

replied I.—“ Ah, why so cold a name, papa ? ” cried she : “ this is the first time you ever called me by so cold a name. ”—“ I ask pardon, my darling, ” returned I ; “ but I was going to observe, that wisdom makes but a slow defence against trouble, though at last a sure one. ”

The landlady now returned to know if we did not choose a more genteel apartment ; to which assenting, we were shown to a room where we could converse more freely. After we had talked ourselves into some degree of tranquillity, I could not avoid desiring some account of the gradations that led to her present wretched situation. “ That villain, sir, ” said she, “ from the first day of our meeting, made me honourable, though private proposals. ”

“ Villain, indeed, ” cried I : “ and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr. Burchell’s good sense and seeming honour could be guilty of such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it. ”

“ My dear papa, ” returned my daughter, “ you labour under a strange mistake. Mr. Burchell never attempted to deceive me. Instead of that he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr. Thornhill, who,

I now find, was even worse than he represented him."—"Mr. Thornhill!" interrupted I; "can it be?"—"Yes, sir," returned she, "it was Mr. Thornhill who seduced me; who employed the two ladies, as he called them, but who in fact were abandoned women of the town, without breeding or pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices, you may remember, would have certainly succeeded, but for Mr. Burchell's letter, who directed those reproaches at them, which we all applied to ourselves. How he came to have so much influence as to defeat their intentions, still remains a secret to me; but I am convinced he was ever our warmest, sincerest friend."

"You amaze me, my dear," cried I; "but now I find my first suspicions of Mr. Thornhill's baseness were too well grounded: but he can triumph in security; for he is rich and we are poor. But tell me, my child; sure it was no small temptation that could thus obliterate all the impressions of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition as thine?"

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "he owes all his triumph to the desire I had of making him, and not myself, happy. I knew that the ceremony of our marriage, which was privately performed

by a popish priest, was no way binding, and that I had nothing to trust to but his honour."—"What!" interrupted I, "and were you indeed married by a priest, and in orders?"—"Indeed, sir, we were," replied she, "though we were both sworn to conceal his name."—"Why, then, my child, come to my arms again; and now you are a thousand times more welcome than before; for you are his wife to all intents and purposes; nor can all the laws of man, though written upon tables of adamant, lessen the force of that sacred connexion."

"Alas! papa," replied she, "you are but little acquainted with his villainies; he has been married already, by the same priest, to six or eight wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and abandoned."

"Has he so?" cried I, "then we must hang the priest, and you shall inform against him tomorrow."—"But, sir," returned she, "will that be right, when I am sworn to secrecy?"—"My dear," I replied, "if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will I tempt you to break it. Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions, a smaller evil is allowed to procure a

greater good ; as, in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom ; in medicine, a limb may be lopped off to preserve the body. But in religion the law is written and inflexible, *never* to do evil. And this law, my child, is right : for otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred in expectation of contingent advantage. And though the advantage should certainly follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away to answer for the things we have done, and the volume of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt you, my dear : go on."

"The very next morning," continued she, "I found what little expectations I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view I danced, dressed, and talked, but still was unhappy. The gentlemen who visited there told me every moment of the power of my charms,

and this only contributed to increase my melancholy, as I had thrown all their power quite away. Thus each day I grew more pensive and he more insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to offer me to a young baronet of his acquaintance. Need I describe, sir, how this ingratitude stung me? My answer to this proposal was almost madness. I desired to part. As I was going, he offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with indignation, and burst from him in a rage that for a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one friend in the world to apply to. Just in that interval a stage-coach happening to pass by, I took a place, it being my only aim to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised and detested. I was set down here; where, since my arrival, my own anxiety and this woman's unkindness have been my only companions. The hours of pleasure that I have passed with my mamma and sister now grow painful to me. Their sorrows are much; but mine are greater than theirs, for mine are mixed with guilt and infamy."

"Have patience, my child," cried I, "and I

hope things will yet be better. Take some repose to-night, and to-morrow I'll carry you home to your mother and the rest of the family, from whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman! this has gone to her heart; but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it."



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



CHAPTER XXII.

Offences are easily pardoned where there is love at bottom.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove by every persuasion to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country, through which we passed, to observe how much kinder Heaven was to us than we to each other; and that the misfortunes of nature's making were but very few. I assured her that she should never perceive any change in my affections; and that during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censures of the world, showed her that books were sweet, unrepublishing companions to the miserable, and that, if they

could not bring us to enjoy life, they would at least teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be put up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my house; and as I was willing to prepare my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to return for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed stage; however, after seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. And now my heart caught new sensations of pleasure, the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frightened from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fireside with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace; the labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock, and the deep-mouthed watch-

dog, at hollow distance. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and, before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door: all was still and silent—my heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out into a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my son, who had till this been asleep, and he, perceiving the flames, instantly awaked my wife and daughter, and all running out, naked and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish. But it was only to objects of new terror, for the flames had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood with silent agony looking on as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones: but they were not to be seen. “O misery! where,” cried I, “where are my little ones?”—“They are burnt to death in the flames,” said my wife calmly, “and I will die with them.” That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just

awaked by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. "Where, where are my children?" cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined; "where are my little ones?"—"Here, dear papa, here we are!" cried they together, while the flames were just catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and conveyed them through the fire as fast as possible, while, just as I was going out, the roof sunk in. "Now," cried I, holding up my children, "now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish; here they are. I have saved my treasure: here, my dearest, here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy." We kissed our little darlings a thousand times; they clasped us round the neck, and seemed to share our transports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames, and after some time began to perceive that my arm to the shoulder was scorched in a terrible manner. It was, therefore, out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our assistance;

but all they could do was to stand, like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters' fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box with some papers that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our outhouses with kitchen utensils; so that by daylight we had another, though a wretched, dwelling to retire to. My honest next neighbour and his children were not the least assiduous in providing us with everything necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay began to take place; having, therefore, informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the reception of our lost one; and, though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, I was willing to procure her a welcome to what we had: this task would have been more difficult but for our own recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted

it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not the courage to look up at her mother, whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men. "Ah, madam!" cried her mother, "this is but a poor place you are come to after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction; yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very much of late; but I hope Heaven will forgive you." During this reception, the unhappy victim stood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply; but I could not continue a silent spectator of her distress: wherefore, assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with instant submission, "I entreat, woman, that my words may be now marked once for all; I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer—her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness; the real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us; let us not, therefore,

increase them by dissensions among each other: if we live harmoniously together, we may yet be contented, as there are enough of us to shut out the censuring world, and keep each other in countenance. The kindness of Heaven is promised to the penitent, and let ours be directed by the example. Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to view a repentant sinner than ninety-nine persons who have supported a course of undeviating rectitude: and that is right; for that single effort by which we stop short in the down-hill path to perdition, is of itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hundred acts of justice.”

CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA



CHAPTER XXIII.

None' but the guilty can be long and completely miserable.

