you make your choice, and be content. No man can taste the fruits of autumn while he is delighting his scent with the flowers of the spring: no man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile.

CHAPTER XXX.

Imlac enters, and changes the conversation.

HERE Imlac entered, and interrupted them. Imlac, said Rasselas, I have been taking from the princess the dismal history of private life, and am almost discouraged from further search.

It seems to me, said Imlac, that while you are making the choice of life, you neglect to live. You wander about a single city, which, however large and diversified, can now afford few novelties, and forget that you are in a country, famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestic life.

The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power, before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders; and from the wonders which time has spared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed.

My curiosity, said Rasselas, does not very strongly lead me to survey piles of stone, or mounds of earth: my business is with man. I came hither not to measure fragments of temples, or trace choaked aqueducts, but to look upon the various scenes of the present world.

The things that are now before us, said the princess, require attention, and deserve it. What have I to do with the heroes or the monuments of ancient times; with times which never can return, and heroes whose form of life was different from

all that the present condition of mankind requires or allows?

To know any thing, returned the poet, we must know its effects; to see men, we must see their works, that we may learn what reason has dictated, or passion has incited, and find what are the most powerful motives of action. To judge rightly of the present, we must oppose it to the past; for all judgment is comparative, and of the future nothing can be known. The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments. Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear. Of joy and grief the past is the object, and the future of hope and fear: even love and hatred respect the past, for the cause must have been before the effect.

The present state of things is the consequence of the former; and it is natural to inquire what were the sources of the good that we enjoy, or the evil that we suffer. If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent; if we are intrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil who refused to learn how he might prevent it.

There is no part of history so generally useful as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the light and darkness of thinking beings, the extinction and resuscitation of arts, and the revolutions of the intellectual world. If accounts of battles and invasions are peculiarly the business of princes, the useful or elegant arts are not to be neglected; those who have kingdoms to govern have understandings to cultivate.

Example is always more efficacious than precept. A soldier is formed in war, and a painter must copy pictures. In this contemplative life has the advantage: great actions are seldom seen; but the labours of art are always at hand for those who desire to know what art has been able to perform.

When the eye or the imagination is struck with any uncommon work, the next transition of an active mind is to the means by which it was performed. Here begins the true use of such contemplation: we enlarge our comprehension by new ideas, and perhaps recover some art lost to mankind, or learn what is less perfectly known in our own country. At least we compare our own with former times, and either rejoice at our improvements, or, what is the first motion towards good, discover our defects.

I am willing, said the prince, to see all that can deserve my search. And I, said the princess, shall rejoice to learn something of the manners of antiquity.

The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry, said Imlac, are the pyramids; fabrics raised before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these the greatest is still standing, very little injured by time.

Let us visit them to-morrow, said Nekayah: I have often heard of the pyramids, and shall not rest till I have seen them within and without with my own eyes.

CHAPTER XXXI.

They visit the pyramids.

THE resolution being thus taken, they set out the next day. They laid tents upon their camels, being resolved to stay among the pyramids till their curiosity was fully satisfied. They travelled gently, turned aside to every thing remarkable, stopped from time to time and conversed with the inhabitants, and observed the various appearances of towns ruined and inhabited, of wild and cultivated nature.

When they came to the great pyramid, they were astonished at the extent of the base, and the height of the top. Imlac explained to them the principles upon which the pyramidal form was chosen for a fabric intended to co-extend its duration with that of the world: he showed that its gradual diminution gave it such stability, as defeated all the common attacks of the elements, and could scarcely be overthrown by earthquakes themselves, the least resistable of natural violence. A concussion that should shatter the pyramid, would threaten the dissolution of the continent.

They measured all it dimensions, and pitched their tents at its foot. Next day they prepared to enter its interior apartments; and having hired the common guides, climbed up to the first passage, when the favourite of the princess, looking into the cavity, stepped back and trembled. Pekuah, said the princess, of what art thou afraid?—Of the narrow entrance, answered the lady, and of the dreadful gloom. I dare not enter a place which must surely be inhabited by unquiet souls. The original possessors of these dreadful vaults will

start up before us, and perhaps shut us in for ever. She spoke, and threw her arms around the neck of her mistress.

If all your fear be of apparitions, said the prince, I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried, will be seen no more.

That the dead are seen no more, said Imlac, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence: and some who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears.

Yet I do not mean to add new terrors to those which have already seized upon Pekuah. There can be no reason why spectres should haunt the pyramid more than other places, or why they should have power or will to hurt innocence and purity. Our entrance is no violation of their privileges: we can take nothing from them; how then can we offend them?

My dear Pekuah, said the princess, I will always go before you, and Imlac shall follow you. Remember that you are the companion of the princess of Abissinia.

If the princess is pleased that her servant should die, returned the lady, let her command some death less dreadful than inclosure in this horrid cavern. You know I dare not disobey you: I

must go, if you command me: but if I once enter, I never shall come back.

The princess saw that her fear was too strong for expostulation or reproof, and, embracing her, told her that she should stay in the tent till their return. Pekuah was not yet satisfied, but entreated the princess not to pursue so dreadful a purpose as that of entering the recesses of the pyramid.—Though I cannot teach courage, said Nekayah, I must not learn cowardice; nor leave at last undone what I came hither only to do.

CHAPTER XXXII.

They enter the pyramid.

Pekuah descended to the tents, and the rest entered the pyramid: they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble, and examined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been reposited. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest awhile before they attempted to return.

We have now, said Imlac, gratified our minds with an exact view of the greatest work of man, except the wall of China.

Of the wall it is very easy to assign the motive. It secured a wealthy and timorous nation from the incursions of barbarians, whose unskilfulness in the arts made it easier for them to supply their wants by rapine than by industry, and who from time to time poured in upon the habitations of peaceful commerce, as vultures descend upon domestic fowl. Their celerity and fierceness made the wall necessary, and their ignorance made it efficacious.

But for the pyramids no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labour of the work. The narrowness of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treasures might have been reposited at far less expense with equal security. It seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment. Those who have already all that they can enjoy, must enlarge their desires. He that has built for use, till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity, and extend his plan to the utmost power of human performance, that he may not be soon reduced to form another wish.

I consider this mighty structure as a monument of the insufficiency of human enjoyments. A king, whose power is unlimited, and whose treasures surmount all real and imaginary wants, is compelled to solace, by the erection of a pyramid, the satiety of dominion and tastelessness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another. Whoever thou art, that, not content with a moderate condition, imaginest happiness in royal magnificence, and dreamest that command or riches can feed the appetite of novelty with perpetual gratifications, survey the pyramids, and confess thy folly!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The princess meets with an unexpected misfortune.

THEY rose up, and returned through the cavity at which they had entered; and the princess prepared for her favourite a long narrative of dark labyrinths and costly rooms, and of the different impressions which the varieties of the way had made upon her. But when they came to their train, they found every one silent and dejected: the men discovered shame and fear in their countenances, and the women were weeping in their tents.

What had happened they did not try to conjecture, but immediately inquired.—You had scarcely entered into the pyramid, said one of the attendants, when a troop of Arabs rushed upon us: we were too few to resist them, and too slow to escape. They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive us along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen put them to flight; but they seized the Lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: the Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, but I fear they will not be able to overtake them.

The princess was overpowered with surprise and grief. Rasselas, in the first heat of his resentment, ordered his servants to follow him, and prepared to pursue the robbers with his sabre in his hand. Sir, said Imlac, what can you hope from violence or valour? The Arabs are mounted on horses trained to battle and retreat: we have only beasts of burden. By leaving our present station we may lose the princess, but cannot hope to regain Pekuah.

In a short time the Turks returned, having not

been able to reach the enemy. The princess burst out into new lamentations, and Rasselas could scarcely forbear to reproach them with cowardice; but Imlac was of opinion, that the escape of the Arabs was no addition to their misfortune, for perhaps they would have killed their captives rather than have resigned them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

They return to Cairo without Pekuah.

THERE was nothing to be hoped from longer stay. They returned to Cairo repenting of their curiosity, censuring the negligence of the government, lamenting their own rashness, which had neglected to procure a guard, imagining many expedients by which the loss of Pekuah might have been prevented, and resolving to do something for her recovery, though none could find any thing proper to be done.

Nekayah retired to her chamber, where her women attempted to comfort her, by telling her that all had their troubles, and that Lady Pekuah had enjoyed much happiness in the world for a long time, and might reasonably expect a change of fortune. They hoped that some good would befal her wheresoever she was, and that their mistress would find another friend who might supply her place.

The princess made them no answer; and they continued the form of condolence, not much grieved in their hearts that the favourite was lost.

Next day the prince presented to the bassa a memorial of the wrong which he had suffered, and

a petition for redress. The bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them; nor indeed could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.

It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish, and more wrongs than they can redress, set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence, and presently forget the request when they lose sight of the petitioner.

Imlac then endeavoured to gain some intelligence by private agents. He found many who pretended to an exact knowledge of all the haunts of the Arabs, and to regular correspondence with their chiefs, and who readily undertook the recovery of Pekuah. Of these, some were furnished with money for their journey, and came back no more; some were liberally paid for accounts which a few days discovered to be false. But the princess would not suffer any means, however improbable, to be left untried. While she was doing something, she kept her hope alive. As one expedient failed, another was suggested; when one messenger returned unsuccessful, another was dispatched to a different quarter.

Two months had now passed, and of Pekuah nothing had been heard: the hopes which they had endeavoured to raise in each other grew more languid; and the princess, when she saw nothing more to be tried, sunk down inconsolable, in hopeless dejection. A thousand times she reproached herself with the easy compliance by which she permitted her favourite to stay behind her. Had not my fondness, said she, lessened my authority, Pekuah had not dared to talk of her terrors. She ought to have feared me more than spectres. A

severe look would have overpowered her; a peremptory command would have compelled obedience. Why did foolish indulgence prevail upon me? Why did I not speak, and refuse to hear?

Great princess, said Imlac, do not reproach yourself for your virtue, or consider that as blameable by which evil has accidentally been caused. Your tenderness for the timidity of Pekuah was generous and kind. When we act according to our duty, we commit the event to Him by whose laws our actions are governed, and who will suffer none to be finally punished for obedience. When in prospect of some good, whether natural or moral, we break the rules prescribed us, we withdraw from the direction of superior wisdom, and take all consequences upon ourselves. Man cannot so far know the connection of causes and events, as that he may venture to do wrong in order to do right. When we pursue our end by lawful means, we may always console our miscarriage by the hope of future recompence. When we consult only our own policy, and attempt to find a nearer way to good, by overleaping the settled boundaries of right and wrong, we cannot be happy even by success, because we cannot escape the consciousness of our fault: but, if we miscarry, the disappointment is irremediably embittered. How comfortless is the sorrow of him who feels at once the pangs of guilt and the vexation of calamity which guilt has brought upon him!

Consider, princess, what would have been your condition, if the Lady Pekuah had entreated to accompany you, and, being compelled to stay in the tents, had been carried away; or how would you have borne the thought, if you had forced her into the Pyramid, and she had died before you in agonies of terror?

Had either happened, said Nekayah, I could not have endured life till now: I should have been tortured to madness by the remembrance of such cruelty, or must have pined away in abhorrence of myself.

This, at least, said Imlac, is the present reward of virtuous conduct, that no unlucky consequence can oblige us to repent it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The princess languishes for want of Pekuah.

NEKAYAH being thus reconciled to herself, found that no evil is insupportable but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong. She was, from that time, delivered from the violence of tempestuous sorrow, and sunk into silent pensiveness and gloomy tranquillity. She sat from morning to evening recollecting all that had been done or said by her Pekuah, treasured up with care every trifle on which Pekuah had set an accidental value, and which might recal to mind any little incident or careless conversation. The sentiments of her, whom she now expected to see no more, were treasured in her memory as rules of life, and she deliberated to no other end than to conjecture on any occasion what would have been the opinion and counsel of Pekuah.

The women by whom she was attended knew nothing of her real condition, and therefore she could not talk to them but with caution and reserve. She began to remit her curiosity, having no great desire to collect notions which she had no convenience of uttering. Rasselas endeavoured first to comfort, and afterwards to divert her. He hired

musicians, to whom she seemed to listen, but did not hear them; and procured masters to instruct her in various arts, whose lectures, when they visited her again, were again to be repeated. She had lost her taste of pleasure, and her ambition of excellence; and her mind, though forced into short excursions, always recurred to the image of her friend.

Imlac was every morning earnestly enjoined to renew his inquiries, and was asked every night whether he had yet heard of Pekuah, till, not being able to return the princess the answer that she desired, he was less and less willing to come into her presence. She observed his backwardness, and commanded him to attend her. You are not, said she, to confound impatience with resentment, or to suppose that I charge you with negligence, because I repine at your unsuccessfulness. I do not much wonder at your absence: I know that the unhappy are never pleasing, and that all naturally avoid the contagion of misery. To hear complaints is wearisome alike to the wretched and the happy; for who would cloud, by adventitious grief, the short gleams of gaiety which life allows us? or who, that is struggling under his own evils, will add to them the miseries of another?

The time is at hand, when none shall be disturbed any longer by the sighs of Nekayah: my search after happiness is now at an end. I am resolved to retire from the world with all its flatteries and deceits, and will hide myself in solitude without any other care than to compose my thoughts, and regulate my hours by a constant succession of innocent occupations; till, with a mind purified from earthly desires, I shall enter into that state, to which all are hastening, and in which I hope again to enjoy the friendship of Pekuah.

Do not entangle your mind, said Imlac, by irrevocable determinations, nor increase the burden of life by a voluntary accumulation of misery: the weariness of retirement will continue or increase when the loss of Pekuah is forgotten. That you have been deprived of one pleasure, is no very good reason for rejection of the rest.

Since Pekuah was taken from me, suid the princess, I have no pleasure to reject or to retain. She that has no one to love or trust has little to hope. She wants the radical principle of happiness. We may, perhaps, allow that what satisfaction this world can afford, must arise from the conjunction of wealth, knowledge, and goodness: wealth is nothing but as it is bestowed, and knowledge nothing but as it is communicated: they must therefore be imparted to others, and to whom could I now delight to impart them? Goodness affords the only comfort which can be enjoyed without a partner, and goodness may be practised in retirement.

How far solitude may admit goodness, or advance it, I shall not, replied Imlac, dispute at present. Remember the confession of the pious hermit. You will wish to return into the world, when the image of your companion has left your thoughts.

That time, said Nekayah, will never come. The generous frankness, the modest obsequiousness, and the faithful secrecy of my dear Pekuah, will always be more missed, as I shall live longer to see vice and folly.

The state of a mind oppressed with a sudden calamity, said Imlac, is like that of the fabulous inhabitants of the new-created earth, who, when the first night came upon them, supposed that day would never return. When the clouds of sorrow gather over us, we see nothing beyond them, nor

can imagine how they will be dispelled: yet a new day succeeded to the night, and sorrow is never long without a dawn of ease. But they who restrain themselves from receiving comfort, do as the savages would have done, had they put out their eyes when it was dark. Our minds, like our bodies, are in continual flux: something is hourly lost, and something acquired. To lose much at once is inconvenient to either, but while the vital powers remain uninjured, nature will find the means of reparation. Distance has the same effect on the mind as on the eye; and while we glide along the stream of time, whatever we leave behind us is always lessening, and that which we approach increasing in magnitude. Do not suffer life to stagnate: it will grow muddy for want of motion: commit yourself again to the current of the world. Pekuah will vanish by degrees: you will meet in your way some other favourite, or learn to diffuse yourself in general conversation.

At least, said the prince, do not despair before all remedies have been tried: the inquiry after the unfortunate lady is still continued, and shall be carried on with yet greater diligence, on condition that you will promise to wait a year for the event, without any unalterable resolution.

Nekayah thought this a reasonable demand, and made the promise to her brother, who had been advised by Imlac to require it. Imlac had, indeed, no great hope of regaining Pekuah, but he supposed, that if he could secure the interval of a year, the princess would be then in no danger of a cloister.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Pekuah is still remembered. The progress of sorrow.

NEKAYAH, seeing that nothing was omitted for the recovery of her favourite, and having, by her promise, set her intention of retirement at a distance, began imperceptibly to return to common cares and common pleasures. She rejoiced without her own consent at the suspension of her sorrows, and sometimes caught herself with indignation in the act of turning away her mind from the remembrance of her, whom yet she resolved never to forget.

She then appointed a certain hour of the day for meditation on the merits and fondness of Pekuah, and for some weeks retired constantly at the time fixed, and returned with her eyes swollen and her countenance clouded. By degrees she grew less scrupulous, and suffered any important and pressing avocation to delay the tribute of daily tears. She then yielded to less occasions; sometimes forgot what she was indeed afraid to remember, and, at last, wholly released herself from the duty of periodical affliction.

Her real love of Pekuah was yet not diminished. A thousand occurrences brought her back to memory, and a thousand wants, which nothing but the confidence of friendship can supply, made her frequently regretted. She therefore solicited Imlac never to desist from inquiry, and to leave no art of intelligence untried, that, at least, she might have the comfort of knowing that she did not suffer by negligence or sluggishness. Yet what, said she, is to be expected from our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such,

that happiness itself is the cause of misery? Why should we endeavour to attain that, of which the possession cannot be secured. I shall henceforward fear to yield my heart to excellence, however bright, or to fondness, however tender, lest I should lose again what I have lost in Pekuah.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The princess hears news of Pekuah.

In seven months, one of the messengers, who had been sent away upon the day when the promise was drawn from the princess, returned, after many unsuccessful rambles, from the borders of Nubia, with an account that Pekuah was in the hands of an Arab chief, who possessed a castle or fortress on the extremity of Egypt. The Arab, whose revenue was plunder, was willing to restore her, with her two attendants, for two hundred ounces of gold.

The price was no subject of debate. The princess was in ecstacies when she heard that her favourite was alive, and might so cheaply be ransomed. She could not think of delaying for a moment Pekuah's happiness or her own, but entreated her brother to send back the messenger with the sum required. Imlac, being consulted, was not very confident of the veracity of the relater, and was still more doubtful of the Arab's faith, who might, if he were too liberally trusted, detain at once the money and the captives. He thought it dangerous to put themselves in the power of the Arab, by going into his district, and could not expect that the rover would so much expose him-

self as to come into the lower country where he might be seized by the forces of the bassa.

It is difficult to negociate where neither will trust. But Imlac, after some deliberation, directed the messenger to propose that Pekuah should be conducted by ten horsemen to the monastery of St. Anthony, which is situated in the deserts of Upper Egypt, where she should be met by the same number, and her ransom should be paid.

That no time might be lost, as they expected that the proposal would not be refused, they immediately began their journey to the monastery; and when they arrived, Imlac went forward with the former messenger to the Arab's fortress. Rasselas was desirous to go with them; but neither his sister nor Imlac would consent. The Arab, according to the custom of his nation, observed the laws of hospitality with great exactness to those who put themselves into his power, and, in a few days, brought Pekuah with her maids, by easy journeys, to the place appointed, where, receiving the stipulated price, he restored her with great respect to liberty and her friends, and undertook to conduct them back towards Cairo beyond all danger of robbery or violence.

The princess and her favourite embraced each other with transport, too violent to be expressed, and went out together to pour the tears of tenderness in secret, and exchange professions of kindness and gratitude. After a few hours they returned into the refectory of the convent, where, in the presence of the prior and his brethren, the prince required of Pekuah the history of her adventures.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The adventures of the Lady Pekuah.

At what time, and in what manner, I was forced away, said Pekuah, your servants have told you. The suddenness of the event struck me with surprise, and I was at first rather stupified than agitated with any passion of either fear or sorrow. My confusion was increased by the speed and tumult of our flight, while we were followed by the Turks, who, as it seemed, soon despaired to overtake us, or were afraid of those whom they made a show of menacing.

When the Arabs saw themselves out of danger they slackened their course; and as I was less harassed by external violence, I began to feel more uneasiness in my mind. After some time we stopped near a spring shaded with trees in a pleasant meadow, where we were set upon the ground, and offered such refreshments as our masters were partaking. I was suffered to sit with my maids apart from the rest, and none attempted to comfort or insult us. Here I first began to feel the full weight of my misery. The girls sat weeping in silence, and from time to time looked on me for succour. I knew not to what condition we were doomed, nor could conjecture where would be the place of our captivity, or whence to draw any hope of deliverance. I was in the hands of robbers and savages, and had no reason to suppose that their pity was more than their justice, or that they would forbear the gratification of any ardour of desire, or caprice of cruelty. I, however, kissed my maids, and endeavoured to pacify them by remarking, that we were yet treated with decency, and that, since

we were now carried beyond pursuit, there was no danger of violence to our lives.

When we were to be set again on horseback, my maids clung round me, and refused to be parted, but I commanded them not to irritate those who had us in their power. We travelled the remaining part of the day through an unfrequented and pathless country, and came by moonlight to the side of a hill, where the rest of the troop was stationed. Their tents were pitched, and their fires kindled, and our chief was welcomed as a man much beloved by his dependants.

We were received into a large tent, where we found women who had attended their husbands in the expedition. They set before us the supper which they had provided, and I ate rather to encourage my maids, than to comply with any appetite of my own. When the meat was taken away, they spread the carpets for repose. I was weary, and hoped to find in sleep that remission of distress which nature seldom denies. Ordering myself therefore to be undrest, I observed that the women looked very earnestly upon me, not expecting, I suppose, to see me so submissively attended. When my upper vest was taken off, they were apparently struck with the splendour of my clothes, and one of them timorously laid her hand upon the embroidery. She then went out, and in a short time came back with another woman, who seemed to be of higher rank, and greater authority. She did, at her entrance, the usual act of reverence, and taking me by the hand, placed me in a smaller tent, spread with finer carpets, where I spent the night quietly with my maids.

In the morning, as I was sitting on the grass, the chief of the troop came towards me. I rose up to receive him, and he bowed with great respect.

Illustrious lady, said he, my fortune is better than I had presumed to hope: I am told by my women, that I have a princess in my camp.—Sir, answered I, your women have deceived themselves and you: I am not a princess, but an unhappy stranger who intended soon to have left this country, in which I am now to be imprisoned for ever.—Whoever, or whencesoever you are, returned the Arab, your dress, and that of your servants, show your rank to be high and your wealth to be great. Why should you, who can so easily procure your ransom, think yourself in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpose of my incursions is to increase my riches, or, more properly, to gather tribute. The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders and low born tyrants, from whom we are compelled to take by the sword what is denied to justice. The violence of war admits no distinction: the lance, that is lifted at guilt and power, will sometimes fall on innocence and gentleness.

How little, said I, did I expect that yesterday it should have fallen upon me!

Misfortunes, answered the Arab, should always be expected. If the eye of hostility could learn reverence or pity, excellence like yours had been exempt from injury. But the angels of affliction spread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean. Do not be disconsolate: I am not one of the lawless and cruel rovers of the desert; I know the rules of civil life: I will fix your ransom, give a passport to your messenger, and perform my stipulation with nice punctuality.

You will easily believe that I was pleased with his courtesy: and finding that his predominant passion was desire of money, I began now to think my dan-

ger less, for I knew that no sum would be thought too great for the release of Pekuah. I told him, that he should have no reason to charge me with ingratitude, if I was used with kindness, and that any ransom which could be expected from a maid of common rank would be paid; but that he must not persist to rate me as a princess. He said he would consider what he should demand, and then smiling, bowed and retired.

Soon after the women came about me, each contending to be more officious than the other, and my maids themselves were served with reverence. We travelled onward by short journeys. On the fourth day the chief told me, that my ransom must be two hundred ounces of gold; which I not only promised him, but told him, that I would add fifty more, if I and my maids were honourably treated.

I never knew the power of gold before. From that time I was the leader of the troop. The march of every day was longer or shorter as I commanded, and the tents were pitched where I chose to rest. We now had camels and other conveniences for travel, my own women were always at my side, and I amused myself with observing the manners of the vagrant nations, and with viewing remains of ancient edifices, with which these deserted countries appear to have been, in some distant age, lavishly embellished.

The chief of the band was a man far from illiterate: he was able to travel by the stars or the compass, and had marked, in his erratic expeditions, such places as are most worthy the notice of a passenger. He observed to me, that buildings are always best preserved in places little frequented, and difficult of access: for, when once a country declines from its primitive splendour, the more inhabitants are left, the quicker ruin will be made.

Walls supply stones more easily than quarries, and palaces and temples will be demolished to make stables of granite and cottages of porphyry.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The adventures of Pekuah continued.

We wandered about in this manner for some weeks, either, as our chief pretended, for my gratification or, as I rather suspected, for some convenience of his own. I endeavoured to appear contented where sullenness and resentment would have been of no use, and that endeavour conduced much to the calmness of my mind; but my heart was always with Nekayah, and the troubles of the night much overbalanced the amusements of the day. My women, who threw all their cares upon their mistress, set their minds at ease from the time when they saw me treated with respect, and gave themselves up to the incidental alleviations of our fatigue without solicitude or sorrow. I was pleased with their pleasure, and animated with their confidence. My condition had lost much of its terror, since I found that the Arab ranged the country merely to get riches. Avarice is an uniform and tractable vice: other intellectual distempers are different in different constitutions of mind; that which sooths the pride of one will offend the pride of another; but to the favour of the covetous there is a ready way: bring money, and nothing is denied.

At last we came to the dwelling of our chief, a strong and spacious house built with stone in an island of the Nile, which lies, as I was told, under the tropic. Lady, said the Arab, you shall rest after

your journey a few weeks in this place, where you are to consider yourself as sovereign. My occupation is war: I have therefore chosen this obscure residence, from which I can issue unexpected, and to which I can retire unpursued. You may now repose in security: here are few pleasures, but here is no danger. He then led me into the inner apartments, and seating me on the richest couch, bowed to the ground. His women, who considered me as a rival, looked on me with malignity; but being soon informed that I was a great lady detained only for my ransom, they began to vie with each other in obsequiousness and reverence.

Being again comforted with new assurances of speedy liberty, I was for some days diverted from impatience by the novelty of the place. The turrets overlooked the country to a great distance, and afforded a view of many windings of the stream. In the day I wandered from one place to another, as the course of the sun varied the splendour of the prospect, and saw many things which I had never seen before. The crocodiles and river-horses are common in this unpeopled region; and I often looked upon them with terror, though I knew that they could not hurt me. For some time I expected to see mermaids and tritons, which, as Imlac has told me, the European travellers have stationed in the Nile: but no such beings ever appeared; and the Arab, when I inquired after them, laughed at my credulity.

At night the Arab always attended me to a tower set apart for celestial observations, where he endeavoured to teach me the names and courses of the stars. I had no great inclination to this study, but an appearance of attention was necessary to please my instructor, who valued himself for his skill; and, in a little while, I found some employment

requisite to beguile the tediousness of time, which was to be passed always amidst the same objects. I was weary of looking in the morning on things from which I had turned away weary in the evening: I therefore was at last willing to observe the stars rather than do nothing, but could not always compose my thoughts, and was very often thinking on Nekayah, when others imagined me contemplating the sky. Soon after, the Arab went upon another expedition; and then my only pleasure was to talk with my maids about the accident by which we were carried away, and the happiness that we should all enjoy at the end of our captivity.

