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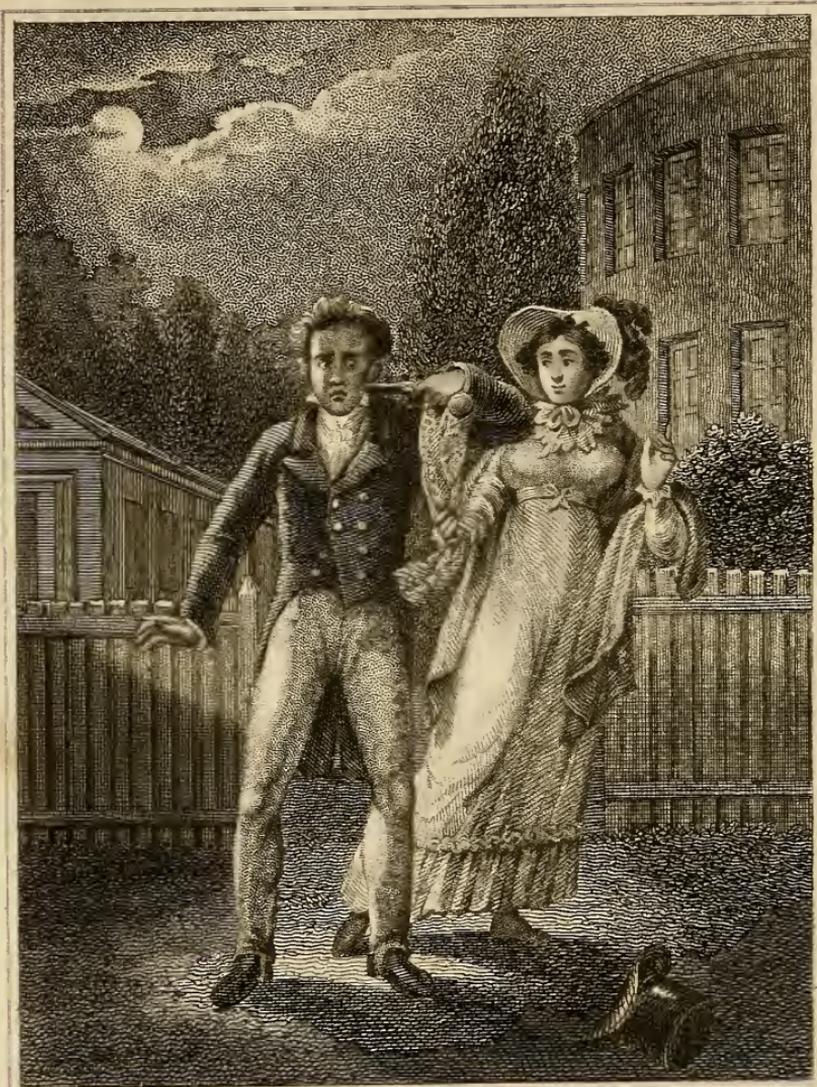


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SUICIDE
AND ITS ANTIDOTES.

MEMORANDUM
OF THE BOARD

1409
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Drawn by J. Fussell.

Engraved by R. Cooper.

Suicide Providentially Arrested.

Page 38.

J. Robins & C^o London. Nov^r 8. 1824.

SUICIDE

AND ITS ANTIDOTES,

A SERIES OF

ANECDOTES AND ACTUAL NARRATIVES,

WITH

SUGGESTIONS ON MENTAL DISTRESS.

BY THE

REV. SOLOMON PIGGOTT, A. M. OF OXFORD.

Domestic Chaplain to Viscount Lord Carlton, Rector of Dunstable,
&c. &c. Author of Guide for Families, or Sacred Truth;
The Reflector, or Christian Advocate; &c. &c.

‘Think what you are doing!
Consider, and live!’

COWPER.

London:

PUBLISHED BY J. ROBINS AND CO. IVY LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1824.

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AND LIST OF CONTENTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO, ILL., 1911

BY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

1911

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.

1911

TO JOHN EARL OF ELDON,

LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN.

MY LORD,

COULD law regulate the aberrations of intellect, and compel the melancholy to exertion—could power reach the human mind, stay the incipient encroachments of delusion, and arrest lunacy in its progress—could the enactments of the one and the inflictions of the other deter from crime in general—and from suicide, the worst of all

—there would have been no necessity for the following pages; your Lordship would officially have performed the task which your benevolence is ever ready to attempt, and in you the dejected and the lunatic would have found not only a guardian, but a physician.

But to cure the distempers of the mind, and to remove the hypochondriacal depressions to which our constitution is subject from a thousand causes, requires the gentle suggestions of a friend, and the ratiocinations of prudence and experience. What the law, therefore, with all its wisdom, cannot effect, is humbly attempted in this work by methods which observation, history, natural reason, and religion, prescribe.

Allow me, therefore, with due deference, to dedicate this work of philanthropy to

your Lordship, as a Nobleman whose well-known character stands high in the estimation of those whose hearts feel for the unavoidable calamities of their fellow-men; but more particularly as the guardian of those who have lost their own powers of management.

Happy shall I feel myself if any of my observations shall approve themselves to your Lordship's discerning judgment, and if this humble effort of my pen should confirm that good opinion of my wish to be in some degree useful to the community, in Church and State, which your Lordship was led to entertain, when you lately preferred me to the important charge which I have now the honour to superintend. That I may approve myself the advocate of Christian truth, the friend of pure morality and social order, and the promoter of peace and harmony—and

that your Lordship may long share the choicest blessings of Heaven, and long live to witness the good effects of your discriminating benevolence—is the earnest wish of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

Most faithful, and

Very humble servant,

S. PIGGOTT.

PREFACE.

THE author has been insensibly led to compile this work on Suicide and its Antidotes from having been solicited, in his official capacity as Curate of Clerkenwell, to visit a young man, his parishioner, who was slowly recovering from the dreadful wounds which had been inflicted by a rash attempt at suicide; and from preaching, at his earnest request, a sermon on his providential deliverance, admonishing others to beware of the steps which precipitated him into this dreadful crime. This sermon, as might be expected; drew together an immense congregation, who listened to its de-

livery with solemn and almost breathless attention ; and the publication of it, under the title of 'Suicide Providentially Arrested,' excited considerable interest, and brought to the knowledge of the author several other cases : among which was that of the mother of a family in the parish of Clerkenwell, who, of her own accord, came to the author, and related to him her providential restoration from drowning, through the means used by the officers belonging to the Humane Society. The whole is narrated in the following work, and its moral effects are described in her heart and life.

The spread of the sermon into the midland counties occasioned the third narrative, that of a young lady, who was preserved from the intended crime of poisoning herself by sitting down to the perusal of the sermon before she took the deadly cup of oxalic acid, which she had prepared for self-destruction. The author has received the most ample confirmation of the truth of

all the circumstances related respecting these three individuals from the testimony of other persons acquainted with them, and from the mouth of two of the persons concerned. They are all now living, and ready to establish these accounts by their own attestations, if required.

The design of the present work, which has increased to an extent far beyond the author's original intention, is to present such striking pictures from real life as may excite the attention of the most phlegmatic, rouse the melancholy to alarm, or cheer the desponding with hope, that, by a full view of the gradual or sudden causes of suicide, the mind may be stirred up to seek for timely tranquillity from the considerations of reason, the suggestions of philosophy, and the heavenly consolations of religion—that, from a full and undisguised exhibition of the horrid nature of self-murder, and all its tremendous consequences, every human being who reads and

contemplates the terrific picture may be deterred from the perpetration of the atrocious deed; and that, by displaying the happy, the blessed consequences of a providential preservation from the crime, the agitated may look to Heaven for support, and seek their refuge there.

So numerous are the causes of mental and bodily distress, so much does the solitary mind brood over its fancied or its real ills, that it is wonderful no work has appeared to show the sufferers that they are not the only persons who have been the subjects of them. Sorrows, when divided, are greatly lessened, as well as joys, when imparted, are highly increased. It is proposed, therefore, by a detail of many cases of distress, to show the evils arising from indulging vexation or grief too long, and to point out the necessity of adopting timely remedies. We propose, in the following work, to reason some out of their melancholy, and, if possible, to laugh others out

of it; and to apply the higher principles of morality and religion to chase away this demon from the human breast. The instances of Sir Samuel Romilly, Lord Castle-reagh, Mr. Whitbread, and others of high station and dignity, prove to us that no station, rank, or honours, can elevate the possessors above the gloom of melancholy; and that no mental excellence is sufficient to shield poor man from the darts of trouble and calamity. But, perhaps, it may be in the power of sober argument, simple suggestions, and scriptural motives, to allay the tempests of the soul, and guide the shattered vessel into a quiet harbour. The attempt is not hopeless; philanthropy loudly calls for the trial, and with the smile of Heaven it may be crowned with success. The rash youth—the unhappy female—the restless politician—the impoverished merchant—the gloomy student—the heartless hypochondriac—the disappointed author—the ruined spendthrift—and the hopeless and romantic lover—may be won over to reason.

inspire hope under the most discouraging exigencies—to fortify the aching agitated heart with Christian principle—and to lead ‘the weary and heavy-laden’ to HIM ‘who alone can give rest to their souls.’

Northampton Square, London,

Nov. 1, 1824.

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S U I C I D E.

INTRODUCTION.

Objects of the Work stated—Reasons—Suicide of a Youth of fourteen Years of age—Attempted Suicide by Mr. Towers, of Kendal—Proposals to Governors of Lunatic Asylums.

‘WHY,’ says one, ‘write a book on Suicide?’ What! Are all pleasing subjects so exhausted that you must choose to take up your pen on a theme so horrible and appalling? Besides, you are writing for the instruction of youth! What have they to do with suicide? They are too fond of life to throw it away: they entertain the prospect of too many gay hopes to put the extinguisher upon the present existence, and to retire, as volunteers, into the darksome valley of the shadow of death! Youth are thoughtless, and it is your gloomy thoughtful misanthropes, your grey-headed sons of disappointment, who have recourse to a halter or a pistol.’ Softly, friend Critic. It is the thoughtlessness of

youth which exposes them to a crime, irremediable, in a fit of passion, disappointment, and revenge: it is the ignorance, the bad education, the heathen sentiments imbibed at our classical schools. The suicide heroes whom they have admired in the page of antiquity or on the stage—the want of religious principle and Christian sentiments—the infidelity of the age—their association with corrupt companions, with whom the sneer is indulged at the existence of an evil spiritual adversary, and bravado jests passed on a Hell and a Heaven;—these expose them to the temptation to commit every crime—even the last and worst—suicide! Our purpose, in the following collection of facts, histories, narratives, and examples, is to point out the precipice in time, that we may stop the course of adventurous youth before they rush to the brink; and, if possible, to persuade them to enter a safer path—even into the way of industry, sobriety, and peace—which may conduct them to reputation and eminence in this world, and to glory, honour, and immortality, in the world to come.

Nor is the present day without instances of juvenile suicide; in proof let the following quotation from the *Traveller* be examined:

‘Sunday, December 9, 1821, between eight and

nine o'clock, Charles Cartwright, about fifteen years of age, who resided with his parents in Museum Street, Bloomsbury, destroyed himself, in his father's house, under distressing circumstances. It appears that his father, a short time ago, procured for him a situation at a grocer's at the west end of the town; and, in the course of his employment, he met with a serious accident, which caused him to leave his situation: he subsequently became worse, and his spirits appeared to be much preyed upon. Sunday morning he was in his apartment along with his mother, who requested him to go and clean himself: he left her, but proceeded to the kitchen; and, in about half an hour afterwards, he was discovered by the servant suspended by a thin cord. He was instantly cut down, and a surgeon sent for; but the unfortunate youth was quite dead.'

The same paper contains the following record of a deed which has filled the whole town of Kendal with consternation:

'Mr. Towers, after returning from a visit with his wife, her mother, and another lady, deliberately walked into another room, and brought thence a double-barrelled pistol, with which he shot his wife through the head, who immediately fell down and expired. He then placed the pistol to his own

head, and fired ; but, although he fractured his skull, he is likely to recover. He had previously given indications of insanity.'

'We aim, too, to speak a word of timely advice to the impetuous, of encouragement to the desponding, of consolation to the afflicted. I have been led to make these efforts from examples which occurred under my own eye, and well known to a parish containing upwards of thirty-five thousand inhabitants, and by the especial desire of two individuals who were providentially delivered from desperate attempts at suicide, a particular account of whom shall be given in the course of this work.

The author could mention a living example of one of the most popular preachers of the present day in the metropolis, who met him in the street, and said, 'I have been reading your sermon on Suicide Providentially Arrested: Sir, it is a very useful work. People ought to be warned and cautioned against it: I myself have been twice tempted to suicide.' Upon accompanying him home, he said he was once tempted, before he knew religion, from a variety of agitating circumstances, which he could not make known without giving pain and offence to others; but this he could assure me, that religion came in to his aid, and rescued him from the dreadful deed :

and a second time, when he was tempted to self-murder, it was the all-powerful motives of religion which again arrested his hand. 'I do not care about its being known,' said he; 'I have often mentioned it myself in the pulpit, the only place where I wish to speak much of it.'

Though all the arguments and advice which I have to offer have been addressed to the rash, the melancholy, and the agitated, a thousand times, with stronger motives, with more powerful language, with more striking examples, than the following pages contain; yet something new, something bearing upon recent transactions, recording events which the present age has noticed, or should regard, may excite more prompt attention, and enkindle deeper interest in the heart. For these purposes I have compiled the following pages. My wish is that they may be read by those who need them; that parents and guardians, friends and relatives, governors of Bethlehems and lunatic asylums, may put this portable volume in every room where agitation, despondency, disappointment, passion, revenge, ennui, and infidel rashness, may chance to come; and that, when it meets the eye of sorrow, wildness, vacancy, or distress, its pages may convey a lesson of alarm and admoni-

tion, or instil the soothing cordials of consolation and support; and that, in its measure, it may contribute to prevent the monster, Suicide, any longer from stalking, with colossal stride, through our happy country, and involving widows, fathers, mothers, friends, and families, in shame, sorrow, and desolation.

CHAP. I.

CAUSES AND PREVENTIONS.

‘ We blame the weather for the disorder of our nerves.’

STERNE.

‘ Pericula mille sævæ urbis.’

‘ It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things.’

ARMSTRONG.

Suicide a Subject on which all need to be cautioned—Sir Samuel Romilly—Number of Suicides—November the Month for them—Influence of the Weather—Excitement of the Passions to be avoided—Predisposing Causes—Intemperance—Use of Opium—Infidelity—Dr. Reid’s Cautions respecting Nervous Affections—Examples.

SUICIDE is a crime which startles us at the sound. Commit suicide! Who thinks of it?—who dares to mention it? Reader, did you never, in a fit of vexation, perplexity, disappointment, passion, and revenge, think of it yourself? But who, of wise and good men, ever dreamt of it? Ah! we know not our hearts. *Obsta principiis.* The steps which lead to it are so remote and unsuspected—the moral and religious principles which should

guard us against it are so neglected—that men of the greatest worldly and scientific wisdom have been, for want of them, hurried to commit it. One earthly object gone on which they set their hearts, religious duties neglected, virtues unconfirmed, and principles unstrengthened by exercise, they have lost their balance, and fallen!

Who forgets the deplorable case of Sir Samuel Romilly? He had attained the meridian of a career of intellectual labour, wise administration, prudent management, and benevolent exertions to lessen the miseries of others: but, alas! he had not the wisdom or the fortitude to bear his own. The loss of a beloved wife, in whom his heart seemed bound up, left him in wretched vacancy without resource; and, in an hour of despondent melancholy, he committed suicide! His servant found him weltering in his blood, from a wound he had inflicted on himself with a razor. And how many have been seduced, from the example of one so eminent, to dismiss their souls to perdition, upon an illusive presumption of the innocency of self-murder!

Several obscure individuals, soon after this catastrophe, hastily trod the awful steps of this celebrated Senator, whose self-murder deprived the bar, the senate, and the nation, of talent and wisdom

requisite to promote that amelioration of our penal code which he declared so necessary. The mischievous effects of such an example are not to be appreciated. In imitation of persons of genius and attainment, others have foolishly rushed, from temporary distress, into interminable misery—have quitted a state where wrongs might be repaired, to enter on one where mistake is irreparable. Oh! would any who admire and are inclined to imitate these reputed sons of science inquire,—Have these suicides, with all their wisdom, ever studied the revealed wisdom of God—ever meditated seriously on the immortal soul—on the Father of spirits—and on a future state in eternity? Have they attended to the means of salvation? Have they set a good example in waiting upon God in his ordinances at church and in the family? Have they obeyed their Maker, served, and feared him—sought his favour, implored the grace of his Spirit, the support of his arm, and the consolations of his promises? If not, their wisdom was very defective, their abilities misapplied; and perhaps it would be found, upon investigation, that such characters pursued their researches into jurisprudence and chymistry, and anatomy and philosophy, on the holy day of God, and profaned it by business or professional studies. No wonder, then, that such have met with a

curse instead of a blessing, and exemplified the truth of the declaration—‘Them that honour me I will honour; but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.’* And it should teach us that ‘the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:’ and that ‘the knowledge of the HOLY is understanding.’*

With what astonishment has the late suicide of Lord Castlereagh—then the Marquis of Londonderry—filled the thinking part of the community! That a Senator with a head so cool, passions so well governed, political wisdom so profound,—who had attained the highest honours of the state, had gained the utmost confidence of his Sovereign, had been employed to adjust the balance of the civilized world—should be reduced, by care and anxieties, or by vexation and opposition, to such mental imbecility, that in a moment of irritation he should plunge a penknife into the jugular artery, and pour forth his life in an instant—proves that the highest prudence does not secure us always from the most abject folly, nor the loftiest talents raise us above the commission of the lowest deeds; and that science and fame, wealth and honours, are unable of themselves to inspire us with patience, fortitude, and trust in Providence. Such instances should teach us the supereminent value of religious prin-

* Sam. ii. 32.

† Prov. ix. 10.

principles, and preserve to us the lesson of inspiration: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; let not the rich man glory in his riches; let not the strong man glory in his strength; let not the mighty man glory in his might: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth the LORD, who exerciseth judgment and mercy.'*

Life is the gift of God: the Sovereign of the universe hath committed it to us to be employed for his glory, or to be endured, in submission to his will, till he recall it, and crown us with his approbation. Shall we rashly throw it away? However afflictive be our lot, the crucible of affliction is intended to refine us for another and a better world: but how seldom is this thought of in this thoughtless and infidel age! It would astonish any one who has not examined the subject to trace the number of suicides which every weekly paper details. Upon a calculation, made in the year 1790, by the Rev. Charles Moore, A. M. Vicar of Caxton, Kent, who wrote two quarto volumes on this subject, it appears that, of the number of suicides in all England, on whose bodies inquisitions have been taken, and the verdict of lunacy or *felo de se* found, from the proportion of its inhabitants to those of Kent, they amounted, then, to no less a total than one thousand every year, independent of those whose bodies

* Jerem. ix. 23.

are never brought before a coroner at all, or who have been sheltered from public notoriety under the verdict of accidental death. This is reckoning six millions of inhabitants in England, after those of London and Kent—which, at that period, was reckoned about one million—are deducted. The author then supposed that they were much increasing all over Kent, London, and the kingdom. I fear the supposition has been too awfully verified. In this ominous month of November I have counted a long list of no less than about half a score suicides in one weekly paper.

‘ November hears the dismal sound,
 As, slow advancing from the Pole,
 He leads the months their wintry round.
 The black’ning clouds attendant roll
 Where frown a giant band—the sons of care,
 Dark thoughts, presages fell, and comfortless despair.

O’er Britain’s isle they spread their wings,
 And shades of death dismay the land ;
 November wide his mantle flings,
 And, lifting high his vengeful hand,
 Hurls down the demon Spleen, with powers combin’d
 To check the springs of life, and crush th’ enfeebled mind.

This drear dominion he maintains
 Beneath a cold inclement sky,
 While noxious fogs and drizzling rains
 On Nature’s sick’ning bosom lie ;
 The op’ning rose of youth untimely fades,
 And Hope’s fair friendly light beams dimly thro’ the shades.’

The atmosphere may becloud the mind, and injure the health ; but more people fall a sacrifice to fashion, and foul tempers and infidelity, than to foul air. But in the gloomy month of November, especially if we feel dejected, we

‘ Blame the weather for the disorder of our nerves.’

It must be acknowledged that the diseased apprehensions of an invalid are relieved or aggravated by the changes of the weather: when the sun shines, even his mind seems to be irradiated by its influence, and scarcely a cloud can obscure the face of Nature, without, at the same time, casting a melancholy shade over his speculations. For this purpose I have often noticed, with pleasure, as I passed along through Staffordshire to London, a lunatic asylum situated on the edge of a sweet solitary valley, on a rising ground, with a fountain playing in prospect of it, in a little dingle sloping down gradually to the road ; the soothing sound of which, and the green prospects of hill and dale, pastures and corn-fields, must much tend to produce that calm repose which the agitated minds and shaken nerves of the patients so much require.

In these sentiments I am confirmed by the following most beautiful delineation from the hand of that enthusiastic admirer of grand and tranquil nature, Zimmerman :

‘The touching aspect of delightful nature, the variegated verdure of the forests, the noise of an impetuous torrent, the quivering motion of the foliage, the harmony of the groves, and an extensive prospect, ravish the soul so entirely, and absorb in such a manner all our faculties, that the thoughts of the mind are instantly converted into sensations of the heart. The view of an agreeable landscape excites the softest emotions, and gives birth to pleasing and virtuous sentiments: all this is produced by the charms of imagination.

‘The imagination spreads a touching and seductive charm over every object, provided we are surrounded by freedom and tranquillity. A religious horror and soft raptures are alternately excited by the deep gloom of forests, by the tremendous height of broken rocks, and by the multiplicity of sublime and majestic objects which present themselves to our view on the delightful site of a smiling landscape. There are no sensations, however painful, which are not vanquished by these serious but agreeable emotions, and by those soft reveries to which the surrounding tranquillity invites the mind. The solitude of retirement and the awful silence of all nature impress an idea of the happy contrast between simplicity and grandeur.

‘I had been, during the course of many years, familiar with the sublimest appearances of nature, when I saw, for the first time, a garden cultivated in the English taste near Hanover; and soon afterwards I beheld one in the same style, but on a much larger scale, at Marienverder, about the distance of a league from the former. I was not then apprized of the extent of that art which sports with the most ungrateful soil, and, by a new species of creation, converts even barren sandy mountains into fertile and smiling landscapes. This magic art makes an astonishing impression on the mind; it excites in every heart, not yet insensible to the delightful charms of cultivated nature, all the pleasures which solitude, rural repose, and a seclusion from the haunts of men, can procure. I cannot recollect a single day, during the early part of my residence at Hanover, without tears of gratitude and joy. Torn from the bosom of my country, from the embraces of my family, and driven from every thing that I held dear in life, my mind was not susceptible of any other sentiments than those of the deepest melancholy: but, when I entered into the little garden of my late friend M. de Hinuber, near Hanover, I forgot, for the moment, both my country and my grief.’

It is of great consequence to moderate the pas-

sions, to be calm when overtaken by the storms of adversity, and not too elated by the sudden flow of prosperity. Good news intoxicates as well as brandy, and prosperity may produce all the madness of intemperance. Good fortune, as it is called, has ruined many in mind and body. 'A sudden gust of happiness has been known to occasion immediate death; and, in other instances, has given rise to what is incalculably worse—paroxysms which have terminated in incurable insanity. In the celebrated South Sea speculations it was remarked that few lost their reason in consequence of the loss of their property, but that many were stimulated to madness by the too abrupt accumulation of enormous wealth. In other lotteries, as well as in the lottery of life, dreadful effects have, perhaps, more frequently arisen from the prizes than the blanks! It has often happened that an adventurer, in addition to the original price of his ticket, has paid for his ill-gotten wealth by a forfeiture of his reason: the same turn of the wheel which has raised him into affluence has sunk him into idiocy, and, by no advantageous change, has transformed the mendicant into the maniac.* Adversity, on the contrary, is 'a tamer of the human breast:' it calms the irritable mind, subdues our passions, preserves

* Dr. Reid on Hypochondriasis.

the mind in health, and tends to extend the term of human life.

Intemperance, when pursued to excess, contributes to spread a gloom over the mind; to ruin the health, the property, and prospects of its victims; and to prepare them for the perpetration of this horrid deed.

We should attempt to wean our friend from the vice of intemperance, not so much by the representation of the evils which will soon follow this fatal indulgence, as by picturing to the mind the agreeable change which would result from altering his mode of life. We must not, by too strongly representing the fatal effects of the vice, increase the evil, and depress the spirits, till the languor of dejection be converted into the palsy of despair. Let the intemperate man not be suffered to think that reputation, name, friends, and character, are irrecoverably lost! Burdened and bowed down as he is by his appetites, and trampled under foot by calamity and scorn, let us encourage him to lift up his head, and contemplate a brighter prospect dawning before him as he reforms his life. The man that has long indulged his vicious propensities—of whatever nature—and given the reins to his corrupt passions, beholds, sometimes, his misery only, eclipsing all hope and joy. His mind is agi-

tated and despondent, like that of the wretch who is prepared to commit suicide, only his attempts are more cowardly and dilatory: 'he may be compared to a person who, in attempting to cut his throat, from a want of sufficient courage or decision, lacerates it for some time before he accomplishes his purpose.'

'Admitting that the victim of depression and melancholy is at present so afflicted, so infirm, so vicious, so degraded, or so unfavorably situated in any respect, as to be entirely useless, has he lost every capacity of being otherwise in time to come? Or, if this capacity be now lost, is every possibility of recovering it certainly precluded? May not his infirmities be hereafter removed? the clouds which hang over him be dissipated? his vices be repented of and abandoned? his reputation be restored? and his means of usefulness become, if not great and extensive, at least important in a moderate sphere? If these things be duly considered, it will be manifest that there is not an individual breathing who can, with propriety, plead in defence of despair and suicide that he is useless; as there is certainly no individual, on this side the grave, whose life either is not, or might not be, of some value to mankind.'

Let not the agitated, as they value mental peace

and bodily ease, suffer themselves to fascinate their senses by the use of OPIUM. It may act like oil upon the billows, and cause agitation to subside into still tranquillity; but it is a deceitful calm, which will be followed by a hurricane: it may make him fancy himself a superior being, but it will soon humble him like a fallen angel. I recollect the forcible expression of a person, who, in speaking of the miserable effect which the use of opium had produced upon his feelings, remarked that it excited in him ‘an appetite for death.’ Another person thus wrote to Dr. Reid: ‘I have seen and heard of many labouring under dreadful afflictions, but I never can believe that any endured for so long a time such excruciating agony. Every night I expect will be the last. May no man suffer what I have suffered! The laudanum has kept me alive for more than two years, but it has lost its charm. I never would recommend any man to introduce it so long as to make it habitual, or it will make him as miserable as I am.’—‘If any have used this delusive and bewitching poison, let them at once, or by degrees, be persuaded to break the charm which binds them to its use.’

To this excellent advice of Dr. Reid I would subjoin, Let not any one venture to touch a drop of the poison of infidelity; for this will more harden

the heart, degrade the mind, and prepare the man for every species of crime—and for suicide, the last and worst—than all the intoxicating draughts, opiates, and stimulants, which appetite or avarice have invented. ‘The grand cause of infidelity is a bad life.’—BP. BURNETT.

CHAP. II.