SOME assiduity was now required to make our present abode as convenient as possible, and we were soon again qualified to enjoy our former serenity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son in our usual occupations, I read to my family from the few books that were saved, and particularly from such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to ease the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a time in which they were all to assist in repairing my former dwelling. Honest Farmer Williams was not last among these visitors, but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter ; but she rejected them in such a manner as totally repressed his future solicitations. Her grief seemed formed for con-

tinuing, and she was the only person in our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing. Anxiety had now taken strong possession of her mind; her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister brought a pang to her heart, and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured, ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in concern for hers, collecting such amusing passages of history as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. "Our happiness, my dear," I would say, "is in the power of One who can bring it about by a thousand unforeseen ways that mock our foresight. If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing, historian.

"Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of

fifteen. As she stood one day caressing her infant son in the open window of an apartment, which hung over the river Volturna, the child, with a sudden spring, leaped from her arms into the flood below, and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck with instant surprise, and making an effort to save him, plunged in after; but, far from being able to assist the infant, she herself with great difficulty escaped to the opposite shore, just when some French soldiers were plundering the country on that side, who immediately made her their prisoner.

“As the war was then carried on between the French and Italians with the utmost inhumanity, they were going at once to perpetrate those two extremes suggested by appetite and cruelty. This base resolution, however, was opposed by a young officer, who, though their retreat required the utmost expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first caught his eye: her merit, soon after, his heart. They were married; he rose to the highest post; they lived long together, and were happy. But the felicity of a soldier can never be called permanent: after an interval of several years, the troops which he commanded having met with a repulse, he was obliged to

take shelter in the city where he had lived with his wife. Here they suffered a siege, and the city at length was taken. Few histories can produce more various instances of cruelty than those which the French and Italians at that time exercised upon each other. It was resolved by the victors, upon this occasion, to put all the French prisoners to death; but particularly the husband of the unfortunate Matilda, as he was principally instrumental in protracting the siege. Their determinations were, in general, executed almost as soon as resolved upon. The captive soldier was led forth, and the executioner with his sword stood ready, while the spectators, in gloomy silence, awaited the fatal blow, which was only suspended till the general, who presided as judge, should give the signal. It was in this interval of anguish and expectation, that Matilda came to take the last farewell of her husband and deliverer, deploring her wretched situation, and the cruelty of fate that had saved her from perishing by a premature death in the river Volturna, to be the spectator of still greater calamities. The general, who was a young man, was struck with surprise at her beauty, and pity at her distress; but with still greater emotion when he heard her mention her former dangers. He was

her son, the infant for whom she had encountered so much danger; he acknowledged her at once as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may be easily supposed; the captive was set free, and all the happiness that love, friendship, and duty could confer on earth, were united.'”

In this manner I would attempt to amuse my daughter; but she listened with divided attention; for her own misfortunes engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company she dreaded contempt; and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretchedness, when we received certain information that Mr. Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot; for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity before me to express his contempt both of her person and fortune. This news served only to increase poor Olivia's affliction; for such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however, to get more certain information; and to defeat, if possible, the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Mr. Wilmot's, with instructions to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss Wilmot a letter intimating Mr. Thornhill's conduct in my

family. My son went, in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the account; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr. Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days, having appeared together at church, the Sunday before he was there, in great splendour, the bride attended by six young ladies, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the grandest equipage that had been seen in the country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there, particularly the squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty and the bridegroom's fine person, and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding that he could not help thinking Mr. Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

“Why, let him if he can,” returned I; “but, my son, observe this bed of straw and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls and humid floor;

my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread : you have come home, my child, to tell us all this ; yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. Oh, my children, if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendour of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers. The similitude still may be improved, when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers that are going towards home : the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile."

My compassion for my poor daughter, overpowered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had further to observe. I bade her mother support her, and after a short time she recovered. She appeared from that time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree of resolution ; but appearances deceived me, for her tranquillity was the languor of overwrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind parishioners, seemed to diffuse new cheerfulness among the rest of my family, nor was I

displeased at seeing them once more sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp their satisfactions, merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burden them with a sadness they did not feel. Thus, once more, the tale went round, and a song was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.



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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



CHAPTER XXIV.

Fresh Calamities.

THE next morning the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season, so that we agreed to breakfast together on the honeysuckle bank, where, while we sat, my youngest daughter, at my request, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was in this place my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recall her sadness. But that melancholy, which is excited by objects of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart instead of corroding it. Her mother, too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept, and loved her daughter as before. "Do, my pretty Olivia," cried she, "let us have that little melancholy air your papa was so fond of: your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do, child; it will please your old father." She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic, as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds, too late, that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die.

As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice, from sorrow, gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr. Thornhill's equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and, making up to the place where I was still sitting, inquired after my health with his usual air of familiarity. "Sir," replied I, "your present assurance only serves to aggravate the baseness of your character; and there was a time when I would have chastised your insolence, for presuming thus to appear before me. But now you are safe: for age has cooled my passions, and my calling restrains them."

"I vow, my dear sir," returned he, "I am amazed at all this; nor can I understand what

it means! I hope you do not think that your daughter's late excursion with me had anything criminal in it."

"Go," cried I, "thou art a wretch, a poor pitiful wretch, and every way a liar; but your meanness secures you from my anger. Yet, sir, I am descended from a family that would not have borne this! And so, thou vile thing! to gratify a momentary passion thou hast made one poor creature wretched for life, and polluted a family that had nothing but honour for their portion."

"If she, or you," returned he, "are resolved to be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still be happy; and whatever opinion you may have formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to contribute to it. We can marry her to another in a short time; and, what is more, she may keep her lover beside; for I protest I shall ever continue to have a true regard for her."

I found all my passions alarmed at this new degrading proposal; for though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villainy can at any time get within the soul, and sting it into rage.—"Avoid my sight, thou reptile," cried I, "nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home, he

would not suffer this ; but I am old and disabled, and every way undone."

"I find," cried he, "you are bent upon obliging me to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But, as I have shown you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to represent what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard ; nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself ; which, as I have been at some expenses lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then my steward talks of driving for the rent : it is certain he knows his duty ; for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even to have you and your daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnised with Miss Wilmot ; it is even the request of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse."

"Mr. Thornhill," replied I, "hear me once for all : as to your marriage with any but my daughter, that I never will consent to ; and though your friendship could raise me to a throne, or your resentment sink me to the grave,

yet would I despise both. Thou hast once woe-fully, irreparably deceived me. I reposed my heart upon thine honour, and have found its baseness. Never more, therefore, expect friendship from me. Go, and possess what fortune has given thee—beauty, riches, health, and pleasure. Go, and leave me to want, infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet, humbled as I am, shall my heart still vindicate its dignity; and though thou hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever have my contempt.”

“If so,” returned he, “depend upon it, you shall feel the effects of this insolence, and we shall shortly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you or me.” Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference; which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest. But as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence—he had already struck the blow, and I now stood prepared to repel every new effort—like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which, however thrown, still presents a point to receive the enemy.

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We soon, however, found that he had not threatened in vain; for the very next morning his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The consequence of my incapacity was, his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now therefore entreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain destruction. They even begged of me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure—the terrors of a prison in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

“Why, my treasures,” cried I, “why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right? My duty has taught me to forgive him, but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? Would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer; and, to avoid a prison, continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never. If

we are able to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right, and wherever we are thrown we can still retire to a charming apartment, where we can look round our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure."