There were women in your Arab's fortress, said the princess: why did you not make them your companions, enjoy their conversation, and partake their diversions? In a place where they found business or amusement, why should you alone sit corroded with idle melancholy; or why could not you bear, for a few months, that condition to which they were condemned for life?

The diversions of the women, answered Pekuah, were only childish play, by which the mind, accustomed to stronger operations, could not be kept busy. I could do all which they delighted in doing by powers merely sensitive, while my intellectual faculties were flown to Cairo. They ran from room to room, as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow. One sometimes pretended to be hurt, that the rest might be alarmed; or hid herself, that another might seek her. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the sky.

Their business was only needlework, in which I

and my maids sometimes helped them; but you know that the mind will easily straggle from the fingers, nor will you suspect that captivity and absence from Nekayah could receive solace from silken flowers.

Nor was much satisfaction to be hoped from their conversation: for of what could they be expected to talk? They had seen nothing; for they had lived from early youth in that narrow spot: of what they had not seen they could have no knowledge, for they could not read. They had no ideas but of the few things that were within their view, and had hardly names for any thing but their clothes and their food. As I bore a superior character, I was often called to terminate their quarrels, which I decided as equitably as I could. If it could have amused me to hear the complaints of each against the rest, I might have been often detained by long stories: but the motives of their animosity were so small that I could not listen without interrupting the tale.

How, said Rasselas, can the Arab, whom you represented as a man of more than common accomplishments, take any pleasure in his seraglio when it is filled only with women like these? Are they exquisitely beautiful?

They do not, said Pekuah, want that unaffecting and ignoble beauty which may subsist without sprightliness or sublimity, without energy of thought or dignity of virtue. But to a man like the Arab such beauty was only a flower casually plucked and carelessly thrown away. Whatever pleasures he might find among them, they were not those of friendship or society. When they were playing about him, he looked on them with inattentive superiority: when they vied for his regard, he sometimes turned away disgusted,

As they had no knowledge, their talk could take nothing from the tediousness of life: as they had no choice, their fondness, or appearance of fondness, excited in him neither pride nor gratitude; he was not exalted in his own esteem by the smiles of a woman who saw no other man, nor was much obliged by that regard, of which he could never know the sincerity, and which he might often perceive to be exerted, not so much to delight him as to pain a rival. That which he gave, and they received, as love, was only a careless distribution of superfluous time; such love as man can bestow upon that which he despises, such as has neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow.

You have reason, lady, to think yourself happy, said Imlac, that you have been thus easily dismissed. How could a mind, hungry for knowledge, be willing, in an intellectual famine, to lose such a banquet as Pekuah's conversation?

I am inclined to believe, answered Pekuah, that he was for some time in suspense; for, notwithstanding his promise, whenever I proposed to dispatch a messenger to Cairo, he found some excuse for delay. While I was detained in his house, he made many incursions into the neighbouring countries, and, perhaps, he would have refused to discharge me, had his plunder been equal to his wishes. He returned always courteous, related his adventures, delighted to hear my observations, and endeavoured to advance my acquaintance with the stars. When I importuned him to send away my letters, he soothed me with professions of honour and sincerity; and, when I could be no longer decently denied, put his troop again in motion, and left me to govern in his absence. I was much afflicted by this studied procrastination, and was sometimes afraid that I should be forgotton;

that you would leave Cairo, and I must end my days in an island of the Nile.

I grew at last hopeless and dejected, and cared so little to entertain him, that he for a while more frequently talked with my maids. That he should fall in love with them, or with me, might have been equally fatal, and I was not much pleased with the growing friendship. My anxiety was not long: for as I recovered some degree of cheerfulness, he returned to me, and I could not forbear to despise my former uneasiness.

He still delayed to send for my ransom, and would, perhaps, never have determined, had not your agent found his way to him. The gold, which he would not fetch, he could not reject when it was offered. He hastened to prepare for our journey hither, like a man delivered from the pain of an intestine conflict. I took leave of my companions in the house, who dismissed me with cold indifference.

Nekayah having heard her favourite's relation, rose and embraced her; and Rasselas gave her an hundred ounces of gold, which she presented to the Arab for the fifty that were promised.

CHAPTER XL.

The history of a man of learning.

THEY returned to Cairo, and were so well pleased at finding themselves together, that none of them went much abroad. The prince began to love learning; and one day declared to Imlac, that he intended to devote himself to science, and pass the rest of his days in literary solitude.

Before you make your final choice, answered Imlac, you ought to examine its hazards, and converse with some of those who are grown old in the company of themselves. I have just left the observatory of one of the most learned astronomers in the world, who has spent forty years in unwearied attention to the motions and appearances of the celestial bodies, and has drawn out his soul in endless calculations. He admits a few friends once a month to hear his deductions and enjoy his discoveries. I was introduced as a man of knowledge worthy of his notice. Men of various ideas and fluent conversation are commonly welcome to those whose thoughts have been long fixed upon a single point, and who find the images of other things stealing away. I delighted him with my remarks: he smiled at the narrative of my travels, and was glad to forget the constellations, and descend for a moment into the lower world.

On the next day of vacation I renewed my visit, and was so fortunate as to please him again. He relaxed from that time the severity of his rule, and permitted me to enter at my own choice. I found him always busy, and always glad to be relieved. As each knew much which the other was desirous of learning, we exchanged our notions with great delight. I perceived that I had every day more of his confidence, and always found new cause of admiration in the profundity of his mind. His comprehension is vast, his memory capacious and retentive, his discourse is methodical, and his expression clear.

His integrity and benevolence are equal to his learning. His deepest researches and most favourite studies are willingly interrupted for any opportunity of doing good by his counsel or his riches. To his closest retreat, at his most busy

moments, all are admitted that want his assistance: For though I exclude idleness and pleasure, I will never, says he, bar my doors against charity. To man is permitted the contemplation of the skies, but the practice of virtue is commanded.

Surely, said the princess, this man is happy.

I visited him, said Imlac, with more and more frequency, and was every time more enamoured of his conversation: he was sublime without haughtiness, courteous without formality, and communicative without ostentation. I was at first, great princess, of your opinion, thought him the happiest of mankind, and often congratulated him on the blessing that he enjoyed. He seemed to hear nothing with indifference, but the praises of his condition, to which he always returned a general answer, and diverted the conversation to some other topic.

Amidst this willingness to be pleased, and labour to please, I had quickly reason to imagine that some painful sentiment pressed upon his mind. He often looked up earnestly towards the sun, and let his voice fall in the midst of his discourse. He would sometimes, when we were alone, gaze upon me in silence, with the air of a man who longed to speak what he was yet resolved to suppress. He would often send for me with vehement injunctions of haste, though when I came to him, he had nothing extraordinary to say; and sometimes, when I was leaving him, would call me back, pause a few moments, and then dismiss me.

CHAPTER XLI.

The astronomer discovers the cause of his uneasiness.

At last the time came when the secret burst his reserve. We were sitting together last night in the turret of his house, watching the emersion of a satellite of Jupiter. A sudden tempest clouded the sky and disappointed our observation. We sat a while silent, in the dark, and then he addressed himself to me in these words: Imlac, I have long considered thy friendship as the greatest blessing of my life. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless; and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. I have found in thee all the qualities requisite for trust, benevolence, experience, and fortitude. I have long discharged an office which I must soon quit at the call of Nature, and shall rejoice, in the hour of imbecility and pain, to devolve it upon thee.

I thought myself honoured by this testimony, and protested, that whatever could conduce to his happiness would add likewise to mine.

Hear, Imlac, what thou wilt not without difficulty credit. I have possessed for five years the regulation of the weather, and the distribution of the seasons: the sun has listened to my dictates, and passed from tropic to tropic by my direction: the clouds, at my call have poured their waters, and the Nile has overflowed at my command: I have restrained the rage of the Dog-star, and mitigated the fervours of the Crab. The winds alone, of all the elemental powers, have hitherto refused my authority, and multitudes have perished by equinoctial tempests, which I found myself unable to prohibit or restrain. I have administered this

great office with exact justice, and made to the different nations of the earth an impartial dividend of rain and sunshine. What must have been the misery of half the globe, if I had limited the clouds to particular regions, or confined the sun to either side of the equator!

CHAPTER XLII.

The opinion of the astronomer is explained and justified.

I SUPPOSE he discovered in me, through the obscurity of the room, some tokens of amazement and doubt; for, after a short pause, he proceeded thus—

Not to be easily credited will neither surprise nor offend me; for I am, probably, the first of human beings to whom this trust has been imparted. Nor do I know whether to deem this distinction a reward or punishment: since I have possessed it, I have been far less happy than before, and nothing but the consciousness of good intention could have enabled me to support the weariness of unremitted vigilance.

How long, sir, said I, has this great office been in your hands?

About ten years ago, said he, my daily observations of the changes of the sky led me to consider, whether, if I had the power of the seasons, I could confer greater plenty upon the inhabitants of the earth. This contemplation fastened on my mind, and I sat days and nights in imaginary dominion, pouring upon this country and that the showers of fertility, and seconding every fall of

rain with a due proportion of sunshine. I had yet only the will to do good, and did not imagine that I should ever have the power.

One day, as I was looking on the fields withering with heat, I felt in my mind a sudden wish that I could send rain on the southern mountains, and raise the Nile to an inundation. In the hurry of my imagination, I commanded rain to fall; and by comparing the time of my command with that of the inundation, I found that the clouds had listened to my lips.

Might not some other cause, said I, produce this concurrence? The Nile does not always rise on the same day.

Do not believe, said he with impatience, that such objections could escape me: I reasoned long against my own conviction, and laboured against truth with the utmost obstinacy. I sometimes suspected myself of madness, and should not have dared to impart this secret but to a man like you, capable of distinguishing the wonderful from the impossible, and the incredible from the false.

Why, sir, said I, do you call that incredible, which you know, or think you know, to be true?

Because, said he, I cannot prove it by any external evidence; and I know too well the laws of demonstration, to think that my conviction ought to influence another, who cannot, like me, be conscious of its force. I, therefore, shall not attempt to gain credit by disputation. It is sufficient that I feel this power, that I have long possessed, and every day exerted it. But the life of man is short, the infirmities of age increase upon me, and the time will soon come, when the regulator of the year must mingle with the dust. The care of appointing a successor has long disturbed me: the night and the day have been spent in

comparisons of all the characters which have come to my knowledge, and I have yet found none so worthy as thyself.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The astronomer leaves Imlac his directions.

HEAR, therefore, what I shall impart with attention, such as the welfare of a world requires. If the task of a king be considered as difficult, who has the care only of a few millions, to whom he cannot do much good or harm, what must be the anxiety of him, on whom depends the action of the elements, and the great gifts of light and heat!—Hear me, therefore, with attention.

I have diligently considered the position of the earth and sun, and formed innumerable schemes in which I changed their situation. I have sometimes turned aside the axis of the earth, and sometimes varied the ecliptic of the sun: but I have found it impossible to make a disposition by which the world may be advantaged; what one region gains, another loses by an imaginable alteration, even without considering the distant parts of the solar system, with which we are unacquainted. Do not, therefore, in thy administration of the year, indulge thy pride by innovation. Do not please thyself with thinking that thou canst make thyself renowned to all future ages, by disordering the seasons. The memory of mischief is no desirable fame. Much less will it become thee to let kindness or interest prevail. Never rob other countries of rain to pour it on thine own. For us the Nile is sufficient.

I promised, that when I possessed the power, I would use it with inflexible integrity; and he dismissed me, pressing my hand. My heart, said he, will be now at rest, and my benevolence will no more destroy my quiet: I have found a man of wisdom and virtue, to whom I can cheerfully bequeath the inheritance of the sun.

The prince heard this narration with very serious regard; but the princess smiled, and Pekuah convulsed herself with laughter.—Ladies, said Imlac, to mock the heaviest of human afflictions is neither charitable nor wise. Few can attain this man's knowledge, and few practise his virtues; but all may suffer his calamity. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason.

The princess was recollected, and the favourite was abashed. Rasselas, more deeply affected, inquired of Imlac, whether he thought such maladies of the mind frequent, and how they were contracted?

CHAPTER XLIV.

The dangerous prevalence of imagination.

DISORDERS of intellect, answered Imlac, happen much more often than superficial observers will easily believe. Perhaps, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in its right state. There is no man whose imagination does not sometimes predominate over his reason, who can regulate his attention wholly by his will, and whose ideas will come and go at his command. No man will be found in whose mind airy notions do not

sometimes tyrannize, and force him to hope or fear beyond the limits of sober probability. All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity: but while this power is such as we can controul and repress, it is not visible to others, nor considered as any depravation of the mental faculties: it is not pronounced madness but when it becomes ungovernable, and apparently influences speech or action.

To indulge the power of fiction, and send imagination out upon the wing, is often the sport of those who delight too much in silent speculation. When we are alone, we are not always busy; the labour of excogitation is too violent to last long; the ardour of inquiry will sometimes give way to idleness or satiety. He who has nothing external that can divert him, must find pleasure in his own thoughts, and must conceive himself what he is not; for who is pleased with what he is? He then expatiates in boundless futurity, and culls from all imaginable conditions that which for the present moment he should most desire, amuses his desires with impossible enjoyments, and confers upon his pride unattainable dominion. The mind dances from scene to scene, unites all pleasures in all combinations, and riots in delights which nature and fortune, with all their bounty, cannot bestow.

In time, some particular train of ideas fixes the attention: all other intellectual gratifications are rejected: the mind, in weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favourite conception, and feasts on the luscious falsehood, whenever she is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of fancy is confirmed: she grows first imperious, and in time despotic. Then fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the

mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.

This, sir, is one of the dangers of solitude which the hermit has confessed not always to promote goodness, and the astronomer's misery has proved to be not always propitious to wisdom.

I will no more, said the favourite, imagine myself the queen of Abissinia. I have often spent the hours, which the princess gave to my own disposal, in adjusting ceremonies and regulating the court; I have repressed the pride of the powerful, and granted the petitions of the poor; I have built new palaces in more happy situations, planted groves upon the tops of mountains, and have exulted in the beneficence of royalty, till, when the princess entered, I had almost forgotten to bow down before her.

And I, said the princess, will not allow myself any more to play the shepherdess in my waking dreams. I have often soothed my thoughts with the quiet and innocence of pastoral employments, till I have in my chamber heard the winds whistle, and the sheep bleat; sometimes freed the lamb entangled in the thicket, and sometimes, with my crook, encountered the wolf. I have a dress like that of the village maids, which I put on to help my imagination, and a pipe on which I play softly, and suppose myself followed by my flocks.

I will confess, said the prince, an indulgence of fantastic delight more dangerous than yours. I have frequently endeavoured to image the possibility of a perfect government, by which all wrong should be restrained, all vice reformed, and all the subjects preserved in tranquillity and innocence. This thought produced innumerable schemes of reformation, and dictated many useful regula-

tions and salutary edicts. This has been the sport, and sometimes the labour, of my solitude; and I start, when I think with how little anguish I once supposed the death of my father and my brothers.

Such, said Imlac, are the effects of visionary schemes: when we first form them we know them to be absurd, but familiarize them by degrees, and in time lose sight of their folly.

CHAPTER XLV.

They discourse with an old man.

THE evening was now far past, and they rose to return home. As they walked along the bank of the Nile, delighted with the beams of the moon quivering on the water, they saw at a small distance an old man, whom the prince had often heard in the assembly of the sages. Yonder, said he, is one whose years have calmed his passions, but not clouded his reason: let us close the disquisitions of the night, by inquiring what are his sentiments of his own state, that we may know whether youth alone is to struggle with vexation, and whether any better hope remains for the latter part of life.

Here the sage approached and saluted them. They invited him to join their walk, and prattled a while, as acquaintance that had unexpectedly met one another. The old man was cheerful and talkative, and the way seemed short in his company. He was pleased to find himself not disregarded, accompanied them to their house, and, at the prince's request, entered with them. They placed him in the seat of honour, and set wine and conserves before him.

Sir, said the princess, an evening walk must give to a man of learning, like you, pleasures which ignorance and youth can hardly conceive. You know the qualities and the causes of all that you behold, the laws by which the river flows, the periods in which the planets perform their revolutions. Every thing must supply you with contemplation, and renew the consciousness of your own dignity.

Lady, answered he, let the gay and the vigorous expect pleasure in their excursions; it is enough that age can obtain ease. To me the world has lost its novelty: I look round, and see what I remember to have seen in happier days. I rest against a tree, and consider that in the same shade I once disputed upon the annual overflow of the Nile with a friend who is now silent in the grave. I cast my eyes upwards, fix them on the changing moon, and think with pain on the vicissitudes of life. I have ceased to take much delight in physical truth: for what have I to do with those things which I am soon to leave?

You may at least recreate yourself, said Imlac, with the recollection of an honourable and useful life, and enjoy the praise which all agree to give you.

Praise, said the sage, with a sigh, is to an old man an empty sound. I have neither mother to be delighted with the reputation of her son, nor wife to partake the honours of her husband. I have outlived my friends and my rivals. Nothing is now of much importance; for I cannot extend my interest beyond myself. Youth is delighted with applause, because it is considered as the earnest of some future good, and because the prospect of life is far extended: but to me, who am now declining to decrepitude, there is little to be feared

from the malevolence of men, and yet less to be hoped from their affection or esteem. Something they may yet take away, but they can give me nothing. Riches would now be useless, and high employment would be pain. My retrospect of life recals to my view many opportunities of good neglected, much time squandered upon trifles, and more lost in idleness and vacancy. I leave many great designs unattempted, and many great attempts unfinished. My mind is burdened with no heavy crime, and therefore I compose myself to tranquillity; endeavour to abstract my thoughts from hopes and cares, which, though reason knows them to be vain, still try to keep their old possession of the heart; expect, with serene humility, that hour, which nature cannot long delay; and hope to possess, in a better state, that happiness which here I could not find, and that virtue which here I have not attained.

He rose and went away, leaving his audience not much elated with the hope of long life. The prince consoled himself with remarking, that it was not reasonable to be disappointed by this account; for age had never been considered as the season of felicity: and if it was possible to be easy in decline and weakness, it was likely that the days of vigour and alacrity might be happy; that the noon of life might be bright, if the evening could be calm.

The princess suspected that age was querulous and malignant, and delighted to repress the expectations of those who had newly entered the world: she had seen the possessors of estates look with envy on their heirs, and known many who enjoyed pleasure no longer than they could confine it to themselves.

Pekuah conjectured, that the man was older than he appeared, and was willing to impute his com-

plaints to delirious dejection; or else supposed that he had been unfortunate, and was therefore discontented: for nothing, said she, is more common, than to call our own condition the condition of life.

Imlac, who had no desire to see them depressed, smiled at the comforts which they could so readily procure to themselves, and remembered, that at the same age, he was equally confident of unmingled prosperity, and equally fertile of consolatory expedients. He forbore to force upon them unwelcome knowledge, which time itself would too soon impress. The princess and her lady retired: the madness of the astronomer hung upon their minds; and they desired Imlac to enter upon his office, and delay next morning the rising of the sun.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The princess and Pekuah visit the astronomer.

THE princess and Pekuah, having talked in private of Imlac's astronomer, thought his character at once so amiable and so strange, that they could not be satisfied without a nearer knowledge; and Imlac was requested to find the means of bringing them together.

This was somewhat difficult: the philosopher had never received any visits from women, though he lived in a city that had in it many Europeans who followed the manners of their own countries, and many from other parts of the world, that lived there with European liberty. The ladies would not be refused, and several schemes were proposed for the accomplishment of their design. It was

proposed to introduce them as strangers in distress, to whom the sage was always accessible: but, after some deliberation, it appeared that by this artifice, no acquaintance could be formed; for their conversation would be short, and they could not decently importune him often.—This, said Rasselas, is true: but I have yet a stronger objection against the misrepresentation of your state. I have always considered it as treason against the great republic of human nature, to make any man's virtues the means of deceiving him, whether on great or little occasions. All imposture weakens confidence, and chills benevolence. When the sage finds that you are not what you seemed, he will feel the resentment natural to a man, who, conscious of great abilities, discovers that he has been tricked by understandings meaner than his own, and, perhaps, the distrust, which he can never afterwards wholly lay aside, may stop the voice of counsel, and close the hand of charity: and where will you find the power of restoring his benefactions to mankind, or his peace to himself?

To this no reply was attempted, and Imlac began to hope that their curiosity would subside; but, next day, Pekuah told him, she had now found an honest pretence for a visit to the astronomer, for she would solicit permission to continue under him the studies in which she had been initiated by the Arab, and the princess might go with her either as a fellow-student, or because a woman could not decently come alone. I am afraid, said Imlac, that he will be soon weary of your company: men advanced far in knowledge do not love to repeat the elements of their art; and I am not certain that even of the elements, as he will deliver them connected with inferences, and mingled with reflections, you are a very capable auditress. That, said

Pekuah, must be my care; I ask of you only to take me thither. My knowledge is, perhaps, more than you imagine it; and, by concurring always with his opinions, I shall make him think it greater than it is.

The astronomer, in pursuance of this resolution, was told, that a foreign lady, travelling in search of knowledge, had heard of his reputation, and was desirous to become his scholar. The uncommonness of the proposal raised at once his surprise and curiosity; and when, after a short deliberation, he consented to admit her, he could not stay without impatience till the next day.

The ladies dressed themselves magnificently, and were attended by Imlac to the astronomer, who was pleased to see himself approached with respect by persons of so splendid an appearance. In the exchange of the first civilities he was timorous and bashful; but when the talk became regular, he recollected his powers, and justified the character which Imlac had given. Inquiring of Pekuah, what could have turned her inclination towards astronomy; he received from her a history of her adventure at the pyramid, and of the time passed in the Arab's island. She told her tale with ease and elegance, and her conversation took possession of his heart. The discourse was then turned to astronomy. Pekuah displayed what she knew: he looked upon her as a prodigy of genius, and entreated her not to desist from a study which she had so happily begun.

They came again and again, and were every time more welcome than before. The sage endeavoured to amuse them, that they might prolong their visits, for he found his thoughts grow brighter in their company; the clouds of solicitude vanished by degrees, as he forced himself to entertain them, and

he grieved when he was left, at their departure, to his old employment of regulating the seasons.

The princess and her favourite had now watched his lips for several months, and could not catch a single word from which they could judge whether he continued, or not, in the opinion of his preternatural commission. They often contrived to bring him to an open declaration; but he easily eluded all their attacks, and, on which side soever they pressed him, escaped from them to some other topic.

As their familiarity increased, they invited him often to the house of Imlac, where they distinguished him by extraordinary respect. He began gradually to delight in sublunary pleasures. He came early and departed late; laboured to recommend himself by assiduity and compliance; excited their curiosity after new arts, that they might still want his assistance; and, when they made any excursion of pleasure or inquiry, entreated to attend them.

By long experience of his integrity and wisdom, the prince and his sister were convinced that he might be trusted without danger; and, lest he should draw any false hopes from the civilities which he received, discovered to him their condition, with the motives of their journey, and required his opinion on the choice of life.

Of the various conditions which the world spreads before you, which you shall prefer, said the sage, I am not able to instruct you: I can only tell that I have chosen wrong. I have passed my time in study without experience; in the attainment of sciences which can, for the most part, be but remotely useful to mankind. I have purchased knowledge at the expense of all the common comforts of life: I have missed the endearing elegance

of female friendship, and the happy commerce of domestic tenderness. If I have obtained any prerogatives above other students, they have been accompanied with fear, disquiet, and scrupulosity; but even of these prerogatives, whatever they were, I have, since my thoughts have been diversified by more intercourse with the world, begun to question the reality. When I have been for a few days lost in pleasing dissipation, I am always tempted to think that my inquiries have ended in error, and that I have suffered much, and suffered it in vain.

Imlac was delighted to find that the sage's understanding was breaking through its mists, and resolved to detain him from the planets till he should forget his task of ruling them, and reason should recover its original influence.

From this time the astronomer was received into familiar friendship, and partook of all their projects and pleasures: his respect kept him attentive, and the activity of Rasselas did not leave much time unengaged. Something was always to be done: the day was spent in making observations which furnished talk for the evening; and the evening was closed with a scheme for the morrow.

The sage confessed to Imlac, that since he had mingled in the gay tumults of life, and divided his hours by a succession of amusements, he found the conviction of his authority over the skies fade gradually from his mind, and began to trust less to an opinion which he never could prove to others, and which he now found subject to variation, from causes in which reason had no part. If I am accidentally left alone for a few hours, said he, my inveterate persuasion rushes upon my soul, and my thoughts are chained down by some irresistible violence; but they are soon disentangled by the prince's con-

versation, and instantaneously released at the entrance of Pekuah. I am like a man habitually afraid of spectres, who is set at ease by a lamp, and wonders at the dread which harassed him in the dark; yet, if his lamp be extinguished, feels again the terrors which he knows that when it is light he shall feel no more. But I am sometimes afraid lest I indulge my quiet by criminal negligence, and voluntarily forget the great charge with which I am intrusted. If I favour myself in a known error, or am determined by my own ease in a doubtful question of this importance, how dreadful is my crime!

No disease of the imagination, answered Imlac, is so difficult of cure as that which is complicated with the dread of guilt: fancy and conscience then act interchangeably upon us, and so often shift their places, that the illusions of one are not distinguished from the dictates of the other. If fancy presents images not moral or religious, the mind drives them away when they give it pain; but when melancholic notions take the form of duty, they lay hold on the faculties without opposition, because we are afraid to exclude or banish them. For this reason the superstitious are often melancholy, and the melancholy almost always superstitious.

But do not let the suggestions of timidity overpower your better reason: the danger of neglect can be but as the probability of the obligation, which, when you consider it with freedom, you find very little, and that little growing every day less. Open your heart to the influence of the light, which, from time to time, breaks in upon you: when scruples importune you, which you in your lucid moments know to be vain, do not stand to parley, but fly to business or to Pekuah, and keep this

thought always prevalent, that you are only one atom of the mass of humanity, and have neither such virtue nor vice as that you should be singled out for supernatural favours or afflictions.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The prince enters, and brings a new topic.

ALL this, said the astronomer, I have often thought; but my reason has been so long subjugated by an uncontrollable and overwhelming idea, that it durst not confide in its own decisions. I now see how fatally I betrayed my quiet, by suffering chimeras to prey upon me in secret; but melancholy shrinks from communication, and I never found a man before, to whom I could impart my troubles, though I had been certain of relief. I rejoice to find my own sentiments confirmed by yours, who are not easily deceived, and can have no motive or purpose to deceive. I hope that time and variety will dissipate the gloom that has so long surrounded me, and the latter part of my days will be spent in peace.

Your learning and virtue, said Imlac, may justly give you hopes.

Rasselas then entered with the princess and Pekuah, and inquired, whether they had contrived any new diversion for the next day? Such, said Nekayah, is the state of life, that none are happy but by the anticipation of change: the change itself is nothing; when we have made it, the next wish is to change again. The world is not yet exhausted: let me see something to-morrow which I never saw before.