THE GRADUAL ADVANCES TO SUICIDE EXEMPLIFIED.

‘ A sensual unreflecting life is big
 With monstrous births, and SUICIDE, to crown
 The black infernal brood.’ YOUNG.

Causes of Suicide—The mysterious Movements of the human Mind—The gradual Advances to this Crime, and its exciting Causes exhibited in the History of Mr. Geo. Furneaux, who shot himself at White Conduit House, September 19, 1821—His providential Preservation—Its moral Effect upon his Mind and Conduct—His Advice to all impetuous Youth, and the agitated in Mind.

THE causes of suicide are multiform and various.

‘ The usual primary occasions of suicide are themselves highly criminal ; they are such as these : the want of godly fear ; irreligious companions and habits ; atheistical principles, and neglect of religious observations and duties ; pride ; disappointment of romantic schemes ; indulged vexations ; the frequent exhibition of examples of suicide, and its almost justification at our public theatres ; the

daily record of recent cases in our newspapers; some secret sin, which time may expose; sometimes a malicious desire to make others miserable; revenge on others for supposed injuries; the unfaithfulness of others to their solemn engagements. In respect to this last cause, multitudes of men will have a most dreadful account to render to the common Father of all.'

'But, if every man who has defrauded his master, or committed any other crime, and fears its just punishment—if every man who has fallen from an eminence, and met with some mortification to his pride, or is likely to meet it—if every man who has lost a wife, or the friendship of a wife—if every woman who has lost a husband, or an expected husband—if every man who finds he has made a bad bargain—if every man in debt and distress were to dismiss his spirit to the vast, untried, untrodden eternity—our land would indeed be an Aceldama, a field of blood. Our nation, if God's preventing mercy did not interpose, would become worse than savage, destitute of all those ties of love and friendship, and confidence, that now in a great measure are the cements of society.'

It generally happens that a variety of predisposing causes precede the dreadful deed of suicide. I shall illustrate this from a detailed example of a gentle-

man, only twenty-two years of age, who was wondrously preserved, and who is now living, adoring that mercy which rescued him from the horrid crime and all its tremendous consequences.

The history of the human mind, so far as its internal movements are concerned which prompt to outward deeds, is very curious, surprising, and worthy of investigation.

If the history of every individual who has stepped out of the usual path of ordinary life and attracted public gaze, so far as regards the internal movements of his mind, were written, it would be far more philosophical, interesting, and improving, than many of the narratives of *mere* facts which surprise and entertain the world.

The following narrative is a plain detail of the several steps and stages, in mind and conduct, by which a youth of twenty-two was seduced, beguiled, prompted, and pushed forward by his own heart, his evil companions, and Satan's influence, to raise his hand against his own life, and to fire a pistol through his head. It is intended as a commemoration of the providential interposition which rescued him from 'so great a death,' as a grateful endeavour on his part to make his own example a warning to sinners and an encouragement to peni-

tents, and as a monumental trophy of the goodness of Almighty God.

The attempt to perpetrate the dreadful deed was related in all newspapers of that week subsequent to September 19, 1821. The *Morning Chronicle* contained the following :

‘ *Dreadful Attempt at Suicide.*—Wednesday evening, Mr. Furneaux, a young gentleman connected with a respectable family in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell, made a desperate attempt to destroy himself.

‘ It appears that Mr. Furneaux, who is twenty-two years of age, unknown to his family, had formed a strong attachment to a young lady, which was disapproved by his father, who forbid the banns.

‘ Wednesday evening he went to White Conduit House, wrote a letter to the young lady, the object of his affections, and sent the waiter to deliver it to her. Soon afterwards she arrived, in the company of a female friend: he met them at the door, ushered them up stairs, and requested them to accept of some negus, which they assented to, and he said he would go and order it: he went down stairs, but, instead of ordering the negus, he went into the middle of the road, placed a pistol to his head, and discharged the contents, by which part of the left

side of his skull was carried away: he fell on the road insensible; medical aid was instantly procured, and he was placed in bed, but without the least hope of recovery.'

This letter led me to visit the young gentleman and his friends; and, from successive conversations, I obtained the particulars which form the following narrative; added to which I preached a sermon on the occasion of his providential deliverance, at the desire of the young man, at the parish churches of St. James's, Clerkenwell, and St. Antholin, Watling Street, which I committed to the press with the hope, under the blessing of God, of conveying to young people some very important and useful warnings and admonitions.

George Furneaux was the third son of Mr. L. Furneaux, a respectable watch-manufacturer in Clerkenwell. He was generally considered an active, sprightly, industrious youth; and at length commenced business for himself in the watch trade, with fair prospects and an extending connexion. Removed too much from parental observation, and having become, in some measure, the master of his own conduct, he was betrayed into the snare which captivates so many of our youth—he became connected with improper companions. He was thus led into habits of dissipation and expense; his busi-

ness was neglected; and much of his time was wasted at coffee-houses, taverns, and places of frivolous entertainments and seductive amusements. His affairs, through these causes, became somewhat deranged; he could not meet his payments with regularity; and his business, through his neglect, declined:

‘ With virtue prudence fled—what he possess’d
Was sold, was spent, and he was now distress’d:
His pride felt keenly what he must expect
From useless pity and from cold neglect.’

Such dissipation and neglect at so early a period appears somewhat strange; and generally, when we witness comic and tragic scenes so uncommon as were displayed in this young man, there is some machinery behind the curtain which puts the whole in motion: the further I have investigated the causes, the more I have been surprised.

But further light has been thrown upon the subject by more minute and particular inquiries of him. He assured me that the original cause was a strong attachment to a worthy young woman, in which he was crossed and opposed. He feared the separation would be final, though his attachment remained the same. Purely to revenge himself for a disappointment in an object on which he had so set his heart, and in which he was persuaded his happiness for

life was involved, he commenced a system of wicked and desperate revenge to mortify and vex those who had broken off the connexion. The young woman for whom it was thought he had committed this rash act was not the real object of his affections; he disapproved of her character, and had the bans put up out of spite. 'If I had married her,' he said, 'which was a doubtful case, I should have considered myself as sealing my own misery, and should still have committed the dreadful deed.' He added, 'It is a proof that these are my real sentiments, because, now, like the prodigal, I have come to myself, I have abandoned her for ever.' This explanation may serve to unravel some of the mysteries otherwise involved in the surprising occurrences which form his dreadful tale. Whatever be the real state of the case—from whatever causes, whether this mere remote attachment, or the opposition he now met with—certain it was that a strong excitement of passion was the consequence—that his mind was sometimes sunk in gloomy despondence, at other times roused to desperate schemes of violence. The opposition made to his headstrong will, together with disappointments, losses, and failures, owing to his extravagant, wild, and thoughtless conduct, increased by bad company, so harassed a youth of his unreflecting age and habits, as to agitate his mind till it lost its balance, and fell under

the pressure of his real and fancied troubles. For nearly a week previous to his attempted suicide his mind was the prey of gloomy reflections and desperate resolves :

‘ Oh, had he pray’d to an offended God,
His tears had flown a penitential flood !
Tho’ far astray, he would have heard the call
Of Mercy—“ Come, return, thou prodigal !”
Then, tho’ confus’d, distress’d, asham’d, afraid,
Still, had the trembling penitent obey’d,
Tho’ Faith had fainted when assail’d by Fear,
Hope, better Hope, had whisper’d “ Persevere !”

‘ But all this joy was to the youth denied
By his fierce passions and his daring pride ;
And shame and doubt impell’d him in a course,
Once so abhorr’d, with unresisted force.
Proud minds and guilty, whom their crimes oppress,
Fly to new crimes for comfort and redress :
So found our fallen youth a short relief
In wine, the opiate Guilt applies to Grief—
From fleeting mirth, that o’er the bottle lives—
From the false joy its inspiration gives—
And from associates pleas’d to find a friend
With pow’rs to lead them, gladden, and defend.
In all those scenes what transient ease is found
For minds whom sins oppress and sorrows wound !’

CRABBE’S TALES.

How foolish, rash, and headstrong, he now considers his conduct ! how wicked this attempted suicide ! He shall speak for himself on his own character ; on the state of mind which gradually beguiled him to this atrocity ; on the circumstances attending it ;

on the salutary effects produced upon his own heart by reflections on his sin, and the goodness of God in his preservation ; and on the course of life which he has now marked out for himself. The following narrative is in substance what I received from his own lips, and therefore may be perused with confidence. It was communicated to me partly by letter, in which he solicited me to preach a sermon as an admonition to others ; and in several subsequent conversations with him and his friends, of all which I took notes. Instead, therefore, of the tedious repetition of the first and second person, I shall put the whole into his own mouth, taking the liberty of strengthening his observations with some of my own as I proceed.

‘ I now see my sin,’ said he, ‘ in all its dark and dismal colours. It is true I was vexed by losses, opposed and discountenanced by my friends ; but, instead of desperate resolves, I should have laid the blame of my troubles on my own misconduct, submitted to them with resignation, humbled myself before God, reformed my conduct, exerted my energies, trusted in the blessing of Providence on my future exertions, and listened to the good advice of my parents, who, I am now persuaded, were my best friends and advisers. But, instead of this, I was proud, conceited, obstinate, and self-sufficient : I was vexed at

my losses, goaded by the just reproof of my friends, determined to have my own way, and listened to a set of bad advisers, who I now plainly perceive had their own ends in view instead of my benefit. God therefore suffered me to punish myself, by going on frowardly in the way of my heart. It was evident that no principle of morality or religion at this time swayed my heart, for I seemed "neither to fear God nor regard man!" Satan was permitted to have power over me, and to agitate my shattered powers, which were left open, like a musical instrument, to the touch of an evil finger:

"Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight—
 Each yielding harmony, dispos'd aright;
 The screws revers'd (a task which, if He please,
 God in a moment executes with case),
 Ten thousand thousand strings at once go loose—
 Lost, till He turn them, *all* their power and use.

* * * *

No wounds like those a wounded spirit feels;
 No cure for such till God, who makes them, heals."

And dreadfully the tempter improved his advantage, as he ever will "if we give place to the devil." Let every one "resist the devil, and he will flee from him;" but, if we yield to his devices, we may be "taken captive by him at his will," and ruined for ever! For some days I had prepared pistols and made bullets; there seemed in my mind scarcely any definite object; but I brooded over some sullen

resolve to make use of them if OCCASION should serve. Dreadful project! Rely upon it the devil will be sure to bring before you an occasion for the perpetration of meditated crime: your own evil heart will suggest a reason, or your impetuous passions will rouse you to the deed; and, perhaps, in three minutes, as in my case, you may seize an opportunity to commit it. If ever you prepare the means of wickedness, and get ready the instruments of death, you are undone! I shall never forget the mental perturbation I experienced, and the more than earthly prompting which I felt, while I was deliberately preparing for the atrocious crime. While others observed me without emotion, I seemed "to hear a voice they did not hear," whispering to me, in urgent accents, "Do it—do it—do it!" There are very few persons, I believe, who have been prompted to deeds so dreadful, but have been driven on in a similar way by the devil! I seemed to be surrounded with an evil influence—to have always at my elbow an invisible adviser and an impetuous prompter. However much before this I may have been tempted, in the heat of wine, amongst light companions at the tavern or the bagnio, to laugh at the devil, and pronounce his name in the spirit of infidelity, I was fully convinced of the existence of this evil, tempting, lying,

deceiving, and persuading spirit, during this dread period. I felt myself under his immediate agency !

“ As perilous rocks lie in the sleeping seas
 Unknown, and make no discord with the waves
 Till these are blown against them with vexation ;
 So, then, are secrets in men’s hearts as hid,
 In th’ hour of peace, as if they had no being,
 And but speak out when passions rise in tempest.”

‘ Soon after this the confusion of my mind was such that I think I was under a temporary derangement of my faculties. I do not mention this, however, with a view to excuse my guilt. I believe, in just judgment, God punished my obstinacy and sin by suffering worldly trouble and a wicked spirit of revenge to upset me—“ The sorrow of the world worketh death.” He allowed Satan to buffet, harass, prompt, deceive, and drive me on to the very edge of perdition, from which his hand and his mighty arm of mercy alone delivered me. In the extravagance of my mental agitation I purchased a new DIRK ; and, a few days afterwards, under the impression of some opposite feeling, I went and buried the dirk, together with seven sovereigns, in the fields beyond White Conduit House. The waiter at this tavern has since told me that I came in with my coat off, and my arms covered with earth and dirt up to my elbows—a proof that I had dug the hole which I made the depository of

my dirk, like a dog, with my own hands. I have no recollection of the spot where lie buried in the ground these melancholy proofs of my guilty insanity; but I recollect I walked out in the morning, and the cheerful appearance of the new-born day had a soothing effect on my mind :

“ The storm is hush’d ; the turmoil’d el’ments slumber ;
 And the fierce gale, which rock’d these battlements,
 Is lull’d and motionless. Meek Nature now,
 Her fitful passion o’er, sleeps like an infant,
 A playful smile bedewing its moist lips
 As its eye sinks in stillness. There is pleasure
 In the calm aspect of the firmament,
 E’en when the mind is frenzied. The genuine wretch,
 ’Midst hideous shapes that haunt his fever’d couch,
 Blesses the day-breeze, and the soothing light
 That beams from the blue Heav’n. How slow the break
 Of the mild evening ! It steals over me
 With thoughts that have been long foregone. O Nature,
 Parent of our best joys, how have I scar’d thee !
 Thro’ what terrific mazes has the fiend
 Led my despairing steps !”

‘ At another time I went to Islington, and called on my sister : the family were sat down at the tea-table, and I was about to take some tea with them. My two brothers came in : they began to look at me and ask me questions. I suspected, by their manner, that they entertained apprehensions respecting me. Instantly I conceived that they were all forming a league against me, and intended to put me in a prison or a mad-house : this so roused my

indignation, that, instead of answering their questions, I literally gnashed my teeth at them, burst forth from the house, and hastened away, with the intention of going to White Conduit House.

‘ My friends had become alarmed respecting my conduct, having observed me handling a pistol, and manifesting other extravagances.

‘ My mother earnestly requested my brother to look to me ; and, as I expressed my determination to take a journey into the country, she begged him to accompany me.

“ She mark’d my desultory pace,
 My gestures strange, and varying face,
 With many a smother’d sound ;
 And ah ! too late, aghast she view’d
 The fatal ball—the hand imbrued :
 I fell, and, groaning, grasp’d in agony the ground.

“ Full many a melancholy night
 I watch’d the slow return of light,
 And ’sought the powr’s of sleep
 To spread a momentary calm
 O’er my sad couch, and in the balm
 Of bland Oblivion’s dews my burning eyes to steep.

“ Beck’ning me forth to torments new,
 Revenge, for ever in my view,
 A spectre pale, appear’d ;
 While, as the shades of eve arose,
 And brought the day’s unwelcome close,
 More terrible and huge her giant shape she rear’d.”*

* Wharton on Suicide.

My brother, mindful of my mother's charge, when he observed me rushing out of my sister's, followed; and proposed to go with me. This I objected to, saying "I am engaged—I am engaged, and wish to be alone." To elude his pursuit, I got upon a coach which that instant met us. As soon, however, as my brother observed me ascend the coach, he got up after me. We had not proceeded far, however, before I made another effort to escape, and suddenly dismounted: he also did the same. "Why do you follow me?" said I. "Because I wish to keep you company," he replied, "and see if I can do any thing to serve you; we have always been friends, and I am this afternoon disengaged; I wish to go with you: why are you displeased with me?" "I am engaged," said I, "and I will be alone." My brother, however, kindly persevered:

"Fearless, he would track my feet
To my gloomy wild retreat."

Observing him still following me, I turned round, and exclaimed, "If you dare to follow me, I will blow your brains out!" Soon after I arrived at White Conduit House, and my brother speedily entered it too. Convinced that he was determined to keep near me, as though he suspected the self-murderous intention which I then harboured in my breast, my perverted reason had sufficient command

to have recourse to a most hypocritical stratagem. While he was gone to fetch my sister and brother-in-law I rallied my spirits, and succeeded in putting on a mirthful countenance, while I suppressed a heavy grief at heart. I drank freely; I sang several songs to the organ in the upper room, and told him I was perfectly well and happy, and would soon follow him home, so that he need not stay :

“ As a beam o’er the face of the waters may glow,
 While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
 So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,
 Tho’ the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.
 One fatal remembrance, one sorrow, that throws
 Its bleak shade alike o’er our joys and our woes,
 To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,
 For which Joy has no balm, and Affliction no sting.”

‘ How deceitful and desperately wicked is the human heart ! Who can know it ? How fatal is the ingenuity of flagitiousness ! To be a hypocrite to myself and others, in order to secure myself from obstruction in perpetrating the blackest atrocity—treason against my own life and soul—treason against the God who gave me life to preserve till he recalled it ! Oh ! when I think of my conduct, it fills me with horror, and bows me down low in humble gratitude to my divine Preserver ! Never was my purpose more fell and obstinate to sin against my own life than at this period, when, amidst laughter

and wine, I attempted, and too fatally succeeded, in drowning my own reflections, and completely undermining my brother's apprehensions !

“ Wine is like anger, for it makes us strong,
Blind, and impatient, and it leads us wrong :
The strength is quickly lost ; we feel the error long.
Thus led, thus strengthen'd in an evil cause,
For folly pleading, sought the youth applause :
Sad for a time, then eloquently wild,
He gaily spoke as his companions smil'd.”

‘ I had my pistols loaded in my pocket, but artfully concealed in a silk handkerchief, to prevent suspicion. Some little time after my brother had left me, the young woman arrived by appointment, accompanied by a female companion. She said she had seen my brother during the day ; for he had met her about noon, and inquired after me. She said he had upbraided her about me ; she appeared provoked by some remark of his, and she retorted them upon myself. Amongst other expressions she used the word “lunatic” in a manner which seemed to apply to myself. This was as the spring to my fury, which burst forth from its restraint with elastic violence. Here let all remark the weight of a former observation—“ Satan, or your own heart, will never fail of finding you occasion, if you prepare the means of atrocity, and get ready the instruments of death !” These were, indeed, ready :

I had fatally prepared them days before, for no definite object at any particular time, but ready for action *upon occasion!* The OCCASION came! My brain was fired; I thought my friends my enemies! and now, the object for whom I had forfeited the favour of friends, lost my business, my reputation, and my prospects, herself reproaching me as my enemy, too! I would not bear it! I would rush from the presence of them all into an unknown and distant world, and hide me from them all for ever!

“He bore it not—’twas a deciding stroke—
And on his reason like a torrent broke;
In dreadful stillness he appeared awhile,
With vacant horror and a ghastly smile;
Then rose at once into the frantic rage
That force controll’d not, nor could love assuage.”

“Do it—do it,” as from no earthly voice, seemed to sound in my ears as from a familiar spirit at my elbow, who seemed already to have tied and bound me with the chain of my sins, and to be leading me captive at his will. I told them to walk up stairs, and I would order them wine and negus; but, instead of this, I rushed into the street, and drew my pistol. I raised my pistol to my head, folded in my handkerchief—pushed it strongly under my ear, the mark of which almost remains now—and was feeling for the trigger—my finger was on it! when a hand pulled away the silk handkerchief

which had enveloped the pistol ! It was the hand of a female passing near, who, not aware of my intention, stole away the handkerchief while I was in the very act of self-murder. The action depressed the but-end of the pistol an inch as it was firing off, and the ball passed through my brain within a leaf's thickness of a vital part ! My gloves, which were in my hat, received many of the slugs, but could not have contributed to ward off the fatal stroke, as the ball passed under my hat. I fell, to all appearance, dead ! The business was a deed of *three minutes* !—I was in spirits at seeing the young woman ; her remarks kindled my fury ; and in three minutes I fell under my own pistol, weltering in my blood. Well may it be said,

“ Anger is a short madness.

“ It resteth only in the bosom of fools.

“ He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.”

‘ This daring deed and dreadful catastrophe were quickly known throughout Pentonville and Clerkenwell. The news reached my friends at half past twelve on Thursday morning, and roused them from their beds. My eldest brother, who had been with me the preceding evening, was so affected at the thought that, had he stayed an hour longer, it might have been prevented, that his whole mass of

blood was curdled with affright, and almost converted into water : he has been under the doctor's hands ever since, and is scarcely now recovered. The distress of my father, mother, and brothers and sisters, may be more easily conceived than described.

‘ To two sisters, who lived in the Isle of Wight, I had the week before sent a timepiece, seven sovereigns, and a letter, as I expected to put myself out of the need of them in future : indeed, my intention of suicide had been formed several days before it was executed, and this was one of my acts preparatory to the dreadful atrocity.

‘ The waiter at the tavern thought, from my strange behaviour, that I meditated some rash attempt, though he had no idea of my having a pistol in my possession ; and he followed me immediately he saw me go out, expecting I might rashly plunge into a pit of water which was in the adjoining field. He was petrified with horror when, after observing me stand still, he heard the unexpected report of a pistol, and saw me fall ! He instantly gave the alarm, and ran to my assistance. The person who, it might have been supposed, would have felt the most on this occasion, appeared, I was informed, to treat it with too much indifference, calling me a foolish fellow ; yet, such were my feelings at that

time, that, in my paroxysms, I could neither eat nor drink except that individual was at hand.

‘The whole family, and all the guests in White Conduit House, rushed out, and came around me: every one expected my death immediately. In this house I lay motionless for three days, in a state bordering upon derangement. In the midst of my paroxysms I exclaimed that, if I recovered, I would perpetrate the deed effectually, if my father opposed me. He assured me he would not cross me again; and that, sooner than expose my life to the gust of my furious passions, he would suffer me to take my own course.

‘My mother came to the house, and watched over me with the tenderest care night and day. To the astonishment of all, I began to recover! The doctor, Mr. —, who attended me during my illness, never now speaks of the catastrophe, and my nearness to death, without shuddering: he said the ball passed within a leaf’s thickness of a vital part!

‘As reason returned, my mind was opened to behold all the horrors of my past mad efforts to shoot the gulf of death and eternity. Like Nebal, upon being told of his escape from the destroying sword of David and his four hundred men, my heart sunk within me, and I was ready to die with fright at the alarming view of my late tremendous situation. I

was fully sensible of the wickedness of my attempt at suicide, and of the judgment of God in the punishment of my perverseness and departure from duty; and I felt overwhelmed with an admiring sense of the divine goodness. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? was my inquiry; how shall this signal deliverance be sufficiently made known, I thought, for the admonition of others, especially of thoughtless, dissipated, corrupted youth? I wrote, as soon as I was able, the letter to you, soliciting you to improve the astonishing providence in a public sermon, in my own parish church of St. James's, Clerkenwell. I care not for the disgrace which this catastrophe has brought upon me: I desire to be humbled for my sin—to repent of it; and I seek forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and I pray for his grace to enable me to “bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” He proceeded—

‘I have now fixed upon a plan to guard against future temptation and sin. I have discarded all my former companions, and have determined to spend a portion of my time in retirement in my own room, convinced my father was right in his opposition to me. My hastiness might have been my ruin. I would most strongly impress one advice upon all young people—seek and take the counsel of your own friends in matters of import-

ance, instead of the rash advice of strangers. My own bitter experience dictates this. Be persuaded, from my own conviction and assurance, that *mere acquaintances* may have their *own private ends* to serve, at your expense, misery, and ruin; whereas it is most likely that your own near relations have your own good at heart. “Be not wise in your own conceit;” “Let counsel go before every enterprise, and caution before every action.” Use your foresight in looking forward to the *consequences* of your actions, and ask, “What shall I do at the end thereof?” Consider the end, and thou shalt never do amiss. Look forward to a future and eternal world. What will all the serious calamities of time be but mere trifles in eternity, except as they have tended to qualify us for future happiness? What if you possess many “of the thousand pangs which flesh is heir to?” Yet, if these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, you need not regret them; on the contrary, what would be all worldly prosperity and happiness if, at last, you die under the curse of God? “What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?—for, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

SUICIDE PROVIDENTIALLY ARRESTED.

An Abstract of the Sermon delivered in the Parish Churches of St. James, Clerkenwell, and St. Antholin, Watling Street, London, by the express Desire of Mr. G. J. Furneaux.

‘And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’—ACTS. ix. 4, 5.

IT is a subject of astonishment and deep regret that scarcely can we open a weekly paper but we discover several suicides. The causes are various: we are all in the hands of God, and, if the mind be not under his especial guardianship, a few irritating circumstances may soon derange its powers. There are many physical causes, doubtless; but I fear the principal are dissipation, bad company, ungoverned passions, immoral conduct, irreligion, thoughtlessness, and INFIDELITY! I believe all these causes conspired to bring the youth on whose deliverance this sermon is preached to that state of irritation and temerity which gave the tempter an

advantage over him, and prompted him, on a sudden excitement, to make the rash and dreadful attempt of destroying himself.

How mysterious are the movements of Providence, and how astonishing the forbearance and the mercy of God ! A learned and moral character is permitted to go to murderous lengths in unhallowed zeal, and, just when his greatest atrocities are about to be perpetrated, he is met by the God of justice ! But, instead of beholding the arm of vengeance, we hear the voice of mercy and love ; the hardened persecutor is made a partaker of the faith which he once destroyed, and the very attempt to destroy is made the means of spiritual life to himself and to others. Such was the case of Saul of Tarsus ; and such has lately been, in part, the case with an inhabitant of the parish of Clerkenwell, from whom I have received a letter, informing me that he had been tempted to destroy himself ; that he had shot himself with a pistol ; but that the mercy of God had met him in his bold career, and saved him from death ; and now, recovering from the wound which his guilty hand, purposing self-destruction, had inflicted, that he was overwhelmed with a sense of God's mercy and his own crime, and requested me to preach a sermon on the occasion, in order to warn others, by his example, against

the same crimes and excesses, and to encourage the afflicted to look to the mercy of God.

He knew the course he was pursuing would make him miserable, and yet he followed it; he knew he was plunging into eternal misery, yet an infidelity of heart emboldened him to go forward. What was the consequence? A rash attempt at self-murder! Oh, dreadful result! This was the end of disobedience, bad company, self-conceit, and of a wilful and revengeful disposition. To such a precipice, alas! the devil may drive those who suffer themselves to be led captive by him at his will!

I hope his calamity may be the means of spiritual life to many, and of precaution against self-murder to others. To make the subject more deeply interesting and important, I have selected the wondrous case of Saul of Tarsus, on which to raise the observations which this remarkable deliverance may suggest to us. We shall take occasion to consider,

I. Saul's wondrous conversion, and the deliverance of this rescued suicide.

II. The lessons which the subject should inculcate.

I. Saul, not content with the blood of Stephen, still breathed out, as we are informed in this chap-

ter, threatenings and slaughter against the disciples and saints of the Lord. But God marked him as he marks the actions—yes, and the motives and views—of every man living: He is on our right hand wherever we go, and whatever we do: He can abate the pride and confound the malice of men in an instant. In his mad career Saul was arrested; not, however, in judgment, but in mercy. He was convinced that his way was perverse and criminal by an audible voice from Heaven: he was struck blind, that the eyes of his mind might be opened; he was brought humbled and penitent, like the prodigal, to his Father in Heaven; and from his late rage, resembling the violence of Samson's lion, came his spiritual strength and sweetness.