In this manner we spent that evening. Early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house.

Just as he spoke they came in. And approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county gaol, which was eleven miles off.

"My friends," said I, "this is severe weather in which you are come to take me to a prison; and it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of my arms has lately been burned in a terrible manner, and it has thrown me into a slight fever, and I want clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and old to walk far in such deep snow; but if it must be so——"

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated them to be expeditious; and desired my son to assist his eldest sister; who, from a consciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had low anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the meantime my youngest daughter prepared for our departure, and as she received several hints to use despatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.



CHAPTER XXV.

No situation, however wretched it seems, but has some sort of comfort attending it.

WE set forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had a horse, kindly took her behind him; for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other; while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell not for her own but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poorest parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and swearing they would never see their minister go to a gaol, while they had a drop

of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequence might have been fatal, had I not immediately interposed, and with some difficulty rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared transported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me service.

“What! my friends,” cried I, “and is this the way you love me? Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit? thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me? Which is your ringleader? Show me the man that has thus seduced you. As sure as he lives, he shall feel my resentment. Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet, perhaps, one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort, when I pen my fold for immortality, that not one here shall be wanting.”

They now seemed all repentance, and melting

into tears, came, one after the other, to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward without meeting any further interruption. Some hours before the night we reached the town, or rather village; for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the gaol.

Upon entering we put up at an inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be procured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison, which had formerly been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated, and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four-and-twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected upon my entrance to find nothing but lamentations, and various sounds of misery, but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprised of the usual perquisite required upon

these occasions ; and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for liquor, and the whole prison was soon filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

“How!” cried I to myself, “shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy? I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy.”

With such reflections I laboured to become more cheerful: but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort, which is itself painful. As I was sitting, therefore, in a corner of the gaol, in a pensive posture, one of my fellow-prisoners came up, and sitting by me entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it; for if good, I might profit by his instructions; if bad, he might be assisted by mine.

I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense, but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called; or, more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself

with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

“That’s unfortunate,” cried he, “as you are allowed nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman; and, as I have been one myself in my time, part of my bedclothes are heartily at your service.”

I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a gaol, in misfortunes; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, “that the sage ancients seemed to understand the value of company in affliction, when he said, *Ton kosmon aire, ei dos ton etairon*; and in fact,” continued I, “what is the world if it affords only solitude?”

“You talk of the world, sir,” returned my fellow-prisoner; “the world is in its dotage, and yet the cosmogony, or creation of the world, has puzzled the philosophers of every age. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world! Sanchoniathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. The latter has these words: *Anarchon arakai atelutaion to pan*, which implies——” —“I ask pardon, sir,” cried I, “for interrupting so much learning; but I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had the

pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson?" At this demand he only sighed. "I suppose you must recollect," resumed I, "one Doctor Primrose, from whom you bought a horse."

He now at once recollected me, for the gloominess of the place and the approaching night had prevented his distinguishing my features before. "Yes, sir," returned Mr. Jenkinson. "I remember you perfectly well: I bought a horse, but forgot to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamborough is the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at the next assizes; for he intends to swear positively against me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, sir, I ever deceived you, or indeed any man; for you see," continued he, pointing to his shackles, "what my tricks have brought me to."

"Well, sir," replied I, "your kindness in offering me assistance, when you could expect no return; shall be repaid with my endeavours to soften or totally suppress Mr. Flamborough's evidence, and I will send my son to him for that purpose the first opportunity: nor do I in the least doubt but he will comply with my request: and as to my own evidence, you need be under no uneasiness about that."

“Well, sir,” cried he, “all the return I can make shall be yours. You shall have more than half my bed-clothes to-night, and I’ll take care to stand your friend in the prison, where I think I have some influence.”

I thanked him, and could not avoid being surprised at the present youthful change in his aspect; for at the time I had seen him before he appeared at least sixty. “Sir,” answered he, “you are little acquainted with the world. I had at that time false hair, and have learned the art of counterfeiting every age from seventeen to seventy. Ah, sir! had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade, that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that, perhaps, when you least expect it.”

We were now prevented from further conversation by the arrival of the gaoler’s servants, who came to call over the prisoners’ names, and lock up for the night. A fellow also with a bundle of straw for my bed attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage into a room paved like the common prison, and in one corner of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by my

fellow-prisoner ; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my heavenly Corrector, I laid myself down and slept with the utmost tranquillity until morning.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



CHAPTER XXVI.

A reformation in the gaol—To make laws complete, they should reward as well as punish.

THE next morning early I was awakened by my family, whom I found in tears at my bedside. The gloomy appearance of everything about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their sorrow, assuring them I had never slept with greater tranquillity, and next inquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two to lodge my family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed, but could only find one apartment, which was hired at a small expense, for his mother and sisters; the gaoler with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the prison with

me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lie in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

“Well,” cried I, “my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this room, dark as it appears.”

“No, papa,” says Dick, “I am not afraid to lie anywhere where you are.”

“And I,” says Bill, who was yet but four years old, “love every place best that my papa is in.”

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly directed to watch her sister's declining health; my wife was to attend me; my little boys were to read to me: “And as for you, my son,” continued I, “it is by the labour of your hands we must all hope to be supported. Your wages as a day labourer will be fully sufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength, and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes; for it, must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare then

this evening to look out for work against to-morrow, and bring home every night what money you earn for our support."

Having thus instructed him, and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there when the execrations, lewdness, and brutality that invaded me on every side, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches who, finding all mankind in open arms against them, were labouring to make themselves a future and tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and blotted my own uneasiness from my mind. It even appeared a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I resolved therefore, once more to return, and in spite of their contempt, to give them my advice, and conquer them by perseverance. Going therefore among them again, I informed Mr. Jenkinson of my design, at which he laughed heartily, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good humour, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for

mirth but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service, with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking, and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might amend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them than to reprove. I previously observed that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; but I was their fellow-prisoner, and now got nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane; because they got nothing by it, and might lose a great deal: "For be assured, my friends," cried I, "(for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship), though you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day, it would not put one penny in your purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how scurvily he uses you? He has given you nothing here, you find, but a

mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and, by the best accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter.

“If used ill in our dealings with one man, we naturally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while, then, just to try how you may like the usage of another Master, who gives you fair promises, at least, to come to Him? Surely, my friends, of all stupidity in the world, his must be the greatest, who, after robbing a house, runs to the thief-takers for protection. And yet how are you more wise? You are seeking comfort from one that has already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious being than any thief-taker of them all; for they only decoy and then hang you; but he decoys and hangs, and what is worst of all, will not let you loose after the hangman has done.”

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my further acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture next day, and actually conceived some hope of making a reformation here; for it had ever been my opinion, that no man was past the hours of amendment, every heart lying open to

the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife prepared a frugal meal, while Mr. Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure, as he was kind enough to express it, of my conversation. He had not yet seen my family, for as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson at the first interview, therefore, seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her pensive air contributed to heighten, and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

"Alas! doctor," cried he, "these children are too handsome and too good for such a place as this."