Variety, said Rasselas, is so necessary to content that even the Happy Valley disgusted me by the recurrence of its luxuries: yet I could not forbear to reproach myself with impatience, when I saw the monks of St. Anthony support, without complaint, a life, not of uniform delight, but uniform hardship.

Those men, answered Imlac, are less wretched in their silent convent than the Abissinian princes in their prison of pleasure. Whatever is done by the monks is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Their labour supplies them with necessaries: it therefore cannot be omitted, and is certainly rewarded. Their devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach, while it fits them for it. Their time is regularly distributed: one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of listless inactivity. There is a certain task to be performed at an appropriated hour; and their toils are cheerful, because they consider them as acts of piety, by which they are always advancing towards endless felicity.

Do you think, said Nekayah, that the monastic rule is a more holy and less imperfect state than any other? May not he equally hope for future happiness who converses openly with mankind, who succours the distressed by his charity, instructs the ignorant by his learning, and contributes by his industry to the general system of life; even though he should omit some of the mortifications which are practised in the cloister, and allow himself such harmless delights as his condition may place within his reach?

This, said Imlac, is a question which has long divided the wise, and perplexed the good. I am

afraid to decide on either part. He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monastery. But, perhaps, every one is not able to stem the temptations of public life; and if he cannot conquer, he may properly retreat. Some have little power to do good, and have likewise little strength to resist evil. Many are weary of their conflicts with adversity, and are willing to eject those passions which have long busied them in vain. And many are dismissed by age and diseases from the more laborious duties of society. In monasteries the weak and timorous may be happily sheltered, the weary may repose, and the penitent may meditate. Those retreats of prayer and contemplation have something so congenial to the mind of man, that, perhaps, there is scarcely one that does not purpose to close his life in pious abstraction with a few associates serious as himself.

Such, said Pekuah, has often been my wish; and I have heard the princess declare, that she should not willingly die in a crowd.

The liberty of using harmless pleasures, proceeded Imlac, will not be disputed; but it is still to be examined what pleasures are harmless. The evil of any pleasure that Nekayah can image is not in the act itself, but in its consequences. Pleasure, in itself harmless, may become mischievous, by endearing to us a state which we know to be transient and probatory, and withdrawing our thoughts from that, of which every hour brings us nearer to the beginning, and of which no length of time will bring us to the end. Mortification is not virtuous in itself, nor has any other use, but that it disengages us from the allurements of sense. In the state of future perfection, to which we all aspire, there will be pleasure without danger, and security without restraint.

The princess was silent, and Rasselas, turning to the astronomer, asked him, whether he could not delay her retreat, by shewing her something which she had not seen before?

Your curiosity, said the sage, has been so general, and your pursuit of knowledge so vigorous, that novelties are not now very easily to be found: but what you can no longer procure from the living may be given by the dead. Among the wonders of this country are the catacombs, or the ancient repositories, in which the bodies of the earliest generations were lodged, and where, by the virtue of the gums which embalmed them, they yet remain without corruption.

I know not, said Rasselas, what pleasure the sight of the catacombs can afford; but, since nothing else is offered I am resolved to view them, and shall place this with many other things which I have done because I would do something.

They hired a guard of horsemen, and the next day visited the catacombs. When they were about to descend into the sepulchral caves, Pekuah, said the princess, we are now again invading the habitations of the dead; I know that you will stay behind; let me find you safe when I return. No, I will not be left, answered Pekuah: I will go down between you and the prince.

They then all descended, and roved with wonder through the labyrinth of subterraneous passages, where the bodies were laid in rows on either side.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Imlac discourses on the nature of the soul.

WHAT reason, said the prince, can be given, why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcases which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight, as soon as decent rites can be performed?

The original of ancient customs, said Imlac, is commonly unknown; for the practice often continues when the cause has ceased; and concerning superstitious ceremonies it is vain to conjecture; for what reason did not dictate, reason cannot explain. I have long believed that the practice of embalming arose only from tenderness to the remains of relations or friends; and to this opinion I am more inclined, because it seems impossible that this care should have been general: had all the dead been embalmed, their repositories must in time have been more spacious than the dwellings of the living. I suppose only the rich or honourable were secured from corruption, and the rest left to the course of nature.

But it is commonly supposed that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body continued undissolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death.

Could the wise Egyptians, said Nekayah, think so grossly of the soul? If the soul could once survive its separation, what could it afterwards receive or suffer from the body?

The Egyptians would doubtless think erroneously, said the astronomer, in the darkness of heathenism, and the first dawn of philosophy. The nature of

the soul is still disputed amidst all our opportunities of clearer knowledge: some yet say, that it may be material, who, nevertheless, believe it to be immortal.

Some, answered Imlac, have indeed said that the soul is material, but I can scarcely believe that any man has thought it, who knew how to think; for all the conclusions of reason enforce the immateriality of mind, and all the notices of sense and investigations of science concur to prove the unconsciousness of matter.

It was never supposed that cogitation is inherent in matter, or that every particle is a thinking being. Yet, if any part of matter be devoid of thought, what part can we suppose to think? Matter can differ from matter only in form, density, bulk, motion, and direction of motion: to which of these, however varied or combined, can consciousness be annexed? To be round or square, to be solid or fluid, to be great or little, to be moved slowly or swiftly one way or another, are modes of material existence, all equally alien from the nature of cogitation. If matter be once without thought, it can only be made to think by some new modification, but all the modifications which it can admit are equally unconnected with cogitative powers.

But the materialists, said the astronomer, urge that matter may have qualities with which we are unacquainted.

He who will determine, returned Imlac, against that which he knows, because there may be something which he knows not; he that can set hypothetical possibility against acknowledged certainty, is not to be admitted among reasonable beings. All that we know of matter is, that matter is inert, senseless, and lifeless; and if this conviction cannot be

opposed but by referring us to something that we know not, we have all the evidence that human intellect can admit. If that which is known may be over-ruled by that which is unknown, no being, not omniscient, can arrive at certainty.

Yet let us not, said the astronomer, too arrogantly limit the Creator's power.

It is no limitation of Omnipotence, replied the poet, to suppose that one thing is not consistent with another; that the same proposition cannot be at once true and false; that the same number cannot be even and odd; that cogitation cannot be conferred on that which is created incapable of cogitation.

I know not, said Nekayah, any great use of this question. Does that immateriality, which, in my opinion, you have sufficiently proved, necessarily include eternal duration?

Of immateriality, said Imlac, our ideas are negative, and therefore obscure. Immateriality seems to imply a natural power of perpetual duration as a consequence of exemption from all causes of decay: whatever perishes is destroyed by the solution of its contexture, and separation of its parts; nor can we conceive how that which has no parts, and therefore admits no solution,can be naturally corrupted or impaired.

I know not, said Rasselas, how to conceive any thing without extension: what is extended must have parts, and you allow, that whatever has parts may be destroyed.

Consider your own conceptions, replied Imlac, and the difficulty will be less. You will find substance without extension. An ideal form is no less real than material bulk: yet an ideal form has no extension. It is no less certain, when you think on a pyramid, that your mind possesses the idea

of a pyramid, than that the pyramid itself is standing. What space does the idea of a pyramid occupy more than the idea of a grain of corn? or how can either idea suffer laceration? As is the effect, such is the cause: as thought, such is the power that thinks; a power impassive and indiscerptible.

But the Being, said Nekayah, whom I fear to name, the Being which made the soul, can destroy it.

He surely can destroy it, answered Imlac; since, however unperishable, it receives from a superior nature its power of duration. That it will not perish by any inherent cause of decay, or principle of corruption, may be shewn by philosophy; but philosophy can tell no more. That it will not be annihilated by Him that made it, we must humbly learn from higher authority.

The whole assembly stood awhile silent and collected. Let us return, said Rasselas, from this scene of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die; that what now acts shall continue its agency, and what now thinks shall think on for ever! Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state: they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy like us in the choice of life.

To me, said the princess, the choice of life is become less important: I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity.

They then hastened out of the caverns, and, under the protection of their guard, returned to Cairo.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The conclusion, in which nothing is concluded.

It was now the time of the inundation of the Nile: a few days after their visit to the catacombs the river began to rise.

They were confined to their house. The whole region being under water gave them no invitation to any excursions, and, being well supplied with materials for talk, they diverted themselves with comparisons of the different forms of life which they had observed, and with various schemes of happiness, which each of them had formed.

Pekuah was never so much charmed with any place as the convent of St. Anthony, where the Arab restored her to the princess, and wished only to fill it with pious maidens, and to be made prioress of the order: she was weary of expectation and disgust, and would gladly be fixed in some unvariable state.

The princess thought, that of all sublunary things, knowledge was the best: she desired first to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.

The prince desired a little kingdom, in which he might administer justice in his own person, and see all the parts of government with his own eyes; but he could never fix the limits of his dominion, and was always adding to the number of his subjects.

Imlac and the astronomer were contented to be driven along the stream of life, without directing their course to any particular port.

Of these wishes that they had formed, they well knew that none could be obtained. They deliberated awhile what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia.

THE END OF RASSELAS.

ALMORAN AND HAMET,

AN

ORIENTAL TALE.

BY

DR. HAWKESWORTH.

TO

THE KING.

SIR,

AMIDST the congratulations and praises of a free, a joyful, and now united people, who are ambitious to express their duty and their wishes in their various classes; I think myself happy to have YOUR MAJESTY'S most gracious permission to approach you, and, after the manner of the people whose character I have assumed, to bring an humble offering in my hand.

As some part of my subject led me to consider the advantages of our excellent constitution in comparison of others; my thoughts were naturally turned to YOUR MAJESTY, as its warmest friend and most powerful protector: and as the whole is intended to recommend the practice of virtue as the means of happiness, to whom could I address it with so much propriety, as to a PRINCE, who illustrates and enforces the precepts of the moralist by his life.

I am, may it please your MAJESTY,

Your MAJESTY'S most faithful,

Most obliged, and most obedient

Subject and Servant,

JOHN HAWKESWORTH.

ALMORAN AND HAMET.

CHAPTER I.

WHO is he among the children of the earth, that repines at the power of the wicked? And who is he, that would change the lot of the righteous? He, who has appointed to each his portion, is God; the Omniscient and the Almighty, who fills eternity, and whose existence is from Himself! But he who murmurs is man; who yesterday was not, and who to-morrow shall be forgotten: let him listen in silence to the voice of knowledge, and hide the blushes of confusion in the dust.

Solyman, the mighty and the wise, who, in the one hundred and second year of the Hegyra, sat upon the throne of Persia, had two sons, Almoran and Hamet, and they were twins. Almoran was the first born, but Solyman divided his affection equally between them: they were both lodged in the same part of the seraglio, both were attended by the same servants, and both received instructions from the same teacher.

One of the first things that Almoran learnt, was the prerogative of his birth; and he was taught very early to set a high value upon it, by the terms in which those about him expressed their sense of the

power, the splendour, and the delights of royalty. As his mind gradually opened, he naturally considered these as the objects of universal desire, and the means of supreme felicity: he was often reminded, that the time was coming, when the sole possession of sovereign power would enable him to fulfil all his wishes, to determine the fate of dependent nations with a nod, and dispense life and death, happiness and misery, at his will. He was flattered by those who hoped to draw wealth and dignity from his favour; and interest prompted all who approached him, to administer to his pleasures with a zeal and assiduity which had the appearance of reverence to his merit, and affection to his person.

Hamet, on the contrary, soon became sensible of a subordinate station: he was not, indeed, neglected; but he was not much caressed. When the gratification of Hamet came in competition with that of Almoran, he was always obliged to give it up, except when Solyman interposed: his mind was, therefore, naturally led to seek for happiness in objects very different from those which had fixed the attention of Almoran. As he knew not to how narrow a sphere caprice or jealousy might confine him, he considered what pleasures were least dependent upon external advantages; and as the first popular commotion which should happen after his brother's accession to the throne, might probably cost him his life, he was very inquisitive about the state into which his spirit would be dismissed by the angel of death, and very diligent to do whatever might secure him a share of the permanent and unchangeable felicity of paradise.

This difference in the situation of Almoran and Hamet, produced great dissimilarity in their dispositions, habits, and characters: to which, perhaps, nature might also in some degree contribute. Al-

moran was haughty, vain, and voluptuous; Hamet was gentle, courteous, and temperate: Almoran was volatile, impetuous, and irascible; Hamet was thoughtful, patient, and forbearing. Upon the heart of Hamet also were written the instructions of the prophet; to his mind futurity was present by habitual anticipation; his pleasure, his pain, his hopes, and his fears, were perpetually referred to the Invisible and Almighty Father of Life, by sentiments of gratitude or resignation, complacency or confidence; so that his devotion was not periodical but constant.

But the views of Almoran were terminated by nearer objects: his mind was perpetually busied in the anticipation of pleasures and honours, which he supposed to be neither uncertain nor remote; these excited his hopes, with a power sufficient to fix his attention: he did not look beyond them for other objects, nor inquire how enjoyments more distant were to be acquired; and as he supposed these to be already secured to him by his birth, there was nothing he was so solicitous to obtain as the reward of merit, nor any thing that he considered himself to possess as the bounty of Heaven. If the sublime and disinterested rectitude that produces and rewards itself, dwells indeed with man, it dwelt not with Almoran: with respect to God, therefore, he was not impressed with a sense either of duty or dependence; he felt neither reverence nor love, gratitude nor resignation: in abstaining from evil, he was not intentionally good; he practised the externals of morality without virtue, and performed the rituals of devotion without piety.

Such were Almoran and Hamet, when Solyman their father, full of days and full of honour, slept in peace the sleep of death. With this event they were immediately acquainted. The emotions of

Almoran were such as it was impossible to conceal. The joy that he felt in secret was so great, that the mere dread of disappointment for a moment suspended his belief of what he heard: when his fears and his doubts gave way, his cheeks were suffused with sudden blushes, and his eyes sparkled with exultation and impatience: he looked eagerly about him, as if in haste to act; yet his looks were embarrassed, and his gestures irresolute, because he knew not what to do: he uttered some incoherent sentences, which discovered at once the joy that he felt, and his sense of its impropriety; and his whole deportment expressed the utmost tumult and perturbation of mind.

Upon Hamet, the death of his father produced a very different effect: as soon as he heard it, his lips trembled, and his countenance grew pale; he stood motionless a moment, like a pilgrim transfixed by lightning in the desert: he then smote his breast, and, looking upwards, his eyes by degrees overflowed with tears, and they fell, like dew distilling from the mountain, in a calm and silent shower. As his grief was thus mingled with devotion, his mind in a short time recovered its tranquillity, though not its cheerfulness, and he desired to be conducted to his brother.

He found him surrounded by the lords of his court, his eye still restless and ardent, and his deportment elate and assuming. Hamet pressed hastily through the circle, and prostrated himself before him. Almoran received the homage with a tumultuous pleasure; but at length raised him from the ground, and assured him of his protection, though without any expressions either of kindness or sorrow. Hamet, says he, if I have no cause to complain of you as a subject, you shall have no cause to complain of me as a king. Hamet,

whose heart was again pierced by the cold and distant behaviour of his brother, suppressed the sigh that struggled in his bosom, and secretly wiped away the tear that started to his eye. He retired, with his looks fixed upon the ground, to a remote corner of the apartment; and though his heart yearned to embrace his brother, his modest diffidence restrained him from intruding upon the king.

In this situation were Almoran and Hamet, when Omar entered the apartment. Omar, upon whose head the hand of Time became heavy, had from his youth acquainted himself with wisdom. To him Nature had revealed herself in the silence of the night, when his lamp was burning alone, and his eyes only were open: to him was known the power of the seal of Solomon; and to him the knowledge of things invisible had been revealed. Nor was the virtue of Omar inferior to his knowledge; his heart was a fountain of good, which, though it flowed through innumerable streams, was never dry: yet was the virtue of Omar clothed with humility; and he was still pressing nearer to perfection, by a devotion which though elevated was rational, and though regular was warm. From the counsel of Omar, Solyman had derived glory and strength; and to him he had committed the education of his children.

When he entered the apartment, the crowd, touched at once with reverence and love, drew back; every eye was cast downward, and every tongue was silent. The full of days approached the king, and kneeling before him he put into his hand a sealed paper: the king received it with impatience, seeing it superscribed with the hand of his father; and Omar looking round, and perceiving Hamet, beckoned him to come forward. Hamet, whose

obedience to Omar had been so long habitual that it was now almost spontaneous, instantly drew near, though with a slow and irresolute pace; and Almoran, having broken the seal of the paper, began to read it to himself, with a look that expressed the utmost anxiety and impatience. Omar kept his eye fixed upon him, and soon perceived that his countenance was disfigured by confusion and trouble, and that he seemed preparing to put up the paper in his bosom. He then produced another paper from under his robe, and gave it to Hamet: This, says he, is a copy of the will of Solyman, your father; the original is in the hand of Almoran: read it, and you will find that he has bequeathed his kingdom between you.

The eyes of all present were now turned upon Hamet, who stood silent and motionless with amazement, but was soon roused to attention by the homage that was paid him. In the mean time, Almoran's confusion increased every moment: his disappointment was aggravated by the sudden attention of those who were present to his brother; and his jealousy made him think himself neglected, while those acts of duty were performed to Hamet, which were now known to be his right, and which he had himself received before him.

Hamet, however, regarded but little what so much excited the envy of Almoran; his mind was employed upon superior objects, and agitated by nobler passions. The coldness of his brother's behaviour, though it had grieved, had not quenched his affection; and as he was now no longer restrained by the deference due from a subject to his king, he ran to him, and catching him to his breast, attempted to speak; but his heart was too full, and he could express his affection and joy only by his tears. Almoran rather suffered than received the

embrace; and after a few ceremonies, to which neither of them could much attend, they retired to separate apartments.

CHAPTER II.

When Almoran was alone, he immediately locked the door; and throwing himself upon a sofa in an agony of vexation and disappointment, of which he was unwilling there should be any witness, he revolved in his mind all the pleasures and honours of supreme dominion which had now suddenly been snatched from him, with a degree of anguish and regret, not proportioned to their real, but their imaginary value. Of future good, that which we obtain is found to be less than our expectations; but that of which we are disappointed, we suppose would have been more: thus do the children of hope extract evil, both from what they gain, and from what they lose. But Almoran, after the first tumult of his mind had subsided, began to consider as well what was left him, as what had been taken away. He was still without a superior, though he had an equal: he was still a king, though he did not govern alone: and with respect to every individual in his dominions except one, his will would now be a law; though, with respect to the public, the concurrence of his brother would be necessary to give it force. Let me then, says he, make the most of the power that is now put into my hand, and wait till some favourable opportunity shall offer to increase it. Let me dissemble my jealousy and disappointment, that I may not alarm suspicion, or put the virtues of Hamet upon their guard against me; and let me

contrive to give our joint administration such a form, as may best favour my design.

Such were the reflections with which Almoran soothed the anguish of his mind; while Hamet was busied in speculations of a very different kind. If he was pleased at reflecting that he was raised from a subject to a prince, he was pleased still more, when he considered his elevation as a test of his father's affection to his person, and approbation of his conduct: he was also delighted with the thought, that his brother was associated with him in the arduous task which he was now called to perform.—If I had been appointed to govern alone, said he, I should have had no equal; and he who has no equal, though he may have faithful servants, can have no friend: there cannot be that union of interests, that equal participation of good, that unrestrained intercourse of mind, and that mutual dependence, which constitutes the pure and exalted happiness of friendship. With Almoran, I shall share the supreme delight of wresting the innocent and the helpless from the iron hand of oppression; of animating merit by reward, and restraining the unworthy by fear. I shall share, with Almoran, the pleasures of governing a numerous, a powerful, and a happy people; pleasures which, however great, are, like all others, increased by participation.

While Hamet was thus enjoying the happiness which his virtue derived from the same source from which the vices of Almoran had filled his breast with anguish and discontent, Omar was contriving in what manner their joint government could best be carried into execution.

He knew that Solyman, having considered the dispositions of his sons, was of opinion, that if they

had been blended in one person, they would have produced a character more fit to govern in his stead, than either of them alone. Almoran, he thought, was too volatile and warm; but he suspected that Hamet would sink into inactivity for want of spirit: he feared alike Almoran's love of enterprise, and Hamet's fondness for retirement: he observed, in Hamet, a placid easiness of temper, which might suffer the reins of government to lie too loose; and, in Almoran, a quickness of resentment, and jealousy of command, which might hold them too tight. He hoped, therefore, that by leaving them a joint dominion, he should blend their dispositions, at least in their effects, in every act of government that should take place; or that, however they should agree to administer their government, the public would derive benefit from the virtues of both, without danger of suffering from their imperfections, as their imperfections would only operate against each other; while, in whatever was right, their minds would naturally concur, as the coincidence of rectitude with rectitude is necessary and eternal. But he did not consider, that different dispositions, operating separately upon two different wills, would appear in effects very unlike those which they would concur to produce in one; that two wills, under the direction of dispositions so different, would seldom be brought to coincide; and that more mischiefs would probably arise from the contest, than from the imperfections of either alone.

But Solyman had so long applauded himself for his project before he revealed it to Omar, that Omar found him too much displeased with any objection to consider its weight; and knowing that peculiar notions are more rarely given up, than opinions received from others, and made our own only by adoption, he at length acquiesced, lest he should

by farther opposition lose his influence, which on other occasions he might still employ to the advantage of the public; and took a solemn oath, that he would, as far as was in his power, see the will carried into execution.

To this, indeed, he consented without much reluctance, as he had little less reason to fear the sole government of Almoran, than a joint administration; and if a struggle for superiority should happen, he hoped the virtues of Hamet would obtain the suffrages of the people in his favour, and establish him upon the throne alone. But as change is itself an evil, and as changes in government are seldom produced without great confusion and calamity, he applied himself to consider in what manner the government of Almoran and Hamet could be administered, so as most effectually to blend their characters in their administration, and prevent the conduct of one from exciting jealousy in the other.

After much thought, he determined that a system of laws should be prepared, which the sons of Solyman should examine and alter till they perfectly approved, and to which they should then give the sanction of their joint authority: that when any addition or alteration should be thought necessary, it should be made in the same manner; and that when any insuperable difference of sentiment happened, either in this or in any act of prerogative independent of the laws for regulating the manners of the people, the kings should refer it to some person of approved integrity and wisdom, and abide by his determination. Omar easily foresaw, that when the opinion of Almoran and Hamet should differ, the opinion of Almoran would be established; for there were many causes that would render Almoran inflexible, and Hamet yielding: Almoran was naturally confident and assuming; Hamet dif-

fident and modest: Almoran was impatient of contradiction; Hamet was attentive to argument, and solicitous only for the discovery of truth. Almoran also conceived, that by the will of his father, he had suffered wrong; Hamet, that he had received a favour: Almoran, therefore, was disposed to resent the first appearance of opposition; and Hamet, on the contrary, to acquiesce, as in his share of government, whatever it might be, he had more than was his right by birth, and his brother had less. Thus, therefore, the will of Almoran would probably predominate in the state: but as the same cause which conferred this superiority, would often prevent contention, Omar considered it, upon the whole, rather as good than evil.

When he had prepared his plan, therefore, he sent a copy of it, by different messengers at the same time, both to Almoran and Hamet, inclosed in a letter, in which he expressed his sense of obligation to their father, and his zeal and affection for them: he mentioned the promise he had made, to devote himself to their service; and the oath he had taken, to propose whatever he thought might facilitate the accomplishment of their father's design, with honour to them and happiness to their people. These motives, which he could not resist without impiety, he hoped would absolve him from presumption; and, trusting in the rectitude of his intentions, he left the issue to God.

CHAPTER III.

THE receipt of this letter threw Almoran into another agony of indignation: he felt again the loss of his prerogative; the offer of advice he disdained

as an insult, to which he had been injuriously subjected by the will of his father: and he was disposed to reject whatever was suggested by Omar, even before his proposal was known. With this temper of mind he began to read, and at every paragraph took new offence: he determined, however, not to admit Omar to the honour of a conference upon the subject, but to settle a plan of government with his brother, without the least regard to his advice.

A supercilious attention to minute formalities, is a certain indication of a little mind, conscious to the want of innate dignity, and solicitous to derive from others what it cannot supply to itself: as the scrupulous exaction of every trifling tribute discovers the weakness of the tyrant, who fears his claim should be disputed: while the prince, who is conscious of superior and indisputable power, and knows that the states he has subjugated do not dare to revolt, scarce inquires whether such testimonies of allegiance are given or not.

Thus the jealousy of Almoran already enslaved him to the punctilios of state; and the most trifling circumstanees involved him in perplexity, or fired him with resentment: the friendship and fidelity of Omar stung him with rage, as insolent and intrusive; and though it determined him to an immediate interview with his brother, yet he was embarrassed how to procure it. At first he rose, and was about to go to him; but he stopped short with disdain, upon reflecting, that it was an act of condescension which might be deemed an acknowledgment of superiority: he then thought of sending for Hamet to come to him; but this he feared might provoke him, as implying a denial of his equality: at length he determined to propose a meeting in the chamber of council, and was just dispatching an officer with the message, when Hamet entered the apartment.

The countenance of Hamet was flushed with joy, and his heart was warmed with the pleasing sensations of affection and confidence, by the same letter from which Almoran had extracted the bitterness of jealousy and resentment; and as he had no idea that an act of courtesy to his brother could derogate from his own dignity or importance, he indulged the honest impatience of his heart to communicate the pleasure with which it overflowed: he was, indeed, somewhat disappointed, to find no traces of satisfaction in the countenance of Almoran, when he saw the same paper in his hand, which had impressed so much upon his own.

He waited some time after the first salutations, without mentioning the scheme of government he was come to concert; because having observed that Almoran was embarrassed and displeased, he expected that he would communicate the cause, and pleased himself with the hope that he might remove it. Finding, however, that this expectation was disappointed, he addressed him to this effect:

How happy are we, my dear brother, in the wisdom and fidelity of Omar! How excellent is the system of government that he has proposed! How easy and honourable will it be to us that govern, and how advantageous to the people that obey!

The advantages, said Almoran, which you seem to have discovered, are not evident to me: tell me, then, what you imagine they are, and I will afterwards give you my opinion.

By establishing a system of laws as the rule of government, said Hamet, many evils will be avoided, and many benefits procured. If the law is the will only of the sovereign, it can never certainly be known to the people: many, therefore, may violate that rule of right which the hand of the Almighty has written upon the living tablets of the heart, in

the presumptuous hope, that it will not subject them to punishment; and those, by whom that rule is fulfilled, will not enjoy that consciousness of security, which they would derive from the protection of a prescribed law, which they have never broken. Neither will those who are inclined to do evil, be equally restrained by the fear of punishment, if neither the offence is ascertained, nor the punishment prescribed. One motive to probity, therefore, will be wanting; which ought to be supplied, as well for the sake of those who may be tempted to offend, as of those who may suffer by the offence. Besides, he who governs not by a written and a public law, must either administer that government in person, or by others: if in person, he will sink under a labour which no man is able to sustain; and if by others, the inferiority of their rank must subject them to temptations which it cannot be hoped they will always resist, and to prejudices which it will perhaps be impossible for them to surmount. But to administer government by a law which ascertains the offence, and directs the punishment, integrity alone will be sufficient; and as the perversion of justice will in this case be notorious, and depend not upon opinion but fact, it will seldom be practised, because it will be easily punished.