Before he went with letters from the high-priest, to imprison men and women for the testimony of Jesus: now we shall see him writing epistles to confirm them in this faith. 'This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' And if God stops the way of a violent sinner, strikes him to the earth with his own weapon, and, in the hours of languishing, breaks his rebellious spirit, and subdues him to penitence; causes him to acknowledge his guilt, and opens his mouth in praise to extol his mercy, and call on all, like the Psalmist, 'Come unto me, all ye that fear God, and I will

tell you what he hath done for my soul;’ truly we ought to say, ‘This is the Lord’s doing:’ let us record it for the instruction of others—yea, for the generation that shall come after us—that they may ‘hear and fear, and do no such wickedness;’ that they may ‘praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare his wonderful works to the children of men.’

‘The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.’ Some are brought to reflection, to a review of their guilt, to penitence and conversion, in solitude; others by thoughts on their bed; others by strange incidents and overruling providences; in journeys; by bereavements; by acts of madness and violence; and the loaded pistol and the ball of death, drawn by a man’s own hand, is converted by God into the instrument of life and salvation to his soul:

‘God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.’

It perhaps is not generally known that Cowper went home and wrote this beautiful and affecting hymn after a frustrated attempt at suicide, in which he was convinced there was the hand of God.

Religion ceased to control this youth, and he no longer had ‘the fear of God before his eyes.’

And I ask, what is there to which a man may not be driven when principle is gone? He is like a ship which has lost its anchor, driven about and tossed, the sport of every billow, dashed by the next gust upon the rocks, or foundering in the quicksands!

His dreadful attempt at suicide, the steps which led to it, and the providential manner in which it was arrested, are very remarkable. Stripped of principle, this rash youth became the subject of Satan's influence, who seemed to lead him captive at his will.

O! ye parents, fancy the feelings of his friends when the news roused them from their beds that their son had made a desperate attempt to imbrue his hands in his own blood! and, if you would never experience a similar consternation, dry up the grand source of vice, by giving your children a proper, a right education. Let them not grow up ignorant of themselves, careless of the great ends of their being, neglectful of the important duties which they were sent into the world to discharge, and their high destiny to reign with God for ever, and their danger of perishing with the devil and his angels. Accustom them to read, and think, and talk of heaven and of hell; to look forward to a judgment to come; and to reverence their Maker and their Judge.

God often suffers the wicked to approach even to the very borders of their designs, and then at once frustrates all their proceedings. It was on the very night preceding St. Peter's execution, when he was chained between two soldiers for greater security, that an angel came and delivered him. It was at the very crisis when Pharaoh was overtaking the fleeing Israelites, and vowed their destruction, that God met him in his wrath, and 'he sunk as lead in the mighty waters!' One wave of trouble after another is suffered to overtake the servants of God; but, when the floods threaten to overwhelm them, they are safely landed. It is when the midnight is the darkest and most dreary that we are nearest the morning. God sometimes permits a sinner to go away, like the prodigal, into a far country, to herd with the swine, and lose reason and all sense of religion in animal and brutish appetites, or to be carried away by violent passions, till he arrives on the borders of hell, and then brings him back, by the force of necessity, in trouble and anguish, to his heavenly Father.

Perhaps some here can testify that at such a moment God met them, led them forth by his mighty hand, brought them into a wilderness, and, at last, 'spake comfortably to them' by his Holy Spirit, and brought them to love his truth.

‘ I was found of them,’ saith God, ‘ that sought me not.’ God, perhaps, suddenly appeared to you, as he did to this young man, whilst you were rebelling against him, and showed mercy towards you through his Son: when you threw the dagger of defiance against Heaven, he prevented it from falling down ‘ to drink up your spirit;’ when you would have ‘ rushed upon his spear and sword, like the unthinking horse into the battle,’ he stopped your blinded course, and turned you into the paths of peace, and suffered you to live to seek after him, and fear and serve him.

2. But whence came the light so suddenly shining round about Saul? ‘ It was a light from Heaven!’ A light from Heaven must shine upon our minds to convert our souls. After so many instances of depravity, shall we trust ‘ to the light within,’ and boast of the natural light of our own reason? The Scriptures inform us that ‘ we are by nature blind and dark;’ but, ‘ if the light which is within us be darkness, how great is that darkness!’ ‘ Every good gift, and every perfect gift,’ saith the Apostle James, ‘ cometh from above.’ My brethren, whatever means God is pleased to make use of to strike our hardened hearts, and open our blinded understandings, and captivate our worldly affec-

tions, let us ascribe our conversion to his grace and Spirit alone.

3. When the light shone, Saul 'fell to the earth.' Who would not have said, that saw him fall, that God had met him in judgment, that the officer of justice had arrested him, and the arm of vengeance was about to strike him? But no! He fell a persecutor under the hand of God, and rose an Apostle, to praise and preach the Redeemer whom he had vilified! God cast him down to lift him up. This hath been the case with many, who have become burning and shining lights in their day and generation, as well as with the Apostle. Persons raised high in their own esteem, swollen with passion, obstinacy, and perverseness, have dared to commit acts at which humanity shudders, and have been struck down to the earth by some judgment, some calamity, like that which had nearly hurled into the future world the thankful penitent who wishes me to tell you of his deliverance. At the time he apprehended that the hour of Almighty vengeance was arrived, he found it the hour of mercy; and I hope he will become a light to teach and cheer others. At the time Saul fell he heard a voice which convicted him of his guilt at once. God says to those who determined not

to hearken, 'Ye shall hear, but not understand; ye shall see, but not perceive.' Whenever you discern your conscience within reproving you, and withholding your hand from iniquity; whenever you hear an admonition which affects you, or read a warning which alarms you, or sustain a calamity which terrifies you; oh! listen to it as the voice of Jesus inviting you to pardon, peace, and safety. What was the voice addressed to Saul? The voice of mercy: 'Why persecutest thou me?' How earnest! How compassionate! The worst sound we shall ever hear that voice utter will be his words at the last day to the wicked—'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Saul cried out with astonishment, 'Who art thou, Lord?' Saul knew not who it was that spake, till the voice informed him, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest!' This is that blessed name, 'exalted above every other name, at which every knee shall bow.' It implies that 'he shall save his people from their sins;' from their number, however many; their guilt, however heinous; their power, however great; and their punishment, however weighty.

The highest consolation and joy to the repentant sinner is this discovery of the Lord Jesus Christ;

and the Apostle, after he became a proselyte to his cause, always pointed him out as the sinner's hope and ground of rejoicing.

4. The glorified Saviour added his rebuke—' It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,' like the ox kicking against the goads, which only harass and torment him the more. Some fight against the suggestions of reason and the checks of conscience ; they harden their heart against the reproof, and rush on in the path of folly and danger. Some murmur at the dispensations of Heaven : they say, ' God is not dealing with them as with others.' They repine—they persecute, as it were, the Lord—on account of their troubles ; they are offended because the word is to them as goads. Oh ! if ever the tempter should excite you to murmur against God, and rouse you to some act of desperation, to commit a greater crime to avoid a less, to lay violent hands upon others or upon yourselves, remember ' It will be hard for you to kick against the pricks ;' it will only be plunging deeper into torment to kick at the points which now pierce you. Would you gratify a mad revenge to indulge your pride and obstinacy, and rush out of the world with all your unpardoned guilt upon your heads, in the certainty of falling into the flames which never shall be quenched, and resign yourself up as

the prey to the worm that dieth not? Oh think! hell is opening its mouth to receive you! Satan stands ready to seize his rightful prey! 'No murderer hath eternal life,' much less a self-murderer, 'abiding in him!'^{*} Pause, therefore, and reflect, ere you take a leap in the dark which may plunge you into the gulf of eternal perdition; pause ere you cast the die to be saved or damned for ever!

5. What was the effect on Saul? 'He trembled and was astonished.' Doubting his senses, and then astonished at the loving-kindness and forbearance of God, he trembling said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' 'The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword.' If the word of the Lord comes to the heart, and causes it to tremble, it is a blessed trembling. But some who have trembled, like Felix, when they have heard the preaching of 'righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,' have tried, like him, to hush their fears, and fly from the reprover. If ever we are brought to conversion and salvation, we shall be convinced of our guilt as sinners, be humbled under a sense of iniquity in our best services, 'in our most holy things,' and confess that, if God were to enter into judgment with us,

* James.

he could condemn us for the sins of our best days. What was the conduct of Saul? He exclaimed, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Let this be our prayer. Let there be no argument, no resistance, but prompt obedience, to the word and will of God, whatever may be the consequences. Some think it sufficient to follow the opinion of others. But what do we ourselves think? Men may work for others, but they must answer for themselves. Not what our connexions say, but what the Lord our God says, should be our inquiry. In the duties we exercise we should inquire, 'Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?' 'How peculiarly does this apply to our neighbour, who so wickedly attempted his own life!' says one. Yes, you pity him; you think he ought to inquire, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' But some can see the errors of others, and not their own; they can feel the obligations and perceive the duties of their neighbours, but not their own. Not that the faults of others are not to be animadverted upon; but sad will be the account we shall render at the last day, if we have not turned at the reproof of God, and honoured and served him ourselves. Each of us should inquire, not what wouldst thou have my neighbour, but what wouldst thou have *me*, to do? what sin have I to give up? what selfishness renounce? and how shall

I best please, and honour, and glorify God? We cannot but admire the astonishing mercy of God, in rescuing from eternal ruin a thoughtless youth just when he had arrived at the mouth of hell! What would have been his condition at this moment, if the arm of mercy had not interposed, and ‘snatched him as a brand from the burning?’ It was like the deliverance of Isaac, at that critical moment when Abraham, by God’s command, lifted the knife to slay his son, but was stayed by the voice of the angel—‘Lay not thine hand upon the lad!’ &c. To him I would say, Remember what great things God hath done for you: turn from all your sin, that you perish not! Never again resist God. It will be hard for you to kick against the points of chastisements which pierce you. Submit, humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Are there any among us who have been delivered from dangers and alarms, like Saul, by the stroke from Heaven; or, like the self-murderer, from the jaws of destruction? What strong reasons—what powerful motives—have you to call by prayer on the God of your lives for pardon of past guilt, for acceptance of your persons, and to make a self-dedication of yourselves to him! Surely your lives, so

wondrously preserved, should be marked by gratitude and obedience to your heavenly Benefactor!

II. Let us attend to the important lessons which this subject suggests :

1. To an infidel disbelief of revelation, a practical denial of the Bible, and of the obligation of moral and relative duty, I ascribe the evils of the present age, and especially the gigantic crime of suicide. The Bible is too much neglected; infidel publications are circulated with avidity, in which every thing sacred is doubted, and every thing awful is ridiculed; in which a future audit is set at defiance; death is spoken of with levity; hell itself made the subject of witticism; and heaven treated as a romantic dream. The novels in our libraries, the songs echoed by our youth, the very Greek and Roman classics we read from our boyish days, all contribute to weaken the influence of Christian principle, to depreciate the value of human existence, and to palliate the crime of self-murder; and it is nothing but sound Christian instruction, a right acquaintance with the religion of Jesus Christ, which can present an antidote to these evils, and correct the wickedness of the age.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a strong proof of the truth of the Christian religion. In

this age of infidelity, we may well attempt to prove the truth by evidence. Lord Lyttleton studied the evidences till he became a Christian. By sensible evidence Paul was converted from his enmity, and became a preacher of what he destroyed. What object had he in view by becoming a Christian? He did not become a Christian for riches, for he supported himself in making tents; not for power, for he was persecuted unto death; not for fame, for he was accounted infamous, and became as the off-scouring of all things; not for pleasure, for he took up the cross when he took up Christianity; he was in journeys, in perils, and in deaths often. He was not brought into the Christian pale because deceived by others. Who should deceive him? Not his companions, they were not converted—they would have murdered him; not the Christians, for they suspected him; not a superstitious voice: Paul was not a weak man, nor an enthusiast, nor ignorant. His Epistles prove his wisdom, his good sense, and his sincerity: he believed in all which he professed; and his success proved that God was with him. Ask infidels how Paul was converted, and they will be asked a question which is unanswerable. A divine agency was exerted, and supernatural means employed to change so entirely

Saul's whole character: the agent was divine; and the Gospel, the sword of the Spirit, came from God.

This reformed youth has met with a providence which, I hope, will impress his heart effectually, and be the means of his conversion from the ways of folly, carelessness, and sin, to wisdom and piety. However infidel and thoughtless before, he must have seen and felt so strongly the divine hand in the late wondrous interposition, he has felt so powerfully the need of a Saviour's blood to atone and plead for him, that he is now fully persuaded of the truth of the Gospel, and the need and value of a Saviour. I pray God that this check may be powerful and lasting; that, admiring the mercy which has arrested him, his heart may be softened into penitence, humbled in gratitude, strengthened with holy resolutions, and determined to forsake the ways of the destroyer, and to walk in the narrow way which leads to life eternal. May he hear the voice of Jesus to the cripple whom he cured, speaking to him—'See, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee!' May he earnestly implore the spirit and grace of God, to keep him from yielding again to the tempter, and to make him a willing and obedient servant of his Lord and Master! But let us remember what our

Lord said, 'Think ye that they on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, were greater sinners than all they that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!'

2: Beware of the steps which lead to the dreadful precipice of suicide. None of you, I hope, have ever harboured the idea of so foul an atrocity! But watch against all the bye and hidden paths which lead to it. Attend prudently to your health by suitable care, cleanliness, exercise, and relaxation; injure not your mind by a too eager pursuit of business or study, nor your bodily powers by neglect of proper precaution; especially beware of those vicious excesses which nip the bloom of health, and undermine the constitution. Gluttony and intoxication, revellings and midnight dissipation, unnerve the man, and expose him to the worst temptations. Beware of habitual gloominess; banish the pensive demon by active industry, reading the Scriptures, and earnest prayer to God.

This rash youth, yielding to several, if not all, these causes, brought on himself a state of gloomy melancholy and sullen revenge, bordering on distraction; and Satan, taking advantage of his irritated passions and mental imbecility, pushed him forward to the dreadful precipice of perdition, from

which the mercy of God, by a peculiar providence, rescued him. Let us beware lest God should permit us to add sin to sin till we approach near it ourselves, and rush down this tremendous precipice. Let us remember that we have all sinned already ; and, if God were to leave us to ourselves, we also might be guilty of the same. Let us seek to Jesus for pardon and mercy, and implore his Spirit to break the chains of sin, by which we are tied and bound : let us quit without delay the broad road which leads to death and hell, and hasten into the paths of God's commandments, and walk therein all the days of our life. The question is important, Whether you are at present pursuing the right road ? Determine this point instantly, lest, if you go blindly forward only a little further, ' your feet should stumble upon the dark mountains, and you should be lost for ever !' Who can tell what a day may bring forth ? One hour we see a neighbour healthy ; another, an accident plunges him into eternity ! One moment another is apparently gay and thoughtless ; the next he is wrought up into a fit of fury, and aims to destroy the life of his neighbour or his own ! A murderer lately exclaimed upon the scaffold—' Hear and remember, all ye people ! it was ungoverned passion which brought me to this end.' The youth at whose desire I address

you calls out to you from the ground on which he weltered; from the torturing couch on which he lay hopeless; and from his abode in which he now adores the sparing mercy of God—‘It was headstrong passion, bad company, negligence, and extravagance, which brought me to the mouth of hell!’ Oh! let the thoughtless youth, the headstrong child, the disobedient son, the beguiled daughter, hear the warning. Death and hell are before you: pause in time.

3. What encouragement does the subject suggest to those who are desirous of returning to the Lord their God? Saul was a persecutor, and injurious; yet he obtained mercy. What an example of God’s forbearance and mercy! The agitated youth whose deliverance we describe had been a moral character till evil company seduced him, and he neglected his business, and yielded to temptation, and became the slave of obstinate passions, and was ‘led captive by Satan at his will:’ then he attempted a crime which harrows up the soul at the thought! Had he not been arrested, where was his soul plunging but into that dreadful gulf from whence there is no redemption? But he obtained mercy: a momentary occurrence, an unexpected hand, with a touch moved his arm, as he was drawing the trigger, and changed the direction of the bullet. If it had

pierced only the twentieth of an inch deeper in his head, it would have been followed by death inevitably. Was this an accident? No! It was overruled by that hand without which not a sparrow falleth to the ground; but which at pleasure can cause the pebble to enter the crevice of mail, and sink into Goliath's forehead, or direct the arrow through the joints of the harness, to pierce Ahab's hardened heart:

‘The bow at venture drawn shall take effect,
If skill divine the heav'nly dart direct!’

What was there in the case of this daring youth to call for this gracious interposition? Nothing. He had obstinately followed his own ways, notwithstanding reproof and admonition. And the Scripture saith—‘He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.’ What if this had been the doom which followed him? It was likely—it had, to all appearance, overtaken him! But he was ‘snatched as a brand from the burning!’ For what cause? The sovereign mercy of a gracious God delivered him as an example of mercy and long-suffering. What an encouragement to all to turn to God! ‘Where sin hath abounded, the grace of God much more aboundeth.’ Every fear is silenced, every objection removed, every plea of

a guilty conscience refuted, by the consoling declarations—‘ The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.’ ‘ Whosoever cometh unto me shall in no wise be cast out.’ The grace of God, I hope, has touched his penitent heart, and ‘ he that hath much forgiven will, I trust, love much;’ he will set up his Ebenezer, his monument of the Lord’s goodness, and say, ‘ Hitherto the Lord hath helped me!’

‘ Oh! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrain’d to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
Bind my wand’ring heart to thee.’

And surely this is an example of all long-suffering, to encourage the vilest of the vile with hope to return to a God of mercy. We would tell even the grossest transgressor that, if he repents, the blood of Christ can wash away his crimson guilt. While we caution you against presumption, we would raise you from despair.

4. What strong inducements does this subject present, to those that have been convinced and converted, to glorify their divine Benefactor, and to abound in the work of the Lord! The Apostle strongly felt his obligations to that Saviour who struck him to the earth, not with the lightning of his anger, but with the beams of love and mercy! His future life was one continued act of gratitude

and devotion to his Master, of zeal in his cause, and of self-denying exertions for his fellow-men. What an example is this of the duties of those who have been converted from the error of their ways! Oh! serve him faithfully! 'Consider what great thing he has done for you! But, if you shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed!' How strongly does this apply to the hopeful youth whom God's mercy has delivered! I would address one word to him:—'Consider your obligations; consider the pit from which you were rescued! The hand of God was displayed in your behalf. Oh! give to him, then, the best of your future hours, your faculties, and powers, and all you have and are. Let the divine Benefactor, who has rescued you from so dreadful a death, and added to your life, share your chief and continued regard, your devotion and obedience.'

Learn another lesson from the Apostle:—Aware how he had been beguiled by a mistaken zeal, and hurried on by furious passions, he trusted not in future to his own understanding, his own might; but, acknowledging his former error and sin, he sought pardon of his transgressions, grace for his weakness, discretion for his ignorance, comfort for his sorrows, from the fountain of grace and mercy in Christ Jesus. The same fountain, my dear bre-

thren, is still open ; the same grace is still offered to us : let the guilty apply to it, and they shall find it ‘ a fountain opened for all sin and uncleanness ;’ let the penitent apply to it, and they shall find it a source of comfort ; let the backslider come, and he shall hear a voice, saying, ‘ I will heal thy backslidings, I will love thee freely ;’ let the late infatuated young man apply, and he shall find it a source of wisdom and strength ; let him rely on the mighty power and grace of God, to keep and preserve him ; let him not trust to himself, nor lean to his own understanding, ‘ but in all his ways remember the Lord, and he shall direct his steps ;’ let him seek the teaching help and guidance of the Holy Spirit by frequent perusal of the holy Scriptures and habitual prayer to Almighty God ; ‘ let him take unto him the whole armour of God, that he may withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand ;’ let us all apply to Christ Jesus, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, and we shall find his strength equal to our day, and obtain grace to pardon, cleanse, help, and deliver us ; grace to enable us to follow on in the way of duty, to resist sin, to escape the pollutions of the world, to overcome our disordered passions, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and to resist the devil till he flee from us, and we are de-

livered from his snares. Then, should temptations harass us, and losses perplex us, and the world frown, or our friends turn their backs upon us; should 'our father and our mother forsake us; the Lord will take us up.' If we have a God to go to, trouble will not injure us; the sorrow of the world worketh death, but godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life; 'and calamity, and disappointment, and suffering, if they drive us to God, will only act like the storm and tempest, which drive the shattered vessel into the haven where she would be.' Follow on in the way of duty, trusting in God, honouring your Saviour, and obeying his word, and your days shall flow on peaceful as a river; the blessing of the Lord shall accompany you; his grace shall sustain you under the trials of life, and double its comforts; and your end shall be peace at the last, and your portion 'quietness and assurance for ever.'

5. If Satan should suggest to any of us the idea of suicide, and tempt us to it, we should summon to our aid every motive, every consideration, to deter us from it. Our body is the workmanship of God: would you dare to injure and demolish this curious structure? Time will wear it away expeditiously enough. Reverence thyself, O man! for thou art the resemblance of God; and the Son of God as-

sumed thy form to work out thy redemption : and he shall raise up thy mouldered body from the dust of death, and make it like his own glorious body, and associate it with angels in his kingdom for ever and ever.

Is there any courage in *self-murder* ? No ! the suicide is a coward. He flies for refuge from temporary trials to the valley of the shadow of death. Far more magnanimity is displayed by the patient sufferer, who stands the shock of trouble, and bears up nobly against the storms of adversity.

Is there any pitiable sensibility which prompts to the deed ? Where is the sensibility which pretends to be too keen to bear a few troubles, and yet, without feeling and without pity, deserts the post of exertion, and leaves his dearest friends to struggle alone, and fixes a lasting pang in the bosom of a parent, a wife, a child, and entails an indelible blot of disgrace and shame on all his family ? Consider, too, the mischief of your example. You encourage some friend to follow you, like a forlorn hope, to this rugged, precipitous, and headlong path.

What profit do you hope from this madness ? It will aggravate, instead of relieving, your distresses.

You are rushing headlong from temporary sorrows into eternal torments. *Hell* is no fable—*death* is no eternal sleep, but the gate to an endless

series of happy or miserable existence. And to what state of being must that man be consigned who dies in his blood, whose temper resembles Satan's, but to the same abode with the devil and his angels, in the unspeakable woes of the damned? The dagger that is plunged into the heart pierces the soul, too, for ever and ever. This mischief is irretrievable. The deed cannot be repented of. It sends the soul beyond the great and fixed gulf which can never be repassed, and the wretched reprobate must lie down in eternal sorrows. The desperate suicide, however he may elude human scrutiny, and make himself an outlaw from human jurisdiction, by becoming his own executioner, yet cannot escape the just judgment of God. Nothing indeed now remains but a senseless, deformed, loathsome corpse; a guilt which appals us, and a name that fills us with horror: but a day is coming when body and soul shall be dragged before the tribunal of God, to receive 'according to the things done in the body;' and then shall the poor wretch be driven to shame and torment, and everlasting contempt.

Oh! if God, in his mysterious wisdom and mercy, should make this sermon, preached on the deliverance of one rash youth, the occasion of deterring any one soul from plunging headlong into the gulf

of endless woe, the curse will be turned into a blessing, and this calamity will be the cause of eternal gain. For this end he wishes me to address you; and I pray that God may make the warning an effectual admonition, and the means of your final salvation.

There seem to have been several strong reasons why he wished me to address you: he is a *young man*, only twenty-two years old; he wishes me to warn and entreat impetuous youth to curb their hasty passions—to take no sudden and ill-advised steps, but to advance with prudence, seeking the advice of judicious friends, and listening to the admonitions of their parents; and, should they be grieved by rebuke, and obstructed in their wishes, to remember the command, ‘Honour thy father and mother,’ and wait patiently, and submissive to the will of God, under the disappointment, calmly considering the whole of their case, and depending on the guidance and wisdom of Providence to smooth their path and grant them good success, or to make the trial work together for their good. This he is now convinced was his duty and his true interest; and he entreats all young persons to pursue this path, that they may escape the pangs he felt, and the perils he escaped. How dreadful to himself the consequences of a contrary conduct! A gloomy,

foolish, mad revenge—bad advisers—wicked company, and wicked habits, stimulated him forwards, till his passions rose to fury and madness. He pretended a passion which himself condemned; he was about to form a connexion which he foresaw would seal his misery, and he resolved to rush from life into a boundless eternity; he was plunging into the torments of hell, to revenge himself for affronts received on earth! Oh, what madness! Hear it, ye stubborn, rebellious, wicked, wasteful, abandoned, and daring youths, if there be any present! Think me not your enemy when I assure you Satan is your leader: he is dragging you to the precipice, below which roll the billows of the fiery floods of hell's vast ocean! Will you take this desperate leap? The gulf is bottomless—the escape or return impossible—the torment eternal! Pause ere you venture a step further; forsake the foolish, and live and walk in the path of understanding. Do you believe in a future state? Do you really believe there are a heaven and a hell? And can you be so lost to reason, to sense, to truth, and evidence, as to dream that there can be a heaven for murderers? Will you brave the terrors of that God who can cast both body and soul into hell?

Another reason why this preserved suicide wished me to improve his deliverance is to preach a lesson

of submission and patience, and hope to the *agitated mind*. Are there any whom the weight of guilt oppresses, and who anticipate the torments of the lost? Doth heaven seem to gather blackness, and the gleams of the unquenchable fire appal them? Does an angry God seem ready to pour his vials of wrath on their guilty heads, and kindling the world in flames around them? And are they ready to draw their sword, like the gaoler, to kill themselves? If any such be here, I say to you, in Christ's name, 'Do thyself no harm;' there is mercy with God. Flee to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' Beware lest you retire in the despair of Judas, and fall under the burden of guilt. There are some whom calamities mortify; whose pride is wounded; whose stubborn will is crossed, and whose hopes are disappointed; who have been cut off from the object of their wishes. He desires me to say to such, if there are any here, Do not, under the sore pressure of your calamities, rush into a world unseen, to lodge your complaints in person at the Divine footstool. Do not impetuously rush into the tomb as a refuge from the storms of life. God appoints all the evils of life, that we may seek a better portion—a permanent rest in the world to come.

Are there any whose passions are too turbulent,

and their impatience too great, to submit to the yoke of Providence? Like the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, are they galled into impatience, instead of being subdued into submission? He wishes me to tell such, from his own bitter experience, that it is hard for them to kick against the pricks. You will thereby only chafe and goad yourselves the more, till your passions are too irritable to endure your trials any longer. Let not any, like that crafty politician, Ahitophel, because their devices are confounded, destroy themselves. Let not any who are unsuccessful in love, or ruined by hazardous speculations, flee to the perilous, the mad plan of stripping themselves of all, and precipitating themselves, poor and wretched, into an eternal world. Let not any lead a dashing, gay, and sumptuous life; squander away all their possessions; eat and drink, and be merry; and tomorrow drive themselves, by a pistol or halter, into that world where they will want a drop of water to cool their parched tongues.

Let not the wretched and the criminal, to avoid detection, shame, and infamy, resort to suicide, to bury their guilty secrets in oblivion. 'The fear of man bringeth a snare.' Let not the *idle* 'tempt the devil' to tempt *them*, by courting his presence to find them sinful employment. Be not slothful in

business, lest, destitute of occupation, your existence become to you successively the object of indifference, restlessness, disgust, and death ; and lest, under the *ennui* of a listless unprofitable life, you should be urged, by a depraved thirst after novelty, to make the desperate trial of the invisible state.

Are there any persons troubled with a *constitutional sensibility*, which shrinks from harshness and yields to despondence, tyrannized over by parental severity, or oppressed by the hand of power, till roused to frenzy, or dispirited with grief, their souls choose strangling rather than life? Let them not be cast down or disquieted, but hope in God, for they may yet praise him for the health of his countenance. And let others beware of imitating

‘The pitiless part

Some act by the delicate mind,

Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart

Already to sorrow resign’d !’