"Why, Mr. Jenkinson," replied I, "thank Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in morals, and if they be good it matters little for the rest."

"I fancy, sir," returned my fellow-prisoner, "that it must give you a great comfort to have all this little family about you."

"A comfort, Mr. Jenkinson!" replied I, "yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be with-

out them for all the world; for they can make a dungeon seem a palace. There is but one way in this life of wounding my happiness, and that is by injuring them."

"I am afraid, then, sir," cried he, "that I am in some measure culpable; for I think I see here (looking at my son Moses) one that I have injured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven."

My son immediately recollected his voice and features, though he had before seen him in disguise, and taking him by the hand; with a smile forgave him. "Yet," continued he, "I can't help wondering at what you could see in my face, to think me a proper mark for deception."

"My dear sir," returned the other, "it was not your face, but your white stockings, and the black riband in your hair, that allured me. But, no disparagement to your parts, I have deceived wiser men than you in my time; and yet with all my tricks the blockheads have been too many for me at last."

"I suppose," cried my son, "that the narrative of such a life as yours must be extremely instructive and amusing."

"Not much of either," returned Mr. Jenkinson. "Those relations which describe the tricks

and vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicion in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time at his journey's end.

“Indeed, I think from my own experience, that the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was thought cunning from my very childhood; when but seven years old the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning that no one would trust me. Thus I was at last obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of detection. I used often to laugh at your honest simple neighbour Flamborough, and one way or another generally cheated him once a year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion, and grew rich, while I still continued tricky and cunning, and was poor without the consolation of being honest. “However,” continued he, “let me know your case, and what has brought you here; perhaps, though

I have not skill to avoid a gaol myself, I may extricate my friends."

In compliance with his curiosity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my present troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my story, and pausing some minutes, he slapped his forehead, as if he had hit upon something material, and took his leave, saying he would try what could be done.



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CHAPTER XXVII.

The same subject continued.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the schemes I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alleging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

“Excuse me,” returned I, “these people, however fallen, are still men; and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected returns to enrich the giver’s bosom; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but in my opinion the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne.

Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them I will ; perhaps they will not all despise me ; perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulf, and that will be great gain : for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul ?”

Thus saying, I left them and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival ; and each prepared with some gaol-trick to play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry “ Amen ” in such an affected tone as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slyly picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest ; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dexterously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous group of little beings could do, but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while what was serious would

be permanent. My design succeeded, and in less than six days some were penitent, and all were attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling, and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco-stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobaccoists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and, when manufactured, sold by my appointment; so that each earned something every day; a trifle indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus in less than a fortnight I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reformation than severity; that it would seem convinced that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Then, instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which enclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands; we should see, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance, if guilty, or new motives to virtue, if innocent. And this, but not the increasing punishments, is the way to mend a state; nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shown a disregard for the life of another. Against such all nature rises in arms, but it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as by that the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If, then, I have any right, it

must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life, any more than to take it away, as it is not his own. And, besides, the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a trifling inconvenience, since it is far better that two men should live than that one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men is equally so between a hundred and a hundred thousand; for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that reason speaks, and untutored nature says the same thing. Savages that are directed by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of each other; they seldom shed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace; and in all commencing governments, that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarcely any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community that penal laws, which are in the hands of the

rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age; and as if our property were become dearer in proportion as it increased; as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extensive our fears; all our possessions are paled up with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

I cannot tell whether it is from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should show more convicts in a year than half the dominions of Europe united. Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When by indiscriminate penal laws a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no distinction in the penalty the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality: thus the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished then, that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting away wretches as useless before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into

vengeance—it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant, of the people. We should then find that creatures, whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner; we should then find that wretches, now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger; that as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too; that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

Happiness and misery rather the result of prudence than of virtue in this life; temporal evils or felicities being regarded by Heaven as things merely in themselves trifling, and unworthy its care in the distribution.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not since my arrival been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment leaning on her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled, and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

"I am glad to see thee, my dear," cried I, "but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me, to

permit disappointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child, and we may yet see happier days."

"You have ever, sir," replied she, "been kind to me, and it adds to my pain that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved for me here, and I long to be rid of a place where I have only found distress. Indeed, sir, I wish you would make a proper submission to Mr. Thornhill; it may in some measure induce him to pity you, and it will give me relief in dying."

"Never, child," replied I, "never will I be brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute; for though the world may look upon your offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a mark of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am no way miserable in this place, however dismal it may seem; and be assured that while you continue to bless me by living, he shall never have my consent to make you more wretched by marrying another."

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy, in refusing a submission which promised to give me

freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family were not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. "Besides," added he, "I don't know if it be just thus to obstruct the union of man and wife, which you do at present, by refusing to consent to a match which you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy."

"Sir," replied I, "you are unacquainted with the man that oppresses us. I am very sensible that no submission I can make could procure me liberty even for an hour. I am told that even in this very room a debtor of his, no later than last year, died for want. But though my submission and approbation could transfer me from hence to the most beautiful apartment he is possessed of, yet I would grant neither, as something whispers me that it would be giving a sanction to adultery. While my daughter lives, no other marriage of his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she removed, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from any resentment of my own, to attempt putting asunder those who wish for a union. No; villain as he is, I should then wish him married, to prevent the consequences of his future debaucheries. But now should I not be the most cruel of all fathers to sign an instrument

which must send my child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison myself; and thus, to escape one pang, break my child's heart with a thousand?"

He acquiesced in the justice of this answer, but could not avoid observing, that he feared my daughter's life was already too much wasted to keep me long a prisoner. "However," continued he, "though you refuse to submit to the nephew, I hope you have no objection to laying your case before the uncle, who has the first character in the kingdom for everything that is just and good. I would advise you to send him a letter by the post, intimating all his nephew's ill usage, and, my life for it, that in three days you shall have an answer." I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about complying: but I wanted paper, and unluckily all our money had been laid out that morning in provisions: however, he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days I was in a state of anxiety to know what reception my letter might meet with; but in the meantime was frequently solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions rather than remain here, and every hour received repeated accounts of the decline of my daughter's health. The third day and the fourth arrived,

but I received no answer to my letter: the complaints of a stranger against a favourite nephew were no way likely to succeed; so that these hopes soon vanished like all my former. My mind, however, still supported itself, though confinement and bad air began to make a visible alteration in my health, and my arm that had suffered in the fire grew worse. My children, however, sat by me, and, while I was stretched on my straw, read to me by turns, or listened and wept at my instructions. But my daughter's health declined faster than mine: every message from her contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain. The fifth morning after I had written the letter which was sent to Sir William Thornhill, I was alarmed with an account that she was speechless. Now it was that confinement was truly painful to me; my soul was bursting from its prison to be near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven! Another account came—she was expiring, and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-prisoner some time after came with the last account, he bade me be patient—she was dead! The next morning he returned and found me with my two little ones, now

my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They entreated to read to me, and bade me not to cry, for I was now too old to weep. "And is not my sister an angel now, papa?" cried the eldest; "and why then are you sorry for her? I wish I were an angel, out of this frightful place, if my papa were with me."—"Yes," added my youngest darling, "heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than this; and there are none but good people there, and the people here are very bad."