Almoran, who had heard the opinions of Hamet with impatience and scorn, now started from his seat with a proud and contemptuous aspect: he first glanced his eyes upon his brother; and then looking disdainfully downward, he threw back his robe, and stretching out his hand from him, Shall the son of Solyman, said he, upon whose will the fate of nations was suspended, whose smiles and frowns were alone the criterions of right and wrong, before whom the voice of wisdom itself was silent, and the pride even of virtue humbled in the dust; shall

the son of Solyman be harnessed, like a mule, in the trammels of law? Shall he become a mere instrument to execute what others have devised? Shall he only declare the determinations of a statute, and shall his ear be affronted by claims of right? It is the glory of a prince, to punish for what and whom he will; to be the sovereign, not only of property, but of life; and to govern alike without prescription or appeal.

Hamet, who was struck with astonishment at this declaration, and the vehemence with which it was uttered, after a short recollection, made this reply: It is the glory of a prince, to govern others as he is governed by Him who is alone most merciful and almighty! It is his glory to prevent crimes, rather than to display his power in punishment; to diffuse happiness, rather than enforce subjection; and rather to animate with love, than depress by fear. Has not He that shall judge us given us a rule of life, by which we shall be judged? Is not our reward and punishment already set before us? Are not His promises and threatenings, motives to obedience? and have we not confidence and joy, when we have obeyed? To God, his own divine perfections are a law; and these he has transcribed as a law to us. Let us, then, govern, as we are governed: let us seek our happiness in the happiness that we bestow, and our honour in emulating the benevolence of Heaven.

As Almoran feared, that to proceed farther in this argument would too far disclose his sentiments, and put Hamet too much upon his guard, he determined for the present to dissemble: and as he perceived that Hamet's opinion, and an administration founded upon it, would render him extremely popular, and at length possibly establish him alone, he was solicitous only to withdraw him from public notice, and persuade him to leave the

government, whatever form it should receive, to be administered by others: returning, therefore to his seat, and assuming an appearance of complacence and tranquillity, with which he could not form his language perfectly to agree: Let us, then, said he, if a law must be set up in our stead, leave the law to be executed by our slaves: and as nothing will be left for us to do, that is worthy of us, let us devote ourselves to the pleasures of ease; and if there are any enjoyments peculiar to royalty, let us secure them as our only distinction from the multitude.

Not so, says Hamet, for there is yet much for a prince to do, after the best system of laws has been established. The government of a nation as a whole, the regulation and extent of its trade, the establishment of manufactories, the encouragement of genius, the application of the revenues, and whatever can improve the arts of peace, and secure superiority in war, is the proper object of a king's attention.

But in these, said Almoran, it will be difficult for two minds to concur: let us, then, agree to leave these also to the care of some other, whom we can continue as long as we approve, and displace when we approve no longer. We shall, by this expedient, be able to avert the odium of any unpopular measure; and by the sacrifice of a slave, we can always satisfy the people, and silence public discontent.

To trust implicitly to another, says Hamet, is to give up a prerogative, which is at once our highest duty and interest to keep; it is to betray our trust, and to sacrifice our honour to another. The prince, who leaves the government of his people implicitly to a subject, leaves it to one who has many more temptations to betray their interest than himself. A

vicegerent is in a subordinate station: he has, therefore, much to fear and much to hope: he may also acquire the power of obtaining what he hopes, and averting what he fears, at the public expence: he may stand in need of dependents, and may be able no otherwise to procure them, than by conniving at the fraud or the violence which they commit: he may receive, in bribes, an equivalent for his share, as an individual, in the public prosperity; for his interest is not essentially connected with that of the state: he has a separate interest; but the interest of the state and of the king are one: he may even be corrupted to betray the councils, and give up the interests of the nation, to a foreign power; but this is impossible to the king; for nothing equivalent to what he would give up could be offered him. But as a king has not equal temptations to do wrong, neither is he equally exposed to opposition when he does right. The measures of a substitute are frequently opposed merely from interest; because the leader of a faction against him hopes that, if he can remove him by popular clamour, he shall succeed to his power: but it can be no man's interest to oppose the measures of a king, if his measures are good, because no man can hope to supplant him. Are not these the precepts of the prophet, whose wisdom was from above?—Let not the eye of expectation be raised to another, for that which thyself only should bestow. Suffer not thy own shadow to obscure thee; nor be content to derive that glory, which it is thy prerogative to impart.

But is the prince, said Almoran, always the wisest man in his dominions? Can we not find, in another, abilities and experience, which we do not possess; and is it not the duty of him who presides in the ship, to place the helm in that hand which can best steer it?

A prince, said Hamet, who sincerely intends the good of his people, can scarce fail to effect it; all the wisdom of the nation will be at once turned to that object: whatever is his principal aim, will be that of all who are admitted to his council; for to concur with his principal aim, must be the surest recommendation to his favour. Let us, then, hear others; but let us act ourselves.

As Almoran now perceived, that the longer this conversation continued, the more he should be embarrassed, he put an end to it by appearing to acquiesce in what Hamet had proposed. Hamet withdrew, charmed with the candour and flexibility which he imagined he had discovered in his brother; and not without some exultation in his own rhetoric, which he supposed had gained no inconsiderable victory. Almoran, in the mean time, applauded himself for having thus far practised the arts of dissimulation with success; fortified himself in the resolutions he had before taken; and conceived new malevolence and jealousy against Hamet.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE Hamet was exulting in his conquest, and his heart was overflowing at once with self-complacency, and affection to his brother, he was told that Omar was waiting without and desired admittance. Hamet ordered that he should be immediately introduced; and when Omar entered, and would have prostrated himself before him, he catched him in his arms in a transport of affection and esteem: and having ordered that none should interrupt them, compelled him to sit down on a sofa.

He then related, with all the joy of a youthful and an ardent mind, the conversation he had had with Almoran, intermixed with expressions of the highest praise and the most cordial esteem. Omar was not without suspicion, that the sentiments which Almoran had first expressed with such vehemence of passion, were still predominant in his mind; but of these suspicions he did not give the least hint to Hamet; not only because to communicate suspicions is to accuse without proof, but because he did not think himself at liberty to make an ill report of another, though he knew it to be true. He approved the sentiments of Hamet, as they had indeed been infused by his own instructions; and some precepts and cautions were now added, which the accession of Hamet to a share of the imperial power made particularly necessary.

Remember, said Omar, that the most effectual way of promoting virtue, is to prevent occasions of vice. There are, perhaps, particular situations, in which human virtue has always failed: at least temptation often repeated, and long continued, has seldom been finally resisted. In a government so constituted as to leave the people exposed to perpetual seduction, by opportunities of dissolute pleasure or iniquitous gain, the multiplication of penal laws will only tend to depopulate the kingdom, and disgrace the state; to devote to the scymitar and the bow-string, those who might have been useful to society, and to leave the rest dissolute, turbulent, and factious. If the streets not only abound with women, who inflame the passenger by their appearance, their gesture, and their solicitations; but with houses, in which every desire which they kindle may be gratified with secrecy and convenience; it is in vain that the feet of the prostitute go down to

death, and that her steps take hold on hell: what then can be hoped from any punishment, which the laws of man can superadd to disease and want, to rottenness and perdition? If you permit opium to be publicly sold at a low rate; it will be folly to hope, that the dread of punishment will render idleness and drunkenness strangers to the poor. If a tax is so collected as to leave opportunities to procure the commodity without paying it, the hope of gain will always surmount the fear of punishment. If, when the veteran has served you at the risque of life, you withhold his hire, it will be vain to threaten usury and extortion with imprisonment and fines. If, in your armies, you suffer it to be any man's interest, rather to preserve the life of a horse than a man; be assured that your own sword is drawn for your enemy: for there will always be some, in whom interest is stronger than humanity and honour. Put no man's interest, therefore, in the balance against his duty; nor hope that good can often be produced, but by preventing opportunities of evil.

To these precepts of Omar, Hamet listened as to the instructions of a father; and having promised to keep them as the treasure of life, he dismissed him from his presence. The heart of Hamet was now expanded with the most pleasing expectations; but Almoran was pining with solicitude, jealousy, and distrust: he took every opportunity to avoid both Omar and Hamet; but Hamet still retained his confidence, and Omar his suspicions.

CHAPTER V.

In the mean time, the system of government was established which had been proposed by Omar, and in which Hamet concurred from principle, and Almoran from policy. The views of Almoran terminated in the gratifications of his own appetites and passions; those of Hamet, in the discharge of his duty. Hamet, therefore, was indefatigable in the business of the state; and as his sense of honour, and his love of the public, made this the employment of his choice, it was to him the perpetual source of a generous and sublime felicity. Almoran also was equally diligent, but from another motive: he was actuated, not by love of the public, but by jealousy of his brother; he performed his task as the drudge of necessity, with reluctance and ill will; so that to him it produced pain and anxiety, weariness and impatience.

To atone for this waste of time, he determined to crowd all that remained with delight. His gardens were an epitome of all nature, and on his palace were exhausted all the treasures of art: his seraglio was filled with beauties of every nation, and his table supplied with dainties from the remotest corners of his dominions. In the songs that were repeated in his presence, he listened at once to the voice of adulation and music; he breathed the perfumes of Arabia, and he tasted the forbidden pleasure of wine. But as every appetite is soon satiated by excess, his eagerness to accumulate pleasure deprived him of enjoyment. Among the variety of beauty that surrounded him, the passion, which, to be luxurious, must be delicate and refined, was degraded to a mere instinct, and exhausted in endless dissipation; the caress was unendeared by a

consciousness of reciprocal delight, and was immediately succeeded by indifference or disgust. By the dainties that perpetually urged him to intemperance, that appetite, which alone could make even dainties tasteful, was destroyed. The splendour of his palace and the beauty of his gardens, became at length so familiar to his eye, that they were frequently before him, without being seen. Even flattery and music lost their power, by too frequent a repetition: and the broken slumbers of the night, and the languor of the morning, were more than equivalent to the transient hilarity that was inspired by wine. Thus passed the time of Almoran, divided between painful labours which he did not dare to shun, and the search of pleasure which he could never find.

Hamet, on the contrary, did not seek pleasure, but pleasure seemed to seek him: he had a perpetual complacence and serenity of mind, which rendered him constantly susceptible of pleasing impressions; every thing that was prepared to refresh or entertain him in his seasons of retirement and relaxation added something to the delight which was continually springing in his breast, when he reviewed the past, or looked forward to the future. Thus, the pleasures of sense were heightened by those of the mind, and the pleasures of the mind by those of sense: he had, indeed, as yet no wife; for as yet no woman had fixed his attention, or determined his choice.

Among the ambassadors whom the monarchs of Asia sent to congratulate the sons of Solyman upon their accession to the throne, there was a native of Circassia, whose name was Abdallah. Abdallah had only one child, a daughter, in whom all his happiness and affection centered; he was unwilling to leave her behind, and therefore brought her to

the court of Persia. Her mother died while she was yet an infant; she was now in the sixteenth year of her age, and her name was Almeida. She was beautiful as the daughters of paradise, and gentle as the breezes of the spring: her mind was without stain, and her manners were without art.

She was lodged with her father in a palace that joined to the gardens of the seraglio; and it happened that a lamp which had one night been left burning in a lower apartment, by some accident set fire to the net-work of cotton that surrounded a sofa, and the whole room was soon after in a flame. Almoran, who had been passing the afternoon in riot and debauchery, had been removed from his banqueting room asleep; but Hamet was still in his closet, where he had been regulating some papers that were to be used the next day. The windows of this room opened towards the inner apartments of the house in which Abdallah resided; and Hamet, having by accident looked that way, was alarmed by the appearance of an unusual light, and starting up to see whence it proceeded, he discovered what had happened.

Having hastily ordered the guard of the night to assist in quenching the flame, and removing the furniture, he ran himself into the garden. As soon as he was come up to the house, he was alarmed by the shrieks of a female voice; and the next moment, Almeida appeared at the window of an apartment directly over that which was on fire. Almeida he had till now never seen, nor did he so much as know that Abdallah had a daughter: but though her person was unknown, he was strongly interested in her danger, and called out to her to throw herself into his arms. At the sound of his

voice she ran back into the room, such is the force of inviolate modesty, though the smoke was then rising in curling spires from the windows: she was, however, soon driven back; and part of the floor at the same instant giving way, she wrapt her veil round her, and leaped into the garden. Hamet caught her in his arms; but though he broke her fall, he sunk down with her weight: he did not, however, quit his charge; but perceiving she had fainted, he made haste with her into his apartment, to afford her such assistance as he could procure.

She was covered only with the light and loose robe in which she slept, and her veil had dropped off by the way. The moment he entered his closet, the light discovered to him such beauty as before he had never seen: she now began to revive; and before her senses returned, she pressed the prince with an involuntary embrace, which he returned by straining her closer to his breast, in a tumult of delight, confusion, and anxiety, which he could scarce sustain. As he still held her in his arms, and gazed silently upon her, she opened her eyes, and instantly relinquishing her hold, shrieked out, and threw herself from him. As there were no women nearer than that wing of the palace in which his brother resided, and as he had many reasons not to leave her in their charge, he was in the utmost perplexity what to do. He assured her, in some hasty and incoherent words, of her security: he told her, that she was in the royal palace, and that he who had conveyed her thither was Hamet. The habitual reverence of sovereign power now surmounted all other passions in the bosom of Almeida: she was instantly covered with new confusion; and, hiding her face with her hands, threw herself at

his feet: he raised her with a trepidation almost equal to her own, and endeavoured to sooth her into confidence and tranquillity.

Hitherto her memory had been wholly suspended by violent passions, which had crowded upon her in a rapid and uninterrupted succession, and the first gleam of recollection threw her into a new agony: and having been silent a few moments, she suddenly smote her hands together, and bursting into tears, cried out, Abdallah! my father! my father! ——Hamet not only knew but felt all the meaning of the exclamation, and immediately ran again into the garden: he had advanced but a few paces, before he discerned an old man sitting upon the ground, and looking in silent anguish, as if he had exhausted the power of complaint. Hamet, upon a nearer approach, perceived by the light of the flame that it was Abdallah; and instantly calling him by his name, told him, that his daughter was safe. At the name of his daughter, Abdallah suddenly started up, as if he had been roused by the voice of an angel from the sleep of death: Hamet again repeated, that his daughter was in safety; and Abdallah, looking wistfully at him, knew him to be the king. He was then struck with an awe that restrained him from inquiry: but Hamet, directing him where he might find her, went forward, that he might not lessen the pleasure of their interview, nor restrain the first transports of duty and affection by his presence. He soon met with other fugitives from the fire, which had opened a communication between the gardens and the street; and among them some women belonging to Almeida, whom he conducted himself to their mistress. He immediately allotted to her and to her father, an apartment in his division of the palace

and the fire being now nearly extinguished, he retired to rest.

CHAPTER VI.

THOUGH the night was far advanced, yet the eyes of Hamet were strangers to sleep: his fancy incessantly repeated the events that had just happened; the image of Almeida was ever before him; and his breast throbbed with a disquietude, which, though it prevented rest, he did not wish to lose.

Almoran, in the mean time, was slumbering away the effects of his intemperance; and in the morning, when he was told what had happened, he expressed no passion but curiosity: he went hastily into the garden; but when he had gazed upon the ruins, and inquired how the fire began, and what it had consumed, he thought of it no more.

But Hamet suffered nothing that regarded himself, to exclude others from his attention: he went again to the ruins, not to gratify his curiosity, but to see what might yet be done to alleviate the misery of the sufferers, and secure for their use what had been preserved from the flames. He found that no life had been lost, but that many persons had been hurt; to these he sent the physicians of his own household: and having rewarded those who had assisted them in their distress, not forgetting even the soldiers, who had only fulfilled his own orders, he returned, and applied himself to dispatch the public business in the chamber of council, with the same patient and diligent attention as if nothing had happened. He had, indeed, ordered inquiry to be made after Almeida; and when he

returned to his apartment, he found Abdallah waiting to express his gratitude for the obligations he had received.

Hamet accepted his acknowledgments with a peculiar pleasure, for they had some connection with Almeida; after whom he again inquired, with an ardour uncommon even to the benevolence of Hamet. When all his questions had been asked and answered, he appeared still unwilling to dismiss Abdallah, though he seemed at a loss how to detain him: he wanted to know, whether his daughter had yet received an offer of marriage, though he was unwilling to discover his desire by a direct inquiry; but he soon found, that nothing could be known, which was not directly asked, from a man whom reverence and humility kept silent before him, except when something was said which amounted to a command to speak. At length, however, he said, not without some hesitation, Is there no one, Abdallah, who will thank me for the preservation of thy daughter, with a zeal equal to thy own?—Yes, replied Abdallah, that daughter whom thou hast preserved. This reply, though it was unexpected, was pleasing: for Hamet was not only gratified to hear, that Almeida had expressed herself warmly in his behalf, at least as a benefactor; but he judged, that if any man had been interested in her life as a lover, the answer which Abdallah had given him would not so readily have occurred to his mind.

As this reflection kept Hamet a few moments silent, Abdallah withdrew; and Hamet, as he observed some marks of haste and confusion in his countenance, was unwilling longer to continue him in a situation, which he had now reason to think gave him pain. But Abdallah, who had conceived a sudden thought that Hamet's question was an

indirect reproach of Almeida, for not having herself solicited admission to his presence; went in haste to her apartment, and ordered her immediately to make ready to attend him to the king.

Almeida, from whose mind the image of Hamet had not been absent a moment since she first saw him, received this order with a mixture of pain and pleasure—of wishes, hopes, and apprehensions, that filled her bosom with emotion, and covered her face with blushes. She had not courage to ask the reason of the command, which she instantly prepared to obey; but the tenderness of Abdallah, who perceived and pitied her distress, anticipated her wish. In a short time, therefore, he returned to the chamber of presence; and, having received permission, he entered with Almeida in his hand. Hamet rose in haste to receive her, with a glow of pleasure and impatience in his countenance; and having raised her from the ground, supported her in his arms, waiting to hear her voice; but though she made many attempts, she could not speak.

Hamet, who knew not to what he owed this sudden and unexpected interview, which, though he wished, he could contrive no means to obtain, imagined that Almeida had some request, and therefore urged her tenderly to make it; but as she still remained silent, he looked at Abdallah, as expecting to hear it from him. We have no wish, said Abdallah, but to atone for our offence; nor any request, but that my lord would now accept the thanks of Almeida for the life which he has preserved, and impute the delay, not to ingratitude, but inadvertence: let me now take her back, as thy gift; and let the light of thy favour be upon us. —Take her, then, said Hamet; for I would give her only to thee.

These words of Hamet did not escape the notice

either of Abdallah or Almeida; but neither of them mentioned their conjectures to the other. Almeida, who was inclined to judge of Hamet's situation by her own, and who recollected many little incidents, known only to herself, which favoured her wishes; indulged the hope, that she should again hear of Hamet, with more confidence than her father; nor were her expectations disappointed. Hamet reflected with pleasure, that he had prepared the way for a more explicit declaration; and, as his impatience increased with his passion every hour, he sent for Abdallah the next morning, and told him, that he wished to be more acquainted with his daughter, with a view to make her his wife. As neither you nor your daughter are my subjects, says Hamet, I cannot command you; and if you were, upon this occasion I would not. I do not want a slave, but a friend; not merely a woman, but a wife. If I find Almeida such as my fancy has feigned her; if her mind corresponds with her form; and if I have reason to think that she can give her heart to Hamet, and not merely her hand to the king, I shall be happy. To this declaration, Abdallah replied with expressions of the profoundest submission and gratitude; and Hamet dismissed him, to prepare Almeida to receive him in the afternoon of the same day.

CHAPTER VII.

As eight moons only had passed since the death of Solyman, and as the reverence of Hamet for the memory of his father would not suffer him to marry till the year should be completed; he determined not to mention Almeida to his brother, till the

time when he could marry her was near. The fierce and haughty deportment of Almoran had now left Hamet no room to doubt of his character: and though he had no apprehension that he would make any attempts upon Almeida, after she should be his wife; yet he did not know how much might justly be feared from his passion, if he should see her and become enamoured of her, while she was yet a virgin in the house of her father.

Almeida had not only unsullied purity of mind, but principles of refined and exalted virtue; and as the life of Hamet was an example of all that was either great or good, Abdallah felt no anxiety upon leaving them together, except what arose from his fears, that his daughter would not be able to secure the conquest she had made.

As it was impossible for Hamet to have such an acquaintance with Almeida as he desired, till he could enter into conversation with her upon terms of equality, it was his first care to sooth her into confidence and familiarity; and by degrees he succeeded: he soon found, in the free intercourse of mind with mind, which he established instead of the implicit submission which only echoed his own voice, how little of the pleasure that women were formed to give can be enjoyed, when they are considered merely as slaves to a tyrant's will, the passive subjects of transient dalliance and casual enjoyment. The pleasure which he took in the youthful beauty of Almeida, was now endeared, exalted, and refined, by the tender sensibility of her heart, and by the reflection of his own felicity from her eyes: when he admired the gracefulness of her motion, the elegance of her figure, the symmetry of her features, and the bloom of her complexion, he considered them as the decorations only of a mind, capable of mixing with his own in the most exqui-

site delight, of reciprocating all his ideas, and catching new pleasure from his pleasure. Desire was no longer appetite; it was imagination, it was reason; it included remembrance of the past, and anticipation of the future; and its object was not the sex, but Almeida.

As Hamet never withheld any pleasure that it was in his power to impart, he soon acquainted Abdallah, that he waited only for a proper time to place Almeida upon the throne; but that he had some reasons for keeping a resolution, which he thought himself obliged to communicate to him, concealed from others.

It happened, however, that some of the women who attended upon Almeida, met with some female slaves belonging to the seraglio of Almoran, at the public baths, and related to them all the particulars of Almeida's preservation by Hamet; that he had first conveyed her to his own apartments, and had since been frequently with her in that which he had assigned her in his palace: they were also lavish in the praise of her beauty, and free in their conjectures of what might be the issue of her intercourse with Hamet.

Thus the situation of Hamet and Almedia became the subject of conversation in the seraglio of Almoran, who learnt it himself in a short time from one of his women.

He had hitherto professed great affection for Hamet, and Hamet was deceived by his professions: for notwithstanding the irregularities of his life, he did not think him capable of concealed malice; or of offering injury to another, except when he was urged by impetuous passions to immediate pleasure. As there was, therefore, an appearance of mutual affection between them, Almoran, though the report of Almeida's beauty had fired his imagination

and fixed him in a resolution to see her, did not think proper to attempt it without asking Hamet's consent, and being introduced by his order; as he made no doubt of there being a connection between them which would make him resent a contrary conduct.

He took an opportunity, therefore, when they were alone in a summer pavilion that was built on a lake behind the palace, to reproach him, with an air of mirth, for having concealed a beauty near his apartments, though he pretended to have no seraglio. Hamet instantly discovered his surprise and emotion by a blush, which the next moment left his countenance paler than the light clouds that pass by night over the moon. Almoran took no notice of his confusion; but that he might more effectually conceal his sentiments and prevent suspicion, he suddenly adverted to another subject, while Hamet was hesitating what to reply. By this artifice Hamet was deceived; and concluded, that whatever Almoran had heard of Almeida, had passed slightly over his mind, and was remembered but by chance: he, therefore, quickly recovered that ease and cheerfulness which always distinguished his conversation.

Almoran, observing the success of his artifice, soon after, as if by a sudden and casual recollection, again mentioned the lady; and told him, he would congratulate Abdallah upon having resigned her to his bed. As Hamet could not bear to think of Almoran's mentioning Almeida to her father as his mistress, he replied, that he had no such intimacy with Almeida as he supposed; and that he had so high an opinion of her virtue, as to believe, that if he should propose it she would not consent. The imagination of Almoran caught new fire from beauties which he found were yet unenjoyed, and virtue

which stamped them with superior value, by rendering them more difficult of access; and as Hamet had renounced a connection with her as a mistress, he wanted only to know whether he intended her for a wife.

This secret he was contriving to discover, when Hamet, having reflected, that if he concealed this particular, Almoran might think himself at liberty to make what attempts he should think fit upon Almeida, without being accountable to him or giving him just cause of offence, put an end to his doubts, by telling him, he had such a design; but that it would be some time before he should carry it into execution. This declaration increased Almoran's impatience: still, however, he concealed his interest in the conversation, which he now suffered to drop.

He parted from his brother, without any farther mention of Almeida; but while he was yet near him, turned hastily back, and, as if merely to gratify his curiosity, told him, with a smile, that he must indulge him with a sight of his Circassian; and desired he might accompany him in his next visit, or at some more convenient time. With this request. Hamet, as he knew not how to refuse it, complied; but it filled his mind with anxiety and trouble.

He went immediately to Almeida, and told her all that had happened; and as she saw that he was not without apprehensions of mischief from his brother's visit, she gently reproached him for doubting the fidelity of her affection, as she supposed no power could be exerted by Almoran to injure him, who in power was his equal. Hamet, in a transport of tenderness, assured her that he doubted neither her constancy nor her love: but as to interrupt the comfort of her mind would only double

his own distress, he did not tell her whence his apprehensions proceeded; nor indeed had they any determinate object, but arose in general from the character of his brother, and the probability of his becoming a competitor for what was essential to the happiness of his life.

But if the happiness of Hamet was lessened, the infelicity of Almoran was increased. All the enjoyments that were in his power he neglected, his attention being wholly fixed upon that which was beyond his reach: he was impatient to see the beauty, who had taken entire possession of his mind; and the probability that he would be obliged to resign her toHamet, tormented him with jealousy, envy, and indignation.

Hamet, however, did not long delay to fulfil his promise to his brother; but having prepared Almeida to receive him, he conducted him to her apartment. The idea which Almoran had formed in his imagination was exceeded by the reality, and his passion was proportionably increased; yet he found means not only to conceal it from Hamet, but from Almeida, by affecting an air of levity and merriment, which is not less incompatible with the pleasures than the pains of love. After they had been regaled with coffee and sherbet, they parted; and Hamet congratulated himself, that his apprehensions of finding in Almoran a rival for Almeida's love, were now at an end.

But Almoran, whose passions were become more violent by restraint, was in a state of mind little better than distraction: one moment he determined to seize upon the person of Almeida in the night, and secret her in some place accessible only to himself: and the next to assassinate his brother, that he might at once destroy a rival both in empire and in love. But these designs were no sooner

formed by his wishes, than they were rejected by his fears: he was not ignorant, that in any contest between him and Hamet, the voice of the public would be against him; especially in a contest in which it would appear that Hamet had suffered wrong.