Let us consider that, whatever are our troubles, the days of our pilgrimage are few and transitory ; that we should not immoderately set our hearts upon any objects of the present world, nor expect undisturbed ease nor uninterrupted pleasure here, but make it our chief endeavour to serve God, to do

our duty, and to be useful in our day and generation, that we may be ready to depart, to render up our account at last with joy, to obtain the favour of our Judge, and be admitted to spend an eternity of bliss in his presence, whenever he shall be pleased to call our spirits to himself. Meanwhile, whether in trouble or in joy, may we say, with the patience of afflicted Job, ‘ All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come !’

Thus, my dear brethren, have I endeavoured to improve this truly awful event, and this providential deliverance. May the appalling effects of un-governed passions and evil company be deeply impressed on our memories, and inscribed on the tablets of our hearts? Can we listen to the recital without being struck with horror, or yearning with benevolence? Should we not all unite in opposing and stemming the torrent of infidelity, which hurries men forward to such depths of madness and guilt, and overwhelms them in the floods of despair?

I have esteemed it my duty to exert all my powers against Infidelity—the growing and gigantic monster of the present age—the parent of vice, misery, and black despair—the blaster of man’s brightest hopes, the murderer of his immortal soul, the robber of his crown of glory.

CHAP. III.

THE CONTRAST; OR, THE HISTORY OF THOMAS ROYLE, A RECLAIMED PROFLIGATE; AND OF MR. S. AND A LADY, BOTH AT PRESENT LIVING.

‘Behold from realms of light descend
 The FRIEND of him who has no friend—
 Religion! Her almighty breath
 Rebukes the winds and waves of death;
 She bids the storm of frenzy cease,
 And smiles a calm, and whispers peace.’

MONTGOMERY.

Royle's abandoned Youth—Voyages—Sickness—Temptation to Self-Murder—Preventions—Reformation—Happy Death—Moore's Penitent.—Mr. S. his Profligacy—Distress—Attempt at Self-Destruction—The Bible his Preservative.—A Lady—Her unhappy Marriage—Attempt at Suicide—Preserved by her Child.

I CANNOT but here introduce the history of one who sought to God in trouble, and was thus preserved from despair and suicide:

Mr. Thomas Royle was born in the parish of Lymm, in the county of Chester, in the year 1780. Mr. and Mrs. Royle were respectable farmers, and gave their son a competent education. It was

about nine months before the death of Mr. Thomas Royle, their eldest son, that I became first acquainted with him; his parents having for several years resided in Latchford, near Warrington, the chapelry of which I was the Perpetual Curate.

He had been frequently mentioned to me by his friends as a profligate and violent young man, whose excesses had occasioned them great expense, and given them much pain and trouble. One day I met his mother, who had a tale of a very different kind to tell me of her son—he was the prodigal returned!

In one of our interviews I requested him to give me some account of his life, and particularly of that part of it in which so great a change had been effected in his mind and character. He complied with my request, and gave me the following particulars, in nearly the same words and order, as far as I can recollect:

‘I grew up a headstrong and rebellious youth, and, when arrived at the age of eighteen, nothing would satisfy me but going to sea. To see different parts of the world was the chief object of my desires. My father accordingly obtained for me the situation of steward on board a slave-ship at Liverpool, in which capacity I made three voyages to Africa and the West Indies.’ Here he entered

into a minute detail of his conduct, which corresponded with the corrupt state of his heart; and, with the exception of some instances of kindness to the poor slaves and his shipmates, his life was a continued scene of profligacy, drunkenness, and forgetfulness of God. To use his own expressions respecting himself and his comrades, 'The greater our dangers, and the more signal our deliverances, the more wicked and hardened we were.' He had been in imminent dangers, and had obtained surprising escapes. In some storms the billows had swept several of his comrades overboard, and the lightning had struck some dead, and knocked down others, who rose only to jeer and blaspheme, instead of thanking God. Shipwrecks, imprisonments, perilous enterprises in accomplishing his escape, great straits through want of food, clothing, and friends, had made him familiar with trial and distress. The yellow fever, also, had in one voyage sent him home almost a skeleton, and, as he conceived, fast hastening to the tomb. 'But all these dangers and trials,' he said, 'failed to bring me to repentance; when I returned to Latchford I was the terror of my friends and the corrupter of the neighbourhood.'

'After my third voyage I remained at home for eighteen months, an useless burden to my friends;

when I left Latchford, and soon after enlisted for a soldier in the Royal Artillery, and, upon joining the regiment, I was speedily promoted to the rank of sergeant, and sent to Warrington on the recruiting service. Here I remained some time, during which my friends had the mortification to hear of and witness my conduct, which was so notoriously bad as to give them all much pain.

‘I was ordered to join the regiment at Woolwich, and there, in the midst of my career of folly and wickedness, the hand of God overtook me, and threw me on the sick bed in the hospital, with many others as wicked as myself. However we might in health have cheered and elevated each other’s spirits, none of us knew how to administer consolation to a sick or dying comrade.

‘Here, in an irksome and painful leisure, I ruminated on the desperate and forlorn state to which I was reduced, and soon discovered myself to be a vile outcast, abhorred by all the world. If my thoughts were turned to my relations, I knew my conduct had ensured their hostility, and that my death must with them be rather a cause of rejoicing than of sorrow or trouble. When I looked to my companions, many of whom I had led into sin, my imagination could not produce me one person of whom I could think in the endearing character

of FRIEND. I appeared to myself thrown off and detested by every human being. I thought I had not a friend on earth. Overwhelmed with the sense of my sad condition, I was ready to die with despondence, or kill myself as a wretch hated and deserted by all. But, in the midst of this distress of heart, when there seemed no eye that would pity me and no hand to help me, the thought crossed my mind, "Is there not one in heaven who will be a friend to me? Surely I have heard that he forgives prodigal sinners, and why may he not forgive me?" I instantly determined, if it were possible, to make HIM my friend; and, as I could find none on earth, to secure a FRIEND IN HEAVEN.—But then my sins stared me in the face. How could I hope for forgiveness? Would not God also utterly abandon me, and refuse to show me mercy? This filled my soul with distress and alarm, and almost drove me to despair. I tried to pray, but knew not how. I cried for mercy, and, as well as I could, offered words of supplication. My fellow-sufferers heard me, and were astonished; some said I was distracted, others jeered me as an enthusiast, and some pitied and tried to comfort me. I told them I never was so much in my senses before, for till then I had been beside myself in running from God and my duty; and my only wish

was that He would forgive me, and enable me to begin afresh, that I might go on to serve Him till death. I said little to any one, but tried to pray while others jeered. I anxiously looked round for a Bible, but found none. Here I recollected a Prayer-Book, which I had carried with me in all my wanderings, although I seldom touched it. I seized it with avidity, and read it incessantly. My penitence, as I perused it, became deeper, and my hopes were the more raised.—YES, IN THE PRAYER-BOOK OF OUR CHURCH I BEGAN TO CONFESS FROM MY HEART WHAT BEFORE MY LIPS HAD UTTERED WITHOUT FEELING—“ I HAVE ERRED AND STRAYED FROM THY WAYS LIKE A LOST SHEEP.” I prayed with serious earnestness, “ Lord, have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner, through Jesus Christ, our Lord !” With what fervour did I utter, “ Though I am tied and bound with the chain of my sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose me, for the honour of Jesus Christ, my Mediator and Advocate.” With what gratitude were my thanksgivings offered to the throne of mercy for “ preservation” during my guilty career ; for “ all the blessings of this life ;” but, above all, for the redemption of the world, through our Lord Jesus Christ ! I looked to him as the Lamb of God once offered, and rejoiced in

him as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. I prayed that, "by his cross and passion, by his precious death and burial, by his glorious resurrection and ascension," I might be delivered from my state of guilt and danger. Peace of mind thus returned to my agitated breast; I became resigned to the will of God, whether for life or death. My health improved, and my first wish was to return to my insulted friends, and tell them of the grace I had found, and to exhort them, and those whom I had led into sin, to repent and turn to Christ, that, if possible, it might be the means of undoing some of the evil I had occasioned.'

In this spirit, and with these views, Mr. Thomas returned home to Latchford, and acted in the manner he had prescribed to himself; and there are few of his neighbours who cannot bear testimony to the faithfulness of his reproofs and the earnestness of his exhortations. He read the Bible to those who could not read, and anxiously laboured to instruct them in the meaning of it, and in the way of salvation, in the best manner he could. Many a cottage can testify that he has spent hours in it in this benevolent employment.

He used to say he no more dared to turn again to sin than to lay violent hands on himself—

that it appeared that the vow of God was upon him to serve him faithfully as long as he lived. 'There was a circumstance,' he said, 'that tended to confirm his resolution thus to persevere in the way of duty, which some might reckon superstitious. It was a vow to serve God, which I appeared,' he said, 'to make in a dream, that if God would restore me to health, and permit me to return home, I never would depart from him. I no sooner had made this vow, but my Saviour, I thought, came to me with a roll and a pen, and said "Sign this roll with a pen dipped in the blood I shed for thee, and by this engage to serve me: on this condition I release thee." I thought I took the pen and signed the roll, upon which I awoke. The impression was so strong, that I had no doubt I should recover, and my resolution was confirmed, as my health advanced, to serve God faithfully; and I dare not, with my present views and feelings, whatever be the temptation, break my resolution for the whole world.'

He continued to serve God faithfully. I visited him in his sickness, in which he appeared truly resigned and happy.

Perceiving his end approaching, he called his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, round him, and, requesting them to give him their kiss, he af-

fectionately took his final leave of them, and exhorted them all TO PREPARE TO FOLLOW HIM TO HEAVEN. Speedily after his soul withdrew, without sigh or struggle, almost imperceptibly, from his worn-out body; and, doubtless, ascended to that mansion of glory, which he so joyfully beheld by faith. He died at the age of 33, February 24, 1814, and was buried in the grave of his wife, in Grappenall church-yard. His spirit now, no doubt, rests with God and his Saviour; and is before the throne, singing ‘Worthy is the Lamb which was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood.’ Such was THE CONVERSION OF A GREAT SINNER FROM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS, BY THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE PRAYER-BOOK—SUCH WERE HIS ZEAL AND ACTIVITY FOR GOD—SUCH WAS HIS BLESSED END!

‘Thomas, being dead, yet speaketh’ to the living. Oh that the living would lay it to heart! It is a voice from the tomb, which with gentle energy penetrates the very soul! It is the voice of warning and love! Its language is, ‘Repent and turn to God through Christ, that you perish not—be encouraged by my example to return—do not despair, but come with hope of mercy through the all-gracious, all-sufficient, Redeemer!’

I cannot but add to this Moore's description of another penitent :

- ' The boy has started from his bed
 Of flow'rs, where he had laid his head,
 And down upon the fragrant sod
 Kneels with his forehead to the South,
 Lispering th' eternal name of God
 From Purity's own cherub mouth ;
 And looking to the glowing skies,
 Like a stray babe of Paradise.
- ' Oh 'twas a sight ! that heaven ! that child !
 A scene which might have well beguil'd
 E'en haughty Eblis of a sigh
 For glories lost, and peace gone by.
 And how felt he, that wretched man
 Reclining there, while mem'ry ran
 O'er many a year of guilt and strife,—
 Flew o'er the dark flood of his life,
 Nor found one sunny resting-place,
 Nor brought him back one branch of grace.
 " 'There was a time," he said, with mild
 Heart-humbling tones, " thou blessed child,
 When, young and happy, pure as thou,
 I look'd and pray'd like thee ! but now !"—
- ' He hung his head—each nobler aim,
 And hope, and feeling, that had slept
 From boyhood's hour, that instant came
 Fresh o'er him, and he wept !—he wept !
 Blest tears of soul-felt penitence,
 From whose benign redeeming flow

Is felt the first, the only sense
 Of guiltless joy that guilt can know !
 Oh! is it not thus, thou man of sin,
 The precious tears of repentance fall ?
 Though foul thy fiery plagues within,
 One heavenly drop will dispel them all.

‘ And now behold him kneeling there,
 By the child’s side, in humble pray’r,
 While the same sunbeam shines upon
 The guilty and the guiltless one,
 And hymns of joy proclaim through heaven
 The triumph of a soul forgiven.
 ’Twas when the golden orb had set,
 While on their knees they linger’d yet,
 There fell a light, more lovely far
 Than ever came from moon or star,
 Upon the tear that, warm and meek,
 Dew’d that repentant sinner’s cheek :
 ’Twas heaven’s own smile upon that tear,
 The harbinger of glory near.’

LALLA ROOKH.

Mr. S. had been leading a very irregular life ; he had offended his friends by his extravagances, and was reduced in consequence to peculiar difficulties. He kept company with those above his rank in life, launched into expenses beyond his means, and entered into all the gaieties that could be met with in his circumstances, till he found himself exhausted of resources, involved in debt, with disgrace and imprisonment before his eyes. He

deemed his case more desperate than it really was; the thought of the vices which had brought him into this forlorn situation, and of the misery which was before him, worked much upon his mind, and brought upon him a dangerous sickness, accompanied with disease, which was aggravated with the thought that he had offended his friends, and he should never regain their favour, nor be restored to his rank in society again. His friends, however, had scarcely as yet upbraided him with his bad conduct; at least, they had not expressed irreconcilable displeasure. They reproved and advised him; but, through the restlessness of an accusing conscience, he considered them as his enemies. To use his own words, ‘What an argument is this for young men in the most desperate cases never to despond! I made many resolutions to reform, but could not summon up sufficient strength to persevere. I sunk the deeper in iniquity, and my affairs became more desperate, till at length, in a fit of despair, I resolved to *destroy myself!* The thought worked upon my mind with the greatest agony, till I was again laid upon a sick bed. I thought my case peculiarly bad; that my disease would expose me to shame, and my embarrassed circumstances reduce me to ruin.

‘If you knew all the circumstances that worked my

mind up to this frenzy ; the misgivings of my heart, and the vacillations of my tortured conscience, till I resolved upon the deed, you would pity me. The thought of the consequences of this atrocity, and the remembrance of a crucified Saviour, who died for the vilest of the vile, had an effect upon me for a time, and repressed the rash and wicked attempt. The disease grew worse, and the idea that it would be found out, to my utter confusion and ruin, overwhelmed me with dismay. Remorse of conscience, reflections upon my past life, with all the wildness, extravagance, and the vices, with which it had been marked, convinced me that, instead of being an honour and comfort to my friends, I should be their disgrace and abhorrence. I therefore meditated more determinately the shocking purpose of self-destruction. My doctor did not contribute to alleviate my case. He said that I was in a very awkward predicament ; so that, after he quitted me, I felt the greatest agony of mind, and rose from my bed with the determination of destroying myself ! I ran to my scrutoire, where I kept my razor, in order to seize the deadly weapon ; but, when I opened the scrutoire, behold, there lay the BIBLE in the very drawer where I kept my razor ! The sight of that holy book struck me with awe and terror : from the book seemed to issue the

voice of the angel which called unto Abraham "Stay now thine hand!" Instead of searching for my razor, I took the monitory volume in my hand, fell upon my knees, and thanked God for the greatest mercy that could ever be shown to a human being! I was overwhelmed with gratitude and astonishment; and admired it as a divine interposition, which no being could believe with such conviction as I myself, who experienced it.' God works the greatest events of our lives by means of apparently trivial causes.

A Lady with whom I became acquainted related the following tale: Amid many other wonderful circumstances of an eventful life, she gave her hand, contrary to her inclination, with a considerable fortune, to a professional gentleman. Disappointment and misery were the consequence. After years of ill usage, he at length crowned his baseness by taking her maid-servant for his mistress, and they both united under the same roof to harass and distress her and her daughter. Wearied out with the insults she met with in her own house, she resolved upon *self-destruction*, and for that horrid purpose procured a dose of arsenic. She at length poured it out in a glass, and, after many a mental struggle, resolved to take it. But she thought she would take one more look at her lovely little daugh-

ter, who was playing around her, before she perpetrated the deed which must deprive her of her only proper guardian. She took her little hand and kissed her innocent cheek, which she bedewed with the tears of a heart-broken mother. The prattling innocent rose in an agony, as if inspired by Providence, and wrung her little hands, exclaiming, 'Pray, mother, don't take that nasty physic!—throw it away—throw it away—it will do you harm.' 'Do thyself no harm—do thyself no harm!' sounded in her ears as from the voice of the Apostle Paul calling to the gaoler, who had drawn his sword to kill himself. 'Yes,' said she, 'my heavenly Father, it is thy voice speaking through my child!' and, with these words, she threw the deadly potion into the fire. Then, clasping the little angel in her arms, she exclaimed, '*Thou* hast been *my* preserver, and, if it please God, *I* will live to be *thine*! I'll live to guard thy innocency, to nurse thy opening virtues, to inspire thee with love to my God and my Saviour, and to guide thy steps in the ways of piety. Thou shalt not want a mother's love—a mother's care—a mother's instruction! Thou shalt be thy mother's comfort in her sorrow, and God preserve thee to be her stay in her tottering years, my friend and companion through this vale of tears; and may I hail thee at last coming to join

me as my companion in the realms of bliss! My God shall be thy God. May no trials, no troubles, divide us on earth; may I be thy guardian angel when removed from this scene of conflict; and mayest thou open thine eyes upon me when thou closest them in death!' I have seen that prayer partly fulfilled; she has been her defender, her comforter, her companion through changing scenes of almost unprecedented ill usage, conspiracy, and distress, for nearly twenty years, in the desolate state of a *widowed wife*. I hope the latter part of the prayer will be fulfilled in the final experience of them both in this world and in that which is to come!

CHAP. IV.

PREDISPOSING CAUSES OF SUICIDE, AND ANTIDOTES SUGGESTED.

'To cure the mind's strong bias, spleen,
Some recommend the bowling-green;
Some hilly walks; all exercise;
Fling but a stone, the giant dies.'

Sin a Poison to the Soul, like the Upas Tree—Guilt paves the Way to the Crime—Suicide Cowardice, illustrated in the Case of an Officer preserved from Suicide by a poor Man in Hyde Park—Reason and Philosophy Antidotes, exemplified in Epic-tetus—Tobacco an Antidote—Dr. Johnson's Opinion—Vicious Indulgence a moral Suicide.—Mental Maladies—Lunacy—Lunatic Asylums considered—Wise and tender Modes of Treatment recommended from the Experience and Advice of Dr. Reid—Imprisonments under the Plea of Lunacy—Two late touching and afflictive Instances—Nervous Affections removed by Exercise—Remarkable Example of a Student—Dr. Johnson's Opinion of Woman—Paley's, of his Toils—Gibbon's—Bishop Horne's—Ennui Parent of Melancholy—Use of Toil, Expectation, and Activity—A lucky Tailor fleeing from Ennui back to his Shopboard—Cowper—Zimmerman's Advice—Beattie's.

So fatal is the subject of suicide, and yet so pre-
valent is the crime, that it is of the highest import-

ance to suggest arguments and motives against this horrid atrocity, and to bring forward examples which may deter us from the commission of so foul a deed. I would, therefore, without further delay, advance a few especial considerations against this horrid crime, and illustrate and confirm them with great authorities and remarkable examples :

‘ Could mortal vision look within
 The hidden heart of secret sin,
 Each throe that bids the conscience bleed,
 Each keen remorse for evil deed,
 Would then its awful moral read—
 Would, as a guardian angel, plead,
 And, on perdition’s brink, might save
 From hopeless doom and timeless grave.
 Such heart is like the tree of death,
 Where nothing near has healthful breath ;
 Where nothing lives its branch beneath ;
 Whose deadly dew is scatter’d round
 On ev’ry herb that strews the ground ;
 And e’en the ’venom’d soil receives
 The poison of its weeping leaves.’

‘ Like that foul Upas’ baleful shade
 Is the dark soul to sin betray’d ;
 And, all undying, rankles there
 The burning torment of despair.
 Nor may the victim hope for rest
 When earthly terrors fly ;
 Though honour’s ermine bind his crest,
 Where the fiend’s signet hath impress’d
 Its changeless features on the breast,
 All piteous must he die !’

‘Well,’ said the inspired king, ‘leave off contention, and let go displeasure, else shalt thou be moved to do mischief. Yield not to wrath, neither give place to the devil.’

A mind which has lost the fear of God is prepared and qualified for self-murder :

‘A sensual unreflecting life is big
With monstrous births, and suicide, to crown
The black infernal brood.’ YOUNG.

Disappointed pride, impatience, shame, fell despair, and ungoverned passions, hurry a man to rush thoughtlessly into a future world. Alas! at such a hurried moment—

‘Eternity ne’er steals one thought between,
And suicide completes the fatal scene.’

Oh! who can with daring wing pursue the downward flight of such a wretched soul into the world unseen, when the sword or pistol has driven it from its earthly tenement?

‘There took her gloomy flight,
On wing impetuous, a black sullen soul,
Blasted from hell with horrid lust of death.’ YOUNG.

Whoever commits self-murder to get rid of trouble is a coward. The greatest courage is displayed in bearing it with patience; in submitting to the will of God, and waiting his time for deliverance, and trusting to his support.

It is said that a man cannot be called a coward

who has conquered the fear of death. I say, yes, he is a coward still; because he supposes death a less evil than those from which he seeks to escape. To say the least, he has far less courage than the man who endures his calamities with resignation and fortitude.

I know that the advocates of suicide are, in general, the most loquacious assertors of the *dignity of man*. This is the idol which they profess to worship, and, contending for its honours, they consider it their greatest merit. But does it comport with the dignity of our nature to act the part of cowards, poltroons, and deserters? Have fortitude, patience, and self-command, ceased to be virtues? Putting moral and religious obligation out of the question, is it not more honorable for a rational being to bear afflictions with firmness, to meet misfortunes with magnanimity, and to surmount difficulties with triumph, than to sink under their pressure, or to fly from the conflict?

An officer attempted, some years since, in Hyde Park, to shoot himself. The pistol missing fire, he drew his sword; but his hand was immediately arrested by a poor man near the spot, whom he had not observed. Resenting this obstruction, he attempted to stab his deliverer. 'Stab me, sir, if you think proper to escape,' said the poor man; 'I fear

death as little as you, but I have more courage. More than twenty years I have lived in affliction and poverty, and yet I trust in God for comfort and support!' The officer was struck dumb with this spirited lesson, burst into tears, gave the honest fellow a purse of money, and lived to prove his greatest benefactor. The brave officer would have fled the field!—the poor man of patience displayed the greatest courage :

' Why has a man false spirit to rebel,
And why not fortitude to suffer well?' SAVAGE.

Mere REASON and PHILOSOPHY have enabled some persons to bear up under the greatest troubles. Epictetus was banished for his philosophy from Rome, and obliged to keep a paltry school at Nicopolis for his support : he was for a time only a slave to a freedman, who used him most cruelly. His maxim was, ' Submission to the will of God—bear and forbear : ' and, when his master was once beating him severely on the leg, he only said, with great composure, ' You will certainly break my leg.' His master did so, and the philosopher calmly added, ' Did I not tell you you would do it ? ' We should endeavour, by the aid of philosophy and religion, to possess an equanimity of temper ; preserving the mind calm in adversity, and composed in prosperity. This would be true fortitude—true

wisdom. We must not be elated with trifling advantages, nor depressed by petty troubles.

‘ Aequam memento rebus in arduis
 Servare mentem ; non secus in bonis
 Ob insolenti temperatam
 Lætitia.’

HOR.

The evils of human life, as Dr. Johnson observes, preponderate against its enjoyments ; and his biographer informs us that he enforced this opinion by observing that narcotics were of general use in all parts of the world ; that opium was used in the eastern and southern countries, spirituous liquors and tobacco in the western and northern ; and that he resolved into this principle most of the temptations to ebriety. He has been heard also to remark that suicide had become more common amongst persons in the higher ranks of society since they had discarded the custom of smoking. Perhaps this great man thought that the ‘ composedness’ of a pipe, to those who were in the habit of using it, lulled to repose the corroding cares and sorrows of the breast, and that on this principle *smoking* acted as a preventive of suicide.

The description given by Lord Byron of the cheering effects of tobacco, in scenes of greatest peril, and on occasions of direct apprehension, where others were palsied by fear or overwhelmed

by despair, the sad and mute attendant of suicide, may be well coupled with this character of it by Dr. Johnson :

‘ But a long, loud, and naval whistle, shrill
 As ever startled through a sea-bird’s bill ;
 And then a pause, and then a hoarse “ Hillo !
 Torquil ! my boy ! what cheer ? Ho, brother, ho ! ”
 “ Who hails ? ” cried Torquil, following with his eye
 The sound. “ Here’s one ” was all the brief reply.
 But here the herald of the self-same mouth
 Came breathing o’er the aromatic south ;
 Not like a “ bed of violets ” on the gale,
 But such as wafts its cloud o’er grog or ale ;
 Borne from a frail short pipe, which yet had blown
 Its gentle odours over either zone,
 And, puffed where’er winds rise or waters roll,
 Had wafted smoke from Portsmouth to the Pole ;
 Oppos’d its vapour as the lightning flash’d,
 And reeked ’midst mountain-billows unabash’d ;
 To Æolus a constant sacrifice
 Through every change of all the varying skies.
 And what was he who bore it ? I may err,
 But deem him sailor or philosopher.*
 Sublime tobacco ! which, from East to West,
 Cheers the tar’s labours or the Turkman’s rest ;
 Which on the Moslem’s ottoman divides
 His hours, and rivals opium and his brides ;
 Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
 Though not less lov’d, in Wapping or the Strand ;
 Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
 When tipp’d with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe ;

* Hobbes, the Deist, was an inveterate smoker, even to pipes beyond computation.

Like other charmers, wooing the caress
 More dazzlingly when daring in full dress.
 Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
 Thy naked beauties—give me a cigar !’

After the battle, when the chief stood

‘ Still as a statue, with his lips comprest,
 To stifle ev’n the breath within his breast,
 Some paces farther Torquil leaned his head
 Against a bank, and spoke not ; but he bled.’

‘ Beside him was another,
 Rough as a bear, but willing as a brother,
 Ben Bunting, who essayed to wash and wipe,
 And bind his wound, then calmly lit his pipe—
 A trophy which surviv’d a hundred fights ;
 A beacon which had cheered ten thousand nights.
 At length Jack Skyscape, a mercurial man,
 Who fluttered over all things like a fan,
 More brave than firm, and more disposed to dare
 And die at once than wrestle with despair,
 Exclaimed * * Those syllables intense,
 Nucleus of England’s native eloquence,
 As the Turk’s “ Allah !” or the Roman’s more
 Pagan “ Proh Jupiter !” was wont of yore.’

‘ The long congenial sound
 Revived Ben Bunting from his sleep profound :
 He drew it from his mouth, and looked most wise.’

THE ISLAND, BY LORD BYRON.

Some have reasoned that the moistness of our
 climate depresses the spirits, and nourishes a me-
 lancholy which is favorable to suicide ; and have said
 of the soul, with Shakspeare—

‘ A breath thou art,
Servile to all the skye influence.’