Mr. Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle, by observing that, now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride and resentment of my own to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now, both by reason and justice, obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

"Heaven be praised!" replied I, "there is no pride left me now. I should detest my own heart, if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to

present him up an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, sir, I have no resentment now; and though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures, though he has wrung my heart, for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage, and if this submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that if I have done him an injury I am sorry for it."

Mr. Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr. Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious: but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us that he stepped up in the humblest manner, and delivered the letter, which, when Mr. Thornhill had read, he said that all submission was now too late and unnecessary: that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved:

and, as for the rest, that all future applications should be directed to his attorney, not to him. He observed, however, that as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

“Well, sir,” said I, to my fellow-prisoner, “you now discover the temper of the man that oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but, let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it; this expectation cheers my afflictions, and though I leave a helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken; some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them, for the sake of their poor father, and some may charitably relieve them for the sake of their Heavenly Father.”

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day before, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak. “Why, my love,” cried I, “why will you thus increase my afflictions by your own? What though no submission can turn our severe master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child,

-yet still you will find comfort in your other children when I shall be no more."—"We have indeed lost," returned she, "a darling child!—My Sophia, my dearest, is gone—snatched from us, carried off by ruffians."

"How, madam!" cried my fellow-prisoner. "Miss Sophia carried off by villains! Sure it cannot be!"

She could only answer me with a fixed look and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoners' wives, who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account; she informed us that as my wife, my daughter, and herself were taking a walk together on the great road a little way out of the village, a postchaise and pair drove up to them, and instantly stopped. Upon which a well-dressed man, but not Mr. Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and forcing her in, bid the postillion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

"Now," cried I, "the sum of my miseries is made up; nor is it in the power of anything on earth to give me another pang. What! not one left! not to leave me one! the monster! the child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall. Not

to leave me one !”—“ Alas, my husband !” said my wife, “ you seem to want comfort more than I. Our distresses are great ; but I could bear this and more, if I saw you but easy. They may take away my children, and all the world, if they leave me but you.”

My son, who was present, endeavoured to moderate her grief ; he bade us take comfort, for he hoped that we might still have reason to be thankful. “ My child,” cried I, “ look round the world, and see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not every ray of comfort shut out, while all our bright prospects only lie beyond the grave ?”—“ My dear father,” returned he, “ I hope there is still something that will give you an interval of satisfaction, for I have a letter from my brother George.”—“ What of him, child ?” interrupted I, “ does he know our misery ? I hope my boy is exempt from any part of what his wretched family suffers.”—“ Yes, sir,” returned he, “ he is perfectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings nothing but good news ; he is the favourite of his colonel, who promises to procure him the very next lieutenantcy that becomes vacant.”

“ But are you sure of all this ?” cried my wife.
“ Are you sure that nothing ill has befallen my

boy?"—"Nothing indeed, madam," returned my son; "you shall see the letter, which will give you the highest pleasure: and, if anything can procure you comfort, I am sure that will."—"But are you sure," still repeated she, "that the letter is from himself, and that he is really so happy?"—"Yes, madam," replied he, "it is certainly his, and he will one day be the credit and the support of our family."—"Then I thank Providence," cried she, "that my last letter to him has miscarried. Yes, my dear," continued she, turning to me, "I will now confess, that though the hand of Heaven is sore upon us in other instances, it has been favourable here. By the last letter I wrote my son, which was in the bitterness of anger, I desired him, upon his mother's blessing, and if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his father and sister, and avenge our cause. But thanks be to Him who directs all things, it has miscarried, and I am at rest."—"Woman," cried I, "thou hast done very ill, and at another time my reproaches might have been more severe. Oh! what a tremendous gulf hast thou escaped, that would have buried both thee and him in endless ruin! Providence, indeed, has here been kinder to us than we to ourselves. It has reserved that son to be

the father and protector of my children when I shall be away. How unjustly did I complain of being stripped of every comfort, when still I hear that he is happy, and insensible of our afflictions; still kept in reserve to support his widowed mother, and to protect his brothers and sisters! —But what sisters has he left! he has no sisters now: they are all gone, robbed from me, and I am undone!” —“Father,” interrupted my son, “I beg you will give me leave to read this letter: I know it will please you.” Upon which, with my permission, he read as follows:

“HONOURED SIR,

“I have called off my imagination a few moments from the pleasures that surround me, to fix it upon objects that are still more pleasing, the dear little fireside at home. My fancy draws that harmless group as listening to every line of this with great composure. I view those faces with delight, which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or distress. But whatever your happiness may be at home, I am sure it will be some addition to it to hear that I am perfectly pleased with my situation, and every way happy here.

“Our regiment is countermanded, and is not

to leave the kingdom ; the colonel, who professes himself my friend, takes me with him to all companies where he is acquainted, and, after my first visit, I generally find myself received with increased respect upon repeating it. I danced last night with Lady G——, and, could I forget you know whom, I might perhaps be successful. But it is my fate still to remember others, while I am myself forgotten by most of my absent friends, and in this number I fear, sir, that I must consider you, for I have long expected the pleasure of a letter from home to no purpose. Olivia and Sophia, too, promised to write, but seem to have forgotten me. Tell them that they are two arrant little baggages, and that I am at this moment in a most violent passion with them ; yet still, I know not how, though I want to bluster a little, my heart is respondent only to softer emotions. Then tell them, sir, that after all I love them affectionately ; and be assured of my ever remaining

“ YOUR DUTIFUL SON.”

“ In all our miseries,” cried I, “ what thanks have we not to return, that one at least of our family is exempted from what we suffer ! Heaven be his guard, and keep my boy thus happy, to be

the support of his widowed mother, and the father of these two babes, which is all the patrimony I can now bequeath him? May he keep their innocence from the temptations of want, and be their conductor in the paths of honour!"

I had scarcely said these words, when a noise like that of a tumult seemed to proceed from the prison below; it died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the passage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the prison entered, holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons.

I looked with compassion upon the wretch as he approached me, but with horror when I found it was my own son! "My George! my George! and do I behold thee thus! wounded! fettered! Is this thy happiness! Is this the manner you return to me! Oh that this sight would break my heart at once, and let me die!"

"Where, sir, is your fortitude?" returned my son, with an intrepid voice. "I must suffer: my life is forfeited, let them take it."

I tried to restrain my passion for a few minutes in silence, but I thought I should have died with the effort. "Oh, my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee thus, and I cannot, cannot help it! In the moment that I thought thee blest, and

prayed for thy safety, to behold thee thus again, chained, wounded! And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see this day; to see my children all ultimately falling about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in the midst of ruin! May all the curses that ever sunk a soul fall heavy upon the murderer of my children! May he live, like me, to see——”

“Hold, sir,” replied my son, “or I shall blush for thee. How, sir! forgetful of your age, your holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of Heaven, and fling those curses upward, that must soon descend to crush thy own grey head with destruction! No, sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I must shortly suffer, to arm me with hope and resolution, to give me courage to drink of that bitterness which must shortly be my portion.”