Many other projects, equally rash and injurious, were by turns conceived and rejected: and he came at last to no other determination, than still carefully to conceal his passion, till he should think of some expedient to gratify it; lest Hamet should have a just reason for refusing to let him see the lady again, and remove her to some place which he might never be able to discover.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the mean time, Omar, to whom Hamet had from time to time disclosed the minutest particulars of his situation and design, kept his eye almost continually upon Almoran; and observed him with an attention and sagacity which it was difficult either to elude or deceive. He perceived, that he was more than usually restless and turbulent; that in the presence of Hamet he frequently changed countenance; that his behaviour was artificial and inconsistent, frequently shifting from gloomy discontent and furious agitation, to forced laughter and noisy merriment. He had also remarked, that he seemed most discomposed after he had been with Hamet to Almeida, which happened generally once in a week; that he was become fond of solitude, and was absent several days together from the apartment of his women.

Omar, who from this conduct of Almoran had

begun to suspect his principles, determined to introduce such topics of discourse as might lead him to discover the state of his mind; and enable him to enforce and confirm the principles he had taught him, by new proofs and illustrations.

Almoran, who since the death of his father, had nothing to apprehend from the discovery of sentiments which before he had been careful to conceal; now urged his objections against religion, when Omar gave him opportunity, without reserve. You tell me, says he, of beings that are immortal, because they are immaterial: beings which do not consist of parts, which therefore can admit no solution, the only natural cause of corruption and decay: but that which is not material, can have no extension; and what has no extension, possesses no space: and of such beings, the mind itself, which you pretend to be such a being, has no conception.

If the mind, says Omar, can perceive that there is in itself any single property of such a being, it has irrefragable evidence that it is such a being; though its mode of existence, as distinct from matter, cannot now be comprehended.—And what property of such a being, said Almoran, does the mind of man perceive in itself?—That of *acting*, said Omar, without *motion*. You have no idea that a material substance can act, but in proportion as it moves: yet to *think* is to *act*; and with the idea of thinking, the idea of motion is never connected: on the contrary, we always conceive the mind to be fixed, in proportion to the degree of ardour and intenseness with which the power of thinking is exerted. Now, if that which is material cannot act without motion; and if man is conscious, that to think, is to act and not to move; it follows, that there is, in man, somewhat that is not matter;

somewhat that has no extension, and that possesses no space; somewhat which, having no contexture or parts that can be dissolved or separated, is exempted from all the natural causes of decay.

Omar paused; and Almoran having stood some moments without reply, he seized this opportunity to impress him with an awful sense of the power and presence of the Supreme and Eternal Being, from whom his own existence was derived: Let us remember, said he, that to every act of this immaterial and immortal part, the Father of Spirits, from whom it proceeds, is present: when I behold the busy multitudes that crowd the metropolis of Persia, in the pursuit of business and projects infinitely complicated and various; and consider that every idea which passes over their minds, every conclusion, and every purpose, with all that they remember of the past and all that they imagine of the future, is at once known to theAlmighty, who without difficulty weighs every thought of every mind in his balance, and reserves it to the day of retribution; my follies cover me with confusion, and my soul is humbled in the dust.

Almoran, though he appeared to listen with attention, and offered nothing against the reasoning of Omar, yet secretly despised it as sophistry, which cunning only had rendered specious; and which he was unable to confute, merely because it was subtle, and not because it was true: he had been led, by his passions, first to love, and then to adopt different opinions; and, as every man is inclined to judge of others by himself, he doubted whether the principles which Omar had thus laboured to establish were believed even by himself.

Thus was the mind of Almoran to the instructions of Omar, as a rock slightly covered with earth, is to the waters of heaven: the crags are left bare

by the rain that washes them; and the same showers that fertilize the field can only discover the sterility of the rock.

Omar, however, did not yet disclose his suspicions to Hamet, because he did not yet see that it could answer any purpose. To remove Almeida from her apartment, would be to shew a distrust, for which there would not appear to be any cause; and to refuse Almoran access to her, when he desired it, might precipitate such measures as he might meditate, and engage him in some desperate attempt: he therefore contented himself with advising Hamet, to conceal the time of his marriage till the evening before he intended it should take place, without assigning the reason on which his advice was founded.

To the counsel of Omar, Hamet was implicitly obedient, as to the revelations of the prophet; but, like his instructions, it was neglected by Almoran, who became every moment more wretched. He had a graceful person, and a vigorous mind; he was in the bloom of youth, and had a constitution that promised him length of days; he had power which princes were emulous to obey, and wealth by which whatever could administer to luxury might be bought: for every passion, and every appetite, it was easy for him to procure a perpetual succession of new objects. Yet was Almoran, not only without enjoyment but without peace: he was by turns pining with discontent, and raving with indignation: his vices had extracted bitter from every sweet; and having exhausted nature for delight in vain, he was repining at the bounds in which he was confined, and regretting the want of other powers as the cause of his misery.

Thus the year of mourning for Solyman was completed, without any act of violence on the part

of Almoran, or of caution on the part of Hamet: but on the evening of the last day, Hamet, having secretly prepared every thing for performing the solemnity in a private manner, acquainted Almoran by a letter, which Omar undertook to deliver, that he should celebrate his marriage on the morrow. Almoran, who never doubted but he should have notice of this event much longer before it was to happen, read the letter with a perturbation that it was impossible to conceal: he was alone in his private apartment, and taking his eye hastily from the paper, he crushed it together in his hands, and thrusting it into his bosom, turned from Omar without speaking; and Omar, thinking himself dismissed, withdrew.

The passions which Almoran could no longer suppress, now burst out in a torrent of exclamation: Am I then, said he, blasted for ever with a double curse; divided empire, and disappointed love? What is dominion, if it is not possessed alone? and what is power which the dread of rival power perpetually controuls? Is it for me to listen in silence to the wrangling of slaves, that I may at last apportion to them what, with a clamorous insolence, they demand as their due? As well may the sun linger in his course, and the world mourn in darkness for the day, that the glow-worm may still be seen to glimmer upon the earth, and the owls and bats, that haunt the sepulchres of the dead enjoy a longer night. Yet this have I done, because this has been done by Hamet: and my heart sickens in vain with the desire of beauty, because my power extends not to Almeida. With dominion undivided and Almeida, I should be Almoran: without them, I am less than nothing.

Omar, who, before he had passed the pavilion, heard a sound which he knew to be the voice of

Almoran, returned hastily to the chamber in which he left him, believing he had withdrawn too soon, and that the king, as he knew no other was present, was speaking to him. He soon drew near enough to hear what was said; and while he was standing torpid in suspense, dreading to be discovered, and not knowing how to retire, Almoran turned about. At first, both stood motionless with confusion and amazement; but Almoran's pride soon surmounted his other passions, and his disdain of Omar gave his guilt the firmness of virtue.

It is true, said he, that thou hast stolen the secret of my heart; but do not think, that I fear it should be known: though my poignard could take it back with thy life, I leave it with thee. To reproach or curse thee, would do thee honour, and lift thee into an importance which otherwise thou canst never reach. Almoran then turned from him with a contemptuous frown: Omar caught him by the robe; and prostrating himself upon the ground, entreated to be heard. His importunity at length prevailed; and he attempted to exculpate himself from the charge of having insidiously intruded upon the privacy of his prince; but Almoran sternly interrupted him: And what art thou, said he, that I should care whether thou art innocent or guilty? If not for my sake, said Omar, listen for thy own: and though my duty is despised, let my affection be heard. That thou art not happy, I know; and I now know the cause. Let my lord pardon the presumption of his slave. He that seeks to satisfy all his wishes, must be wretched: he only can be happy, by whom some are suppressed. At these words Almoran snatched his robe from the hand of Omar, and spurned him in a transport of rage and indignation: The suppression of desire, said he, is such happiness, as that of the deaf who do not remem-

ber to have heard. If it is virtue, know, that, as virtue, I despise it; for though it may secure the obedience of the slave, it can only degrade the prerogative of a prince. I cast off all restraint, as I do thee: begone, therefore, to Hamet, and see me no more.

Omar obeyed without reply; and Almoran being again alone, the conflict in his mind was renewed with greater violence than before. He felt all that he had disguised to Omar, with the keenest sensibility; and anticipated the effects of his detection, with unutterable anguish and regret. He walked backward and forward with a hasty but interrupted pace; sometimes stopping short and pressing his hand hard upon his brow; and sometimes by violent gestures showing the agitation of his mind: he sometimes stood silent, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and his arms folded together; and sometimes a sudden agony of thought forced him into loud and tumultuous exclamations. He cursed the impotence of mind that had suffered his thoughts to escape from him unawares, without reflecting that he was even then repeating the folly; and while he felt himself the victim of vice, he could not suppress his contempt of virtue: If I must perish, said he, I will at least perish unsubdued: I will quench no wish that nature kindles in my bosom; nor shall my lips utter any prayer but for new powers to feed the flame.

As he uttered this expression, he felt the palace shake; he heard a rushing, like a blast in the desert; and a being of more than human appearance stood before him. Almoran, though he was terrified, was not humbled; and he stood expecting the event, whether evil or good, rather with obduracy than courage.

Thou seest, says the appearance, a genius, whom

the daring purpose of thy mind has convoked from the middle region, where he was appointed to wait the signal; and who is now permitted to act in concert with thy will. Is not this the language of thy heart?—Whatever pleasure I can snatch from the hand of time, as he passes by me, I will secure for myself: my passions shall be strong, that my enjoyments may be great; for what is the portion allotted to man, but the joyful madness that prolongs the hours of festivity, the fierce delight that is extorted from injury by revenge, and the sweet succession of varied pleasures which the wish that is ever changing prepares for love?

Whatever thou art, said Almoran, whose voice has thus disclosed the secret of my soul, accept my homage; for I will worship thee: and be thou henceforth my wisdom and my strength.

Arise, said the genius, for therefore am I sent. To thy own powers, mine shall be superadded: and if, as weak only, thou hast been wretched: henceforth thou shalt be happy. Take no thought for to-morrow: to-morrow, my power shall be employed in thy behalf. Be not affrighted at any prodigy; but put thy confidence in me. While he was yet speaking, and the eyes of Almoran were fixed upon him, a cloud gathered around him; and the next moment dissolving again into air, he disappeared.

CHAPTER IX.

ALMORAN, when he recovered from his astonishment, and had reflected upon the prodigy, determined to wait the issue, and refer all his hopes to the interposition of the genius, without attempting

any thing to retard the marriage; at which he resolved to be present, that he might improve any supernatural event which might be produced in his favour.

Hamet, in the mean time, was anticipating the morrow with a mixture of anxiety and pleasure; and though he had no reason to think any thing could prevent his marriage, yet he wished it was over, with an impatience that was considerably increased by fear.

Though the anticipation of the great event that was now so near kept him waking the greatest part of the night, yet he rose early in the morning; and while he waited till Almeida should be ready to see him, he was told that Omar was without, and desired admittance. When he came in, Hamet, who always watched his countenance as a mariner the stars of heaven, perceived that it was obscured with perplexity and grief. Tell me, said Hamet, whence is the sorrow that I discover in thy face? I am sorrowful, said Omar, not for myself, but for thee. At these words Hamet stept backward, and fixed his eyes upon Omar, without power to speak. Consider, said Omar, that thou art not a man only but a prince: consider also, that immortality is before thee; and that thy felicity, during the endless ages of immortality, depends upon thyself. Fear not, therefore, what thou canst suffer from others: the evil and the good of life are transient as the morning dew, and over these only the hand of others can prevail.

Hamet, whose attachment to life was strong, and whose expectations of immediate enjoyment were high, did not feel the force of what Omar had said, though he assented to its truth. Tell me, said he, at once, what thou fearest for me: deliver me from the torments of suspense, and trust my own forti-

tude to save me from despair. Know then, said Omar, that thou art hated by Almoran, and that he loves Almeida. At this declaration, the astonishment of Hamet was equal to his concern; and he was in doubt whether to believe or disbelieve what he heard: but the moment he recollected the wisdom and integrity of Omar, his doubts were at an end; and having recovered from his surprise, he was about to make such inquiries as might gratify the anxious and tumultuous curiosity which was excited in his breast, when Omar, lifting up his hand, and beginning again to speak, Hamet remained silent.

Thou knowest, said Omar, that when my cheeks were yet ruddy with youth, and my limbs were braced by vigour, that mine eye was guided to knowledge by the lamp that is kindled at midnight; and much of what is hidden in the innermost recesses of nature was discovered to me: my prayer ascended in secret to Him, with whom there is wisdom from everlasting to everlasting, and He illuminated my darkness with his light. I know, by such sensations as the world either feels not at all, or feels unnoticed without knowledge of their use, when the powers that are invisible are permitted to mingle in the walks of men; and well I know, that some being, who is more than mortal, has joined with Almoran against thee, since the veil of night was last spread upon the earth.

Hamet, whose blood was chilled with horror, and whose nerves were no longer subservient to his will, after several ineffectual attempts to speak, looked up at Omar; and striking his hand upon his breast, cried out, in an earnest, but faultering voice, What shall I do? Thou must do, said Omar, that which is RIGHT. Let not thy foot be drawn by any allurement, or driven by any terror, from the path of

virtue. While thou art there, thou art in safety; and though the world should unite against thee, by the united world thou canst not be hurt.

But what friendly power, said Hamet, shall guard even the path of virtue from grief and pain; from the silent shaft of disappointed love, or the sounding scourge of outrageous jealousy? These, surely, have overtaken the foot of perseverance; and by these, though I should persevere, may my feet be overtaken.—What thou sayest, replied Omar, is true; and it is true, also, that the tempest which roots up the forest, is driven over the mountain with unabated rage: but from the mountain, what can it take more than vegetable dust, which the hand of Nature has scattered upon the moss that covers it? As the dust is to the mountain, so is all that the storms of life can take from virtue, to the sum of good which the Omnipotent has appointed for its reward. Hamet, whose eye now expressed a kind of doubtful confidence, a hope that was repressed by fear, remained still silent; and Omar, perceiving the state of his mind, proceeded to fortify it by new precepts. If Heaven, said he, should vanish like a vapour, and this firm orb of earth should crumble into dust, the virtuous mind would stand unmoved amidst the ruins of nature: for He who has appointed the heavens and the earth to fail, has said to virtue, Fear not; for thou canst neither perish nor be wretched. Call up thy strength, therefore, to the fight in which thou art sure of conquest: do only that which is RIGHT, and leave the event to Heaven.

Hamet, in this conference with Omar, having gradually recovered his fortitude; and the time being now near, when he was to conduct Almeida to the court of the palace, where the marriage ceremony was to be performed, they parted with mutual bene-

dictions, each recommending the other to the protection of the Most High.

At the appointed hour the princes of the court being assembled, the mufti and the imans being ready, and Almoran seated upon his throne; Hamet and Almeida came forward, and were placed one on the right hand and the other on the left. The mufti was then advancing, to hear and to record the mutual promise which was to unite them: Almoran was execrating the appearance of the genius, as a delusive dream, in all the tumults of anguish and despair; and Hamet began to hope that the suspicions of Omar had been ill founded; when a stroke of thunder shook the palace to its foundations, and a cloud rose from the ground, like a thick smoke, between Hamet and Almeida.

Almoran, who was inspired with new confidence and hope, by that which had struck the rest of the assembly with terror, started from his seat with an ardent and furious look; and at the same moment, a voice, that issued from the cloud, pronounced with a loud but hollow tone,

Fate has decreed, to Almoran, Almeida.

At these words, Almoran rushed forward, and placing himself by the side of Almeida, the cloud disappeared; and he cried out, Let me now proclaim to the world the secret which to this moment I have hidden in my bosom—I love Almeida. The being who alone knew my love, has now by miracle approved it. Let his decree be accomplished. He then commanded that the ceremony should proceed; and seizing the hand of the lady, began to repeat that part of it which was to have been repeated by Hamet. But Almeida instantly drew her hand from him in an agony of distress; and Hamet, who till then had stood motionless with amazement

and horror, started from his trance, and springing forward rushed between them. Almoran turned fiercely upon him; but Hamet, who having been warned by Omar, knew the prodigy to be effected by some evil being, whom it was virtue to resist, laid his hand upon his scymitar, and, with a frown of indignation and defiance, commanded him to stand off: I know thee, said he, as a man; and, therefore, as a brother I know thee not.

Almoran reflecting, that the foundation of this reproach was unknown to all who were present, and that to them he would therefore appear to be injured looked around with an affected smile of wonder and compassion, as appealing to them from a charge that was thus fiercely and injuriously brought against him, and imputing it to the violence of sudden passions by which truth and reason were overborne. The eye of Hamet at once detected the artifice, which he disdained to expose: he, therefore, commanded the guard that attended to carry off Almeida to her apartment. The guard was preparing to obey, when Almoran, who thought he had now such an opportunity to get her into his power as would never return, ordered them to see her safely lodged in his own seraglio.

The men, who thus received opposite commands, from persons to whom they owed equal obedience, stood still in suspense, not knowing which to prefer; Almoran then reproached them with want of obedience, not to him, but to God, appealing to the prodigy for the justification of his claim. Hamet, on the contrary, repeated his order, with a look and emphasis scarce less commanding than the thunder and the voice. But the priests interposing in favour of Almoran, upon presumption that his right had been decided by a superior power; the guard rushed between Hamet and Almeida, and with looks

that expressed the utmost reluctance and regret, attempted to separate their hands, which were clasped in each other. She was affrighted at the violence, but yet more at the apprehension of what was to follow: she, therefore, turned her eyes upon Hamet, conjuring him not to leave her, in a tone of tenderness and distress which it is impossible to describe; he replied with a vehemence that was worthy of his passion, I will not leave thee, and immediately drew his sabre. At the same moment they forced her from him; and a party having interposed to cover those that were carrying her off, Hamet lifted up his weapon to force his passage through them; but was prevented by Omar, who, having pressed through the crowd, presented himself before him. Stop me not, said Hamet: it is for Almeida. If thou wouldest save Almeida, said Omar, and thyself, do that only which is RIGHT. What have these done who oppose thee, more than they ought? And what end can their destruction answer, but to stain thy hands with unavailing murder? Thou canst only take the life of a few faithful slaves, who will not lift up their hands against thee: thou canst not rescue Almeida from thy brother; but thou canst preserve thyself from guilt.

These words of Omar suspended the rage of Hamet, like a charm; and returning his scymitar into its sheath, Let me then, said he, suffer and be guiltless. It is true that against these ranks my single arm must be ineffectual; but if my wrongs can rouse a nation to repress the tyranny, that will shortly extend over it the injuries that now reach only to me, justice shall be done to Hamet. Then turning to Almoran, Henceforth, said he, the kingdom shall be mine or thine. To govern in concert with thee, is to associate with the powers of hell. The beings that are superior to evil, are the friends

of Hamet; and if these are thy enemies, what shall be thy defence? Almoran replied only by a contemptuous smile; and the assembly being dismissed, he retired to his apartment: and Hamet and Omar went out to the people, who had gathered in an incredible multitude about the palace.

CHAPTER X.

A RUMOUR of what had happened within had reached them, which some believed, and some doubted: but when they saw Omar and Hamet return together, and observed that their looks were full of resentment and trouble, they became silent with attention in a moment; which Omar observing, addressed them with an eloquence of which they had often acknowledged the force, and of which they never repented the effect.

He told them the tender connection between Hamet and Almeida, and disclosed the subtle hypocrisy of Almoran: he expatiated upon the folly of supposing, that the Power that was supreme in goodness and truth should command a violation of vows that had been mutually interchanged, and often repeated, and devote to Almoran the beauties which could only be voluntarily surrendered to Hamet. They heard him with a vacant countenance of surprise and wonder; and while he waited for their reply, they agreed among themselves, that no man could avoid the destiny that was written upon his head; and that if Almeida had thus been taken from Hamet, and given to Almoran, it was an event that, by an unchangeable decree, was appointed to happen; and that, therefore, it was their duty to

acquiesce. Omar then beckoned with his hand for audience the second time; and told them, that Almoran had not only practised the arts of sorcery to deprive Hamet of Almeida, but that he meditated a design to usurp the sole dominion, and deprive him of the share of the government to which he had a right by the will of Solyman his father. This also they heard with the same sentiment of wonder and acquiescence: If it is decreed, said they, that Almoran shall be king alone, who can prevent it? And if it is not, who can bring it to pass? But know ye not, said Omar, that when the end is appointed, the means are appointed also. If it is decreed that one of you shall this night die by poison, is it not decreed also that ye shall drink it?

The crowd now gazed upon each other, without reply, for some minutes: and at last they only said, that no effort of theirs could change the universal appointment of all things; that if Almoran was to be king alone, he would be so, notwithstanding all opposition; and that if he was not to be king alone, no attempt of his own, however supported, could make him so.—I will not, said Omar, contradict your opinion; I will only tell you what I have heard, and leave you to suffer the calamities which threaten you, with a fortitude and resignation that are suitable to your principles: having no consolation to offer you, but that Hamet, whose destiny it was to make you happy, will suffer with you the evils, that neither he nor you could prevent: the mournful comfort of this fellowship he will not be denied; for he loves you too well, to wish even to be happy alone. The crowd fixed their eyes upon Hamet, for whom their affection was now strongly moved, with looks of much greater intelligence and sensibility; a confused murmur, like the fall of pebbles upon the

beach when the surge retires from the shore, expressed their gratitude to Hamet, and apprehensions for themselves.

Omar waited till they were again silent, and then improved the advantage he had gained. Almoran, said he, considers you as the slaves of his power; Hamet as the objects of his benevolence: your lives and your properties, in the opinion of Almoran, are below his notice; but Hamet considers his own interest as connected with yours. When Almoran, therefore, shall be unchecked by the influence of Hamet, he will leave you to the mercy of some delegated tyrant, whose whole power will be exerted to oppress you, that he may enrich himself.

A new fire was now kindled in their eyes, and their cheeks glowed with indignation at the wrongs that threatened them: they were no longer disposed to act upon the principles of fatality, as they had perversely understood them; and they argued at once like reasonable and free beings, whose actions were in their choice, and who had no doubt but that their actions would produce adequate effects. They recollected that Omar had, in the reign of Solyman, often rescued them from such oppression as now threatened them; and that the power of Hamet had since interposed in their behalf, when Almoran would have stretched his prerogative to their hurt, or have left them a prey to the farmer of a tax. Shall Hamet, said they, be deprived of the power that he employs only for our benefit; and shall it centre in Almoran, who will abuse it to our ruin? Shall we rather support Almoran in the wrong he has done to Hamet, than Hamet to obtain justice of Almoran? Hamet is our king: let him command us, and we will obey. This was uttered with a shout that echoed from the mountains beyond

the city, and continued near a full hour. In the mean time, the multitude was increasing every moment: and the troops that lay in and near the city having taken arms, fell in with the stream: they were secretly attached to Hamet, under whose eye they had been formed, and of whose bounty they had often partaken; and their fear being removed by the general cry, which left them no room to apprehend an opposition in favour of Almoran, they were now at full liberty to follow their inclinations.

In the mean time, Almoran who had retired to the innermost court of the palace, had heard the tumult, and was alarmed for his safety: he ran from room to room, confused and terrified, without attempting or directing any thing either for his defence or escape; yet he sent every moment to know the state of the insurrection, and to what end its force would be directed.

Among those whom accident rather than choice had attached to the interest of Almoran, were Osmyn and Caled: they were both distinguished by his favour; and each conceived hopes that, if he should possess the throne alone, he would delegate his authority to him. Almoran now ordered them to take the command of the troops, that were appointed to attend his person as their peculiar duty, with as many others as had not declared for Hamet, and to secure all the avenues that led to his seraglio.

Omar and Hamet were now on horseback, and had began to form the troops that had joined them, and as many others as were armed, which were before mingled together in a confused multitude. An account of this was brought to Almoran by Osmyn; and threw him into a perturbation and perplexity, that disgraced his character, and confounded his

attendants. He urged Osmyn, in whom he most confided, to dispatch, without giving him any orders to execute; then turning from him, he uttered, in a low and inarticulate voice, the most passionate exclamations of distress and terror, being struck with the thought that his guard might betray him: when he recollected himself, and perceived that Osmyn was still present, he burst into a rage, and snatching out his poignard, he swore by the soul of the prophet, that if he did not instantly attempt something, he would stab him to the heart. Osmyn drew back trembling and confused: but having yet received no orders, he would have spoken; but Almoran drove him from his presence with menaces and execrations.

The moment that Osmyn left him, his rage subsided, and his fears were mingled wih remorse: Which way soever I turn, said he, I see myself surrounded by destruction. I have incensed Osmyn by unreasonable displeasure and causeless menaces. He must regard me at once with abhorrence and contempt: and it is impossible but he should revolt to Hamet.

In this agony, the terrors of futurity rushed upon his mind with all their force; and he started as if at the bite of a scorpion. To me, said he, death, that now approaches, will be but the beginning of sorrow. I shall be cut off at once from enjoyment, and from hope; and the dreadful moment is now at hand. While he was speaking, the palace again shook, and he stood again in the presence of the genius.

Almoran, said the inhabitant of the unapparent world, the evil which thou fearest, shall not be upon thee. Make haste, and show thyself from the gallery to the people, and the tumult of faction shall be still before thee: tell them that their rebellion is not

against thee only, but against him by whom thou reignest; appeal boldly to that power for a confirmation of thy words, and rely for the attesting sign upon me. Almoran, who had stooped with his face to the ground, now looked upward, and found himself alone: he hasted therefore, to follow the directions he had received; and hope was again kindled in his bosom.

Osmyn, in the mean time, made a proper disposition of the troops now under his command; and had directed a select company to remain near the person of the king, that they might at least make good his retreat. While he was waiting at his post, and revolving in his mind the total disappointment of his hopes, and considering what he should do if Hamet should establish himself alone, he was joined by Caled.

Caled had a secret enmity against Osmyn, as his rival in the favour of Almoran; but as he had concealed his own pretensions from Osmyn, Osmyn had no ill will against Caled. As they were now likely to be involved in one common calamity, by the ruin of the prince, whose party they had espoused, Caled's enmity subsided, and the indifference of Osmyn was warmed into kindness: mutual distress produced mutual confidence; and Caled, after condoling with Osmyn on their present hopeless situation, proposed that they should draw off their forces, and revolt to Hamet. This proposition Osmyn rejected, not only from principle, but from interest. Now we have accepted of a trust, said he, we ought not to betray it. If we had gone over to Hamet when he first declared against his brother, he would have received us with joy, and probably have rewarded our service; but I know that his virtue will abhor us for treachery though practised in his favour: treachery under the dominion of Hamet, will not

only cover us with dishonour, but will probably devote us to death.

In this reasoning Caled could not but acquiesce: he felt himself secretly but forcibly reproved, by the superior virtue of Osmyn: and while he regretted his having made a proposal which had been rejected not only as imprudent but infamous, he concluded that Osmyn would ever after suspect and despise him; and he, therefore, from a new cause, conceived new enmity against him. They parted, however, without any appearance of suspicion or disgust; and in a short time they were in circumstances very different from their expectations.

CHAPTER XI.