The mind, as well as the body, is weakened by vicious indulgence; and many are those who cannot strictly be said to die a natural death: an unseasonable old age grows out of the hot-bed of juvenile licentiousness, and man decays before he comes to that state of manly maturity in which his intellectual and physical vigour combine to render him dignified in himself and useful to others. Such may be said to be moral suicides. We sometimes witness a state of nerveless, lifeless, ennui, arising from licentious excesses. But even then, so depraved is the heart, that, ‘ when the bodily organs have lost their freshness, the imagination its radiant hues, and the nerves their once exquisite faculty of thrilling with delight through all their filaments, the dull debauchee, the vapid voluptuary, still persists to pursue habits into which he is no longer hurried by instinct.’

We confess the ulcerations of the mind may be too deep and hidden to be healed like a tumour on the body. Much vigilance may be requisite to mark the movements and to examine the delicate texture of a disordered imagination; but in the management of these mental maladies harshness may drive to desperation, whereas kindness may

south and reclaim. And when, indeed, we consider the secret woes, the corroding cares, the pungent sorrows, the painful recollections, which oppress the mind with an insupportable burden, or swell the heart till it nearly breaks, and inflame the brain to delirium, the cases of the agitated and disordered ought to be treated with great feeling, humanity, delicacy, and kindness :

‘ Oppress’d by woe and angry care,
 The child of sorrow and despair
 Reverts to times long since gone by,
 The sunshine of prosperity ;
 And, as remembrance points the bliss,
 Sighs for the days that once were his.
 So bleeds the heart when sorrow’s blight
 Has nipt the flow’r of young delight,
 When we contrast the present scene
 With what our other days have been.
 Then Pleasure, from her airy bow’rs,
 Strew’d on our steps her choicest flow’rs,
 And bade th’ exulting soul arise
 To vision’d bliss beyond the skies.
 Whilst we indulge the pleasing theme,
 And rapturous view the fairy dream,
 Should Recollection chance to glow,
 Quick rise the scenes of pain and woe.
 O then !—but close the mournful tale,
 O drop the Grecian painter’s veil !

* * * *

By frantic thought to misery driven,
 Ah ! why to man was Memory given ?

Led by her tyrant pow'r, he strays
In Fortune's better, brighter, days;
Till, lost to sorrow, sense, and pain,
Delirious madness whirls his brain !'

Affection and sympathy may be attended with more trouble, but it will be more availing than those hasty remedies, blows, cords, and strait waistcoats. Friendship and domestic love will exercise their constraining and, perhaps, their healing influence, over the melancholy; whereas any thing like injury and insult may rouse their irritable nerves to resentment, and the walls of a Bethlem utterly deprive them of reason. Acquire the confidence of those whose rational faculties are suspended, and you may see them ere long returning to their balance. By delicate and anxious care you may keep alive, and blow into a flame, 'the glimmering embers of a nearly extinguished mind.'

The author begs leave here to introduce a case which he himself witnessed as it amply illustrates the beneficial effects of such kind and judicious treatment. A gentleman, not thirty years of age, had met with great and unexpected losses. The calamity for a time almost overwhelmed his mind, and brought on a nervous irritation of the system, which he confidently believed was the precursor of immediate death. In this state of mind he was brought to me

by his friend, who had kindly undertaken to manage his affairs, in order to receive the last consolations, and to tranquillize his mind for a removal to another scene of existence. I will not attempt to describe the uncommon agitation of his mind, or the benefit he derived from the kind attentions and affectionate sympathy of judicious friends. By the advice and gentle persuasion of his surgeon, he was prevailed upon to go into the country, to be placed in the company of a medical friend, whose skill in his case, and retired situation, removed from the noise and bustle of town, might quiet his agitation, repair his shattered health, and revive his dejected spirits. There we promised to visit him the next day. According to our agreement, we repaired to his sequestered retirement. The judicious treatment of his medical friend had already produced a visible improvement, and he expressed himself recovered; but we could discern that his spirits were assumed, and his cheerfulness merely affected. We invited him to walk with us in the spacious garden that surrounded the house. As soon as we were fairly alone, and he seemed convinced that he had gained our confidence as to the improvement of his health and mind, he told us, ' I am not a stranger to the place where you have brought me, which is a *private mad-house* ; and, did I suppose that you meant

to confine me here, I should go mad with vexation. What would become of my reputation if the world knew it? I am determined to return with you.' By the gentle persuasions of two ladies who were with me, and upon the absolute promise of fetching him back the next day, he consented to remain there another night. The promise was fulfilled; he was brought home to their pleasant retreat; and there, in their agreeable society, and in occasional visits to other friends—by the sympathies of friendship, and the soothing influence of Christian motives and religious principles—by gradual introduction to business and the world—they had the happiness to see his agitation gently subside, his undermined health gradually restored, and his deranged faculties regaining their former vigour; and he returned to his friends in the country completely recovered. Thus kind treatment and judicious management restored one who was the ornament of his circle, but who, by harshness and coercion, might have been driven to distraction for life; and religion, which has been often unjustly accused as the cause of melancholy and madness, was to him the guide to peace and soundness of mind; impressing this lesson, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.'

‘Religion’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.’

Not that we would speak the slightest word to depreciate the value of lunatic asylums under a judicious and merciful superintendence; but it is to be feared that many have been condemned to a state of insulation from all rational and sympathizing intercourse before a necessity has occurred for so severe a lot. Diseased members have been amputated from the trunk of society before they have become so incurable or unsound as absolutely to require separation. Many of the *dépôts* for the captivity of intellectual invalids may be regarded only as nurseries for and manufactories of madness, magazines or reservoirs of lunacy, from which is issued, from time to time, a sufficient supply for perpetuating and extending this formidable disease—a disease which is not to be remedied by stripes or strait waistcoats, by imprisonment or impoverishment; but by an unwearied tenderness, and unceasing and anxious superintendence.

There are no circumstances in my professional life on which I look back with a more sincere self-congratulation than on those cases where I have rescued persons, who had some incipient or transient symptoms of insanity, from the threatened

terrors of a madhouse. By a proper attention to their physical health, and a considerate observance and soothing of their mental agitations, they became, in several instances, speedily convalescent, and were soon restored to their former place in domestic and general society.

The subject of lunacy and of lunatic asylums is one of peculiar interest to the British practitioner. By its visible and rapid extension insanity renders itself every day more deserving of the title of the 'English Malady.' Madness strides like a colossus over this island.*

The imprisonment of persons under the plea of lunacy has often been most unjust, and deserving the severest reprobation. The following facts were told by a gentleman well known at the east part of London, (James U——, Esq.) and may be relied upon as most authentic:—A gentleman had two natural children, a son and a daughter, to each of whom he left a considerable property. The daughter married; the son remained a bachelor, and lived in comfortable circumstances, keeping a gardener and a maid-servant. With this gentleman Mr. U—— and his father were very intimate; he was in the habit of frequently visiting them, but they were rather surprised that they had not seen him

* Reid on Hypochondriasis.

for some time ; when the gardener called, and said that, as he was going by the mad-house not far from Wh——, he heard his master's voice from an upper window, calling out, ' Go directly, and tell Mr. U—— where I am.' The man immediately came, and informed us of the lamentable confinement of his master.

' We proceeded,' said Mr. U——, ' with my father's physician, as soon as possible, to the place. The acting physician behaved ill upon the occasion, and refused to admit us ; but Mr. T—— acted a very honorable part, and we were permitted to visit him. He told us that his brother-in-law had repeatedly endeavoured to persuade him, as the sole trustee of his wife's property, to give up his trust ; and, his wife not being *compos mentis* he would then have the possession in his own hands. This Mr. U——'s friend steadily refused, saying he would never alter his father's will. Unable to move him from his purpose, his brother-in-law had recourse to this execrable stratagem to seize the property. He obtained a certificate, which he persuaded the minister and churchwardens of the parish, who did not know the parties, to sign—an example which, I hope, will serve to increase the usual caution of my clerical brethren and parish officers. With this certificate, so incautiously at-

tested, he proceeded in a coach to Mr. U——'s friend, and told him he was going out for an airing, and persuaded him to take a ride with him. Instead of conveying him back to his house, he proceeded round to the mad-house, where the certificate procured them a ready admittance, and placed his friend in a state of confinement as a lunatic. From this imprisonment, perhaps, he would have never been released, had it not been for the rescue which Mr. U—— was providentially directed to procure for him. He and his father visited him with their own physician, who would suffer no medicine to be administered to him but under his own especial observation. The friend said to Mr. U——, "They might soon make me mad, by giving me their own medicines." They found him much agitated and vexed by this unexpected ill usage; and such kidnapping was, indeed, of itself sufficient to agitate a man's mind to distraction, if not already disordered. But otherwise he was as rational as they were, and in a few days they procured his discharge. Oh! how does man prey upon man, and try to enslave the rest of his species for the sake of lucre! The love of money is the root of all evil.'

But the above case, aggravated as it is, is far inferior to the hardship and tragical consequences

which attended the tyranny exercised over a young lady, who was born to a most opulent fortune, and deprived of it by means of a similar unjust captivity, exercised upon her by her high connexions, who now prosper and flourish in the splendour created by their cruel robberies. The gentleman who related to me the following case is a man of known probity and honour: he knows the parties, but has never revealed them to me; and is determined, he says, to watch their motions, to ascertain if the money so unjustly acquired is suffered to prosper by a retributive Providence:

‘ A person died, leaving the large property of 200,000*l.* This, as it turned out, was claimed by two nieces, to the exclusion of a third niece, who seemed to have an equal right to her share of the property, and was thought by the world to have participated in it. Both these ladies were married to persons of high rank and consequence; *the other was engaged to a person of exalted rank.* The young niece, therefore, whom we will call Cordelia, unprotected as she was, conceived that they had taken advantage of her, and had acted upon a forged will, thus to deprive her of her share in a fortune, which, upon the ground of equity, relationship, and affection, she had always had reason to suppose would fall in equal proportion to her share.

She came, therefore, to London, for the purpose of stirring the subject of the will. She took lodgings, where lived also the agent of a nobleman, whom we will call Honestus. To him she opened her mind, and asked him to go with her to Doctors' Commons, to procure a copy of the will.

‘ It became necessary, however, that she should go into the country, to get some indispensable evidence. It was requisite she should go into Wales; and at the place where the coach set her down were persons ready waiting, who immediately took her into custody, under plea of being a lunatic, and hurried her away to B——, where she was placed in Dr. F——’s mad-house.

‘ An officer’s widow, in the neighbourhood, hearing of her interesting character, often visited her, to whom she related the whole of the circumstances. To her she complained most bitterly of her unjust and cruel imprisonment in a mad-house, and exclaimed, in the language of despondency, “I am now ruined for life!—they will never let me out—and, if they do, who will ever marry a woman who has been confined in a mad-house?” Such conduct was enough to drive any one to madness, desperation, or suicide. She also grievously complained of many most disagreeable circumstances “among the secrets of her prison-house,” over which a re-

gard to decency obliges me to throw the veil. To guard against which I take this opportunity of cautioning all who prefer private asylums to be very particular in their inquiries of the patients themselves, and to weigh well the moral character of those to whom their dear relatives are consigned. They parted good friends; but it having come to the ears of the powerful husbands of the two nieces that this officer's widow had visited the lady whom they had so magnanimously despoiled and imprisoned, and had made an unfavorable report thereupon, they contrived to send her a threatening intimation sufficiently terrifying to make her sparing in her speech on that subject, and to discourage her from visiting the young lady; and, shortly after, this poor, oppressed, disinherited, interesting, lovely young lady, in a fit of despondency, from the cruel tyranny of power, which she could not resist, and villainy, which she was unable to expose, threw herself into the river Avon, which runs at the foot of her hated prison-house, and drowned her inconsolable sorrows in a watery grave.'

'Ye Peers of England, pillars of the State!' is there one of those connected with you who would be guilty of so foul a deed? I know not the names of the parties; my two friends knew them well. I wish not to know them, nor did my friends think it

necessary to tell me, and I declined to press them to do it; but, whoever they may be, I do not envy their feelings should this meet their eye, nor the tarnished splendour which glitters round them. For the honour of Britain, I hope few such examples of oppressive power under a high name are to be found; and I pray God that the guilty may repent of their crime ere they stand before ‘Him to whom all hearts are known, and from whom no secrets are hid.’

But an avenger arrived, who waited upon my friend, Mr. Honestus, the nobleman’s agent, to hear the particulars of his lamented sister. Mr. H. told him all. He expressed himself infinitely obliged, and said he would never forget it! But behold! while my friend was expecting that this affectionate brother was taking every step to bring the culprits to justice, and secure his rights, he hears of him being *highly promoted* through the interest of the very parties who were revelling in what he supposed his sister’s rightful property!! Of course, no word of requital has been heard of since. So easy do some minds find it to compensate for another’s injury by a convenient *douceur*, and to make a little interest preponderate against a sister’s robbery, and a sister’s broken heart! It might appear uncharitable to say ‘Omne venale;’ we therefore add, ‘Charity hopeth all things—be-

lieveth all things—endureth all things;’ and especially where a man’s own interest is concerned in so doing.

‘Nervous affections,’ says Dr. Reid, ‘are approaches to insanity. The coming on of insanity, like that of the evening darkness, is scarcely perceptible in its encroachment;’ and Dr. Johnson thus traces it with a master’s hand: ‘Some particular train of ideas fixes upon the mind; all other intellectual gratifications are rejected: the mind, on weariness or leisure, recurs constantly to the favorite conception, and feasts on the delicious falsehood whenever it is offended with the bitterness of truth. By degrees the reign of Fancy is confirmed. She grows first imperious, and then despotic. These fictions begin to operate as realities; false opinions fasten upon the mind; and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish.’* We should, therefore, counteract the first tendencies of this disease, and notice with awe the first symptoms; like the prophet observing the cloud like a man’s hand in the distant horizon, which soon overspread the whole sky with blackness. Let us hear Dr. Beattie on the same subject:

‘Fancy enervates, while it soothes, the heart,
 And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight:
 To joy each heightening charm it can impart,
 But wraps the hour of woe in tenfold night.

* *Rasselas.*

And often, where no real ills affright,
 Its visionary fiends, an endless train,
 Assail with equal or superior might,
 And through the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,
 And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mortal pain.

‘And yet, alas ! the real ills of life
 Claim the full vigour of a mind prepar’d,
 Prepar’d for patient, long, laborious strife,
 Its guide experience, and truth its guard.
 We fare on earth as other men have far’d :
 Were they successful? Let us not despair.
 Was disappointment oft their sole reward ?
 Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare
 How they have borne the load ourselves are doom’d to bear.’

‘The vital powers, unexcited by motion, grow gradually languid ; as their vigour fails obstructions are generated, and from obstructions proceed most of those pains which wear us away slowly by periodical tortures.’—JOHNSON.

‘To cure the mind’s strong bias, spleen,
 Some recommend the bowling-green ;
 Some hilly walks ; all exercise ;
 Fling but a stone, the giant dies.’

GREEN.

Labour, carried to fatigue, will moderate acute feelings, and cure nervous disorders. Bodily labour, assisted by mental excitement, has produced wonderful effects. Dr. Reid gives the following instance:—‘A young student at college became so deeply hypochondriacal as to proclaim himself dead, and

ordered the college bells to be tolled on the occasion of his death. In this he was indulged; but the man employed to execute the task performed it so imperfectly, that he arose from his bed in a fury of passion, to toll the bell for his own departure. When he had finished, he retired to his bed in a state of profuse perspiration, and was from that moment alive and well.' As Dr. Reid adds, 'the skin, it should seem, in such a case, having been relaxed by exertion, hypochondriasis evaporated through its pores.'

Bereft of graver employments, the desponding mind may be cured by lighter occupations. Dr. Johnson said, that 'a woman was happier than a man, because she could hem a pocket-handkerchief;' for this trifling occupation contributed to beguile the excessive sensibility of the mind.

Dr. Paley said, 'that, in writing his valuable volumes on moral and political philosophy, he had found, in sickness and health, that which could alone alleviate the one or give enjoyment to the other—occupation and engagement.' And Gibbon laments, rather than rejoices, when he comes to the conclusion of his large, laborious, and intellectual history—*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Employment, and the hope of fame, imparted the highest enjoyment to his hours of lite-

rary labour; and Bishop Horne wishes the reader only as much pleasure in reading his Commentary on the Psalms as himself enjoyed in writing them.

Yet, though we are busy in our occupations, let us beware of nursing our melancholy complaints. It is like meddling with the machinery of a watch—it will spoil it. It is like nursing children into delicacy and disease.

Ennui is, indeed, the cause of melancholy; expectation is a vital principle of happiness. The blossoms of hope seem better than the ripened fruits of fortune. It is in vicissitude that the interest and value of the present state appears. Anticipation of change is the chief charm of life. We should not proceed in the journey of life with half the pleasure we do, could we trace all the windings of our future way upon a map presented to us.

The hypochondriac is often agitated in mind, but disinclined to active exertion. ‘I have,’ said Cowper, ‘that within me which hinders me wretchedly in every thing that I ought to do; but is prone to trifle, and let every good thing run to waste.’ Toil was made for man, and ‘he is in every instance obliged to *earn* what is necessary to his enjoyment.’ If we wish for habitual cheerfulness,

we must work for it: there is no royal road to good spirits. The lounge's life is the most irksome: he has no burden to carry, and every hour presses as a load. Time moves tediously. The sun seems to him to stand still. Leisure is often the cause of our complaints. Dr. Reid tells of a tailor who suddenly arrived at a large fortune, and descended from his shop-board, like Charles from his throne: he soon fell ill of the tedium of indolence, and he returned again to his tailor's board; and he could never be induced by any motive to relinquish his throne of industrious employment a second time.

There is a lunatic asylum in Spain, where the poor are cured by labour; while the grandees, who are exempt from labour, remain incurable. Cowper, when at the period of his deepest disorder and despair, found relief from reading novels. By interesting himself in the distresses of fictitious beings he diverted his attention from sufferings which were no less the offspring of his imagination. Any engagement, however trifling, is of great moment, if it can occupy a mind of great sensibility.

'To cheer the drooping spirits of a lady,' says Zimmerman, 'in the country, whose health was impaired by a nervous affection, I advised her to read very frequently the history of the Greek and

Roman empires. At the expiration of three months she wrote to me, "With what veneration for antiquity have you inspired my mind! What are the buzzing race of the present age, when compared with those noble characters? History heretofore was not my favorite study; now I live only on its pages. I feel, during the progress of my study, the strongest inclination to become acquainted with all the transactions of Greece and Rome. It has opened to me an inexhaustible source of pleasure and health. I could not have believed that my library contained so inestimable a treasure; it will become dearer to me than any thing I inherit. In the course of six months you will no longer be troubled with my complaints. My Plutarch has already become more valuable to me than all the triumphs of coquetry, or all the sentimental writing addressed to ladies in the country who are inclined to be all heart, and with whom Satan plays tricks of love with the same address as a *dilletante* plays tricks of music on the violin." This lady, who, I confess, is learned, gives me further information respecting the conduct of her kitchen, and the management of her poultry-yard; but she has recovered her health, and I think she will hereafter find as much pleasure in housekeeping and feeding

her chickens as she did formerly from the pages of Plutarch :'

' What dire necessities on ev'ry hand
 Our art, our strength, our fortitude require !
 Of foes intestine, what a numerous band
 Against this little throb of life conspire !
 Yet Science can elude their fatal ire
 Awhile, and turn aside Death's level'd dart,
 Sooth the sharp pang, allay the fever's fire,
 And brace the nerves once more, and cheer the heart,
 And yet a few soft nights and balmy days impart.

' Nor less to regulate man's moral frame
 Science exerts her all-composing sway.
 Flutters thy breast with fear, or pants for fame,
 Or pines, to indolence and spleen a prey,
 Or avarice, a fiend more fierce than they ?
 Flee to the shade of Academus' grove,
 Where cares molest not, discord melts away
 In harmony, and the pure passions prove
 How sweet the words of Truth, breath'd from the lips of
 Love.

' What cannot Art and Industry perform,
 When Science plans the progress of their toil ?
 They smile at penury, disease, and storm ;
 And oceans from their mighty mounds recoil.
 When tyrants scourge, or demagogues embroil
 A land, or when the rabble's headlong rage
 Order transforms to anarchy and spoil,
 Deep-vers'd in man, the philosophic sage
 Prepares with lenient hand their frenzy to assuage.'

CHAP. V.

PREDISPOSING NATURAL CAUSES OF SUICIDE,
AND ANTIDOTES SUGGESTED.

‘ A sight for Pity to peruse
Till she resemble faintly what she views ;
Till Sympathy contract a kindred pain,
Pierc’d with the woes that she laments in vain.’

Excess in Animal Food—In Spirituous Liquors—Strong Tea—Luxury—Irregular Hours—All tend to Melancholy—Antidotes—Business—Sorrows of Werter—Hume—Garth—Seneca—Cato—Contrast of Heathen Philosophy with Christian Hopes—Change of Scene—Dr. Heberden—Contrast between the hateful Suicide, Mordaunt, and a nameless pitiable Suicide at an Inn in Kent—Ennui a Cause—Sorrows of Werter mischievous—Mental Agitation illustrated in the Suicide of Lieut. Sharpe, and his Murder of Miss Shuckburgh—Ignorance and Superstition Causes—The Gentoo Widow—The Martyr—Poverty and Infidelity Causes, exemplified in Smith, his Wife, and Child—Pride and Despair Causes—Saul, King of Israel, his Suicide—Lessons against Apostacy—The Crime of Suicide proved, and its horrid Guilt depicted.

IT must not be denied that there are natural as well as mental causes of suicide. Too copious an use of gross and animal food will oppress the digestive organs of the body, produce plethora, and oc-

caasion uneasy and fretful sensations, impatience, and despondency :

‘ Corpus onustum

Hesternis vitiis animum quoque prægravat unâ.’

HORACE.

The excessive use of strong and spirituous liquors acts as latent poisons ; they exhilarate for a time, but depress the spirits afterwards. These wind up the spirits to the utmost elevation ; but they go down, like clock-work, with equal depression, and the mind becomes at times elated to frenzy, or deep sunk in melancholy. The frequent use of strong tea also enfeebles and enervates the body, impairs the strength of the nervous system, occasions depression of spirits, and contributes to abate courage, vigour, and steadiness of mind. But, assuredly, luxury, high-seasoned viands, spirituous liquors, effeminate habits, and irregular hours, are the chief causes of those bodily and nervous disorders emphatically called ‘ The English Malady,’ which may predispose some persons for melancholy and lunacy.

Change of scene, and proper means, timely and judiciously applied, may do much to recover the spirit which has been broken down by sorrow and trouble, and the frame which is the prey of ‘ sinking, suffocating, and strangling nervous affections:’

' Virtuous and faithful Heberden, whose skill
 Attempts no task it cannot well fulfil ;
 Gives ' Melancholy' up to Nature's care,
 And sends the patient into purer air ;
 Look where he comes ! In this embower'd alcove
 Stand close conceal'd, and see a statue move :
 Lips busy and eyes fix'd, foot falling slow,
 Arms hanging idly down, hands clasp'd below,
 Interpret to the marking eye distress
 Such as its symptoms can alone express.
 This, of all maladies that man infest,
 Claims most compassion and receives the least.'

COWPER.

A nervous affection of this kind is

' A sight for Pity to peruse
 Till she resemble faintly what she views ;
 Till Sympathy contracts a kindred pain,
 Pierc'd with the woes that she laments in vain.'

It was not such a nervous affection as this which
 occasioned the suicide of Colonel Philip Mordaunt,
 as related by Voltaire, but a shadowy sorrow, impa-
 tience, and ingratitude, amid the wantonness of
 prosperity. This man's trouble was truly

' As heads that never ache suppose
 Forgery of fancy and a dream of woes !'

This gentleman was nearly related to the
 famous Earl of Peterborough : he was a young man
 of quality, of about twenty-seven years of age ; he
 was handsome and well made ; his birth and genius
 gave him room to expect the greatest advantages.

He had placed all his happiness in a mistress, by whom he was passionately beloved. Yet under these circumstances he took a sudden distaste to life; wrote several letters to his friends, to bid them farewell; and composed some verses, in which he declares his resolution to die by his own hands; and says that opium was serviceable to the will on such occasions, but that, in his opinion, a brace of balls and resolution were much better. In one of his letters he has these expressions: 'Life has given me the head-ache, and I want a good churchyard sleep to set me right.' Accordingly he shot himself, for no other reason but that his soul was tired of his body. He seemed to choose death merely because he had no longer a relish for his present happiness. How detestable to God and man!

The depression and heartbroken grief of an unknown suicide, who was found dead in a chamber at an inn in Kent, excite our pity, while the former moves our execration. The following paper lay beside him:

' Lost to the world, and by the world forsaken,
 A wretched creature,
 Who groaned under a weary life
 Upwards of thirty years, without knowing
 One happy hour;
 And all
 In consequence of one single error,

Committed in early days!
 Though highly venial,
 As being the mere effect of juvenile folly,
 And soon repented of.
 But, alas!
 The poor prodigal
 Had no kind father that would take him home,
 And welcome back his sad repentant virtue
 With fond forgiveness and the fatted calf.
 Here
 He sinks beneath his mighty load of ills,
 And with
 His miserable being lays them down,
 Heartbroken,
 At the age of fifty.
 Tender reader, give him a little earth
 For charity.'

To this may well be added Campbell's animated picture of a suicide:

'Truth, ever lovely—since the world began,
 The foe of tyrants, and the friend of man—
 How can thy words from balmy slumber start,
 Reposing Virtue, pillow'd on the heart!
 Yet, if thy voice the note of thunder roll'd,
 And that were true which Nature never told,
 Let Wisdom smile not on her conquer'd field;
 No rapture dawns, no treasure is reveal'd!
 Oh! let her read, nor loudly, nor elate,
 The doom that bars us from a better fate;
 But, sad as angels for the good man's sin,
 Weep to record, and blush to give it in!

'And well may Doubt, the mother of Dismay,
 Pause at her martyr's tomb, and read the lay,

Down by the wilds of yon deserted vale,
 It darkly hints a melancholy tale !
 There, as the homeless madman sits alone,
 In hollow winds he hears a spirit moan !
 And there, they say, a wizard orgie crowds,
 When the Moon lights her watch-tower in the clouds.
 Poor lost Alonzo ! Fate's neglected child !
 Mild be the doom of Heaven—as thou wert mild !
 For, oh ! thy heart in holy mould was cast,
 And all thy deeds were blameless, but the last.
 Poor lost Alonzo ! still I seem to hear
 The clod that struck thy hollow-sounding bier,
 When Friendship paid, in speechless sorrow drown'd,
 Thy midnight rites, but not on hallow'd ground !

' Cease, every joy, to glimmer on my mind,
 But leave—oh ! leave, the light of HOPE behind.
 What though my winged hours of bliss have been,
 Like angel-visits, few and far between,
 Her musing mood shall every pang appease,
 And charm—when pleasures lose the power to please !
 Yes ! let each rapture, dear to Nature, flee—
 Close not the light of Fortune's stormy sea—
 Mirth, music, friendship, Love's propitious smile,
 Chase every care, and charm a little while ;
 Ecstatic throbs the fluttering heart employ,
 And all her strings are harmonized to joy.'

The former of these cases (Col. Mordaunt's) may be classed under a singular cause which prompts to suicide, and that is *ennui*, a state in which many feel a listlessness and weariness of themselves. This is the offspring of mere idleness and want of employment. Nothing is more laborious and irksome

than having nothing to do. This acts like a drought upon the constitution, which dries up the springs of health and strength, debilitates the animal economy, deranges the mental powers, preys on the spirits, and produces that *tedium vitæ* which sometimes terminates in self-destruction :

‘ Within that ample niche,
 With every quaint device of splendour rich,
 Yon phantom, who, from vulgar eyes withdrawn,
 Appears to stretch in one eternal yawn:
 His nurse was Indolence ; his tutor Pomp,
 Who kept the child from every earthly romp.
 They rear’d their nursling to the bulk you see,
 And his proud parents call’d their imp Ennui.’