“My child, you must not die! I am sure no offence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment. My George could never be guilty of any crime to make his ancestors ashamed of him.”

“Mine, sir,” returned my son, “is, I fear, an unpardonable one. When I received my mother’s letter from home, I immediately came down, determined to punish the betrayer of our honour,

and sent him an order to meet me, which he answered, not in person, but by despatching four of his domestics to seize me. I wounded one who first assaulted me, and I fear desperately; but the rest made me their prisoner. The coward is determined to put the law in execution against me: the proofs are undeniable: I have sent a challenge; and as I am the first aggressor upon the statute, I see no hopes of pardon. But you have often charmed me with your lessons of fortitude; let me now, sir, find them in your example."

"And, my son, you shall find them. I am now raised above this world, and all the pleasures it can produce. From this moment I break from my heart all the ties that held it down to earth, and will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes, my son, I will point out the way, and my soul shall guide yours in the ascent, for we will take our flight together. I now see and am convinced you can expect no pardon here, and I can only exhort you to seek it at that greatest tribunal where we both shall shortly answer. But let us not be niggardly in our exhortations, but let all our fellow-prisoners have a share. Good gaoler, let them be permitted to stand here, while I attempt to improve them." Thus saying, I made an effort to rise from my straw, but

wanted strength, and was able only to recline against the wall. The prisoners assembled themselves according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counsel; my son and his mother supported me on either side; I looked and saw that none were wanting, and then addressed them with the following exhortation.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalif
 CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA



CHAPTER XXIX.

The equal dealings of Providence demonstrated with regard to the happy and the miserable here below. That from the nature of pleasure and pain, the wretched must be repaid the balance of their sufferings in the life hereafter.

“MY friends, my children, and fellow-sufferers, when I reflect on the distribution of good and evil, here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer. Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for: but we daily see thousands who by suicide show us they have nothing left to hope. In this life, then, it appears that we cannot be entirely blest; but yet we may be completely miserable.

“Why man should thus feel pain; why our wretchedness should be requisite in the formation of universal felicity; why, when all other systems are made perfect by the perfection of their sub-

ordinate parts, the great system should require for its perfection parts that are not only subordinate to others, but imperfect in themselves—these are questions that never can be explained, and might be useless if known. On this subject Providence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, satisfied with granting us motives to consolation.

“In this situation man has called in the friendly assistance of philosophy; and Heaven, seeing the incapacity of that to console him, has given him the aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us that life is filled with comforts if we will but enjoy them; and on the other hand, that though we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short, and they will soon be over. Thus do these consolations destroy each other: for if life is a place of comfort, its shortness must be misery; and if it be long our griefs are protracted. Thus philosophy is weak; but religion comforts in a higher strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his mind, and preparing it for another abode. When the good man leaves the body, and is all a glorious mind, he will find he has been making himself a heaven of happiness here; while the wretch that has been maimed and contaminated by his vices, shrinks from his body with terror, and finds that

he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To religion, then, we must hold in every circumstance of life for our truest comfort; for, if already we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending; and, if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think that there is a place of rest. Thus, to the fortunate, religion holds out a continuance of bliss to the wretched, a change from pain.

“But though religion is very kind to all men, it has promised peculiar rewards to the unhappy; the sick, the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and the prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in our sacred law. The Author of our religion everywhere professes himself the wretch's friend; and, unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all his caresses upon the forlorn. The unthinking have censured this as partiality, as a preference without merit to deserve it. But they never reflect, that it is not in the power even of Heaven itself to make the offer of unceasing felicity as great a gift to the unhappy as to the miserable. To the first, eternity is but a single blessing, since at most it but increases what they already possess. To the latter, it is a double advantage; for it diminishes their pain here and rewards them with heavenly bliss hereafter.

“But Providence is in another respect kinder to the poor than to the rich ; for as it thus makes the life after death more desirable, so it smooths the passage there. The wretched have had a long familiarity with every face of terror. The man of sorrow lays himself quietly down, with no possessions to regret, and but few ties to stop his departure ; he feels only nature’s pang in the final separation, and this in no way greater than he has often fainted under before ; for, after a certain degree of pain, every new breach that death opens in the constitution, nature kindly covers with insensibility.

“Thus Providence has given to the wretched two advantages over the happy in this life—greater felicity in dying, and in heaven all that superiority of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoyment. And this superiority, my friends, is no small advantage, and seems to be one of the pleasures of the poor man in the parable ; for though he was already in heaven, and felt all the raptures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an addition to his happiness, that he had once been wretched, and now was comforted ; that he had known what it was to be miserable, and now felt what it was to be happy.

“Thus, my friends, you see religion does what

philosophy could never do: it shows the equal dealings of heaven to the happy and the unhappy, and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the same standard. It gives to both rich and poor the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the endless satisfaction of knowing what it was once to be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity hereafter; and even though this should be called a small advantage, yet, being an eternal one, 'it must make up by duration what the temporal happiness of the great may have exceeded by intensesness.

“These are, therefore, the consolations which the wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in which they are above the rest of mankind; in other respects they are below them. They who would know the miseries of the poor, must see life, and endure it. To declaim on the temporal advantages they enjoy, is only repeating what none either believe or practise. The men who have the necessaries of living, are not poor; and they who want them, must be miserable. Yes, my friends, we must be miserable. No vain efforts of a refined imagination can soothe the wants of nature, can give elastic sweetness to the

dank vapour of a dungeon, or ease to the throbbings of a broken heart. Let the philosopher from his couch of softness tell us, that we can resist all these. Alas! the effort by which we resist them is still the greatest pain. Death is slight, and any man may sustain it; but torments are dreadful, and these no man can endure.

“To us, then, my friends, the promises of happiness in heaven should be peculiarly dear, for if our reward be in this life alone, we are, indeed, of all men the most miserable. When I look round these gloomy walls, made to terrify, as well as to confine us; this light, that only serves to show the horrors of the place; those shackles, that tyranny has imposed, or crime made necessary; when I survey these emaciated looks, and hear those groans: oh, my friends, what a glorious exchange would heaven be for these! To fly through regions unconfined as air—to bask in the sunshine of eternal bliss—to carol over endless hymns of praise—to have no master to threaten or insult us, but the form of Goodness Himself for ever in our eyes: when I think of these things, death becomes the messenger of very glad tidings; when I think of these things, his sharpest arrow becomes the staff of my support; when I think of these things, what is

there in life worth having? when I think of these things, what is there that should not be spurned away? Kings in their palaces should groan for such advantages; but we, humbled as we are, should yearn for them.

“And shall these things be ours? Ours they will certainly be, if we but try for them; and what is a comfort, we are shut out from many temptations that would retard our pursuit. Only let us try for them, and they will certainly be ours; and what is still a comfort, shortly too; for if we look back on a past life, it appears but a very short span; and whatever we may think of the rest of life, it will yet be found of less duration: as we grow older the days seem to grow shorter, and our intimacy with time ever lessens the perception of his stay. Then let us take comfort now, for we shall soon be at our journey's end; we shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by Heaven upon us; and though death, the only friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks the weary traveller with the view, and like the horizon still flies before him; yet the time will certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of the world shall no more tread us to

the earth; when we shall think with pleasure of our sufferings below; when we shall be surrounded with all our friends, or such as deserved our friendship; when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to crown all, unending."