ALMORAN had now reached the gallery; and when the multitude saw him, they shouted as in triumph, and demanded that he should surrender. Hamet, who also perceived him at a distance, and was unwilling that any violence should be offered to his person, pressed forward, and when he was come near, commanded silence. At this moment, Almoran, with a loud voice, reproached them with impiety and folly; and appealing to the power, whom in his person they had offended, the air suddenly grew dark, a flood of lightning descended from the sky, and a peal of thunder was articulated into these words—

> Divided sway, the God who reigns alone
> Abhors; and gives to Almoran the throne.

The multitude stood aghast at the prodigy; and hiding their faces with their hands, every one departed in silence and confusion, and Hamet and Omar were left alone. Omar was taken by some o

the soldiers who had adhered to Almoran, but Hamet made his escape.

Almoran, whose wishes were thus far accomplished by the intervention of a power superior to his own, exulted in the anticipation of that happiness which he now supposed to be secured; and was fortified in his opinion that he had been wretched only because he had been weak, and that to multiply and not to suppress his wishes was the way to acquire felicity.

As he was returning from the gallery, he was met by Osmyn and Caled, who had heard the supernatural declaration in his behalf, and learned its effects. Almoran, in that hasty flow of unbounded but capricious favour, which in contracted minds is the effect only of unexpected good fortune, raised Osmyn from his feet to his bosom. As in the trial, said he, thou hast been faithful, I now invest thee with a superior trust. The toils of the state shall from this moment devolve upon thee; and from this moment, the delights of empire unallayed shall be mine. I will recline at ease, remote from every eye but those that reflect my own felicity; the felicity that I shall taste in secret, surrounded by the smiles of beauty, and the gaieties of youth. Like Heaven, I will reign unseen; and like Heaven, though unseen, I will be adored. Osmyn received this delegation with a tumultuous pleasure, that was expressed only by silence and confusion. Almoran remarked it; and exulting in the pride of power, he suddenly changed his aspect, and regarding Osmyn, who was yet blushing, and whose eyes were swimming in tears of gratitude, with a stern and ardent countenance; Let me, however, said he, warn thee to be watchful in thy trust: beware that no rude commotion violate my peace by thy fault; lest my anger sweep thee in a moment to destruc-

tion. He then directed his eye to Caled: And thou, too, said he, hast been faithful; be thou next in honour and in power to Osmyn. Guard both of you my paradise from dread and care: fulfil the duty that I have assigned you, and live.

He was then informed by a messenger, that Hamet had escaped, and that Omar was taken. As he now despised the power both of Hamet and Omar, he expressed neither concern nor anger that Hamet had fled: but he ordered Omar to be brought before him.

When Omar appeared bound and disarmed, he regarded him with a smile of insult and derision; and asked him what he had now to hope.—I have, indeed, said Omar, much less to hope than thou hast to fear.—Thy insolence, said Almoran, is equal to thy folly: what power on earth is there that I should fear?—Thy own, said Omar.—I have not leisure now, replied Almoran, to hear the paradoxes of thy philosophy explained: but to show thee that I fear not thy power, thou shalt live. I will leave thee to hopeless regret; to wiles that have been scorned and defeated; to the unheeded petulance of dotage; to the fondness that is repaid with neglect; to restless wishes, to credulous hopes, and to derided command: to the slow and complicated torture of despised old age; and that, when thou shalt long have abhorred thy being, shalt destroy it.—The misery, said Omar, which thou hast menaced, it is not in thy power to inflict. As thou hast taken from me all that I possessed by the bounty of thy father, it is true that I am poor: it is true, also, that my knees are now feeble, and bend with the weight of years that is upon me. I am, as thou art, a man; and therefore I have erred: but I have still kept the narrow path in view with a faithful vigilance, and to that I have soon returned: the past, therefore, I

do not regret; and the future I have no cause to fear. In Him who is most merciful, I have hope; and in that hope even now I rejoice before thee. My portion in the present hour is adversity: but I receive it not only with humility, but thankfulness; for I know, that whatever is ordained is best.

Almoran, in whose heart there were no traces of Omar's virtue, and therefore no foundation for his confidence; sustained himself against their force, by treating them as hypocrisy and affectation. I know, says he, that thou hast long learned to echo the specious and pompous sounds by which hypocrites conceal their wretchedness, and excite the admiration of folly, and the contempt of wisdom: yet thy walk in this place shall be still unrestrained. Here the splendour of my felicity shall fill thy heart with envy, and cover thy face with confusion; and from thee shall the world be instructed, that the enemies of Almoran can move no passion in his breast but contempt, and that most to punish them is to permit them to live.

Omar, whose eyes had till now been fixed upon the ground, regarded Almoran with a calm but steady countenance: Here, then, said he, will I follow thee constant as thy shadow; though, as thy shadow, unnoticed or neglected: here shall mine eye watch those evils that were appointed from everlasting to attend upon guilt; and here shall my voice warn thee of their approach. From thy breast may they be averted by righteousness! for without this, though all the worlds that roll above thee should, to aid thee, unite all their power, that power can aid thee only to be wretched.

Almoran, in all the pride of gratified ambition, invested with dominion that had no limits, and allied with powers that were more than mortal; was over-awed by this address, and his countenance grew

pale. But the next moment, disdaining to be thus controuled by the voice of a slave, his cheeks were suffused with the blushes of indignation: he turned from Omar in scorn, anger, and confusion, without reply; and Omar departed with the calm dignity of a benevolent and superior being, to whom the smiles and frowns of terrestrial tyranny were alike indifferent, and in whom abhorrence of the turpitude of vice was mingled with compassion for its folly.

CHAPTER XII.

In the mean time, Almeida, who had been conveyed to an apartment in Almoran's seraglio, and delivered to the care of those who attended upon his women, suffered all that grief and terror could inflict upon a generous, a tender, and a delicate mind; yet in this complicated distress, her attention was principally fixed upon Hamet. The disappointment of his hope, and the violation of his right, were the chief objects of her regret and her fears, in all that had already happened, and in all that was still to come: every insult that might be offered to herself, she considered as an injury to him. Yet the thoughts of all that he might suffer in her person, gave way to her apprehensions of what might befal him in his own: in his situation, every calamity that her imagination could conceive, was possible; her thoughts were therefore bewildered amidst an endless variety of dreadful images, which started up before them which way soever they were turned; and it was impossible that she could gain any certain intelligence of his fate, as the splendid prison in which she was now confined was surrounded by

mutes and eunuchs, of whom nothing could be learned, or in whose report no confidence could be placed.

While her mind was in this state of agitation and distress, she perceived the door open, and the next moment Almoran entered the apartment. When she saw him, she turned from him with a look of unutterable anguish, and hiding her face in her veil, she burst into tears. The tyrant was moved with her distress; for unfeeling obduracy is the vice only of the old, whose sensibility has been worn away by the habitual perpetration of reiterated wrongs.

He approached her with looks of kindness, and his voice was involuntarily modulated to pity: she was, however, too much absorbed in her own sorrows to reply. He gazed upon her with tenderness and admiration; and taking her hand into his own, he pressed it ardently to his bosom: his compassion soon kindled into desire; and from soothing her distress, he began to solicit her love. This instantly roused her attention, and her grief gave way to resentment: she turned from him with a firm and haughty step, and, instead of answering his professions, reproached him with her wrongs. Almoran, that he might at once address her virtue and her passions, observed, that though he had loved her from the first moment he had seen her, yet he had concealed his passion, even from her, till it had received the sanction of an invisible and superior power; that he came, therefore, the messenger of Heaven; and that he offered her unrivalled empire and everlasting love. To this she answered only by an impatient and fond inquiry after Hamet. Think not of Hamet, said Almoran; for why should he, who is rejected of Heaven, be still the favourite of Almeida? If thy hand, said Almeida, could quench in everlasting darkness,

that vital spark of intellectual fire which the word of the Almighty has kindled in my breast to burn for ever, then might Almeida cease to think of Hamet; but while that shall live, whatever form it shall inhabit, or in whatever world it shall reside, his image shall be for ever present, and to him shall my love be for ever true.—This glowing declaration of her love for Hamet was immediately succeeded by a tender anxiety for his safety: and a sudden reflection upon the probability of his death, and the danger of his situation if alive, threw her again into tears.

Almoran, whom the ardour and impetuosity of her passions kept sometimes silent, and sometimes threw into confusion, again attempted to sooth and comfort her: she often urged him to tell her what was become of his brother, and he as often evaded the question. As she was about to renew her inquiry, and reflected that it had before been often made, and had not yet been answered, she thought that Almoran had already put him to death. This threw her into a new agony, of which he did not immediately discover the cause: but as he soon learned it from her reproaches and exclamations, he perceived that he could not hope to be heard, while she was in doubt about the safety of Hamet. In order, therefore, to sooth her mind, and prevent its being longer possessed with an image that excluded every other, he assumed a look of concern and astonishment at the imputation of a crime, which was at once so horrid and so unnecessary. After a solemn deprecation of such enormous guilt, he observed, that as it was now impossible for Hamet to succeed as his rival, either in empire or in love, without the breach of a command which he knew his virtue would implicitly obey, he had no motive either to desire his death or to restrain his liberty

His walk, says he, is still uncircumscribed in Persia; and except this chamber, there is no part of the palace to which he is not admitted.

To this declaration Almeida listened, as to the music of paradise; and it suspended for a while every passion but her love. The sudden ease of her mind made her regardless of all about her, and she had in this interval suffered Almoran to remove her veil, without reflecting upon what he was doing. The moment she recollected herself, she made a gentle effort to recover it, with some confusion, but without anger. The pleasure that was expressed in her eyes, the blush that glowed upon her cheek, and the contest about the veil, which to an amorous imagination had an air of dalliance, concurred to heighten the passion of Almoran almost to phrenzy. She perceived her danger in his looks; and her spirits instantly took the alarm. He seized her hand, and gazing ardently upon her, he conjured her, with a tone and emphasis that strongly expressed the tumultuous vehemence of his wishes, that she would renounce the rites which had been forbidden above, and that she would receive him to whom by miracle she had been allotted.

Almeida, whom the manner and voice of Almoran had terrified into silence, answered him at first only with a look that expressed aversion and disdain overawed by fear. Wilt thou not, said Almoran, fulfil the decrees of Heaven? I conjure thee, by Heaven, to answer. From this solemn reference to Heaven, Almeida derived new fortitude: she instantly recollected that she stood in the presence of Him, by whose permission only every other power, whether visible or invisible, can dispense evil or good. Urge no more, said she, as the decree of Heaven, that which is inconsistent with Divine perfection. Can He, in whose hand my heart is, command me to

wed the man, whom he has not enabled me to love? Can the Pure, the Just, the Merciful, have ordained that I should suffer embraces which I loathe, and violate vows which his laws permitted me to make? Can he have ordained a perfidious, a loveless, and a joyless prostitution? What if a thousand prodigies should concur to enforce it a thousand times, the deed itself would be a stronger proof that those prodigies were the works of darkness, than those prodigies that the deed was commanded by the Father of Light!

Almoran, whose hopes were now blasted to the root—who perceived that the virtue of Almeida could neither be deceived nor overborne; that she at once contemned his power, and abhorred his love—gave way to all the furies of his mind, which now slumbered no more: his countenance expressed at once anger, indignation, and despair: his gesture became furious, and his voice was lost in menaces and execrations. Almeida beheld him with an earnest yet steady countenance, till he vowed to revenge the indignity he had suffered upon Hamet. At the name of Hamet, her fortitude forsook her; the pride of virtue gave way to the softness of love: her cheeks became pale, her limbs trembled; and taking hold of the robe of Almoran, she threw herself at his feet. His fury was at first restrained by hope and expectation: but when from her words, which grief and terror had rendered scarce articulate, he could learn only that she was pleading for Hamet, he burst from her in an ecstacy of rage; and forcing his robe from her hand, with a violence that dragged her after it, he rushed out of the chamber, and left her prostrate upon the ground.

As he passed through the gallery with a hasty and disordered pace, he was seen by Omar; who knowing that he was returned from an interview with

Almeida, and conjecturing from his appearance what had happened, judged that he ought not to neglect this opportunity to warn him once more of the delusive phantoms, which, under the pretence of pleasure, were leading him to destruction: he, therefore, followed him unperceived, till he had reached the apartment in which he had been used to retire alone, and heard again the loud and tumultuous exclamations, which were wrung from his heart by the anguish of disappointment: What have I gained, said he, by absolute dominion? The slave, who, secluded from the gales of life, and from the light of heaven, toils without hope in the darkness of the mine, riots in the delights of paradise compared with me. By the caprice of one woman, I am robbed not only of enjoyment but of peace, and condemned for ever to the torment of unsatisfied desire.

Omar, who was impatient to apprize him that he was not alone, and to prevent his disclosing sentiments which he wished to conceal, now threw himself upon the ground at his feet. Presumptuous slave! said Almoran, from whence, and wherefore art thou come?—I am come, said Omar, to tell thee, that not the caprice of a woman, but the wishes of Almoran, have made Almoran wretched.—The king, stung with the reproach, drew back, and with a furious look laid his hand upon his poignard; but was immediately restrained from drawing it, by his pride.—I am come, said Omar, to repeat that truth, upon which, great as thou art, thy fate is suspended. Thy power extends not to the mind of another; exert it, therefore, upon thy own: suppress the wishes which thou canst not fulfil; and secure the happiness that is within thy reach.

Almoran, who could bear no longer to hear the precepts which he disdained to practise, sternly

commanded Omar to depart: Be gone, said he, lest I crush thee like a noisome reptile, which men cannot but abhor, though it is too contemptible to be feared. I go, said Omar, that my warning voice may yet again recal thee to the path of wisdom and of peace, if yet again I shall behold thee while it is to be found.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALMORAN was now left alone; and throwing himself upon a sofa, he sat some time motionless and silent. He revolved in his mind the wishes that had been gratified, and the happiness of which he had been disappointed: I desired, said he, the pomp and power of undivided dominion; and Hamet was driven from the throne which he shared with me, by a voice from Heaven: I desired to break off his marriage with Almeida; and it was broken off by a prodigy, when no human power could have accomplished my desire. It was my wish also to have the person of Almeida in my power, and this wish also has been gratified. Yet I am still wretched. But I am wretched, only because the means have not been adequate to the end: what I have hitherto obtained, I have not desired for itself; and of that, for which I desired it, I am not possessed: I am, therefore, still wretched, because I am weak. With the soul of Almoran I should have the form of Hamet: then my wishes would indeed be filled; then would Almeida bless me with consenting beauty, and the splendour of my power should distinguish only the intervals of my love; my enjoyments would then be certain and permanent, neither blasted by disappointment nor withered by satiety. When he had

uttered these reflections with the utmost vehemence and agitation, his face was again obscured by gloom and despair; his posture was again fixed; and he was falling back into his former state of silent abstraction, when he was suddenly roused by the appearance of the genius, the sincerity of whose friendship he began to distrust.

Almoran, said the genius, if thou art not yet happy, know that my powers are not yet exhausted: fear me not, but let thine ear be attentive to my voice. The genius then stretched out his hand towards him, in which there was an emerald of great lustre, cut into a figure that had four-and-twenty sides, on each of which there was engraven a different letter. Thou seest, said he, this talisman: on each side of it is engraven one of those mysterious characters, of which are formed all the words of all the languages that are spoken by angels, génii, and men. This shall enable thee to change thy figure: and what, under the form of Almoran, thou canst not accomplish, thou shalt still be able to effect, if it can be effected by thee, in the form of any other. Point only to the letters that compose the name of him whose appearance thou wouldst assume, and it is done. Remember only, that upon him, whose appearance thou shalt assume, thine shall be imprest, till thou restorest his own. Hide the charm in thy bosom, and avail thyself of its power. Almoran received the talisman in a transport of gratitude and joy, and the genius immediately disappeared.

The use of this talisman was so obvious, that it was impossible to overlook it. Almoran instantly conceived the design with which it was given, and determined instantly to put it in execution: I will now, said he, assume the figure of Hamet; and my love, in all its ardour, shall be returned by Almeida.

As his fancy kindled at the anticipation of his happiness, he stood musing in a pleasing suspense, and indulged himself in the contemplation of the several gradations by which he should ascend to the summit of his wishes.

Just at this moment, Osmyn, whom he had commanded to attend him at this hour, approached his apartment: Almoran was roused by the sound of his foot, and supposed it to be Omar, who had again intruded upon his privacy; he was enraged at the interruption which had broken a series of imaginations so flattering and luxurious! He snatched out his poignard, and lifting up his arm for the stroke, hastily turned round to have stabbed him: but, seeing Osmyn, he discovered his mistake just in time to prevent the blow.

Osmyn, who was not conscious of any crime, nor indeed of any act that could have given occasion of offence; started back terrified and amazed, and stood trembling in doubt, whether to remain or to withdraw. Almoran, in the mean time, sheathed the instrument of death, and bid him fear nothing, for he should not be hurt. He then turned about; and putting his hand to his forehead, stood again silent in a musing posture: he recollected that if he assumed the figure of Hamet, it was necessary he should give orders for Hamet to be admitted to Almeida, as he would otherwise be excluded by the delegates of his own authority: turning, therefore, to Osmyn, Remember, said he, that whenever Hamet shall return, it is my command, that he be admitted to Almeida.

Osmyn, who was pleased with an opportunity of recommending himself to Almoran, by praising an act of generous virtue which he supposed him now to exert in favour of his brother, received the command with a look, that expressed not only approba-

tion but joy: Let the sword of destruction, said he, be the guard of the tyrant; the strength of my lord shall be the bonds of love: those, who honour thee as Almoran shall rejoice in thee as the friend of Hamet. To Almoran, who was conscious to no kindness for his brother, the praise of Osmyn was a reproach: he was offended at the joy which he saw kindled in his countenance by a command to shew favour to Hamet; and was fired with sudden rage at that condemnation of his real conduct, which was implied by an encomium on the generosity of which he assumed the appearance for a malevolent and perfidious purpose: his brow was contracted, his lip quivered, and the hilt of his dagger was again grasped in his hand. Osmyn was again overwhelmed with terror and confusion: he had again offended, but knew not his offence. In the mean time, Almoran recollecting that to express displeasure against Osmyn was to betray his own secret, endeavoured to suppress his anger; but his anger was succeeded by remorse, regret, and disappointment. The anguish of his mind broke out in imperfect murmurs: What I am, said he, is, to this wretch, the object not only of hatred but of scorn: and he commends only what I am not, in what to him I would seem to be.

These sounds, which, though not articulate, were yet uttered with great emotion, were still mistaken by Osmyn for the overflowings of capricious and causeless anger: My life, says he to himself, is even now wavering in a doubtful balance. Whenever I approach this tyrant, I tread the borders of the grave: like a hood-winked wretch who is left to wander near the brink of a precipice, I know my danger; but which way soever I turn, I know not whether I shall incur or avoid destruction.

In these reflections, did the sovereign and the

slave pass those moments, in which the sovereign intended to render the slave subservient to his pleasure or his security, and the slave intended to express a zeal which he really felt, and a homage which his heart had already paid. Osmyn was at length, however, dismissed with an assurance that all was well; and Almoran was again left to reflect with anguish upon the past, to regret the present, and to anticipate the future with solicitude, anxiety, and perturbation.

He was, however, determined to assume the figure of his brother, by the talisman which had been put into his power by the genius: but just as he was about to form the spell, he recollected, that by the same act he would impress his own likeness upon Hamet, who would consequently be invested with his power and might use it to his destruction. This held him some time in suspense; but reflecting that Hamet might not, perhaps, be apprized of his advantage till it was too late to improve it; that he was now a fugitive, and probably alone, leaving Persia behind him with all the speed he could make: and that, at the worst, if he should be still near, if he should know the transformation as soon as it should be made, and should instantly take the most effectual measures to improve it; yet as he could dissolve the charm in a moment, whenever it should be necessary for his safety, no formidable danger could be incurred by the experiment, to which he, therefore, proceeded without delay.

CHAPTER XIV.

In the mean time, Hamet, to whom his own safety was of no importance but for the sake of Almeida, resolved, if possible, to conceal himself near the city. Having, therefore, reached the confines of the desert, by which it was bounded on the east, he quitted his horse, and determined to remain there till the multitude was dispersed, and the darkness of the evening might conceal his return, when in less than an hour he could reach the palace.

He sat down at the foot of the mountain Kabessed, without considering, that in this place he was most likely to be found, as those who travel the desert seldom fail to enter the cave that winds its way under the mountain, to drink of the water that issues there from a clear and copious spring.

He reviewed the scenes of the day that was now nearly passed, with a mixture of astonishment and distress, to which no description can be equal. The sudden and amazing change that a few hours had made in his situation, appeared like a wild and distressful dream, from which he almost doubted whether he should not wake to the power and felicity that he had lost. He sat some time bewildered in the hurry and multiplicity of his thoughts, and at length burst out into passionate exclamations: What, says he, and where am I? Am I indeed Hamet; that son of Solyman who divided the dominion of Persia with his brother, and who possessed the love of Almeida alone? Dreadful vicissitude! I am now an outcast, friendless and forlorn; without an associate, and without a dwelling: for me the cup of adversity overflows, and the last dregs of sorrow have been wrung out for my portion: the powers not only of the earth, but of the air, have combined against me;

and how can I stand alone before them? But is there no power that will interpose in my behalf? If He, who is supreme, is good, I shall not perish. But wherefore am I thus? Why should the desires of vice be accomplished by superior powers: and why should superior powers be permitted to disappoint the expectations of virtue? Yet let me not rashly question the ways of Him, in whose balance the world is weighed. By Him, every evil is rendered subservient to good; and by His wisdom, the happiness of the whole is secured. Yet I am but a part only, and for a part only I can feel. To me, what is that goodness of which I do not partake? In my cup the gall is unmixed; and have I not, therefore, a right to complain? But what have I said? Let not the gloom that surrounds me, hide from me the prospect of immortality. Shall not eternity atone for time? Eternity—to which the duration of ages is but as an atom to a world! Shall I not, when this momentary separation is past, again meet Almeida to part no more? And shall not a purer flame than burns upon earth, unite us? Even at this moment, her mind, which not the frauds of sorcery can taint or alienate, is mine: that pleasure which she reserved for me, cannot be taken by force; it is in the consent alone that it subsists; and from the joy that she feels, and from that only, proceeds the joy she can bestow.

With these reflections he soothed the anguish of his mind, till the dreadful moment arrived, in which the power of the talisman took place, and the figure of Almoran was changed into that of Hamet, and the figure of Hamet into that of Almoran.

At the moment of transformation, Hamet was seized with a sudden languor, and his faculties were suspended as by the stroke of death. When he recovered, his limbs still trembled, and his lips were

parched with thirst: he rose, therefore, and entering the cavern, at the mouth of which he had been sitting, he stooped over the well to drink; but glancing his eyes upon the water, he saw, with astonishment and horror, that it reflected, not his own countenance, but that of his brother. He started back from the prodigy, and supporting himself against the side of the rock, he stood some time like a statue, without the power of recollection; but at length the thought suddenly rushed into his mind, that the same sorcery which had prevented his marriage, and driven him from the throne, was still practised against him; and that the change of his figure to that of Almoran, was the effect of Almoran's having assumed his likeness, to obtain, in this disguise, whatever Almeida could bestow. This thought, like a whirlwind of the desert, totally subverted his mind: his fortitude was borne down and his hopes were rooted up; no principles remained to regulate his conduct, but all was phrenzy, confusion, and despair. He rushed out of the cave with a furious and distracted look; and went in haste towards the city, without having formed any design, or considered any consequence that might follow.

The shadows of the mountains were now lengthened by the declining sun; and the approach of evening had invited Omar to meditate in a grove, that was adjacent to the gardens of the palace. From this place he was seen at some distance by Hamet, who came up to him with a hasty and disordered pace; and Omar drew back with a cold and distant reverence, which the power and the character of Almoran concurred to excite. Hamet, not reflecting upon the cause of this behaviour, was offended, and reproached him with the want of that friendship he had so often professed: the vehemence

of his expression and demeanour suited well with the appearance of Almoran; and Omar, as the best proof of that friendship which had been impeached, took this opportunity to repeat his admonitions in the behalf of Hamet.—Whatever evil, said he, thou canst bring upon Hamet will be doubled to thyself: to his virtues, the Power that fills infinitude is a friend, and he can be afflicted only till they are perfect; but thy sufferings will be the punishment of vice, and as long as thou art vicious they must increase.

Hamet, who instantly recollected for whom he was mistaken, and the anguish of whose mind was for a moment suspended by this testimony of esteem and kindness, which could not possibly be feigned, and which was paid him at the risque of life, when it could not be known that he received it, ran forward to embrace the hoary sage, who had been the guide of his youth, and cried out in a voice that was broken by contending passions. The face is the face of Almoran; but the heart is the heart of Hamet.

Omar was struck dumb with astonishment; and Hamet, who could not bear to be longer mistaken, related all the circumstances of his transformation, and reminded him of some particulars which could be known only to themselves: Canst thou not yet believe, said he, that I am Hamet; when thou hast this day seen me banished from my kingdom; when thou hast now met me a fugitive returning from the desert; and when I learnt from thee, since the sun was risen which is not yet set, that more than mortal powers were combined against me?—I now believe, said Omar, that thou indeed art Hamet.—Stay me not then, said Hamet, but come with me to revenge.—Beware, said Omar, lest thou endanger the loss of more than empire and Almeida.—If

not to revenge, said Hamet, I may at least be permitted to punish.—Thy mind, says Omar, is now in such a state, that to punish the crimes by which thou hast been wronged, will dip thee in the guilt of blood. Why else are we forbidden to take vengeance for ourselves? and why is it reserved as the prerogative of the Most High? In Him, and in Him alone, it is goodness guided by wisdom: He approves the means, only as necessary to the end; He wounds only to heal, and destroys only to save; He has complacence, not in the evil, but in the good only which it is appointed to produce. Remember, therefore, that he, to whom the punishment of another is sweet; though this act may be just with respect to others, with respect to himself it is a deed of darkness, and abhorred by the Almighty. Hamet, who had stood abstracted in the contemplation of the new injury he had suffered, while Omar was persuading him not to revenge it, started from his posture in all the wildness of distraction; and bursting away from Omar, with an ardent and furious look hasted towards the palace, and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XV.

In the mean time, Almoran, after having effected the transformation, was met, as he was going to the apartment of Almeida, by Osmyn. Osmyn had already experienced the misery of dependent greatness, that kept him continually under the eye of a capricious tyrant, whose temper was various as the gales of summer, and whose anger was sudden as the bolt of Heaven; whose purpose and passions were dark and impetuous as the midnight storm,

and at whose command death was inevitable as the approach of time. When he saw Almoran, therefore, in the likeness of Hamet, he felt a secret desire to apprize him of his situation, and offer him his friendship.