HAYLEY’S TRIUMPH OF TEMPER.

There is nothing so conducive to the health, so calculated to animate the spirits of the hypochondriac, as to be regularly and judiciously employed. To the want of this is ascribed, by the *Christian Observer*, in a criticism upon Cowper, the return of his melancholy :

‘ For a person in whom there existed so strong a tendency towards derangement, it must, however, be fairly admitted, that the mode in which he passed his life at Olney, previous to this attack, was not judiciously contrived. He should have had some well-chosen occupation to engage his mind ; instead of which, a great part of his days were spent in idleness ; and the only fruits which remain of the

labours of five years are a few hymns and familiar letters. That a considerable portion of his time was given to devotional exercises must be acknowledged; but that devotion which does not issue in action partakes too much of the religion of the cloister to have the effect of keeping the mind long in a healthy state. The right use of time is a very important division of Christian duty; and here we cannot help thinking that Cowper failed. Devotional exercises, instead of being used to prepare and strengthen the mind for the active duties of life, were allowed, in a great measure, to usurp their place; and not only was the opportunity thus lost of benefitting mankind, by labours which would probably have proved their own reward, even in the peace and satisfaction they imparted to his own bosom; but the natural timidity and feminine softness of his character must have been increased by his almost total seclusion from the world. * *

‘The death of his brother, whom he most tenderly loved, and whose loss he severely felt, may possibly have contributed to depress his spirits at this period. However that may be, he was a second time overwhelmed with a gloom that rendered five or six years of his life a perfect blank. On his recovery from this melancholy state, his friends, who had probably regarded his want of some regular

employment as one of the predisposing causes of his illness, prevailed with him to turn his thoughts to writing. We now see him regularly occupied ; and the beneficial effect which this circumstance had on his mind sufficiently appears both from the Poems which he first published, and from the letters which, while employed in composing them, he addressed to his friends. These show that while he was moderately and usefully occupied, while he had an object in view which served to keep his mind from preying on itself, he enjoyed a sufficient share of mental quiet and satisfaction. Nor were these blessings obtained by any undue sacrifice of devotional feeling or religious meditation. The poems, and many of the letters, which he then wrote, prove that religion still occupied the chief place in his thoughts : they prove also the scriptural soundness, the cheering tendency, the purifying and elevating effect, of those views of Christianity which Cowper had embraced ; nor do we hesitate in giving it as our opinion that the labours of that period of his life of which we speak will long continue to be the delight and admiration, not only of all who have a taste for poetic excellence, but of all who have a cordial relish for divine truth, the effects and triumphs of which he has so beautifully described. They manifest throughout the genuine spirit of

Christianity ; and carry with them, to the mind of a Christian, intrinsic evidence that they flowed from a heart which felt the full force of the truths that he taught. Let one instance serve to exemplify this opinion :

“ Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
 And cut up all my follies by the root,
 I never trusted in an arm but thine,
 Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine :
 My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
 Were but the feeble efforts of a child ;
 Howe’er performed, it was their brightest part,
 That they proceeded from a grateful heart.
 Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
 Forgive their evil, and accept their good :
 I cast them at thy feet ; my only plea
 Is what it was, dependence upon Thee ;
 While struggling in the vale of tears below,
 That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.” ’

Here I would most strongly reprobate the sickly notions, the sentimental nonsense, the false morality, the infidel opinions, the immoral precepts, contained in many of our popular novels, romances, and plays, which the idle and dissipated waste their hours in perusing. There is not a book of a more dangerous tendency in many of these respects than the undeservedly admired ‘ Sorrows of Werter,’ a book which should be forbidden and proscribed, as having largely contributed to diffuse licentiousness,

to encourage effeminacy, and to seduce the weak and the agitated to suicide.

The same may be said of Hume's 'Essays,' of which let us hear the poet, Cowper, speak, in terms of deserved reprobation :

'I have not yet read the last Review ; but, dipping into it, I accidentally fell upon their account of "Hume's Essay on Suicide." I am glad that they have liberality enough to condemn the licentiousness of an author whom they so much admire. I say liberality ; for there is as much bigotry in the world to that man's errors as there is in the hearts of some sectaries to their peculiar modes and tenets. He is the Pope of thousands as blind and as presumptuous as himself. God certainly infatuates those who will not see : it were otherwise impossible that a man naturally shrewd and sensible, and whose understanding has had all the advantages of constant exercise and cultivation, could have satisfied himself, or have hoped to satisfy others, with such palpable sophistry as has not even the grace of fallacy to recommend it. His silly assertion, that because it would be no sin to divert the course of the Danube, therefore it is none to let out a few ounces of blood from an artery, would justify not suicide only, but homicide also ; for the lives of ten thousand men are of less consequence to their

country than the course of that river to the regions through which it flows. Population would soon make society amends for the loss of her ten thousand members, but the loss of the Danube would be felt by all the millions that dwell upon its banks, to all generations. But the life of a man, and the waters of a river, can never come into competition with each other, in point of value, unless in the estimation of an unprincipled philosopher.

‘Some of the advocates of this crime have contended, that as God is a benevolent Being, who delights in the happiness of his creatures, he cannot be supposed to regard with displeasure one who lays down his life when he ceases to enjoy it. But; if this position be admitted, then it will follow that every man is at liberty to pursue his own happiness in whatever way he chooses; or, which is the same thing, that no act is displeasing to God, or a crime, which the agent commits with a view of promoting his own happiness;—a doctrine which, if conceded, would lead to the justification of the most atrocious crimes; would destroy the firmest principles of moral obligation; and render the caprice of man, instead of the Divine law, the ultimate rule of action.’

And though we must often shed the tear of commiseration over the corpse of the wretched suicide,

who, harassed by evils, and driven to distraction by irreparable injuries, is tempted to commit suicide, yet we must also reprobate as unscriptural the sentiments contained in the following lines, and as too calculated to soften the criminality and veil the turpitude of the crime from the eye of the reader:—

‘ Sad daughter of distress ! who, in the bloom
Of beauty, bow’d with misery and woe,
In the dark grave art laid untimely low,
Rest ! Life’s bleak storm is past. Tho’, by the doom
Of ruthless man, beneath unholy mound
Thy corse, amid the beaten pathway cast,
Lies where the wild birch quivers in the blast ;
Yet soft descending, thro’ the stony mound,
The dew of Heaven shall bathe thy clay-cold breast :
Yet shall thy sufferings, scorn’d on earth, atone,
Where Mercy dwells on high, for life’s sad close ;
And Pity, musing oft at eve alone
On the green sod where grief and pain repose,
Shall sooth, with hymns of peace, thy soul to rest.’

SOTHEY’S SUICIDE.

Addison’s play of *Cato* has doubtless contributed to the same pernicious purposes ; and the tragic end of Eustace Budgell, the unfortunate author of the ‘ Bee,’ and the coadjutor of Steele and Addison, occasioned by that play, is one of the many proofs which might be adduced of its mischievous tendency.

It is true that Seneca ‘ extolled Cato for being

his own assassin; but, where life is more terrible than death, it is then the truest valour to live. All the great and vaunted acts of the ancients do not match the single case of Job. Cato undoubtedly acted like a coward in putting an end to his own life: he would have shown more greatness of soul in living for a time under the victorious Cæsar, until an opportunity presented of regaining the liberties of his country. Brutus, Cassius, Antony, were self-murderers: they were in adversity; and, though no glory was yielded to the suicide unless he was in prosperity, yet thus did these men of courage when the battle was lost to them.'

The philosophy which the noble-minded Cato was master of was insufficient to support him in his adversity: and his stoical firmness, which would enable him to suffer every deprivation of temporal comforts, could not, when, perhaps, it was most necessary, encourage him to hold up against the mental distress of being compelled to walk in the disgraceful train of captives, and adorn the triumphal car of a conqueror, exposed to the insulting scoffs of the multitude.

'But we live in an age when our prospects are brightened with the consolations of a religion founded on the basis of truth, resting on the belief of a superintending gracious Providence, and

abounding with sure promises of happiness hereafter. Our principles may enable us to bear the rudest shocks of adversity, and to endure the strongest pangs of sorrow which 'flesh is heir to.'

'Oh! star-eyed Science, hast thou wander'd there,
 To waft us home the message of despair?
 Then bind the palm, thy sage's brow to suit,
 Of blasted leaf, and death-distilling fruit!
 Ah me! the laurell'd wreath that Murder rears,
 Blood-nursed, and water'd by the widow's tears,
 Seems not so foul, so tainted, and so dread,
 As waves the night-shade round the sceptic head.
 What is the bigot's torch, the tyrant's chain?
 I smile on death, if Heaven-ward hope remain.
 But, if the warring winds of Nature's strife
 Be all the faithless charter of my life;
 If Chance awaked, inexorable power,
 This frail and feverish being of an hour;
 Doom'd o'er the world's precarious scene to sweep,
 Swift as the tempest travels on the deep;
 To know Delight but by her parting smile,
 And toil, and wish, and weep, a little while;
 Then melt, ye elements, that form'd in vain
 This troubled pulse, and visionary brain!
 Fade, ye wild flowers, memorials of my doom,
 And sink, ye stars, that light me to the tomb!'

Let us hear one who knew the value, and felt, through a long life, the consolations, of Christianity:—

'Here in the name of Christ, and of his Gospel,

we may give a challenge to all other religions, and say, which of them has borne up the spirit of man so high above the fears of death as this has done ; or has given us so fair, so rational, and so divine an account how death has been overcome by one Man, and how by faith in His name we may all be made overcomers ? How vain are the trifles with which the heathen priests and their prophets amused the credulous multitude ! What silly and insipid fables do they tell us of souls passing over in a ferry-boat to the other world ! and describe the fields of pleasure and the prisons of pain in that country of ghosts and shadows in so ridiculous a manner, that the wise men of their own nations despised the romance, and few were stupid enough to believe it all. If we consult the religion of their philosophers, they give us but a poor, lame, and miserable account of the state after death. Some of them denied it utterly, and others rave at random in mere conjectures, and float in endless uncertainties. The courage which some of their heroes professed at the point of death was rather a stubborn indolence than a rational and well-founded valour ; and not many arrived at this hardness of mind, except those that supposed their existence ended with their life, and thought they should be dissolved into their

first atoms. Aristotle, one of the greatest men amongst them, tells us that futurity is uncertain, and calls death the most terrible of all terribles.

‘ If we search into the religion of the Jews, which was a scheme of God’s own contrivance and revelation to men, we find the affairs of a future world lay much in the dark ; their consciences were not so thoroughly purged from the guilt of sin but that some terrors hung about them, as appears from Heb. x. 1—3 ; and having so faint and obscure notices of the separate state of souls, and of the resurrection, these were the persons who, in a special manner, “ through the fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”—HEB. ii. 15.

‘ But Christianity lays a fair and rational foundation for our confidence and triumph in the dying hour. It shows how guilt is removed by an all-sufficient sacrifice ; and makes it evident that no hell, no vengeance, no shadows of misery, await the believer in that invisible world. This makes the Christian venture into it with a certain boldness, and a becoming presence of mind. The doctrine of Christ shows us how the sting of death is taken away, and calls us to fight with a vanquished enemy, a serpent without a sting ; it gives us assurance that we shall rise again from the dust with bodies fresher and fairer, glorious in their frame, and their

constitution immortal, for death shall be no more. Exalted by so sublime a hope, what is there in death sufficient to depress our spirits, if our faith were but equal to this admirable doctrine? The holy apostles are witnesses, the noble army of martyrs are witnesses, and many a saint in our day is a witness to this truth, and gives honour to this Gospel. How many thousands have met death, and all its frightful attendants, with a steady soul and a serene countenance, and have departed to Heaven with songs of praise upon their lips, a smile upon their face, and triumph in their eyes! And this was not owing to any extravagant flights of enthusiasm, nor the fires of an inflamed fancy; but it has been performed often, and may be done daily, by the force of a regular faith, on the most solid and reasonable principles; for such are the principles of the Gospel of Christ.'—DR. WATTS.

That the ancients committed the act of suicide, and applauded it, need excite no wonder. The Roman heroes, during the civil wars, killed themselves when they lost a battle. Hannibal, according to Plutarch, poisoned himself. Mithridates, after being a conqueror, being himself conquered, drank poison; but, that not being sufficiently operative, got a soldier, Vitigius, to slay him. Upon this Monyma and Veronica, his wives, destroyed themselves; the

first by hanging, the second by poison. Statira and Roxana, sisters also to the same Mithridates, who had kept their virginity for the space of forty years, and might have borne it much longer, yet chose to bear company with their brother, by drinking each a draught of poison. (See Valerius Maximus, in loco.) Sardanapalus threw himself into a flaming fire. Portia, the wife of Brutus, destroyed herself by eating hot coals; Cleopatra by the sting of an asp; and Nerea and Charmione, her two waiting-maids, followed their mistress's example, by suicide. Bajazet, conquered by Tamerlane, and shut up in an iron cage, beat out his brains in madness, upon witnessing the unmanly usage of the latter to his wife, exhibiting her naked before his eyes to his whole court. Seneca commended Lucretia and Cato for dying, and so ending their misery: and even Eusebius admires the Roman lady's suicide, to avoid the embraces of Tarquin.

Some writers of eminence must be blamed for introducing expressions too favorable to suicide. Sir Thomas More, in his 'Utopia,' cannot be vindicated from the charge of having advocated it; and Garth, in his 'Dispensary,' recommends it, when he says,

'When honour's lost, 'tis a relief to die;
Death's but a sure retreat from infamy.'

We need not wonder at these strange expressions when we are assured that Garth himself once made the attempt to commit the cowardly act of self-murder, not from loss of honour, but loss of health. The particulars of this cowardly act are the following :

‘ When Dr. Garth had been a good while in a bad state of health, he sent one day for a physician with whom he was particularly intimate, and conjured him, by their friendship, and by every thing that was most sacred (if there was any thing more sacred), to tell him sincerely whether he thought he should be ever able to get rid of his illness or not. His friend, thus conjured, told him that he thought he might struggle with it, perhaps, for some years, but that he much feared he could never get the better of it entirely. Dr. Garth thanked him for dealing so fairly with him, turned the discourse to other things, and talked very cheerfully all the rest of the time he staid with him. As soon as he was gone, he called for his servant, said he was a good deal out of order, and would go to bed: he then sent him for a surgeon to bleed him. Soon after he sent for a second surgeon, by a different servant, and was bled in the other arm. He then said he wanted rest, and, when every body had quitted the room, he took off the bandages, and lay

down with the design of bleeding to death. His loss of blood made him faint away, and that stopped the bleeding: he afterwards sunk into a profound sleep, slept all the night, waked in the morning without his usual pains, and said, if it would continue so, he could be content to live on. In his last illness he did not use any remedies, but let his distemper take its course.'

Suicide is generally committed by the sensual dissipated character, who wastes his evening hours in intoxication, and his mornings in sleep and sloth. The man of industry, who rises with the dawn, and refreshes his spirits and renovates his health with the fascinating freshness of the morning, has too much of pleasing and substantial enjoyment to rush madly out of life with disgust. Let the young, the agitated, the dissipated, the luxurious, the slothful, the melancholy, the depressed, walk forth on a summer's morning, and behold the sun rising in native majesty, shedding beams of kindly influence, diffusing a smile on every object, slowly contracting, as he rises to the meridian, the lengthened shadows of the grove; the clouds 'illumined with fluid gold, gradually vanishing before his ardent beams, and uniting into one kindling azure.' Let him trace with hasty feet the upland lawn, and brush away the early dew-drops, or behold them glistening, like

pearls, on every leaf; let him contemplate the rich verdure of the meadows, and crop the flowers which decorate them with variegated beauty, and listen to the melody of birds resounding through the groves; and surely his gloom will vanish with the morning cloud, his heart feel the emotions of gratitude with which all animated nature seems to welcome the rising day, and he will return home with that new satisfaction which seems to animate every animal to motion, and to revive its powers of enjoyment at this 'sweet hour of prime.'

Among the distressing instances of suicide, occasioned by mental agitation and disappointment, may be recorded the following most lamentable event, which will not be forgotten in Warwickshire for many generations. It has been repeated to me every time I travelled that road by the coachman or by the passengers, and the seat pointed out where the dreadful catastrophe befell the victims. The following is the account given of it in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for April 2, 1809:—'A melancholy catastrophe has involved the family of Sir Stewkley Shuckburgh, Bart. of Upper Shuckburgh, near Warwick, and the family of Lieut. Sharpe, of the Bedford militia, in the deepest distress. Lieut. Sharpe having paid his addresses to Miss Shuckburgh, which were disapproved by the family,

formed (if he should be disappointed in obtaining the object of his affections) the horrid determination of putting an end to his own and her existence, which he carried into effect on Sunday morning last, in the plantations of Shuckburgh Park. They were overheard in earnest discourse by the butler, as if Lieut. Sharpe was persuading her to elope with him; and, as Miss Shuckburgh uttered the words "No! no!" he immediately heard the report of a pistol, which in a few seconds was succeeded by another, and they were instantly lifeless corpses! After a most deliberate investigation of all the circumstances of this most affecting and awful event before John Tomes, Esq. and a respectable jury, and the Rev. Mr. Bromfield, a magistrate of the county, a verdict of lunacy was given respecting Lieutenant Sharpe; and that Miss Shuckburgh died by his hand. Lieut. Sharpe had been occasionally, for some weeks preceding, in a state of mental derangement, and in confinement.'

The following lines, if not written for the occasion, may well be applied to it :

' Oh! can I cease, while glows this trembling frame,
In sighs to speak thy melancholy name?
I hear thy spirit wail in every storm;
In midnight shades I view thy passing form,
Pale as in that sad hour when doom'd to feel,
Deep in thy injured heart, the bloody steel!

' Demons of vengeance! ye at whose command
 I grasp'd the tube with more than woman's hand,
 Say ye, did Pity's trembling voice control,
 Or Horror damp, the purpose of my soul?
 No! my wild heart sat smiling o'er the plan
 Till Hate fulfill'd what baffled Love began.

' Long had I watch'd thy dark foreboding brow,
 What time thy bosom scorn'd its dearest vow.
 Sad though I wept the friend, the lover, chang'd,
 Still thy cold look was scornful and estrang'd,
 Till from thy pity, love, and shelter thrown,
 I wander'd hopeless, friendless, and alone!

' Oh, righteous Heaven! 'twas then my tortur'd soul
 First gave to wrath unlimited control.
 Adieu the silent look, the streaming eye,
 The murmur'd plaint, the deep heart-heaving sigh!
 Long-slumbering Justice wakes to vengeful deeds,
 He shrieks—he falls—the murderous lover bleeds!
 Now the last laugh of agony is o'er,
 And, pale in blood, he sleeps to wake no more.

' Oh! 'twas a deed of murder's deepest grain!
 Could Sharpe's dark soul so true to wrath remain?
 A friend long true, a once fond lover, fell!
 Where Love was foster'd could not Pity dwell?

' Unhappy youth! while yon pale crescent glows,
 To watch on silent Nature's deep repose,
 Thy sleepless spirit, breathing from the tomb,
 Foretells the fate that summons murderers home.
 Once more I see thy sheeted spectre stand,
 Roll the dim eye, and wave the paly hand.'

CAMPBELL'S LOVE AND MADNESS.

Mr. Slade, of the Navy Post-office, Chatham, committed the dreadful deed of suicide. On the discovery of this catastrophe a most affecting scene took place. Mrs. Slade and her daughters, in an agony of distraction, threw themselves on the body of the unfortunate husband and father, and were taken away in a state of insensibility. The situation of the unhappy family was most distressing : from a state of comparative affluence they were reduced to beggary ; and their case excited the pity of the whole town. Mr. Slade had maintained for years a character for integrity ; but, having speculated and lost in a banking concern, he was tempted to make use of government money, in the hope of replacing it. When he was called to make up his accounts, there was a deficiency of 8000*l*. Upon Mr. Barclay demanding the money, he opened his desk, and pointed to the bags of money, which he said belonged to government. While Mr. Barclay proceeded to inspect them, he retired, and immediately after was heard the report of a pistol, and he was found weltering in his blood. The bags, instead of gold, contained a large portion of silver !

‘ Frail man, how various is thy lot below !
To-day though gales propitious blow,
And Peace, soft gliding down the sky,
Lead Love along, and Harmony ;

To-morrow the gay scene deforms ;
 Then all around
 The thunder's sound
 Rolls rattling on through heaven's profound,
 And down rush all the storms.

'They shrink, they vanish into air,
 Now Slander taints with pestilence the gale ;
 And mingling cries assail,
 The wail of Woe, and groan of grim Despair.
 Lo, wizard Envy from his serpent eye
 Darts quick destruction in each baleful glance ;
 Pride, smiling stern, and yellow Jealousy,
 Frowning Disdain, and haggard Hate, advance :
 Behold, amidst the dire array,
 Pale wither'd Care his giant-stature rears,
 And lo, his iron hand prepares
 To grasp its feeble prey.'

Such is the influence of ignorant superstition and priestly craft over the minds of the Gentoos, that, in the East, suicide is not only legal, but esteemed to be meritorious :

'The widow'd Indian, when her lord expires,
 Mounts the dread pile, and braves the funeral fires.'

But there legal suicide is daily becoming more rare. But, if any consideration can excite the strongest emotions of pity for a suicide that can stir and agitate the human bosom, it is that of the Gentoos—suicide—the poor deluded widow, who, allured by ignorant superstitions, and frightened by barbarous customs, family pride, and priestly ter-

rors, suffers herself to be bound to the dead body of her husband, and placed on the funeral pile to be burnt alive with him, in the feeble hope of living happily with him in Paradise for upwards of three thousand years. Oh, that British power, co-operating with Christian zeal and evangelical light, may for ever break the bonds that drag thousands of pitiable victims to this most cruel of all suicides on the populous plains of India!

' Here, when the husband dies, the pious bride
 Thinks to delight her God with suicide.
 Near Indus' stream a sad example see
 Of strong, but barbarous, fidelity.
 Behold a female form, in youthful bloom,
 Of death enamour'd, and her consort's doom,
 Beguil'd with promises of happiness,
 Some thousand years t' enjoy connubial bliss.
 Fix'd to the fun'ral pyre, and bound by force,
 The form angelic and the stiffen'd corse,
 Her conjugal regard and faith to prove,
 And to compound with Heaven for future love!
 Assuming joy, the vain deluded spouse,
 With constancy far worse than broken vows,
 Life rashly yields for superstitious lure—
 Plung'd in a death terrific, premature!
 Mark how the flames ascend! and, as they rise,
 Still living, the lugubrious sacrifice,
 While mirth and music mingle with her cries.'

GOMPERTZ' TIME.

The Hindoo Pantheon gives the following account of this tremendous sacrifice, the greatest vic-

tory that superstition and priestcraft have ever acquired over the human mind :

‘ The ceremonies are sometimes very numerous and striking ; they seem abridged or prolonged according to the strength and fortitude of the victim.

‘ The first that I attended was a young and interesting woman, about twenty-five years of age. From the time of her first coming on horseback to the river side, attended by music, her friends, Brahmins, and spectators, to the period of her lighting the pile, two hours elapsed ; she evinced great fortitude. On another occasion, an elderly, sickly, frightened woman, was hurried into the pile in a quarter of an hour.

‘ Of the first of these I took particular notice. Soon after I arrived at the pile, then erecting, she saw me, and beckoned me to approach her. All persons immediately made way, and I was led by a Brahmin close up to her, when I made an obeisance, which she returned, looking full in my face, and proceeded to present me with something which she held in her hand. A Brahmin stopped her, and desired me to hold my hand out, that what she was about to give me might be dropped into it, to avoid pollution, I suppose, by touching any thing which is in contact with an impure person. She accordingly held her hand over mine, and dropped a pome-

granate, which I received in silence, and reverently retired. I was sorry that it was not some ornament, or something of an imperishable nature, that I might have preserved it. My wife, who was in the house on the other side of the river, observing the ceremonies through a glass, was also disappointed; and was, of course, curious to know what was the article presented in so interesting a manner at such an awful time. After the *Sate* (for this is the name given to a widow that immolates herself on the dead body of her husband) was seated in the hut of straw built over the funeral pile, with the corpse of her husband beside her, and just before the fire was applied, a venerable Brahmin took me by the hand, and desired me to observe her, which I did attentively. She had a lighted wick in each hand, and seemed composed. I kept sight of her through the whole of her agony, until forced to retire through the intensity of the heat, which I did not, however, until a good deal scorched. I was within five feet of the pile.

‘In the neighbourhood of temples, it is not unusual to see a flat stone embossed or engraved with two feet. I was told by a Brahmin that they are in remembrance and in honour of widows who have become *Sate* there, being the last earthly or human

impression carved on the stone, which served to step by up to the pile of the husband.

‘ At this affecting sacrifice I have observed a flat stone placed for this purpose, and the family of the victim and the attendant Brahmins receiving her last blessing and adieus while she stood upon it. Having quitted the stone, she is no longer human ; she commences a participation of the beatitude, to the fruition of which she is hastening. It chills me to reflect that I have, for several minutes, been close to a beautiful young creature in this awful situation, even to the moment of the flames reaching her, when her soul could scarcely be thought more in this than in another world. What my feelings may have been when witnessing this tremendous scene I cannot say or recollect ; but I know that I could not then, however much it might have relieved me, shed a tear, although, when reflecting on it, it cannot always be withheld.’

‘Tis the profession of a fun’ral vow,
Which cruel laws to Indian wives allow,
When fatally their virtue they approve,
Cheerful in flames, and martyrs of their love.’

DRYDEN.

How different is this from that voluntary sacrifice of life to achieve durable benefits for our coun-

try, for the world, for our own souls, and for God ; where heroic virtue excites the true patriot to daring deeds of valour and the imminent risk of personal safety, or where the love of God and our Saviour animates the Christian to the endurance of the greatest privations, and to embrace the burning stake !

‘The holy truth perverted, soon
Man scorns the precepts giv’n;
Then superstition’s baleful gloom
Obscures the light of Heav’n.’

‘And priestly power enthroned high
Its dreadful thunders hurl’d ;
Religion breath’d a parting sigh,
Tir’d of a vicious world.

‘Licentious fools her temples tread,
Usurp the sacred name :
Jerome and Huss for conscience bled,
Rome triumph’d in her shame.’

Such sacrifices are applauded by all good men, and well pleasing to God ; and he will one day manifest his acceptance by avenging them on their enemies :

So Milton anticipated in the following ode on the massacre :

‘ ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

‘Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter’d saints, whose bones
Lie scatter’d on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp’d stocks and stones.

Forget not in thy book, record their groans,
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
 To Heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
 O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
 The triple Tyrant, that from these may grow
 A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe.'

Circumstances occur in which it may appear a duty to perform acts which must necessarily terminate in the death of the agent. To such a result all the operations of war conduct men. There are some sacrifices of virtue and magnanimity. Thus Codrus and Decius sacrificed themselves with singular magnanimity for the good of Rome. It will not injure us

'To hold high converse with the mighty dead,
 Sages of ancient time, as gods rever'd,
 As gods beneficent, who bless'd mankind
 With arts, with arms, and humanized a world.'