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XXX.

Happier prospects begin to appear—Let us be inflexible, and fortune will at last change in our favour.

WHEN I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the gaoler, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty, observing, that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to visit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency, and, grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again therefore laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bedside reading, when Mr. Jenkinson, entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter: for that she was seen by a person about two hours before in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and

seemed as if returning to town. He had scarcely delivered this news, when the gaoler came with looks of haste and pleasure to inform me that my daughter was found! Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr. Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news my dearest girl entered, and, with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also showed her pleasure.

"Here, papa," cried the charming girl, "here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery; to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety——" A kiss from Mr. Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than hers, interrupted what she was going to add.

"Ah! Mr. Burchell!" cried I, "this is but a wretched habitation you find us in; and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend: we have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repented of our ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face; yet I hope you'll

forgive me as I was deceived by a base, ungenerous wretch, who under the mask of friendship has undone me."

"It is impossible," replied Mr. Burchell, "that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and, as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it."

"It was ever my conjecture," cried I, "that your mind was noble; but now I find it so. But tell me, my dear child, how thou hast been relieved, or who the ruffians were that carried thee away."

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "as to the villain who carried me off I am yet ignorant. For as my mamma and I were walking out he came behind us, and almost before I could call for help, forced me into the post-chaise, and in an instant the horses drove away. I met several on the road to whom I cried out for assistance, but they disregarded my entreaties. In the meantime the ruffian himself used every art to hinder me from crying out; he flattered and threatened me by turns, and swore that, if I continued but silent, he intended no harm. In the meantime I had broken the canvas that he had drawn up, and whom should I perceive at some distance but

your old friend Mr. Burchell, walking along with his usual swiftness, with the great stick for which we used so much to ridicule him! As soon as we came within hearing, I called out to him by name, and entreated his help. I repeated my exclamations several times, upon which, with a very loud voice, he bade the postillion stop; but the boy took no notice, but drove on with still greater speed. I now thought he could never overtake us, when in less than a minute I saw Mr. Burchell come running up by the side of the horses, and with one blow knocked the postillion to the ground. The horses, when he was fallen, soon stopped of themselves, and the ruffian stepping out, with oaths and menaces, drew his sword, and ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr. Burchell running up shivered his sword to pieces, and then pursued him for near a quarter of a mile; but he made his escape. I was by this time come out myself, willing to assist my deliverer, but he soon returned to me in triumph. The postillion, who was recovered, was going to make his escape too: but Mr. Burchell ordered him at his peril to mount again, and drive back to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound he had received seemed to me to be at least dangerous.

He continued to complain of the pain as we drove along, so that he at last excited Mr. Burchell's compassion ; who, at my request, exchanged him for another at an inn where we called on our return."

"Welcome, then," cried I, "my child, and thou her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes. Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts are ready to receive you. And now, Mr. Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think her a recompense she is yours : if you can stoop to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take her, obtain her consent, as I know you have her heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you, sir, that I give you no small treasure ; she has been celebrated for beauty, it is true, but that is not my meaning—I give you a treasure in her mind."

"But I suppose, sir," cried Mr. Burchell, "that you are apprised of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves !"

"If your present objection," replied I, "be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist ; but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you ; and if I could give her thousands, and thousands sought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice."

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal; and without the least reply to my offer, he demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn; to which being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me; adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once; and though in a prison, he was never more disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the gaoler, who seemed remarkably assiduous; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well-dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor brother's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful, the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced,

I requested also that Mr. Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted; and the gaoler granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons were no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr. Burchell, in the meantime, asked if my son's name was George; to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr. Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. "Come on," cried I, "my son; though we have fallen very low, yet Providence has been pleased to grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy sister is restored to us, and there is her deliverer; to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet having a daughter; give him, my boy, the hand of friendship—he deserves our warmest gratitude."

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance. "My dear brother," cried his sister, "why don't you thank my good deliverer? the brave should ever love each other."

He still continued his silence and astonishment; till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and assuming all his native dignity,

desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen anything so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity; yet there is a still greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, "I again find," said he, "unthinking boy, that the same crime——" But here he was interrupted by one of the gaoler's servants, who came to inform us that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon. "Bid the fellow wait," cried our guest, "till I shall have leisure to receive him:" and then turning to my son, "I again find, sir," proceeded he, "that you are guilty of the same offence for which you had once my reproof, and for which the law is now preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, perhaps, that a contempt for your own life gives you a right to take that of another: but where, sir, is the difference between the duellist, who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer, who acts with greater security? Is it any diminution of the

gamester's fraud, when he alleges that he has staked a counter?"

"Alas, sir!" cried I, "whoever you are, pity the poor misguided creature; for what he has done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who, in the bitterness of her resentment, required him, upon her blessing, to avenge her quarrel. Here, sir, is the letter which will serve to convince you of her imprudence, and diminish his guilt."

He took the letter, and hastily read it over. "This," said he, "though not a perfect excuse, is such a palliation of his fault as induces me to forgive him. And now, sir," continued he, kindly taking my son by the hand, "I see you are surprised at finding me here; but I have often visited prisons upon occasions less interesting. I am now come to see justice done a worthy man, for whom I have the most sincere esteem. I have long been a disguised spectator of thy father's benevolence. I have at his little dwelling enjoyed respect uncontaminated by flattery, and have received that happiness which courts could not give from the amusing simplicity round his fireside. My nephew has been apprised of my intentions of coming here, and I find he is arrived; it would be wronging him and you to condemn him without examination; if there be injury

there shall be redress; and this I may say without boasting, that none have ever taxed the injustice of Sir William Thornhill."

We now found that the personage whom we had so long entertained as a harmless, amusing companion was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarcely any were strangers. The poor Mr. Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction; who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah, sir," cried my wife, with piteous aspect, "how is it possible that I can ever have your forgiveness? the slights you received from me the last time I had the honour of seeing you at our house, and the jokes which I so audaciously threw out—these, sir, I fear, can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he with a smile, "if you had your joke, I had my answer.

I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as yours. To say the truth, I know nobody whom I am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fellow who so frightened my little girl here! I had not even time to examine the rascal's person, so as to describe him in an advertisement. Can you tell me, Sophia, my dear; whether you should know him again!"

"Indeed, sir," replied she, "I cannot be positive; yet now I recollect, he had a large mark over one of his eyebrows."—"I ask pardon, madam," interrupted Jenkinson, who was by, "but be so good as to inform me if the fellow wore his own red hair."—"Yes, I think so," cried Sophia.—"And did your honour," continued he, turning to Sir William, "observe the length of his legs?"—"I can't be sure of their length," cried the baronet, "but I am convinced of their swiftness; for he outran me, which is what I thought few men in the kingdom could have done."—"Please your honour," cried Jenkinson, "I know the man; it is certainly the same; the best runner in England; he has beaten Pinwire, of Newcastle; Timothy Baxter is his name: I know him perfectly, and the very place of his retreat at this moment. If your honour will bid Mr. Gaoler let two of his men go with

me, I'll engage to produce him to you in an hour at farthest." Upon this the gaoler was called, who instantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him. "Yes, please your honour," replied the gaoler, "I know Sir William Thornhill well; and everybody that knows anything of him will desire to know more of him."—"Well, then," said the baronet, "my request is, that you will permit this man and two of your servants to go upon a message by my authority, and as I am in the commission of the peace, I undertake to secure you."—"Your promise is sufficient," replied the other; "and you may at a minute's warning send them over England whenever your honour thinks fit."