Almoran, who with the form assumed the manners of Hamet, addressed Osmyn with a mild though mournful countenance: At length, said he, the will of Almoran alone is law: does it permit me to hold a private rank in this place without molestation?—It permits, said Osmyn, yet more: he has commanded that you should have admittance to Almeida.—Almoran, whose vanity betrayed him to flatter his own power in the person of Hamet, replied with a smile: I know that Almoran, who presides like a god in silent and distant state, reveals the secrets of his will to thee; I know that thou art——I am, said Osmyn, of all thou seest, most wretched.—At this declaration, Almoran turned short, and fixed his eyes upon Osmyn with a look of surprise and anger: Does not the favour of Almoran, said he, whose smile is power, and wealth, and honour, shine upon thee?—My lord, said Osmyn, I know so well the severity of thy virtue, that if I should, even for thy sake, become perfidious to thy brother——Almoran, who was unable to preserve the character of Hamet with propriety, interrupted him with a fierce and haughty tone: How! said he, perfidious to my brother! to Almoran perfidious!

Osmyn, who had now gone too far to recede, and who still saw before him the figure of Hamet, proceeded in his purpose: I knew, said he, that in thy judgment I should be condemned; and yet, the preservation of life is the strongest principle of nature, and the love of virtue is her proudest boast.—Explain thyself, said Almoran, for I cannot comprehend thee.—I mean, said Osmyn, that he, whose

life depends upon the caprice of a tyrant, is like the wretch whose sentence is already pronounced; and who, if the wind does but rush on his dungeon, imagines that it is the bow-string and the mute. —Fear not, said Almoran, who now affected to be again calm: be still faithful, and thou shalt still be safe.—Alas! said Osmyn, there is no diligence, no toil, no faith, that can secure the slave from the sudden phrenzy of passion, from the causeless rage either of drunkenness or lust. I am that slave; the slave of a tyrant whom I hate.—The confusion of Almoran was now too great to be concealed, and he stood silent with rage, fear, and indignation. Osmyn, supposing that his wonder made him doubt the truth of what he had heard, confirmed his declaration by an oath.

Whoever thou art, to whose mind Almoran, the mighty and the proud, is present; before whom the lord of absolute dominion stands trembling and rebuked; who seest the possessor of power by which nature is controuled, pale and silent with anguish and disappointment: if, in the fury of thy wrath, thou hast aggravated weakness into guilt; if thou hast chilled the glow of affection, when it flushed the cheek in thy presence, with the frown of displeasure, or repressed the ardour of friendship with indifference or neglect; now let thy heart smite thee, for, in thy folly, thou hast cast away that gem which is the light of life, which power can never seize, and which gold can never buy!

The tyrant fell at once from his pride like a star from heaven; and Osmyn, still addressing him as Hamet, at once increased his misery and his fears: O, said he, that the throne of Persia was thine! then should innocence enjoy her birthright of peace, and hope should bid honest industry look upward. There is not one to whom Almoran has delegated

power, nor one on whom his transient favour has bestowed any gift, who does not already feel his heart throb with the pangs of boding terror. Nor is there one who, if he did not fear the displeasure of the invisible power, by whom the throne has been given to thy brother, would not immediately revolt to thee.

Almoran, who had hitherto remained silent, now burst into a passionate exclamation of self pity: What can I do? said he; and whither can I turn? Osmyn, who mistook the cause of his distress, and supposed that he deplored only his want of power to avail himself of the general disposition in his favour, endeavoured to fortify his mind against despair: Your state, said he, indeed is distressful, but not hopeless.—The king, who though addressed as Hamet, was still betrayed by his confusion to answer as Almoran, smote his breast, and replied in an agony, It is hopeless!—Osmyn remarked his emotion and despair, with a concern and astonishment that Almoran observed, and at once recollected his situation. He endeavoured to retract such expressions of trouble and despondency, as did not suit the character he had assumed; and telling Osmyn, that he thanked him for his friendship, and would improve the advantages it offered him, he directed him to acquaint the eunuchs that they were to admit him to Almeida. When he was left alone, his doubts and perplexity held him long in suspense: a thousand expedients occurred to his mind by turns, and by turns were rejected.

His first thought was to put Osmyn to death. But he considered, that by this he would gain no advantage, as he would be in equal danger from whoever should succeed him. He considered also, that against Osmyn he was upon his guard; and that he might at any time learn from him whatever design might

be formed in favour of Hamet, by assuming Hamet's appearance: that he would thus be the confidant of every secret, in which his own safety was concerned; and might disconcert the best contrived project at the moment of its execution, when it would be too late for other measures to be taken. He determined, therefore, to let Osmyn live; at least, till it became more necessary to cut him off. Having in some degree soothed and fortified his mind by these reflections, he entered the apartment of Almeida.

His hope was not founded upon a design to marry her under the appearance of Hamet; for that would be impossible, as the ceremony must have been performed by the priests who supposed the marriage with Hamet to have been forbidden by a Divine command; and who, therefore, would not have consented, even supposing they would otherwise have ventured, at the request of Hamet, to perform a ceremony which they knew would be displeasing to Almoran: but he hoped to take advantage of her tenderness for his brother, and the particular circumstances of her situation, which made the solemnities of marriage impossible, to seduce her to gratify his desires, without the sanction which alone rendered the gratification of them lawful. If he succeeded in this design, he had reason to expect, either that his love would be extinguished by enjoyment, or that if he should still desire to marry Almeida, he might, by disclosing to her the artifice by which he had effected his purpose, prevail upon her to consent, as her connection with Hamet, the chief obstacle to her marriage with him, would then be broken for ever; and as she might, perhaps, wish to sanctify the pleasure which she might be not unwilling to repeat, or at least to make that lawful which it would not be in her power to prevent.

In this disposition, and with this design, he was

admitted to Almeida; who, without suspicion of her danger, was exposed to the severest trial, in which every passion concurred to oppose her virtue. She was solicited by all the powers of subtilty and desire, under the appearance of a lover, whose tenderness and fidelity had been long tried, and whose passion she returned with equal constancy and ardour; and she was thus solicited, when the rites which alone could consecrate their union, were impossible, and were rendered impossible by the guilty designs of a rival, in whose power she was, and from whom no other expedient offered her a deliverance. Thus deceived and betrayed, she received him with an excess of tenderness and joy, which flattered all his hopes, and for a moment suspended his misery. She inquired, with a fond and gentle solicitude, by what means he had gained admittance, and how he had provided for his retreat. He received and returned her caresses with a vehemence, in which, to less partial eyes, desire would have been more apparent than love; and in the tumult of his passion, he almost neglected her inquiries: finding, however, that she would be answered, he told her, that being by the permission of Almoran admitted to every part of the palace, except that of the women, he had found means to bribe the eunuch who kept the door; who was not in danger of detection, because Almoran, wearied with the tumult and fatigue of the day, had retired to sleep, and given order to be called at a certain hour. She then complained of the solicitations to which she was exposed, expressed her dread of the consequences she had reason to expect from some sudden sally of the tyrant's rage, and related with tears the brutal outrage she had suffered when he last left her: Though I abhorred him, said she, I yet kneeled before him for thee. Let me bend in reverence to that

Power, at whose look the whirlwinds are silent, and the seas are calm, that his fury has hitherto been restrained from hurting thee.

At these words, the face of Almoran was again covered with the blushes of confusion: to be still beloved only as Hamet, and as Almoran to be still hated; to be thus reproached without anger, and wounded by those who knew not that they struck him; was a species of misery peculiar to himself, and had been incurred only by the acquisition of new powers, which he had requested and received as necessary to obtain that felicity which the parsimony of nature had placed beyond his reach. His emotions, however, as by Almeida they were supposed to be the emotions of Hamet, she imputed to a different cause. As Heaven, says she, has preserved thee from death; so has it, for thy sake, preserved me from violation.—Almoran, whose passion had in this interval again surmounted his remorse, gazed eagerly upon her, and catching her to his bosom. Let us at least, says he, secure the happiness that is now offered; let not these inestimable moments pass by us unimproved; but to shew that we deserve them, let them be devoted to love. —Let us then, said Almeida, escape together.—To escape with thee, said Almoran, is impossible. I shall retire, and like the shaft of Arabia, leave no mark behind me; but the flight of Almeida will at once be traced to him by whom I was admitted, and I shall thus retaliate his friendship with destruction. —Let him then, said Almeida, be the partner of our flight.—Urge it not now, said Almoran; but trust to my prudence and my love, to select some hour that will be more favourable to our purpose.—And yet, said he, even then, we shall, as now, sigh in vain for the completion of our wishes: by whom shall our hands be joined, when in the opinion of

the priests it has been forbidden from above?—Save thyself then, said Almeida, and leave me to my fate.—Not so, said Almoran.—What else, replied Almeida, is in our power?—It is in our power, said Almoran, to seize that joy, to which a public form can give us no new claim; for the public form can only declare that right by which I claim it now.

As they were now reclining upon a sofa, he threw his arm round her; but she suddenly sprung up, and burst from him: the tear started to her eye, and she gazed upon him with an earnest but yet tender look. Is it? says she——No sure, it is not the voice of Hamet!—O! yes, said Almoran, what other voice should call thee to cancel at once the wrongs of Hamet and Almeida; to secure the treasures of thy love from the hand of the robber; to hide thy joys, which if now we lose we may lose for ever, in the sacred and inviolable stores of the past, and place them beyond the power, not of Almoran only, but of fate?—With this wild effusion of desire, he caught her again to his breast, and finding no resistance, his heart exulted in his success; but the next moment, to the total disappointment of his hopes, he perceived that she had fainted in his arms. When she recovered, she once more disengaged herself from him, and turning away her face, she burst into tears. When her voice could be heard, she covered herself with her veil; and, turning again towards him, All but this, said she, I had learnt to bear; and how has this been deserved by Almeida of Hamet? You was my only solace in distress; and when the tears have stolen from my eyes in silence and in solitude, I thought on thee; I thought upon the chaste ardour of thy sacred friendship, which was softened, refined, and exalted into love. This was my hoarded treasure; and the thoughts of pos-

sessing this, soothed all my anguish with a miser's happiness, who, blest in the consciousness of hidden wealth, despises cold and hunger, and rejoices in the midst of all the miseries that make poverty dreadful. This was my last retreat; but I am now desolate and forlorn, and my soul looks round with terror, for that refuge which it could never find. —Find that refuge, said Almoran, in me.—Alas! said Almeida, can he afford me refuge from my sorrows, who, for the guilty pleasures of a transient moment, would for ever sully the purity of my mind, and aggravate misfortune by the consciousness of guilt?

As Almoran now perceived, that it was impossible, by any importunity, to induce her to violate her principles, he had nothing more to attempt, but to subvert them. When, said he, shall Almeida awake, and these dreams of folly and superstition vanish? That only is virtue, by which happiness is produced: and whatever produces happiness is therefore virtue; and the forms, and words, and rites, which priests have pretended to be required by Heaven, are the fraudful arts only by which they govern mankind.

Almeida, by this impious insult, was roused from grief to indignation. As thou hast now dared, said she, to deride the laws which thou wouldst first have broken, so hast thou broken the tender bonds by which my soul was united to thine. Such as I fondly believed thee, thou art not: and what thou art, I have never loved. I have loved a delusive phantom only, which, while I strove to grasp it, has vanished from me.—Almoran attempted to reply; but on such a subject, neither her virtue nor her wisdom would permit debate. That prodigy, said she, which I thought was the slight of cunning, or the work of sorcery, I now revere as the voice of Heaven; which,

as it knew thy heart, has in mercy saved me from thy arms. To the will of Heaven shall my will be obedient: and my voice also shall pronounce to Almoran Almeida.

Almoran, whose whole soul was now suspended in attention, conceived new hopes of success; and foresaw the certain accomplishment of his purpose, though by an effect directly contrary to that which he had laboured to produce. Thus to have incurred the hatred of Almeida, in the form of Hamet, was more fortunate than to have taken advantage of her love. The path that led to his wishes was now clear and open; and his marriage with Almeida in his own person, waited only till he could resume it. He, therefore, instead of soothing, provoked her resentment. If thou hast loved a phantom, said he, which existed only in imagination, on such a phantom my love also has been fixed. Thou hast, indeed, only the form of what I called Almeida: my love thou hast rejected, because thou hast never loved: the object of thy passion was not Hamet, but a throne; and thou hast made the observance of rituals, in which folly only can suppose there is good or ill, a pretence to violate thy faith, that thou mayest still gratify thy ambition.

To this injurious reproach Almeida made no reply; and Almoran immediately quitted her apartment, that he might reassume his own figure, and take advantage of the disposition which, under the appearance of Hamet, he had produced in favour of himself. But Osmyn, who, supposing him to be Hamet, had intercepted and detained him as he was going to Almeida, now intercepted him a second time at his return, having placed himself near the door of the apartment for that purpose.

Osmyn was by no means satisfied with the issue of their last interview: he had perceived a pertur-

bation in the mind of Almoran, for which, imagining him to be Hamet, he could not account, and which seemed more extraordinary upon a review than when it happened: he, therefore, again entered into conversation with him, in which he farther disclosed his sentiments and designs. Almoran, notwithstanding the impatience natural to his temper and situation, was thus long detained listening to Osmyn, by the united influence of his curiosity and his fears: his inquiries still alarmed him with new terrors, by discovering new objects of distrust, and new instances of disaffection. Still, however, he resolved, not yet to remove Osmyn from his post, that he might give no alarm by any appearance of suspicion, and consequently learn with more ease, and detect with more certainty, any project that might be formed against him.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALMEIDA, as soon as she was left alone, began to review the scene that had just past; and was every moment affected with new wonder, grief, and resentment. She now deplored her own misfortune; and now conceived a design to punish the author of it, from whose face she supposed the hand of adversity had torn the mask under which he had deceived her. It appeared to her very easy to take a severe revenge upon Hamet for the indignity which she supposed he had offered her, by complaining of it to Almoran; and telling him he had gained admittance to her, by bribing the eunuch who kept the door. The thought of thus giving him up was one moment rejected, as arising from a vindictive spirit; and the next indulged, as an act of justice to

Almoran, and a punishment due to the hypocrisy of Hamet: it was rejected, when her grief, which was still mingled with a tender remembrance of the man she loved was predominant, and indulged when her grief gave way to indignation.

Thus are we inclined to consider the same action, either as a virtue or a vice, by the influence of different passions, which prompt us either to perform or to avoid it. Almeida, from deliberating whether she should accuse Hamet to Almoran, or conceal his fault, was led to consider what punishment he would either incur or escape, in consequence of her determination; and the images that rushed into her mind, the moment this became the object of her thoughts, at once determined her to be silent. Could I bear to see, said she, that hand, which has so often trembled with delight when it unfolded mine, convulsed and black! those eyes, that as often as they gazed upon me were dissolved in tears of tenderness and love, start from their sockets! and those lips that breathed the softest sighs of elegant desire, distorted and gasping in the convulsions of death!

From this image her mind recoiled in an agony of terror and pity; her heart sunk within her; her limbs trembled: she sunk down upon the sofa, and burst into tears.

By this time, Hamet, on whose form the likeness of Almoran was still impressed, had reached the palace. He went instantly towards the apartment of the women. Instead of that cheerful alacrity, that mixture of zeal, and reverence, and affection, which his eye had been used to find wherever it was turned, he now observed confusion, anxiety, and terror: whoever he met made haste to prostrate themselves before him, and feared to look up till he was past. He went on, however, with a hasty pace; and coming up to the eunuch's guard, he said with an

impatient tone, To Almeida. The slave immediately made way before him, and conducted him to the door of the apartment, which he would not otherwise have been able to find, and for which he could not directly inquire.

When he entered, his countenance expressed all the passions that his situation had roused in his mind. He first looked sternly round him, to see whether Almoran was not present; and then fetching a deep sigh, he turned his eyes with a look of mournful tenderness upon Almeida. His first view was to discover, whether Almoran had already supplanted him; and for this purpose he collected the whole strength of his mind: he considered that he appeared now, not as Hamet, but as Almoran; and that he was to question Almeida concerning Almoran, while she had mistaken him for Hamet; he was therefore to maintain the character, at whatever expense, till his doubts were resolved, and his fears either removed or confirmed. He was so firmly persuaded that Almoran had been there before him, that he did not ask the question, but supposed the fact: he restrained alike both his tenderness and his fears; and looking earnestly upon Almeida, who had risen up in his presence with blushes and confusion, To me, says he, is Almeida still cold; and has she lavished all her love upon Hamet?

At the name of Hamet, the blushes and confusion of Almeida increased: her mind was still full of the images which had arisen from the thought of what Hamet might suffer, if Almoran should know that he had been with her; and though she feared that their interview was discovered, yet she hoped it might be only suspected, and in that case the removal or confirmation of the suspicions, on which the fate of Hamet depended, would devolve upon her.

In this situation, she, who had but a few moments

before doubted, whether she should not voluntarily give him up, when nothing more was necessary for his safety than to be silent, now determined, with whatever reluctance, to secure him, though it could not be done without dissimulation, and though it was probable that in this dissimulation she would be detected. Instead, therefore, of answering the question, she repeated it: On whom, said she, my lord? On Hamet? Hamet, whose suspicions were increased by the evasion, replied with great emotion, Aye, on Hamet? Did he not this moment leave you? Leave me this moment? said Almeida, with yet greater confusion and deeper blushes. Hamet, in the impatience of his jealousy, concluded, that the passions which he saw expressed in her countenance, and which arose from the struggle between her regard to truth and her tenderness for Hamet, proceeded from the consciousness of what he had most reason to dread and she to conceal, a breach of virtue, to which she had been betrayed by his own appearance, united with the vices of his brother: he, therefore, drew back from her with a look of inexpressible anguish, and stood some time silent. She observed, that in his countenance there was more expression of trouble, than rage: she, therefore, hoped to divert him from pursuing his inquiries, by at once removing his jealousy; which she supposed would be at an end, as soon as she should disclose the resolution she had taken in his favour. Addressing him, therefore, as Almoran, with a voice which, though it was gentle and soothing, was yet mournful and tremulous: Do not turn from me, said she, with those unfriendly and frowning looks; give me now that love which so lately you offered, and with all the future I will atone the past.

Upon Hamet, whose heart involuntarily answered to the voice of Almeida, these words had irresistible

and instantaneous force; but recollecting, in a moment, whose form he bore, and to whom they were addressed, they struck him with new astonishment, and increased the torments of his mind. Supposing what he at first feared had happened, and that Almoran had seduced her as Hamet; he could not account for her now addressing him, as Almoran, with words of favour and compliance: he, therefore, renewed his inquiries concerning himself, with apprehensions of a different kind. She, who was still solicitous to put an end to the inquiry, as well for the sake of Hamet, as to prevent her own embarrassment, replied with a sigh, Let not thy peace be interrupted by one thought of Hamet; for of Hamet Almeida shall think no more. Hamet, who, though he had fortified himself against whatever might have happened to her person, could not bear the alienation of her mind, cried out, with looks of distraction and a voice scarcely human, Not think of Hamet! Almeida, whose astonishment was every moment increasing, replied, with a tender and interesting inquiry, Is Almoran then offended, that Almeida should think of Hamet no more? Hamet, being thus addressed by the name of his brother, again recollected his situation; and now first conceived the idea, that the alteration of Almeida's sentiments with respect to himself, might be the effect of some violence offered her by Almoran in his likeness. He, therefore, recurred to his first purpose, and determined, by a direct inquiry, to discover, whether she had seen him under that appearance, This inquiry he urged with the utmost solemnity and ardour, in terms suitable to his present appearance and situation: Tell me, said he, have these doors been open to Hamet? Has he obtained possession of that treasure, which, by the voice of Heaven, has been allotted to me?

To this double question, Almeida answered by a single negative; and her answer, therefore, was both false and true: it was true that her person was still inviolate, and it was true also that Hamet had not been admitted to her; yet her denial of it was false, for she believed the contrary; Almoran only had been admitted, but she had received him as his brother. Hamet, however, was satisfied with the answer, and did not discover its fallacy. He looked up to heaven with an expression of gratitude and joy; and then turning to Almeida, Swear then, said he, that thou hast granted to Hamet no pledge of thy love which should be reserved for me. Almeida, who now thought nothing more than the asseveration necessary to quiet his mind, immediately complied: I swear, said she, that to Hamet I have given nothing, which thou wouldst wish me to withhold: the power that has devoted my person to thee has disunited my heart from Hamet, whom I renounce in thy presence for ever.

Hamet, whose fortitude and recollection were again overborne, was thrown into an agitation of mind, which discovered itself by looks and gestures very different from those which Almeida had expected, and overwhelmed her with new confusion and disappointment: that he, who had so lately solicited her love with all the vehemence of desire impatient to be gratified, should now receive a declaration that she was ready to comply, with marks of distress and anger, was a mystery which she could not solve. In the mean time, the struggle in his breast became every moment more violent: Where, then, said he, is the constancy which you vowed to Hamet; and for what instance of his love is he now forsaken?

Almeida was now more embarrassed than before: she felt all the force of the reproof, supposing it to

have been given by Almoran; and she could be justified only by relating the particular, which at the expense of her sincerity she had determined to conceal. Almoran was now exalted in her opinion, while his form was animated by the spirit of Hamet: as much as Hamet had been degraded, while his form was animated by the spirit of Almoran. In his resentment of her perfidy to his rival, though it favoured his fondest and most ardent wishes, there was an abhorrence of vice, and a generosity of mind, which she supposed to have been incompatible with his character. To his reproach, she could reply only by complaint; and could no otherwise evade his question, than by observing the inconsistency of his own behaviour: Your words, said she, are daggers to my heart. You condemn me for a compliance with your own wishes; and for obedience to that voice, which you supposed to have revealed the will of Heaven. Has the caprice of desire already wandered to a new object; and do you now seek a pretence to refuse, when it is freely offered, what so lately you would have taken by force?

Hamet, who was now fired with resentment against Almeida, whom yet he could not behold without desire; and who, at the same moment was impatient to revenge his wrongs upon Almoran; was suddenly prompted to satisfy all his passions, by taking advantage of the wiles of Almoran, and the perfidy of Almeida, to defeat the one and to punish the other. It was now in his power instantly to consummate his marriage, as a priest might be procured without a moment's delay, and as Almeida's consent was already given: he would then obtain the possession of her person, by the very act in which she perfidiously resigned him to his rival; to whom he would then leave the beauties he had already possessed,

and cast from him in disdain, as united with a mind that he could never love. As his imagination was fired with the first conception of this design, he caught her to his breast with a fury in which all the passions in all their rage were at once concentered: Let the priest, said he, instantly unite us. Let us comprise, in one moment, in this instant, now, our whole of being, and exclude alike the future and the past! Then grasping her still in his arms, he looked up to Heaven: Ye powers, said he, invisible but yet present, who mould my changing and unresisting form: prolong but for one hour, that mysterious charm, that is now upon me, and I will be ever after subservient to your will.

Almeida, who was terrified at the furious ardour of this unintelligible address, shrunk from his embrace, pale and trembling, without power to reply. Hamet gazed tenderly upon her: and recollecting the purity and tenderness with which he had loved her, his virtues suddenly recovered their force. He dismissed her from his embrace; and, turning from her, he dropped in silence the tear that started to his eye, and expressed, in a low and faultering voice, the thoughts that rushed upon his mind: No, said he: Hamet shall still disdain the joy, which is at once sordid and transient: in the breast of Hamet, lust shall not be the pander of revenge. Shall I, who have languished for the pure delight which can arise only from the interchange of soul with soul, and is endeared by mutual confidence and complacency; shall I snatch under this disguise, which belies my features and degrades my virtue, a casual possession of faithless beauty, which I despise and hate? Let this be the portion of those that hate me without a cause! but let this be far from me! At this thought he felt a sudden elevation of mind; and the conscious dignity of virtue, that in such a conflict was victori-

ous, rendered him, in this glorious moment, superior to misfortune: his gestures became calm, and his countenance sedate: he considered the wrongs he had suffered, not as a sufferer, but as a judge; and he determined at once to discover himself to Almeida, and to reproach her with her crime. He remarked her confusion without pity, as the effect not of grief but of guilt; and fixing his eyes upon her, with the calm severity of a superior and offended being, Such, said he, is the benevolence of the Almighty to the children of the dust, that our misfortunes, are, like poisons, antidotes to each other.

Almeida stood fixed in wonder and expectation, and looked earnestly at him, but continued silent. Thy looks, said Hamet, are full of wonder; but as yet thy wonder has no cause, in comparison of that which shall be revealed. Thou knowest the prodigy which so lately parted Hamet and Almeida: I am that Hamet, thou art that Almeida. Almeida would now have interrupted him; but Hamet raised his voice, and demanded to be heard: At that moment, said he, wretched as I am, the child of error and disobedience, my heart repined in secret at the destiny which had been written upon my head; for then I thought thee faithful and constant: but if our hands had been then united, I should have been more wretched than I am; for I now know that thou art fickle and false. To know thee, though it has pierced my soul with sorrow, has yet healed the wound which was inflicted when I lost thee: and though I am now compelled to wear the form of Almoran, whose vices are this moment disgracing mine, yet in the balance I shall be weighed as Hamet, and I shall suffer only as I am found wanting.

Almeida, whose mind was now in a tumult that

bordered upon distraction, bewildered in a labyrinth of doubt and wonder, and alike dreading the consequence of what she heard, whether it was false or true, was yet impatient to confute or confirm it; and as soon as she recovered her speech, urged him for some token of the prodigy he asserted, which he might easily have given, by relating any of the incidents which themselves only could know. But just at this moment, Almoran, having at last disengaged himself from Osmyn, by whom he had been long detained, resumed his own figure: and, while the eyes of Almeida where fixed upon Hamet, his powers were suddenly taken from him, and restored in an instant; and she beheld the features of Almoran vanish, and gazed with astonishment upon his own: Thy features change! said she; and thou indeed art Hamet.—The sudden trance, said he has restored me to myself; and from my wrongs where shalt thou be hidden? This reproach was more than she could sustain; but he caught her as she was falling, and supported her in his arms. This incident renewed in a moment all the tenderness of his love: while he beheld her distress, and pressed her by the embrace that sustained her to his bosom, he forgot every injury which he supposed she had done him; and perceived her recover with a pleasure that for a moment obliterated the sense of his misfortunes.

Her first recollection was upon the snare in which she had been taken; and her first sensation was joy that she had escaped: she perceived at once the whole complication of events that had deceived and distressed her; and nothing more was now necessary, than to explain them to Hamet; which, however, she could not do, without discovering the insincerity of her answers to the inquiries which he had made, while she mistook him for his brother:

If in my heart, says she, thou hast found any virtue, let it incline thee to pity the vice that is mingled with it: by the vice I have been ensnared, but I have been delivered by the virtue. Almoran, for now I know that it was not thee; Almoran when he possessed thy form, was with me: he profaned thy love, by attempts to supplant my virtue; I resisted his importunity, and escaped perdition; but the guilt of Almoran drew my resentment upon Hamet. I thought the vices which, under thy form, I discovered in his bosom, were thine; and in the anguish of grief, indignation, and disappointment, my heart renounced thee; yet, as I could not give thee up to death, I could not discover to Almoran the attempt which I imputed to thee: when you questioned me, therefore, as Almoran, I was betrayed to dissimulation, by the tenderness which still melted my heart for Hamet.—I believe thee, said Hamet, catching her in a transport to his breast; I love thee for thy virtue; and may the pure and exalted beings, who are superior to the passions that now throb in my heart, forgive me, if I love thee also for thy fault! Yet, let the danger to which it betrayed thee teach us still to walk in the straight path, and commit the keeping of our peace to the Almighty; for he that wanders in the maze of falsehood shall pass by the good that he would meet, and shall meet the evil that he would shun. I also was tempted; but I was strengthened to resist: if I had used the power, which I derived from the arts that have been practised against me to return evil for evil; if I had not disdained a secret and unavowed revenge, and the unhallowed pleasures of a brutal appetite; I might have possessed thee in the form of Almoran, and have wronged irreparably myself and thee: for how could I have been admitted, as Hamet, to the beauties which I

had enjoyed as Almoran? And how couldst thou have given to Almoran, what in reality had been appropriated by Hamet?