'A race of heroes :

Fabricius, scorner of all-conqu'ring gold,
 And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough.'

THOMSON.

'They made the nations round about them bow
 With their dictators, taken from the plough.
 Such power has justice, faith, and honesty !
 The world was conquer'd by morality :
 But, where religion does with virtue join,
 It makes a hero like an angel shine.'—WALLER.

It may be remarked, however, that every case in which a man prefers death to guilt may be reckoned a suicide of duty. Thus the martyr sacrifices himself rather than be guilty of compliances which his conscience considers more criminal. ‘They love not their lives unto the death, but strive unto blood, fighting against sin.’ And some persons have slain themselves rather than be made guilty of corporeal pollution: as Virginius slew his daughter, to preserve her honour; and Lucretia slew herself, to preserve herself from the shame of past violation. But such instances can be justified by no principle.

It has been said by a heathen author, who knew human nature well, *Facile credunt homines quod verum esse volunt*—‘Men easily credit that which they wish to be true.’ And hence some, from keen distresses, from which they desire to escape; from despondence, or romantic and unfounded expectations; have ventured to shoot the gulf of death, and try the unknown regions of futurity. Among such deluded characters may be mentioned Richard Smith and his wife, who were discovered hanging in their lodgings within the Rules of the King’s Bench Prison, and their infant child shot, and dead by their side, in 1732. This deliberate act of suicide they justified in a paper, signed Richard Smith and Bridget Smith, left in the room. ‘We are sa-

tisfied,' they said, 'that it was less cruel to take the child, than to leave her friendless on the world, exposed to ignorance and misery. We believe in the existence of an Almighty Being, from the consideration of his wonderful works, those immeasurable, celestial, and glorious bodies, with their wonderful order and harmony. We are convinced that he is good; not implacable; not like such wretches as men are; not taking delight in the miseries of his creatures; for which reason we resign our breath to him without any terrible apprehensions, submitting ourselves to those ways which, in his goodness, he shall appoint after death. We also believe the existence of unbodied creatures, and think we have reason for that belief, although we do not pretend to know their way of subsisting.

'We are not ignorant of those laws made *in terrorem*, but leave the disposal of our bodies to the wisdom of the coroner and his jury; the thing being indifferent to us where they are laid.'

Smith was pronounced *felo-de-se*, and guilty of the murder of his child. His wife they declared a lunatic. Poverty was assigned as the cause of this catastrophe; and a desire to escape from its miseries blinded their minds as to the legality of the horrid and iniquitous deed by which that escape was obtained.

Partly from the same cause, joined with pride, King Saul fell upon his sword; viz. to avoid the indignities and miseries which he justly apprehended the Philistines would inflict upon him; and, wrought up to violence by pride and despair, he became his own executioner.

But we may learn some weighty lessons from these and such like examples. Let us look at Saul. He had seen too much of the hand of God to be an infidel. He knew that 'verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.' He was fully aware that his sins, his impenitence, his continued disobedience, and opposition to God, had provoked his anger. He advanced from one degree of impiety to another, till he scrupled not to consult the devil himself, and then perished miserably by his own hand. What a solemn warning does this tremendous example hold out to us to fear departing from the clear line of duty, lest we fall by little and little; to cherish every good resolution; and to revere the dictates of conscience! Let us not slight this solemn monitor; nor resist the Spirit of God; nor stifle our convictions; nor violate our engagements; and, as long as we desire to serve God, let us not suppose ourselves abandoned like Saul.

'It might seem surprising, if we were not habituated to the observation, that the example of

Saul, in destroying himself, is defended, applauded, and imitated. The King of Israel sought to hide himself from shame and captivity : and is it not almost fashionable among ourselves for men who are in perplexity and distress to seek relief in suicide ? A miserable refuge indeed ! Because our circumstances are reduced, our friends desert us, or our characters become infamous, shall we presumptuously rush into the presence of our Judge by an act of the highest rebellion, and thus consign our souls to eternal perdition ? What madness can be compared to this ? We pronounce not upon the case of those who, by misfortune, temptation, or disease, are deprived of understanding ; but where self-murder is committed, as we fear it is in numerous instances, deliberately and with the possession of reason, there is not the least ground to expect forgiveness, since it is an offence for which there can be no repentance. It is also an aggravation of this sin that the self-destroyer not only plunges himself into endless wretchedness, but involves many surviving friends and relations, who have deserved no such treatment from him, in the deepest affliction.

‘ May we, therefore, be prepared for the hour of trial ! As it is the grand artifice of the devil to persuade sinners under extreme difficulties to fly to this last act of desperation, it may be of use to

fortify the mind against it by a serious consideration of its heinousness before God, and even of its miserable consequences in society. But our security is not in ourselves. Let us seek protection from Him, "who keepeth Israel." Let us watch and pray; and "take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day; and, having done all, to stand." Amen.'---
ROBINSON'S Scripture Characters.

CHAP. VI.

CAUSES OF SUICIDE, AND ANTIDOTES.

‘A breath thou art,
Servile to all the skyey influence.’

Climate considered—Contrast between the cowardly Suicide and the patient Sufferer—Grand Cause, Infidelity—Exemplified in Two French Soldiers—In a Gentleman at Greenwich—Contrasted with the patient Resignation of the late Steward of the Duke of Bedford—The Benefit of Christian Education, and the Part of Wisdom.

SOME have reasoned that the moistness of our climate depresses our spirits, and nourishes a melancholy favorable to suicide. We must not, however, too much blame the climate: the causes are deeper and more subtle than the atmosphere which surrounds us. Yet how far it may conspire to heighten other more potent causes we pretend not to determine. It has long been fashionable for the French to speak of November as the month in which Englishmen hang themselves; and few have written on fancied suicides without blaming

the weather, and assigning as the period the gloomy month of November.

We have before mentioned it as our opinion that suicide arises from cowardice; and that the greatest hero is he who dares to bear his sufferings with fortitude, patience, and submission, as appointed by a wisdom which cannot err, and overruled by a mercy which does not willingly afflict the children of men.

The contrast between the *cowardice* of the suicide and the *courage* of the patient sufferer is forcibly drawn in the following lines by the hand of a lady :

‘ November hears the dismal sound ;
 As, slow advancing from the Pole,
 He leads the months their wintry round,
 The black’ning clouds attendant roll ;
 When frown a grimmer band—the sons of care,
 Dark thoughts, presages fell, and comfortless despair.

‘ Now prowls abroad the ghastly fiend,
 Fell Suicide ! whom Frenzy bore :
 His brows with writhing serpents twin’d,
 His mantle steep’d in gore ,
 The livid flames around his eye-balls play ;
 Stern Horror stalks before, and Death pursues his way.

‘ Hark ! is not that the fatal stroke ?
 See where the bleeding victim lies !
 The bonds of social feeling broke,
 Dismay’d, the frantic spirit flies.
 Creation starts, and shrinking Nature views
 Appall’d the blow which Heaven’s first rights subdues.

‘ Behold, the weight of woes combin’d
 A woman has the power to scorn!
 Her infant race to shame consign’d,
 A name disgraced, a fortune torn,
 She meets resolv’d ; and, combating Despair,
 Supports alone the ills a “ Coward ” durst not share !’

But the grand cause of suicide is not the despondence arising from ruined fortunes—not the melancholy engendered by our foggy climate :

‘ The sun is innocent ; thy clime absolv’d ;
 Immoral climes kind Nature never made.’

The grand cause is infidelity, irreligion, disbelief of a superintending Providence ; in a word, it is the want of religious principle, or else men would never be guilty of breaking all the chains of Providence,

‘ And bursting their confinement, though fast barr’d
 By laws divine and human ; guarded strong
 With horrors, doubled, to defend the pass,
 The blackest Nature or dire Guilt can raise ;
 And moated round with fathomless destruction,
 Sure to receive and ’whelm them in their fall.’

‘ Epictetus declared openly against suicide, the lawfulness of which was maintained by the rest of his sect. He exposes the folly of being full of care for to-morrow.—If you have any sustenance, you will be supported ; if not, you will make your exit ; the door stands always open : (*i. e.* our term of life is short.) “ How ridiculous is it,” said he, “ to suppose that a man ought not rather to be cut in

pieces than desert the post which his General hath fixed him in, and to imagine ourselves at liberty to quit the post which God hath set us in whenever we please.”

How does mere heathen philosophy reprove the morbid discontent of some characters in this enlightened Christian age! From these may be selected ‘Philip Mordaunt, cousin-german to the famous Earl of Peterborough, who was so well known in all the courts of Europe, and who had made his boast that he had seen more postillions and more crowned heads than any other man in the world. This Philip Mordaunt, I say, was a young man, about twenty-seven, handsome, well made, rich, and of an illustrious family, and one who might pretend to any thing; and, what was more than all the rest, he was passionately beloved by his mistress. However, this man took a distate to life, discharged all that he owed, wrote to his friends to take leave of them, and even composed some verses upon the occasion, which concluded thus, that “though opium might be some relief to a wise man, if disgusted with the world, yet, in his opinion, a pistol, and a little resolution, were much more effectual remedies.” His behaviour was suitable to his principles; and he dispatched himself with a pistol, without giving any other reason

for it than that his soul was weary of his body ; and that, when we dislike our house, we ought to quit it. One would imagine he chose to die, because he was weary of being happy.'

Such unphilosophical discontent and pusillanimity was shown by the Earl of Scarborough, who quitted life with the same indifference as he did his place of Master of the Horse. ' Having been told in the House of Lords that he sided with the court, on account of the profitable post he held in it, " My Lords," said he, " to convince you that my opinion is not influenced by any such consideration, I will instantly resign." He afterwards found himself perplexed between a mistress he was fond of, but to whom he was under no engagements, and a woman whom he esteemed, and to whom he had made a promise of marriage. My Lord Scarborough therefore killed himself, to get rid of a difficulty.'

To the same cause, or to some strange desire after notoriety, we must refer the suicide of Mr. Lyon Levy, who some few years since threw himself off the top of the Monument. He probably wished to be talked about, like Eratostratus, who fired the Ephesian Temple.

Perhaps to a love for the wonderful may be attributed the following: *The Independent*, a newspaper of the Two Sicilies, mentions that a

Frenchman, in the Oriental costume, presented himself at the hermitage of St. Saviour, announcing to the hermit that he wished to pass a few days under his hospitable roof. On the day after his arrival he requested the hermit to accompany him to the crater of Etna, and, as soon as they had reached it, the stranger precipitated himself into the abyss formed by the insatiable volcano. The hermit, on his return, having inspected the register in which the visitors usually inserted their names, found a memorandum of the unfortunate traveller, in which he avowed his intention of terminating his existence. The note is signed Louis Cautre, of Nantes.'

The following premeditated suicide demands our pity, but must not be exculpated:—'It took place under London Bridge, by Mr. Temple, only son of the great Sir W. Temple. He had but the week before accepted from King William the office of Secretary at War. On the 14th April, 1689, he hired a boat on the Thames, and directed the waterman to shoot the bridge: at that instant he flung himself into the torrent, having filled his pockets with stones, to destroy all chance of safety, and instantly sunk. In the boat was found a note to this effect: "My folly in undertaking what I could not perform, whereby some misfortunes have befallen the King's service, is the cause of my put-

ting myself to this sudden end. I wish him success in all his undertakings, and a better servant."

Mr. Pennant says, I hope his father's reflection on the occasion was a parental apology, not his real sentiments—"That a wise man might dispose of himself, and make his life as short as he pleased." How strongly did this great man militate against the precepts of Christianity, and the solid arguments of that most wise and pious heathen, Cicero!

' Mossop, the once great actor, starved himself to death, at his lodgings in Chelsea. What a state must the mind of man be in to endure such a death!

' Diodorus Siculus tells us of Diocles making a law that no man should come armed into the assembly of the people: he, perchance, inadvertently broke it himself; when, upon hearing one cry out, "He has broke the law he made himself," Diocles, with a loud voice, replied, "No! the law shall have its sanction;" and, drawing his sword, slew himself.

' By the laws of the Ashantees, a black nation, remarkable for gold and shedding human blood, Mr. Bowditch tells us, If a person kills himself *on the head of another*, that other must kill himself also—a practice frequently resorted to out of a spirit of revenge, of which the following is an in-

stance:—Adunissa, an extraordinarily beautiful red-skinned woman, of Cape Coast, possessed numerous admirers, but rejected them all. One of them, in despair, shot himself *on her head*, close to her house. His family demanding satisfaction, to save her relations from a ruinous palaver, she resolved to shoot herself in expiation. She accordingly assembled her friends and relatives from various parts of the country, and, sitting richly dressed, killed herself in their presence with golden bullets.’

The causes of suicide seem so strange and various that we cannot rank them under any particular head except that of mystery or infidelity.

‘On the 17th August, 1791, a gentleman named James Sutherland, just as the King came opposite to the rails in the Green Park, drew forth a paper, stuck it on the rails, threw off his hat, and discharged a pistol into his bosom: he instantly fell, and expired immediately. He had been Judge-Advocate of Minorca. He left a singular paper behind him, expressive of his being in sound mind, and that the act was deliberate.

A middle-aged Frenchman, decently dressed, hanged himself at a public house in Old Street Road. A remarkable letter, written in French, was found in his pocket, setting forth that, some

years ago, he dreamt he was to die that day ; if not, he was to be damned ; and, therefore, for the salvation of his soul, he had thought it necessary to put an end to his life.'

Two French soldiers at St. Denis, in the year 1773, after having partaken of a hearty dinner, and drank three bottles of wine, deliberately shot themselves, leaving a letter, half a crown (having previously discharged the bill), and a will, in which were these words: 'No urgent motive has prompted us to intercept the career of our lives except the disgust of existing here a moment under the idea that we must, at one time or other, cease to be. A disgust of life is the only motive which has induced us to quit it !'

But it is evident, from this and other instances, that the French philosophy, or irreligion, which banished the dread of futurity, encouraged the commission of this dreadful crime.

It was a similar infidelity which prompted a French gentleman, in 1789, to commit suicide in Greenwich Park. He paid his servants, distributed in various charities 200*l.* and threw eight or ten guineas among the young gentlemen of an academy, whom he met. The master, respecting him, sent his pupils to invite him to tea: he gave one of them his watch, and shortly after shot himself.

The following words were contained in a letter in his pocket :

‘ To all whom it may concern.

‘ Two hours after mid-day ; three hours before my death.

‘ The indifference of my parents, the dislike I had to the profession of an impostor, the perfidy of one tenderly beloved, are the most powerful motives for a sensible soul to prejudge itself, and prefer a grateful dissolution, be it better or worse. Paris and London have not convinced me it is more my interest to live than to die. You say I was a fool ; which I had much rather be, than be wise and suffer. If the four elements should reunite, and, after a thousand combinations, form me once more, I would not consent to exist but under the English government, which is excellence itself, and which ought to serve as a model to all nations of the world. I have seen all, tasted all ; but I am not willing to begin life again !’

From such sickening instances of human folly, ignorance, and guilt ; from scenes dark as night, unillumined by one ray of religion or hope ; from those who sell for present hire

‘ Their rich reversion, and (what shares its fate)

‘ Their native freedom, to the prince who sways

This nether world ; and, when his payments fail,

When his soul basket gorges them no more,
 Or their pall'd palates loathe the basket-full,
 Are instantly, with wild demoniac rage,
 For breaking all the chains of Providence,
 And bursting their confinement'—

we turn with cheering pleasure to scenes of Christian patience and fortitude, and submission. A minister, who attended the death-bed of the late steward of the Duke of Bedford not long since, told me that, among other striking observations, he one day said to him, 'Ah, sir, my pains are great, indeed—they are almost intolerable!' Then pointing to his loaded pistols, which were always in his room, he added, 'Were it not for Christian principle and Christian hopes I would not have borne these pangs till now; I would have delivered myself; but I wait in patient submission to the will of God, thinking of my suffering Redeemer, and humbly hope for rest in Heaven.'

Let education upon Christian grounds diffuse moral and religious principle, that the nation may abhor the crime of suicide :

'O Britain, infamous for suicide!
 In ambient waves plunge thy polluted head,
 Wash the dire stain, nor shock the Continent.'

A wise man will expect a life chequered with troubles and joys; a good man will consider life as a scene of discipline and chastisement, prepara-

tory to a better and a more perfect state of existence. He will consider it his duty, therefore, to receive the trials, as well as the comforts, from the hand of a wise and gracious Providence :

‘ This life is all chequered with sorrows and woes,
Which chase one another, like waves of the deep ;
Each billow is brighter or darker than flows,
Reflecting our eyes as they sparkle or weep.’

He will, therefore, say with Job, ‘ Shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall I not receive evil ?’ and endeavour to imitate his example of patience ; and, in all his afflictions, not to sin against the Lord by murmuring and repining, much less by any sullen acts of despondency or deeds of violence and despair. He will consider that, though the night be dark, a morning of joy and gladness may yet arrive :

‘ New hope may bloom,
And days may come
Of milder, calmer, beam,’

gilding brighter scenes, and blessing the evening of his days ; and, in whatever affliction he lives, if, at last, he sinks into the grave in the embrace of his heavenly Father, he will be truly and eternally blessed in a world where sorrow, losses, oppression, disappointment, and despondence, will be known no more for ever.

To this may well be added the impressive sentiments of the great and pious Bishop Hopkins :

‘Truly self-murder, next to the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, is, I think, the most dangerous and most desperate that can be committed; and, because it leaves so little room for repentance, it leaves but very little for hope and charity. Those wretched creatures, whom God hath so far abandoned as to permit them to fall into this horrid crime, had they but any the least care of their eternal salvation, they would certainly tremble when they are offering violence to themselves; considering that they must instantly appear before God, and lift up those hands at his great tribunal which they but a minute before imbrued in their own blood. It is a sin, which, when the devil tempts men unto, he cannot make use of his most prevailing wile and stratagem; for, when he tempts to other sins, he still drills on the sinner with hopes of living to repent and reform, and promises him mercy and forgiveness; but this of self-murder precludes all such hopes and expectations: for they die in their sins; yea, their death is their sin: and what a forlorn estate are they in who resolve that their last act shall be a damnable sin! These are self-murderers to purpose; and destroy not only their bodies, but their souls too.

‘ Consider, again, that it is a sin committed against the very standard and rule of our love to others : for God hath commanded us to love others as ourselves ; and, therefore, as we may not murder another, so much less may we murder ourselves. And those who are hurried to this impious act, as they do actually destroy themselves, so they do virtually and interpretatively murder and destroy the whole world ; and are as guilty before God, as if, together with themselves, they had murdered their parents, their children, their nearest relations, and all mankind besides : and that, because they destroy that fundamental law which should regulate their love to their neighbours ; and which is the stated rule, according to which they should endeavour after their welfare and preservation.

‘ And, therefore, if ever the devil work upon thy melancholy and discontented pride, to tempt thee to this damnable and almost unpardonable sin, be sure to collect all thy strength unto thee ; and, with infinite abhorrence of it, command him to avoid. Let not any shame, or poverty, or horrors of conscience, fasten this hellish temptation upon thee : for, know assuredly, that, if thou hearkenest unto them, and putttest them in execution, there is no

probability, but that thou must pass from temporal sufferings to eternal torments; which, be thy condition in this life never so deplorable and wretched, thou hast no reason to hasten, but wilt, in hell, think that they came too soon upon thee.'

CHAP. VII.

REMARKABLE MODES OF SUICIDE, SERIOUS AND
BURLESQUE—ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT.

‘ Duplex libelli dos est quod risum movet
Et quod prudenti vitam consilio monet.’

‘ A two-fold gift in this my volume lies—
It makes you merry and it makes you wise.’

Eternity a serious Thought—Blamable Levity on this awful Subject—Example—Trifles sometimes change the Determination—Jeremiah Clarke—Causes, present Uneasiness and Infidelity—Dreadful Ingenuity in the Modes of Suicide—The Geneva Blacksmith—The Surgical Suicide—Suicide Cowardice and Meanness—Roman Laws to disgrace it—English Laws—Causes, a bad Life and Infidelity—‘ The Connoisseur’s’ Ridicule of it—‘ The World’s’ Proposal for a Receptacle for Suicides—Dr. Johnson’s burlesque Advertisement of Three Patents for Suicide—A Gentleman lately laughed out of Suicide—Ludicrous Poem to him by James Usher, Esq. Whitechapel—Voltaire’s Satire upon England—Suicides in France—Laws against them—Suicides occasioned by the most selfish Motives.

IT is a subject of astonishment that persons who live in affluence and splendour, who have no subject for solitude—no business to perplex—no fears

to agitate them—are more miserable in the fulness of their sufficiency than the children of penury and distress. Inaction is not good for man : indolent wealth, like the stagnant lake, contributes to its own corruption, and renders itself pestiferous.

‘On languor, luxury, and pride,
 The subtle fiend employs his spell,
 Where selfish sordid passions bide,
 Where weak impatient spirits dwell ;
 Where thought oppressive from itself would fly,
 And seek relief from time in dark eternity !’

How thoughtless of an awful futurity must be the man who deliberately attempts his life ! Yet we have heard of those who coolly reject with disdain the ignoble halter on so desperate a service, and prefer the more gentleman-like expedient of a sword or a pistol ! The same unfeeling carelessness must have characterized that man of consequence who is reported to have remarked, respecting another gentleman who committed suicide by hanging, ‘What a low-minded wretch, to apply to the halter ! Had he shot himself, like a gentleman, I could have forgiven him !’

We would call up the most awful arguments of religion to prevent the execution of any desperate act of meditated suicide ; and possibly the sight of this little book may contribute, as slighter causes have tended to make the wavering balance of the

agitated mind preponderate on the side of reason, and to shake and change the fatal determination. A remarkable instance of this is related in Sir John Hawkins's 'History of Music.' One Jeremiah Clarke, organist of St. Paul's, A. D. 1700, abruptly determined to leave the house of a friend he was visiting in the country, to return to London. His friend, observing his dejection, and his disappointment in love, furnished him with a horse, and a servant to take care of him. A fit of melancholy seizing him on the road, he alighted, and went into a field, and stood on the bank of a pond, debating with himself whether he should there end his days by drowning, or hanging himself on the trees on its margin. He could not determine, and therefore made Chance his umpire: he threw a piece of money into the air, which came down on its edge, and stuck in the clay. The determination seemed to forbid both methods of destruction, and, had his mind not been so disordered, might have brought him consolation. It broke off his purpose for the present: he returned, mounted his horse, and rode to London; but, alas! the irritation of his mind was too great to be calmed by reason or religion, and in a short time he shot himself.

A strong, a general, and immediate cause of suicide, doubtless, is a strong wish to get rid of pre-

sent uneasiness by plunging into the silent and unconscious grave, from the mistaken and infidel belief that in the dust of death will be found a long sleep, and that all the ills and troubles of life will be steeped as in the waters of Lethe, and forgotten for ever. O foolish and unwise people! 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!' Have they told us that the worm of conscience dieth not? that the fire of wrath attendant upon guilt is never quenched? There must be an infidel Sadducean principle to rouse men to flee from present calamity into an unknown futurity. While they start from the lion before them, they are blind to the precipice behind them; they would not rush forward so impetuously did not Unbelief hold her veil before the gulf; for present uneasiness operates strongly: the fear of disgrace, of present pain, and anguish, and torment, sharpens their ingenuity to invent the politest, the most effectual, and the promptest modes of self-destruction, as if, after all the apparent bravery in encountering death, they would leave a disgraceful blot of cowardice upon their escutcheon, by the anxious invention of the easiest and most expeditious death.

The following method of self-execution is so extraordinary, that, had it not been related by Dr.

Moore in his 'Travels,' as well attested and known to all the inhabitants of Geneva, and the English residing there, it would not be credible:*

'A blacksmith charged an old gun-barrel with a brace of bullets, and, putting one end into the fire of his forge, tied a string to the handle of his bellows, by pulling of which he could make them play while at a convenient distance. Kneeling down, he then placed his head near the mouth of the barrel, and, moving his bellows by means of the string, they blew up the fire, he keeping his head with astonishing firmness, and horrible determination, in that position, till the farther end of the barrel was so heated as to kindle the powder, whose explosion instantly drove the bullets through his brain !'

The same remarks may be made of the professional skill displayed by a surgeon in killing himself with an instrument which he had invented for dilating of wounds. This instrument (trusting to his anatomical skill) he introduced into his own body till it had wounded his liver ; and then he told his friends it was out of their power to recover him. He died in a few days, as related by the Rev. Mr. Moore.

Suicide, after all, is the basest cowardice, and that in two respects: for it is fleeing and turning our back upon the enemy whom God, and nature,

* Vol. I. Let. 32. 'Moore's Travels.'

and reason, command us to resist; and it is cowardly adopting some method which it is supposed may free us from the pangs of death. It is meanness, ignorance, and turpitude; and the Romans branded it with every mark of disgrace, by ordering female suicides to be dragged naked through the streets. The English law which decreed that wilful suicides should be buried with the utmost disgrace in the public highways, as mere animals, without shroud and covering, as an abhorrence and an execration to all mankind, and a disgrace to humanity, to reason, and religion, was not too severe an expression of the abominable and horrible nature of the crime. I once witnessed, as a casual passenger, this disgusting execution of that law near London Bridge upon the body of a foreigner, who had committed suicide under aggravated circumstances of wilful ferocity. We scarcely know how to use argument with such irrational wretches, or religion with such infidels. I believe the grand cause of infidelity is a bad life; and the grand cause of suicide is infidelity. With such despicable wretches, whom truth cannot convince, nor reason sway, nor religion recover, ridicule may be the most effectual; and I shall, therefore, attempt to banter those with whom argument has no power.

‘ From the days of Plato to our own, a suicide

has always been compared to a soldier on guard deserting his post; but I should rather consider a set of these desperate men, who rush on certain death, as a body of troops sent out on the forlorn hope. They meet every face of death, however horrible, with the utmost resolution. Some blow their brains out with a pistol; some expire, like Socrates, by poison; some fall, like Cato, on the points of their own swords; and others, who have lived like Nero, affect to die like Seneca, and bleed to death. The poor sneaking wretch, starving in a garret, tucks himself up in his list garters; a second, crossed in love, drowns himself, like a blind puppy, in Rosamond's Pond; and a third cuts his throat with his own razor: But the man of fashion always dies by a pistol; and even the cobbler of my time goes off by a dose or two extraordinary of gin.*

'The World' attempts to laugh mankind out of this folly by an humorous proposal for the erection of a large building, to be called 'The Receptacle for Lunatics,' where every one may kill himself in his own way:—'I have a most effectual machine for the decapitation of such as choose that noble and honorable exit. I have a comedious bath for disappointed ladies, fed by the clearest stream, where

* 'Connoisseur.'

the patient may drown with the utmost privacy and elegance. I have pistols for gamesters, which, instead of bullets and slugs, are charged with loaded dice, so that they may put an end to their existence by the very means that supported it. I have daggers and poison for distressed actors; and swords fixed obliquely in the floor, with their points upwards, for the gentlemen of the army. For attorneys, tradesmen, and mechanics, who have no taste for genteeler exits, I have a long room, in which a range of halters are fastened to a beam, with their nooses ready tied. I have also a handsome garden, for the entombing of all my good customers; and, lastly, I propose agreeing with a coroner by the year to bring in such verdicts as I think proper. I only claim the *heads* as my own fee, that, by frequent dissections of the brain, I may at last discover and remedy the cause of so unnatural a propensity.*

The following burlesque advertisement by the great Dr. Johnson, so well calculated by its wit and pleasantry to render suicide ridiculous, deserves a place here :

Advertisement.