In pursuance of the gaoler's compliance, Jenkinson was despatched in pursuit of Timothy Baxter, while we were amused with the assiduity of our youngest boy Bill, who had just come in and climbed up to Sir William's neck in order to kiss him. His mother was immediately going to chastise his familiarity, but the worthy man prevented her; and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon his knee, "What, Bill, you chubby rogue!" cried he, "do you remember your old friend Burchell? And Dick, too, my honest veteran, are you here? you shall find I have not

forgot you." So saying, he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost cold; but previously, my arm still continuing painful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made the study of physic his amusement, and was more than moderately skilled in the profession: this being sent to an apothecary, who lived in the place, my arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the gaoler himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour; with which request the baronet complied, and desired Mr. Thornhill to be introduced.



CHAPTER XXXI.

Former benevolence now repaid with unexpected interest.

MR. THORNHILL made his entrance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. "No fawning, sir, at present," cried the baronet with a look of severity; "the only way to my heart is by the road of honour; but here I see only complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced as a recompense for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into prison, perhaps but for resenting the insult—his son, too, whom you feared to face as a man——"

"Is it possible, sir," interrupted his nephew, "that my uncle should object that as a crime which his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me to avoid?"

“Your rebuke,” cried Sir William, “is just; you have acted in this instance prudently and well, though not quite as your father would have done: my brother, indeed, was the soul of honour, but thou—yes, you have acted in this instance perfectly right, and it has my warmest approbation.”

“And I hope,” said his nephew, “that the rest of my conduct will not be found to deserve censure. I appeared, sir, with this gentleman’s daughter at some places of public amusement; thus, what was levity, scandal called by a harsher name, and it was reported that I had debauched her. I waited on her father in person, willing to clear the thing to his satisfaction, and he received me only with insult and abuse. As for the rest, with regard to his being here, my attorney and steward can best inform you, as I commit the management of business entirely to them. If he has contracted debts, and is unwilling, or even unable, to pay them, it is their business to proceed in this manner; and I see no hardship or injustice in pursuing the most legal means of redress.”

“If this,” cried Sir William, “be as you have stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your offences; and though your conduct might have

been more generous in not suffering this gentleman to be oppressed by subordinate tyranny; yet it has been at least equitable."

"He cannot contradict a single particular," replied the squire; "I defy him to do so, and several of my servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, sir," continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him: "thus, sir, my own innocence is vindicated: but though at your entreaty I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem excite a resentment that I cannot govern; and this, too, at a time when his son was actually preparing to take away my life: this, I say, was such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take its course. I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to prove it; one of my servants has been wounded dangerously; and even though my uncle himself should dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it."

"Thou monster!" cried my wife, "hast thou not had vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy feel thy cruelty? I hope that good Sir William will protect us, for my son is as inno-

cent as a child ; I am sure he is, and never did harm to man."

"Madam," replied the good man, "your wishes for his safety are not greater than mine ; but I am sorry to find his guilt too plain, and if my nephew persists——" But the appearance of Jenkinson and the gaoler's two servants now called off our attention, who entered hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dressed, and answering the description already given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter. "Here," cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, "here we have him : and, if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn this is one."

The moment Mr. Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink backward with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn ; but Jenkinson, who perceived his design, stopped him. "What, squire," cried he, "are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter ? But this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved that we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your honour," continued he, turning to Sir William, "has already confessed all. This is the gentleman

reported to be so dangerously wounded; he declares that it was Mr. Thornhill who first put him upon this affair; that he gave him the clothes he now wears to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with the post-chaise. The plan was laid between them that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that there he should threaten and terrify her; but Mr. Thornhill was to come in in the meantime, as if by accident, to her rescue, and that they should fight awhile, and then he was to run off, by which Mr. Thornhill would have the better opportunity of gaining her affections himself under the character of her defender.

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew, and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account; concluding, that Mr. Thornhill had often declared to him that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

“Heavens!” cried Sir William, “what a viper have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond of public justice, too, as he seemed to be! But he shall have it—secure him, Mr. Gaoler—yet hold, I fear there is no legal evidence to detain him.”

Upon this, Mr. Thornhill, with the utmost

humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him: but that his servants should be examined. "Your servants," replied Sir William; "wretch! call them yours no longer; but come, let us hear what those fellows have to say; let his butler be called."

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master's looks that all his power was now over. "Tell me," cried Sir William sternly, "have you ever seen your master and that fellow dressed up in his clothes in company together?"—"Yes, please your honour," cried the butler, "a thousand times: he was the man that always brought him his ladies."—"How!" interrupted young Mr. Thornhill, "this to my face?"—"Yes," replied the butler; "or to any man's face. To tell you a truth, Master Thornhill, I never either loved you or liked you, and I don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind."—"Now then," cried Jenkinson, "tell his honour whether you know anything of me."—"I can't say," replied the butler, "that I know much good of you. The night that gentleman's daughter was deluded to our house, you were one of them."—"So, then," cried Sir William, "I find you have brought a very fine

witness to prove your innocence; thou stain to humanity! to associate with such wretches! But," continuing his examination, "you tell me, Mr. Butler, that this was the person who brought him this old gentleman's daughter."—"No, please your honour," replied the butler, "he did not bring her, for the squire himself undertook that business; but he brought the priest that pretended to marry them."

"It is but too true," cried Jenkinson, "I cannot deny it; that was the employment assigned to me; and I confess it to my confusion."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the worthy baronet, "how every new discovery of his villainy alarms me! All his guilt is now too plain, and I find his present persecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge: at my request, Mr. Gaoler, set this young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to me for the consequences. I'll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the magistrate who has committed him. But where is the unfortunate young lady herself? let her appear to confront this wretch; I long to know by what arts he has seduced her. Entreat her to come in. Where is she?"

"Ah! sir," said I, "that question stings me

to the heart; I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries——” Another interruption here prevented me; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was the next day to have been married to Mr. Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentleman, her father, were passing through the town on their way to her aunt's, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr. Thornhill should be consummated at her house; but, stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there, from the window, that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and, instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learnt from him some account of our misfortunes, but was still kept ignorant of young Mr. Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of her going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual; she desired the child to conduct her, which he did: and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on without a reflection on those

accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives! How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed! The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishing to her beauty. "Indeed, my dear Mr. Thornhill," cried she to the squire, who she supposed was come here to succour and not to oppress us, "I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family so dear to us both; you know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever esteem as you can. But I find that, like your uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in secret."

"He find pleasure in doing good!" cried Sir William, interrupting her: "no, my dear, his pleasures are as base as he is. You see in him,