CHAPTER XVII.

But while Almeida and Hamet were thus congratulating each other upon the evils which they had escaped, they were threatened by others, which, however obvious, they had overlooked.

Almoran, who was now exulting in the prospect of success that had exceeded his hopes, and who supposed the possession of Almeida before the end of the next hour was as certain as that the next hour would arrive, suddenly entered the apartment; but, upon discovering Hamet, he started back both astonished and disappointed. Hamet stood unmoved; and regarded him with a fixed and steady look, that at once reproached and confounded him.—What treachery, said Almoran, has been practised against me? What has brought thee to this place; and how hast thou gained admittance?—Against thy peace, said Hamet, no treachery has been practised but by thyself. By those arts in which thy vices have employed the powers of darkness, I have been brought hither; and by those arts I have gained admittance. Thy form, which they have imposed upon me, was my passport; and by the restoration of my own, I have detected and disappointed the fraud which the double change was produced to execute. Almeida, whom, as Hamet, thou couldst teach to hate thee, it is now impossible that, as Almoran, thou shouldst teach to love.

Almeida, who perceived the storm to be gathering, which the next moment would burst upon the head

of Hamet, interposed between them, and addressed each by turns; urging Hamet to be silent, and conjuring Almoran to be merciful. Almoran, however, without regarding Almeida, or making any reply to Hamet, struck the ground with his foot, and the messengers of death, to whom the signal was familiar, appeared at the door. Almoran then commanded them to seize his brother, with a countenance pale and livid, and a voice that was broken by rage. Hamet was still unmoved; but Almeida threw herself at the feet of Almoran, and, embracing his knees, was about to speak; but he broke from her with sudden fury: If the world should sue, said he, I would spurn it off. There is no pang that cunning can invent, which he shall not suffer; and when death at length shall disappoint my vengeance, his mangled limbs shall be cast out unburied, to feed the beasts of the desert and the fowls of heaven.—During this menace, Almeida sunk down without signs of life; and Hamet struggling in vain for liberty to raise her from the ground, she was carried off by some women who were called to her assistance.

In this awful crisis, Hamet, who felt his own fortitude give way, looked up; and though he conceived no words, a prayer ascended from his heart to heaven, and was accepted by Him, to whom our thoughts are known while they are yet afar off. For Hamet, the fountain of strength was opened from above; his eyes sparkled with confidence, and his breast was dilated with hope. He commanded the guard that were leading him away to stop, and they implicitly obeyed; he then stretched out his hand towards Almoran, whose spirit was rebuked before him: Hear me, said he, thou tyrant! for it is thy genius that speaks by my voice. What has been the fruit of all thy guilt, but accumulated misery?

What joy hast thou derived from undivided empire? What joy from the prohibition of my marriage with Almeida? What good from that power, which some evil dæmon has added to thy own? What, at this moment, is thy portion, but rage and anguish, disappointment and despair? Even I, whom thou seest the captive of thy power, whom thou hast wronged of empire, and yet more of love; even I am happy, in comparison of thee. I know that my sufferings, however multiplied, are short; for they shall end with life, and no life is long: then shall the everlasting ages commence; and through everlasting ages thy sufferings shall increase. The moment is now near, when thou shalt tread that line which alone is the path to heaven—the narrow path that is stretched over the pit which smokes for ever and for ever! When thine aching eye shall look forward to the end that is far distant, and when behind thou shalt find no retreat—when thy steps shall faulter, and thou shalt tremble at the depth beneath, which thought itself is not able to fathom—then shall the angel of distribution lift his inexorable hand against thee: from the irremeable way shall thy feet be smitten: thou shalt plunge in the burning flood; and though thou shalt live for ever, thou shalt rise no more.

As the words of Hamet struck Almoran with terror, and overawed him by an influence which he could not surmount, Hamet was forced from his presence, before any other orders had been given about him, that were implied in the menace that was addressed to Almeida: no violence, therefore, was yet offered him; but he was secured, till the king's pleasure should be known, in a dungeon not far from the palace, to which he was conducted through a subterraneous passage: and the door being closed upon him, he was left in silence, dark-

ness, and solitude, such as may be imagined before the voice of the Almighty produced life and light.

When Almoran was sufficiently recollected to consider his situation, he despaired of prevailing upon Almeida to gratify his wishes, till her attachment to Hamet was irreparably broken; and he, therefore, resolved to put him to death. With this view, he repeated the signal, which convened the ministers of death to his presence; but the sound was lost in a peal of thunder that instantly followed it, and the genius, from whom he received the talisman, again stood before him.

Almoran, said the genius, I am now compelled into thy presence by the command of a superior Power; whom if I should dare to disobey, the energy of his will might drive me, in a moment, beyond the limits of nature and the reach of thought, to spend eternity alone, without comfort and without hope.—And what, said Almoran, is the will of this mighty and tremendous Being?—His will, said the genius, I will reveal to thee. Hitherto thou hast been enabled to lift the rod of adversity against thy brother, by powers which nature has not entrusted to man: as these powers, and these only, have put him into thy hand, thou art forbidden to lift it against his life: if thou hadst prevailed against him by thy own power, thy own power would not have been restrained: to afflict him thou art still free; but thou art not permitted to destroy. At the moment in which thou shalt conceive a thought to cut him off by violence, the punishment of thy disobedience shall commence, and the pangs of death shall be upon thee.—If then, said Almoran, this awful Power is the friend of Hamet; what yet remains, in the stores of thy wisdom, for me? 'Till he dies, I am at once precluded from peace, and safety, and

enjoyment.—Look up, said the genius, for the iron hand of Despair is not yet upon thee. Thou canst be happy, only by his death; and his life thou art forbidden to take away: yet mayst thou still arm him against himself; and if he dies by his own hand thy wishes will be full.—O name, said Almoran, but the means, and it shall this moment be accomplished!—Select, said the genius, some friend—

At the name of friend, Almoran started and looked round in despair. He recollected the perfidy of Osmyn; and he suspected that, from the same cause, all were perfidious: While Hamet yet has life, said he, I fear the face of man, as of a savage that is prowling for his prey.—Relinquish not yet thy hopes, said the genius; for one, in whom thou wilt joyfully confide, may be found. Let him secretly obtain admittance to Hamet, as if by stealth; let him profess an abhorrence of thy reign, and compassion for his misfortunes; let him pretend that the rack is even now preparing for him; that death is inevitable, but that torment may be avoided: let him then give him a poignard, as the instrument of deliverance; and, perhaps his own hand may strike the blow, that shall give thee peace.—But who, said Almoran, shall go upon this important errand?—Who, replied the genius, but thyself? Hast thou not the power to assume the form of whomsoever thou wouldst have sent?—I would have sent Osmyn, said Almoran, but that I know him to be a traitor.—Let the form of Osmyn, then, said the genius, be thine. The shadows of the evening have now stretched themselves upon the earth: command Osmyn to attend thee alone in the grove, where Solyman, thy father, was used to meditate by night; and when thy form shall be impressed upon him, I will there seal his eyes in sleep, till the charm

shall be broken; so shall no evil be attempted against thee, and the transformation shall be known only to thyself.

Almoran, whose breast was again illuminated by hope, was about to express his gratitude and joy; but the genius suddenly disappeared. He began, therefore, immediately to follow the instructions he had received: he commanded Osmyn to attend him in the grove, and forbad every other to approach. By the power of the talisman he assumed his appearance, and saw him sink down in a supernatural slumber before him. He then quitted the place, and prepared to visit Hamet in the prison.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE officer who commanded the guard that kept the gate of the prison was Caled. He was now next in trust and power to Osmyn: but as he had proposed a revolt to Hamet, in which Osmyn refused to concur, he knew that his life was now in his power: he dreaded lest, for some slight offence, or in some fit of causeless displeasure, he should disclose the secret to Almoran, who would then certainly condemn him to death. To secure this fatal secret, and put an end to his inquietude, he resolved, from the moment that Almoran was established upon the throne, to find some opportunity secretly to destroy Osmyn. In this resolution he was confirmed by the enmity, which inferior minds never fail to conceive against that merit which they cannot but envy, without spirit to emulate, and by which they feel themselves disgraced without an effort to acquire equal honour: it was confirmed also by the hope which Caled had conceived, that, upon the death of

Osmyn, he should succeed to his post: his apprehensions likewise were increased, by the gloom which he remarked in the countenance of Osmyn; and which not knowing that it arose from fear, he imputed to jealousy and malevolence.

When Almoran, who had now assumed the appearance of Osmyn, had passed the subterranean avenue to the dungeon in which Hamet was confined, he was met by Caled; of whom he demanded admittance to the prince, and produced his own signet, as a testimony that he came with the authority of the king. As it was Caled's interest to secure the favour of Osmyn till an opportunity should offer to cut him off, he received him with every possible mark of respect and reverence; and when he was gone into the dungeon, he commanded a beverage to be prepared for him against he should return, in which such spices were infused, as might expel the malignity which, in that place, might be received with the breath of life: and taking himself the key of the prison, he waited at the door.

When Almoran entered the dungeon, with a lamp which he had received from Caled, he found Hamet sitting upon the ground: his countenance was impressed with the characters of grief; but it retained no marks either of anger or fear. When he looked up and saw the features of Osmyn, he judged that the mutes were behind him; and, therefore, rose up, to prepare himself for death. Almoran beheld his calmness and fortitude with the involuntary praise of admiration; yet persisted in his purpose without remorse. I am come, said he, by the command of Almoran, to denounce that fate, the bitterness of which I will enable thee to avoid. And what is there, said Hamet, in my fortunes, that has prompted thee to the danger of this attempt? The utmost that I can give thee, said Almoran, I can

give thee without danger to myself: but though I have been placed by the hand of fortune, near the person of the tyrant, yet has my heart in secret been thy friend. If I am the messenger of evil, impute it to him only by whom it is devised. The rack is now preparing to receive thee; and every art of ingenious cruelty will be exhausted to protract and to increase the agonies of death.—And what, said Hamet, can thy friendship offer me?—I can offer thee, said Almoran, that which will at once dismiss thee to those regions where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary rest for ever. He then produced the poignard from his bosom; and presenting it to Hamet, Take this, said he, and sleep in peace.

Hamet, whose heart was touched with sudden joy at the sight of so unexpected a remedy for every evil, did not immediately reflect, that he was not at liberty to apply it: he snatched it in a transport from the hand of Almoran, and expressed his sense of the obligation by clasping him in his arms, and shedding the tears of gratitude in his breast.—Be quick, said Almoran: this moment I must leave thee; and in the next, perhaps, the messenger of destruction may bind thee to the rack.—I will be quick, said Hamet; and the sigh that shall last linger upon my lips, shall bless thee. They then bade each other farewel: Almoran retired from the dungeon, and the door was again closed upon Hamet.

Caled, who waited at the door till the supposed Osmyn should return, presented him with the beverage which he had prepared, of which he recounted the virtues; and Almoran received it with pleasure, and having eagerly drank it off, returned to the palace. As soon as he was alone, he resumed his own figure, and sate, with a confident and impatient expectation, that in a short time a messenger would

be dispatched to acquaint him with the death of Hamet. Hamet, in the mean time, having grasped the dagger in his hand, and raised his arm for the blow; This, said he, is my passport to the realms of peace, the immediate and only object of my hope! But at these words, his mind instantly took the alarm: Let me reflect, said he, a moment: from what can I derive hope in death? From that patient and persevering virtue, and from that alone, by which we fulfil the task that is assigned us upon the earth. Is it not our duty to suffer, as well as to act? If my own hand consigns me to the grave, what can it do but perpetuate that misery, which, by disobedience, I would shun? What can it do, but cut off my life and hope together? With this recollection he threw the dagger from him; and stretching himself again upon the ground, resigned himself to the disposal of the Father of Man, most Merciful and Almighty.

Almoran, who had now resolved to send for the intelligence which he longed to hear, was dispatching a messenger to the prison, when he was told that Caled desired admittance to his presence. At the name of Caled, he started up in an ecstacy of joy; and not doubting but that Hamet was dead, he ordered him to be instantly admitted. When he came in, Almoran made no inquiry about Hamet, because he would not appear to expect the event, which he supposed he had brought about: he, therefore, asked him only upon what business he came. I come, my lord, said he, to apprize thee of the treachery of Osmyn.—I know, said Almoran, that Osmyn is a traitor; but of what dost thou accuse him?—As I was but now, said he, changing the guard which is set upon Hamet, Osmyn came up to the door of the prison, and, producing the royal signet, demanded admittance. As the command which

I received, when he was delivered to my custody, was absolute, that no foot should enter, I doubted whether the token had not been obtained by fraud, for some other purpose; yet, as he required admittance only, I complied: but that, if any treachery had been contrived, I might detect it, and that no artifice may be practised to favour an escape, I waited myself at the door, and, listening to their discourse, I overheard the treason that I suspected.—What, then, said Almoran, didst thou hear?—A part of what was said, replied Caled, escaped me; but I heard Osmyn, like a perfidious and presumptuous slave, call Almoran a tyrant: I heard him profess an inviolable friendship for Hamet, and assure him of deliverance. What were the means, I know not; but he talked of speed, and supposed that the effect was certain.

Almoran, though he was still impatient to hear of Hamet, and discovered, that if he was dead, his death was unknown to Caled, was yet, notwithstanding, rejoiced at what he heard: and as he knew what Caled told him to be true, as the conversation he related had passed between himself and Hamet, he exulted in the pleasing confidence that he had yet a friend; the glooms of suspicion, which had involved his mind, were dissipated, and his countenance brightened with complacency and joy. He had delayed to put Osmyn to death, only because he could appoint no man to succeed him, of whom his fears did not render him equally suspicious: but having now found, in Caled, a friend, whose fidelity had been approved when there had been no intention to try it; and being impatient to reward his zeal, and to invest his fidelity with that power, which would render his services most important; he took a ring from his own finger, and putting it upon that of Caled, Take this, said he, as a pledge, that to-

morrow Osmyn shall lose his head; and that, from this moment, thou art invested with his power.

Caled having, in the conversation between Almoran and Hamet, discerned indubitable treachery, which he imputed to Osmyn, whose appearance Almoran had then assumed, eagerly seized the opportunity to destroy him: he, therefore, not trusting to the event of his accusation, had mingled poison in the bowl which he presented Almoran when he came out from Hamet: this, however, at first he had resolved to conceal.

In consequence of this accusation, he supposed Osmyn would be questioned upon the rack: he supposed also, that the accusation, as it was true, would be confirmed by this confession; that whatever he should then say to the prejudice of his accuser, would be disbelieved; and that when after a few hours the poison should take effect, no inquisition would be made into the death of a criminal, whom the bowstring or the scymitar would otherwise have been employed to destroy. But he now hoped to derive new merit from an act of zeal which Almoran had approved before it was known, by condemning his rival to die, whose death he had already insured: May the wishes of my lord, said he, be always anticipated; and may it be found, that whatever he ordains is already done: may he accept the zeal of his servant, whom he has delighted to honour; for before the light of the morning shall return, the eyes of Osmyn shall close in everlasting darkness.

At these words, the countenance of Almoran changed; his cheeks became pale, and his lips trembled: What, then, said he, hast thou done? Caled, who was terrified and astonished, threw himself upon the ground, and was unable to reply. Almoran, who now, by the utmost effort of his mind,

restrained his confusion and his fear, that he might learn the truth from Caled without dissimulation or disguise, raised him from the ground and repeated his inquiry. If I have erred, said Caled, impute it not to malice. When I had detected the treachery of Osmyn, I was transported by my zeal for thee. For proof that he is guilty, I appeal now to himself; for he yet lives: but that he might not escape the hand of justice, I mingled in the bowl I gave him, the drugs of death.

At these words, Almoran, striking his hands together, looked upward in an agony of despair and horror, and fell back upon a sofa that was behind him. Caled, whose astonishment was equal to his disappointment and his fears, approached him with a trembling though hasty pace: but as he stooped to support him, Almoran suddenly drew his dagger and stabbed him to the heart; and repeated the blows with reproaches and execrations till his strength failed him.

In this dreadful moment, the genius once more appeared before him; at the sight of whom he waved his hand, but was unable to speak. Nothing, said the genius, that has happened to Almoran, is hidden from me. Thy peace has been destroyed alike by the defection of Osmyn, and by the zeal of Caled: thy life may yet be preserved; but it can be preserved only by a charm, which Hamet must apply. Almoran, who had raised his eyes, and conceived some languid hope, when he heard that he might yet live, cast them again down in despair, when he heard that he could receive life only from Hamet. From Hamet, said he, I have already taken the power to save me: I have by thy counsel, given him the instrument of death, which, by thy counsel also, I urged him to use: he received it with joy, and he is now doubtless numbered with the dead.—Hamet,

said the genius, is not dead; but from the fountain of virtue he drinks life and peace. If what I shall propose, he refuses to perform, not all the powers of earth, and sea, and air, if they should combine, can give thee life: but if he complies, the death that is now suspended over thee, shall fall upon his head; and thy life shall be again delivered to the hand of Time.—Make haste, then, said Almoran, and I will here wait the event.—The event, said the genius, is not distant; and it is the last experiment which my power can make, either upon him or thee: when the star of the night, that is now near the horizon, shall set, I will be with him.

When Almoran was alone, he reflected that every act of supernatural power which the genius had enabled him to perform, had brought upon him some new calamity, though it always promised him some new advantage. As he would not impute this disappointment to the purposes for which he employed the power that he had received, he indulged a suspicion that it proceeded from the perfidy of the being by whom it was bestowed. In his mind, therefore, he thus reasoned with himself: The genius who has pretended to be the friend of Almoran, has been secretly in confederacy with Hamet: why else do I yet sigh in vain for Almeida? and why else did not Hamet perish, when his life was in my power? By his counsel, I persuaded Hamet to destroy himself; and, in the very act, I was betrayed to drink the potion, by which I shall be destroyed: I have been led on, from misery to misery, by ineffectual expedients, and fallacious hopes. In this crisis of my fate, I will not trust with implicit confidence in another: I will be present at the interview of this powerful, but suspected being, with Hamet; and who can tell, but that if I detect a fraud, I may be able to disappoint it. However powerful, he is

not omniscient: I may, therefore, be present, unknown and unsuspected even by him, in a form I can chuse by a thought, to which he cannot be conscious.

CHAPTER XIX.

In consequence of this resolution, Almoran, having commanded one of the soldiers of the guard that attended upon Hamet into an inner room of the palace, he ordered him to wait there till his return: then making fast the door, he assumed his figure, and went immediately to the dungeon; where, producing his signet, he said he had received orders from the king to remain with the prisoner, till the watch expired.

As he entered without speaking, and without a light, Hamet continued stretched upon the ground, with his face towards the earth; and Almoran, having silently retired to a remote corner of the place, waited for the appearance of the genius.

The dawn of the morning now broke; and, in a few minutes, the prison shook, and the genius appeared. He was visible by a lambent light that played around him; and Hamet starting from the ground, turned to the vision with reverence and wonder: but as the Omnipotent was ever present to his mind, to whom all beings in all worlds are obedient, and on whom alone he relied for protection, he was neither confused nor afraid. Hamet, said the genius, the crisis of thy fate is near.—Who art thou, said Hamet, and for what purpose art thou come?—I am, replied the genius, an inhabitant of the world above thee; and to the will of thy brother, my powers have been obedient: upon him they

have not conferred happiness, but they have brought evil upon thee. It was my voice, that forbade thy marriage with Almeida; and my voice, that decreed the throne to Almoran: I gave him the power to assume thy form; and by me, the hand of oppression is now heavy upon thee. Yet I have not decreed, that he should be happy, nor that thou shouldst be wretched: darkness as yet rests upon my purpose; but my heart in secret is thy friend.—If thou art, indeed, my friend, said Hamet, deliver me from this prison; and preserve Hamet for Almeida.—Thy deliverance, said the genius, must depend upon thyself. There is a charm, of which the power is great; but it is by thy will only that this power can be exerted.

The genius then held out towards him a scroll, on which the seal of seven powers was impressed.—Take, said he, this scroll, in which the mysterious name of Orosmades is written. Invoke the spirits, that reside westward from the rising of the sun; and northward in the regions of cold and darkness: then stretch out thy hand, and a lamp of sulphur, self-kindled, shall burn before thee. In the fire of this lamp, consume that which I now give thee; and as the smoke, into which it changes, shall mix with the air, a mighty charm shall be formed, which shall defend thee from all mischief: from that instant, no poison, however potent, can hurt thee; nor shall any prison confine: in one moment, thou shalt be restored to the throne, and to Almeida; and the angel of death shall lay his hand upon thy brother: to whom, if I had confided this last best effort of my power, he would have secured the good to himself, and have transferred the evil to thee.

Almoran, who in a borrowed form had listened to this address of the genius to Hamet, was now confirmed in his suspicions that evil had been ulti-

mately intended against him; and that he had been entangled in the toils of perfidy, while he believed himself to be assisted by the efforts of friendship: he was also convinced, that by the genius he was not known to be present. Hamet, however, stood still doubtful, and Almoran was kept silent by his fears.—Whoever thou art, said Hamet, the condition of the advantages which thou hast offered me is such as is not lawful to fulfil: these horrid rites, and this commerce with unholy powers, are prohibited to mortals in the law of life.—See thou to that, said the genius. Good and evil are before thee: that which I now offer thee, I will offer no more.

Hamet, who had not fortitude to give up at once the possibility of securing the advantages that had been offered, and who was seduced by human frailty to deliberate at least upon the choice; stretched out his hand, and, receiving the scroll, the genius instantly disappeared. That which had been proposed as a trial of his virtue, Almoran believed indeed to be an offer of advantage; he had no hope, therefore, but that Hamet would refuse the conditions, and that he should be able to obtain the talisman, and fulfil them himself: he judged that the mind of Hamet was in suspense, and was doubtful to which side it might finally incline; he, therefore, instantly assumed the voice and the person of Omar, that by the influence of his counsel he might be able to turn the scale.

When the change was effected, he called Hamet by his name; and Hamet, who knew the voice, answered him in a transport of joy and wonder: My friend, said he, my father! in this dreary solitude, in this hour of trial, thou art welcome to my soul as liberty and life! Guide me to thee by thy voice: and tell me, while I hold thee to my bosom, how

and wherefore thou art come?—Do not now ask me, said Almoran: it is enough that I am here, and that I am permitted to warn thee of the precipice on which thou standest. It is enough that I have overheard the specious guile, which some evil being has practised upon thee.—Is it then certain, said Hamet, that this being is evil?—Is not that being evil, said Almoran, who proposes evil as the condition of good?—Shall I then, said Hamet, renounce my liberty and life? The rack is now ready; and, perhaps, the next moment, its tortures will be inevitable.—Let me ask thee, then, said Almoran, to preserve thy life, wilt thou destroy thy soul?—O! stay, said Hamet. Let me not be tried too far! Let the strength of Him who is Almighty, be manifest in my weakness! Hamet then paused a few moments; but he was no longer in doubt: and Almoran, who disbelieved and despised the arguments, by which he intended to persuade him to renounce what, upon the same condition, he was impatient to secure for himself, conceived hopes that he should succeed; and those hopes were instantly confirmed. Take then, said Hamet, this unholy charm; and remove it far from me, as the sands of Alai from the trees of Oman; lest, in some dreadful moment, my virtue may fail me, and thy counsel may be wanting!—Give it me then, said Almoran; and feeling for the hands of each other, he snatched it from him in an ecstacy of joy, and instantly resuming his own voice and figure, he cried out, At length I have prevailed; and life and love, dominion and revenge, are now at once in my hand!

Hamet heard and knew the voice of his brother with astonishment; but it was too late to wish that he had withheld the charm, which his virtue would not permit him to use.—Yet a few moments pass, said Almoran, and thou art nothing.—Hamet, who

doubted not of the power of the talisman, and knew that Almoran had no principles which would restrain him from using it to his destruction, resigned himself to death, with a sacred joy that he had escaped from guilt. Almoran then, with an elation of mind that sparkled in his eyes, and glowed upon his cheek, stretched out his hand, in which he held the scroll; and a lamp of burning sulphur was immediately suspended in the air before him: he held the mysterious writing in the flame; and as it began to burn, the place shook with reiterated thunder, of which every peal was more terrible and more loud. Hamet, wrapping his robe round him, cried out, In the Fountain of Life that flows for ever, let my life be mingled! Let me not be, as if I had never been; but still conscious of my being, let me still glorify Him from whom it is derived, and be still happy in his love!

Almoran, who was absorbed in the anticipation of his own felicity, heard the thunder without dread, as the proclamation of his triumph. Let thy hopes, said he, be thy portion; and the pleasures that I have secured shall be mine.—As he pronounced these words, he started as at a sudden pang; his eyes became fixed, and his posture immoveable: yet his senses still remained, and he perceived the genius once more to stand before him.—Almoran, said he, to the last sounds which thou shalt hear, let thine ear be attentive! Of the spirits that rejoice to fulfil the purpose of the Almighty, I am one. To Hamet, and to Almoran, I have been commissioned from above: I have been appointed to perfect virtue, by adversity; and in the folly of her own projects, to entangle vice. The charm, which could be formed only by guilt, has power only to produce misery: of every good, which thou, Almoran, wouldst have secured by disobedience, the opposite evil is thy

portion; and of every evil, which thou, Hamet, wast, by obedience, willing to incur, the opposite good is bestowed upon thee. To thee, Hamet, are now given the throne of thy father, and Almeida. And thou, Almoran, who, while I speak, art incorporating with the earth, shalt remain, through all generations, a memorial of the truths which thy life has taught.

At these words of the genius, the earth trembled beneath, and above the walls of the prison disappeared: the figure of Almoran, which was hardened into stone, expanded by degrees; and a rock, by which his form and attitude are still rudely expressed, became at once a monument of his punishment and guilt.

Such are the events recorded by Acmet, the descendant of the prophet, and the preacher of righteousness! for, to Acmet, that which passed in secret was revealed by the angel of instruction, that the world might know, that, to the wicked, increase of power is increase of wretchedness; and that those who contemn the folly of an attempt to defeat the purpose of a genius, might no longer hope to elude the appointment of the Most High.

THE END OF VOLUME TWENTY-SIX.

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