‘Whereas many noblemen, gentlemen, and others, who in the polite world are distinguished by the

* ‘The World,’ Vol. IV. No. 193.

name of men of pleasure, have, by fast living (now commonly called "sporting," formerly stigmatized by the names of "whoring" and "drunkenness"), brought upon themselves, at the age of forty, all the pains, aches, and infirmities of fourscore; and others, by fashionably spending their whole fortunes, contracting debts which they cannot pay, ill using their wives, wards, children, and creditors, have incurred such reflections as render life intolerable. And whereas it hath been proved by the late Lord Bolingbroke and others, to the full satisfaction of all gentlemen of wit, humour, men of pleasure, and sporters, that, after this life, there is nothing to hope or fear; so that to put an end to it in such circumstances is greatly for the advantage of themselves and the community. And whereas such is the prejudice running amongst the great and little vulgar that this necessary and heroic act reflects indelible dishonour upon such men of wit, humour, and pleasure, and also on their families; and makes the expense of bribing a coroner's jury to perjury absolutely necessary, to prevent a forfeiture of their personal estate, if any such there be. And whereas there is at present no known method by which this necessary measure may be decently and privately executed — the razor, pond, and halter, having

been universally exploded, and the effect of the pistol, as it is commonly used, being very uncertain, sometimes causing a great effusion of blood, sometimes blowing the brains about the room, spoiling the paintings and other furniture, and leaving the body bloody and mangled, the countenance distorted, and the features defaced; and at the same time alarming not only the family, but the neighbourhood, so that all attempts to conceal it by pretending apoplexy, or sudden death, are ineffectual. "Notice" is hereby given, that a gentleman of great study and experience, by sea and land, as well in England as in foreign parts, has discovered and obtained the king's patent for the following remedies "against Life:"—First, his "White Powder," which fires a bullet from any fire-arm without noise, and yet with the same force as that commonly used; and which, by being mixed with a certain chymical compound, may be regulated to any degree of strength according to the thickness of the skull, so as to pass through the ear, or the roof of the mouth, and lodge in the brain, without fracturing any part of the crown behind, or leaving any appearance of a wound. Secondly, his incomparable "Laudanum Water," which produces its effect even whilst it is going

down the throat, without agony or convulsion. Thirdly, his inestimable and effective chymical spirit, invidiously called, by Dr. Meade, "The Stygian Spirit," from its subtle and imperceptible influence upon life: a small phial of which may be so held by a person in the middle of a large circle of company as instantly to kill him, without affecting any others. The author, upon a line, post paid, will attend and administer these remedies himself to any nobleman, gentleman, or other man of wit, humour, or pleasure, who may think fit to honour him with his commands, provided a sufficient indemnity be given, and the gentleman has not courage to apply them himself; or they will be delivered, with a printed paper of directions, to any who shall ask for a dose of "The Anodyne Powders, Drops, or Essence," at the Gentlewoman's, the Two Blue Posts, in Frith Street, Soho, and nowhere else in England, at the price of one guinea, which is nothing to the value of the cure.'

A gentleman, somewhat hypochondriac, told his family that he thought he should make away with himself. Instead of treating it seriously, they made it the subject of ridicule and jocularity, and thus completely laughed him out of his purpose; on which occasion a particular friend of mine, Mr.

Usher, of Whitechapel, was pleased to send him the following poetical celebration of

SUICIDE.

‘Some for anger, some for love,
Deeds of desperation prove ;
Sick of folly, sick of life,
Seize the halter or the knife ;
Or, in sorrow’s depths profound,
In kindred cataracts are drown’d ;
Or, inflam’d with mortal ire,
Snap the trigger, and expire.
Behind the scenes, with ghostly aid,
Satan behold in ambuscade !

‘The murder’d corse the jury see,
And verdict give—“Felo-de-se.”

‘The weeping widow in her weeds,
The sobbing children, curse such deeds ;
The tender maiden faints away ;
The parents old kneel down and pray ;
The Sexton grave, and Parson, fret,
Since dues nor fittings they can get.
Injur’d alike, Jack Ketch may bawl,
“Except Old Nick, we’re cheated all !”
And for this cause, ’tis always found,
’Twixt twelve and one the clarions sound.’

‘It may be demonstrated that suicide is generally prompted by the most sordid and unworthy selfishness. It is a crime which sacrifices every thing on the altar of individual feeling. It is a practice which reverses all the doctrines of social

benevolence, and sets up as a principle of action the detestable maxim, that private caprice and private enjoyment are to be regarded as more worthy objects of pursuit than public happiness. It is a crime, therefore, of which even the atheist, on his own principles, ought to be ashamed, but which the Christian should regard with peculiar abhorrence.'

Voltaire throws out a cutting satire against our country. 'In the frequency of self-murder,' Voltaire says, 'the Japanese may vie with their brother islanders of England! The Japanese, according to Possevin, not only permit men to be their own murderers, but suppose it an action agreeable to the deities, and the true way to deification. Hence great numbers kill themselves, either by plunging into the water, burning or burying themselves alive, or leaping from the top of a rock.'

But Voltaire might have applied his remarks to his own country, had he properly appreciated the number of suicides in France:—'The French,' according to Mr. Holcroft, 'kill themselves at the rate of two hundred per year in the metropolis, and as many in the departments.'

Considering the frequency of suicides and the enormity of the crime, we can scarcely find fault with the laws against suicides:—'It is remarkable that the Jews did not refuse burial, in King David's

time, to those who were guilty of suicide; since Ahitophel was buried peaceably in the sepulchre of his father. Josephus tells us that those who killed themselves are hated by God and man, and that Moses condemned them to remain unburied until sunset; though even the enemies killed in battle were allowed the favour of a burial. But we have no law of Moses extant upon that point. We find, according to Josephus's account, that self-murderers were treated in the same manner as those who were hanged for any crimes. They who had committed suicide were, by the heathen religion, refused a funeral pile, as, by the Christian Church, they are refused Christian burial; but we see how that is evaded.'

CHAP. VIII.

SERIOUS ARGUMENTS AGAINST SUICIDE.

‘Vain man! ’tis Heaven’s prerogative
 To take what first it deign’d to give—
 Thy tributary breath.
 In awful expectation plac’d,
 Await thy doom, nor, impious, haste
 To pluck from God’s right hand his instruments of death.

WHARTON’S ODE ON SUICIDE.

Suicide too serious for Ridicule—Serious Suggestions against the Crime—The lamentable History of Chatterton, and the Causes of his Suicide—Specimens of his Genius—Poetical Quotation to his Memory—Proper Education the grand Antidote—The pernicious Effects of unrestrained Indulgence, and the tragical Consequences exemplified in the Case of Eli and his Sons—Rev. T. Robinson’s Opinion on the proper Use of Kindness, and the Administration of Discipline to Youth—Contrast of the Hon. Mr. Damer, a Suicide, with Zimmerman’s patient Daughter.

WHATEVER attempts we make to render suicide ridiculous, and to drive away the demon of gloom and melancholy by descriptions of humour, yet suicide is a subject which demands a more serious

exposure; and the suicide is of too dark and sullen a temper to be laughed out of his fell and bloody purpose.

‘Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mock’d himself, and scorn’d his spirit,
That could be moved to smile at any thing.’

SHAKESPEARE.

We should therefore endeavour to impress upon his mind the strongest persuasion of its wickedness and horrible nature. God has given us life to use, not to close it at pleasure. He has concealed from our view the limit of our existence here, but time will be expeditious enough in bringing us to its termination. The terms are in his hand, and all the days of our appointed time we are to wait till our final grand change come :—JOB.

‘Safe in the hand of One dispensing Pow’r,
Or in the natal or the mortal hour.’—POPE.

God has sent us into the world for some end. How dare we to determine when that end is accomplished? how dare we to desert the post assigned us, and to rush unbidden into the presence of our Maker and our Judge before we are called upon to give in our unfinished, unprepared, account?

‘Vain man! ’tis Heaven’s prerogative
To take what first it deign’d to give—

Thy tributary breath.

In awful expectation plac'd,

Await thy doom, nor, impious, haste

To pluck from God's right hand his instruments of death.'

WHARTON'S ODE.

Chatterton had an uncommon ardour in the pursuit of knowledge, and an uncommon facility in attaining it. It was a favorite maxim with him, that a man is equal to any thing, and that every thing might be achieved by diligence and abstinence. If an uncommon character was mentioned in his hearing, he would only observe 'that the person in question merited praise; but that God had sent his creatures into the world with arms long enough to reach any thing, if they would be at the trouble of extending them.'

With this idea he went to London, full of ambitious hopes and prospects, and commenced a literary career. For a time he thought favour, patronage, and wealth, were all open to him, till at length he found that all his intellectual labours brought in so scanty a return as to be insufficient to ward off the approach of poverty; and he seems to have sunk almost at once from the highest elevation of hope and illusion to the depth of despair. Literary pride was his ruling passion; and it was followed in its mortification by a too acute sense of shame. Extreme indigence preceded the fatal ter-

mination of his disappointed career ; yet such was his pride, that, though frequently pressed by a neighbour to dine or sup, only on one occasion did his dignity yield to human frailty, when he ate most voraciously. Mrs. Angel, with whom he resided, being assured, on the 24th of August, that he had eaten nothing for two or three days, pressed him to take some dinner with her ; but he was offended at her expressions, which seemed to intimate he was in want, and assured her he was not hungry.'

The lamented and ingenious Chatterton was a youth illustrious for his literary attainments, who reflects an honour on the age and nation which produced him. He might have lived to bless the world with talents of no common kind, but he became tinctured with infidelity, and this emboldened him to commit suicide. Young, lively, and uninformed, he was seduced to throw off what he thought the trammels of infancy, and to drink deeply of the poisoned spring of scepticism. With all the impetuosity of youth, he had emancipated himself from the salutary restraints of religion and duty, and thus threw off the virtuous habits which had resisted vicious allurements, and sunk into a profligacy as conspicuous as his abilities. Thus, deprived of the anchor of religion, he became the sport of passions unfriendly to his happiness and

prosperity. His infidel principles rendered the idea of suicide familiar, and disposed him to think lightly of that existence with which his Maker and his Judge had intrusted him. He coolly resolved, in case his prospects failed, to destroy himself. Reduced from the highest, warmest hopes, to a scanty pittance, and almost to starvation, his mind reverted to that which, through the influence of infidelity, he had suffered himself to regard as his last resource. Had he not lost the protection of religious principles, he would not have so lightly destroyed the life which God had intrusted him with till he should demand it. But, deprived of this stay, he took a dose of arsenic, to get rid of a changing troubled life :

‘ Who now will guard bewilder’d youth
 Safe from the fierce assault of hostile rage ?
 Such war can Virtue wage,
 Virtue, that bears the sacred shield of Truth ?
 Alas ! full oft on Guilt’s victorious car
 The spoils of Virtue are in triumph borne,
 While the fair captive, mark’d with many a scar,
 In long obscurity, oppress’d, forlorn,
 Resigns to tears her angel form.
 Ill-fated youth, then whither wilt thou fly ?
 No friend, no shelter, now is nigh,
 And onward rolls the storm.

‘ But whence the sudden beam that shoots along ?
 Why shrink aghast the hostile throng ?

Lo, from amidst affliction's night,
 Hope bursts, all radiant, on the sight ;
 Her words the troubled bosom soothe ;
 " Why thus dismay'd ?
 Though foes invade,
 Hope ne'er is wanting to their aid
 Who tread the path of truth.
 'Tis I who smooth the rugged way ;
 I who close the eyes of Sorrow ;
 And, with glad visions of to-morrow,
 Repair the weary soul's decay.
 When Death's cold touch thrills to the freezing heart,
 Dreams of Heaven's opening glories I impart,
 Till the freed spirit springs on high
 In rapture too severe for weak mortality." "

Let no one suffer himself in the most distant manner to harbour an idea of quitting the world, however unworthy of it, lest he should be deluded by despondency into so unpardonable a step ; and let the rich and the powerful hasten to patronise merit ere it rush into despondency :

' Search the dark scenes where drooping Genius lies,
 And keep from sorriest sights a nation's eyes ;
 That, from expiring Want's reproaches free,
 Our generous country ne'er may weep to see
 A future Chatterton by poison dead—
 An Otway fainting for a little bread !'

As proofs of the genius of this almost unequalled youth, we select the following, as descriptive of the powers which enabled him to soar into the heavens, and contemplate the laws of the universe :—

THE COPERNICAN SYSTEM.

' The Sun revolving on his axis turns,
 And with creative fire intensely burns :
 Impell'd the forcive air, our earth, supreme,
 Rolls with the planets round the solar gleam :
 First, Mercury completes his transient year,
 Glowing refulgent with reflected glare ;
 Bright Venus occupies a wider way,
 The early harbinger of night and day ;
 More distant still, our globe, terraqueous, burns,
 Nor chills intense, nor fiercely heated burns ;
 Around her rules the Lunar Orb of light,
 Trailing her silver glories through the night.
 On the Earth's orbit see the various signs ;
 Mark where the Sun, our year completing, shines :
 First, the bright Ram his languid ray improves ;
 Next glaring, watery, through the Bull he moves ;
 The am'rous Twins admit his genial ray ;
 Now, burning, through the Crab he takes his way ;
 The Lion, flaming, bears the solar power ;
 The Virgin faints beneath the sultry shower.
 Now the just Balance weighs his equal force ;
 The slimy Serpent swelters in his course ;
 The sable Archer clouds his languid face ;
 The Goat, with tempests, urges on his race ;
 Now in the water his faint beams appear,
 And the cold Fishes end the circling year.
 Beyond our globe the sanguine Mars displays
 A strong reflection of primeval rays ;
 Next belted Jupiter far distant gleams,
 Scarcely enlighten'd with the solar beams ;
 With four unfix'd receptacles of light
 He towers majestic through the spacious height.

But farther yet the tardy Saturn lags,
 And five attendant luminaries drags;
 Investing with a double ring his face,
 He circles through immensity of space.
 These are thy wond'rous works, great Source of Good!
 Now more admir'd in being understood.'

Among these extracts may be also classed the following description of an Eastern suicide :

'NARVA AND MORED.

' "Recite the loves of Narva and Mored,"
 The priest of Chalma's triple idol said.
 The priestess, rising, sings the sacred tale,
 And the loud chorus echoes through the dale :

"PRIESTESS.

" Far from the burning sands of Calabar,
 Far from the lustre of the morning star,
 Far from the pleasure of the holy morn,
 Far from the blessedness of Chalma's horn,
 Now rest the souls of Narva and Mored,
 Laid in the dust, and number'd with the dead.
 Dear are their memories to us, and long,
 Long shall their attributes be known in song.
 Their lives were transient as the morning flower—
 Ripen'd in ages, wither'd in an hour.
 Chalma rewards them in his gloomy cave,
 And opens all the prisons of the grave.
 Bred to the service of the godhead's throne,
 And living but to serve his God alone,
 Narva was beauteous as the opening day
 When on the spangling waves the sunbeams play ;

When the mackaw, ascending to the sky,
 Views the bright splendour with a steady eye;
 Tall as the house of Chalma's dark retreat,
 Compact and firm as Rhadal Ynca's fleet,
 Completely beauteous as a summer's sun,
 Was Narva, by his excellence outdone.
 Where the soft Tolga creeps along the meads,
 Through scented Calamus and fragrant reeds;
 Where the sweet Zinsa spreads his matted bed,
 Liv'd the still sweeter flower, the young Mored:
 Black was her face as Zogla's hidden cell;
 Soft as the moss where hidden adders dwell.
 As to the sacred court she brought a fawn,
 The sportive tenant of the spicy lawn,
 She saw, and lov'd! and Narva, too, forgot
 His sacred vestment and his mystic lot.
 Long had the mutual sigh, the mutual tear,
 Burst from the breast, and scorn'd confinement there.
 Existence was a torment! O, my breast!
 Can I find accents to unfold the rest?
 Lock'd in each other's arms, from Hyga's cave
 They plung'd, relentless, to a wat'ry grave;
 And, falling, murmur'd to the powers above,
 'Gods! take our lives, unless we live to love.' "

He seems in the following to attribute all religion to the prejudices of education:

'O, Education! ever in the wrong,
 To thee the curses of mankind belong;
 Thou first great author of our future state,
 Chief source of our religion, passions, fate.'

And in the following he discovers a profound

secret of the source of true contentment and happiness :

‘ But to return, in this wide sea of thought
How shall we steer our notions as we ought?
Content is happiness, as sages say—
But what’s content?—the trifle of a day.
Then, friend, let inclination be thy guide,
Nor be by Superstition led aside.
The saint and sinner, fool and wise, attain
An equal share of happiness and pain.’

To this Revelation replies, ‘ Godliness with contentment is great gain.’

The following exhibits too strong proofs of his scepticism and want of religious principle :

‘ Priestcraft! thou universal blind of all ;
Thou idol at whose feet all nations fall ;
Father of misery, origin of sin,
Whose first existence did with Fear begin ;
Still sparing deal thy seeming blessings out,
Veil thy Elysium with a cloud of doubt:
Since present blessings in possession cloy,
Bid Hope, in future worlds, expect the joy ;
Or, if thy sons the *airy phantoms* slight,
And dawning Reason would direct them right,
Some glittering trifle to their optics hold,
Perhaps they’ll think the glaring spangle gold ;
And, wedded in the search of coins and toys,
Eager pursue the momentary joys.
What little rest from over-anxious care
The lords of Nature are design’d to share
To wanton whim and prejudice we owe ;
Opinion is the only God we know.

Our farthest wish, the Deity we fear,
 In different subjects differently appear.
 Where's the foundation of religion plac'd ?
 On every individual's fickle taste.
 The narrow way the priest-rid mortals tread,
 By superstitious prejudice misled.
 This passage leads to Heaven ; but, strange to tell,
 Another's conscience finds it lead to hell.
 Conscience, the soul-chamelion's varying hue,
 Reflects all notions to the notion true.'

HAPPINESS, Vol. I.

His defective views of religion are evident in the following :

' Since happiness was not ordained for man,
 Let's make ourselves as easy as we can ;
 Possessed with fame or fortune, friend or w——e,
 But think it happiness, we ask no more.
 Hail, Revelation ! sphere-envelop'd dame,
 To some divinity, to *most a name* ;
 Reason's dark-lantern, Superstition's sun,
 Whose cause mysterious, and effect, are one.
 From thee *ideal bliss* we only trace,
 Fair as Ambition's dream or Beauty's face ;
 But, in reality, as shadowy found
 As seeming truth in twisted mysteries bound.'

We could wish that the arguments included in the following lines, defective as they are, had been suggested to the mind of Chatterton when meditating on the fatal act which deprived mankind of so great a genius, and involved him among the number of wretched deserters of providential care :—

'THE RESIGNATION.

'O God! whose thunder shakes the sky;
 Whose eye this atom globe surveys;
 To thee, my only rock, I fly,
 Thy mercy in thy justice praise.

'The mystic mazes of thy will,
 The shadows of celestial light,
 Are past the power of human skill;
 But what the Eternal acts is right.

'O teach me, in the trying hour,
 When anguish swells the dewy tear,
 To still my sorrows, own thy power,
 Thy goodness love, thy justice fear.

'If in this bosom aught but thee,
 Encroaching, sought a boundless sway,
 Omniscience could the danger see,
 And Mercy look the cause away.

'Then why, my soul, dost thou complain?
 Why, drooping, seek the dark recess?
 Shake off the melancholy chain,
 For God created all to bless.

'But, ah! my breast is human still:
 'The rising sigh, the falling tear,
 My languid vitals' feeble rill,
 The sickness of my soul declare.

'But yet, with fortitude resign'd,
 I'll thank th' inflicter of the blow,
 Forbid the sigh, compose my mind,
 Nor let the gush of misery flow.

‘The gloomy mantle of the night,
Which on my sinking spirit steals,
Will vanish at the morning light,
Which God, my East, my Sun, reveals.’

The pity of Dr. Knox is amiable, and we would plead for the youth too ; but the sense which Chatterton possessed should have led him to examine the evidences of religion, and to provide for his better interests—should have carried forward his soul beyond this state of disappointment to its high and immortal destinies in a future and better world. We would say, then—

‘Forbear, fond bard, thy partial praise;
Nor thus for guilt, in specious lays,
The wreath of glory twine.
In vain with hues of gorgeous glow
Gay Fancy gives her vest to flow,
Unless Truth’s matron-hand the floating folds confine.

‘Just Heaven, man’s fortitude to prove,
Permits through life at large to rove
The tribes of hell-born woe.
Yet the same power that wisely sends
Life’s fiercest ills, indulgent lends
Religion’s golden shield to break th’ embattled foe.

‘Her aid had lull’d to rest
Yon foul self-murderer’s throbbing breast,
And stay’d the rising storm ;
Had bade the sun of Hope appear,
To gild his darkest hemisphere,
And give the wonted bloom to nature’s blasted form.’

WHARTON ON SUICIDE.

Dr. Fry, of Oxford, arrived at Bristol to investigate the history of Rowley, the fictitious author of Chatterton's ancient poems, and to patronise Chatterton, only a few days after the report of his lamentable suicide arrived! At the early age of eighteen this horrid deed was perpetrated:

‘Unfortunate boy! Short and evil were thy days, but thy fame shall be immortal! Oh! hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius! In the gloomy moments of thy despondency, I fear thou hast uttered impious and blasphemous thoughts which none can defend, and which neither thy youth nor thy fiery spirit can excuse. But let thy rigid censors reflect that thou wast literally and strictly a boy. Thou thoughtest it better to die than to support life by theft or violence. Where were ye, O ye friends to genius, when, stung with disappointment, distressed for food and raiment, with every frightful form of human misery painted before his fine imagination, poor Chatterton sunk in despair?’—DR. KNOX.

‘Yes, as with streaming eye the sorrowing Muse
Pale CHATTERTON’S untimely urn bedews,
Her accents shall arraign the partial care
That shielded not her son from black despair.
Behold him, Muses! see your fav’rite son
The prey of want ere manhood is begun!
And now Despair her sable form extends,
Creeps to his couch, and o’er his pillow bends

Ah, see ! a deadly bowl the fiend conceal'd,
 Which to his eye with caution is reveal'd.
 Seize it, Apollo ! seize the liquid snare,
 Dash it to earth, or dissipate in air !
 Stay, hapless youth ! refrain ! abhor the draught
 With pangs, with racks, with deep repentance, fraught.
 Oh, hold ! the cup with woe ETERNAL flows ;
 More—more than death the poisonous juice bestows.
 In vain ! he drinks ; and now the searching fires
 Rush through his veins, and, writhing, he expires !
 No sorrowing friend, no tender parent nigh,
 To sooth his pangs, or catch his parting sigh.
 Alone, unknown, the Muse's darling dies,
 And with the vulgar dead unnoticed lies.'

A striking feature in the character of Chatterton was a generosity and attachment to his mother and relations. Every prospect of advancement seemed gilded with the hope of benefitting them ; every project he informed them of with promises and encouragements. He continued to the last to send them presents even when he was in want himself. Alas ! how pestiferous is the effect of infidelity ! It blighted this amiable disposition ; it undermined every worthy principle ; it made the strongest motives weak, and debased real love into mere gloomy selfishness ; else the suicide's hand would have been arrested by the genuine and uncorrupted love of his mother and his relations.

' Youth of tumultuous soul and haggard eye,
 Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps, I view ;
 On thy cold forehead starts the anguish'd dew,
 And dreadful was that bosom-rending sigh !
 Such were the struggles of the gloomy hour,
 When Care, of wither'd brow,
 Prepared the poison's power.
 Already to thy lips was rais'd the bowl,
 When near thee stood Affection meek
 (Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek).
 Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll
 On scenes that well might melt thy soul :
 Thy native cot she flash'd upon thy view ;
 Thy native cot, where still at close of day
 Peace smiling sate, and listened to thy lay.
 Thy sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
 And mark thy mother's tear.
 See, see her breast's convulsive throo—
 Her silent agony of woe !
 Ah, dash the poison'd chalice from thy hand !
 And thou hadst dash'd it at her soft command,
 But that Despair and Indignation rose,
 And told again the story of thy woes ;
 Told the keen insult of the unfeeling heart—
 The dread dependence on the low-born mind ;
 Told every pang with which thy soul must smart—
 Neglect, and grinning Scorn, and Want, combin'd.
 Recoiling quick, thou bad'st the friend of pain
 Roll the black tide of death through every freezing vein !'
 I would here most pathetically address the pre-
 meditating suicide in the forcible language of Dr.
 Miller, of New York :—

‘Say, miserable man! who art contemplating the crime of self-murder, hast thou no parent, the evening of whose days, by this crime, would be imbittered, or whose grey hairs would be brought down with sorrow to the grave? Hast thou no amiable partner of thy life, who would be precipitated by this step into the deepest affliction? Hast thou no tender babes, who by thy desertion would be left fatherless, and exposed to all the dangers of an unpitied world? Hast thou no brethren or sisters to share in the grief and the disgrace of thine unworthy conduct? Are there no friends who love thee, who would weep over thy folly and sin, and feel themselves wounded by thy fall? In short, would the execution of thy wicked purpose disturb the peace of no family? torture no bosom of sensibility and kindness? defraud no creditor? plunge no friend into difficulty? rob no fellow-creature of advantage or enjoyment? Ah! if the evil terminated in thine own person, though still a crime, it would be comparatively small. But the consequences of such a step would probably extend beyond thy conception, and last longer than thy memory. Stay then, guilty man! stay thy murderous hand! Extinguish not the happiness and the hopes of a family; it may be of many families! Forbear, O forbear to inflict wounds which no time

can heal, and which may tempt survivors to wish that thou hadst never been born.'

The grand antidote to suicide is a proper—a Christian education, accompanied with parental counsel and restraint. The future excesses of children may be too often charged upon a defective education, and they are emboldened to press forward to the very edge of the precipice for want of proper restraint. Too late the parent perceives his error, and is ready to break, instead of bending, the full-grown twig. But the attempt comes too late. Having indulged his children from their youth, the authority seems resigned to them, and cannot be resumed. Thus Eli's sons 'made themselves vile, and he restrained them not:' at length he was roused by their excesses to reprove and warn them; but the reproof had been so long delayed, that the young men were too obdurate to be impressed, and they despised their father's caution. We see the effects of a foolish fondness, and the consequences of not using our influence for the restraint and direction of those that are under us. While parents, ministers, and magistrates, are complimented as benevolent, candid, and indulgent, they may betray their trust, and be accessory to the ruin of thousands. But how terrible were the final consequences of Eli's indulgence! God threatened that

they should be both cut off in the flower of their age. But, undaunted by this determination, these wicked sons were uncontrolled; no amendment took place: for years the judgment was delayed, and they thought 'no harm would happen to them.' But the calamity fast hastened; and the reason alleged for it was, 'because Eli's sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' There arose a war betwixt the Israelites and the Philistines, and the enemy prevailed against them. The elders, instead of humbling themselves before God, sent for the ark into the camp, and Hophni and Phinehas, the wicked sons of Eli, with insolent profaneness conveyed the ark into the field of battle, and proudly dared the foe, fully confident of victory. But the Strength of Israel was departed from these wicked men; they were slain amidst thousands of their sinful countrymen, and the ark itself was taken! To Eli the consequences were equally awful. He was not cut off in his sins, indeed, for he appeared a true penitent—his zeal was great for the honour of God—'His heart trembled for the ark of God;' and when he heard of the death of his sons, the slaughter of the people, and the capture of the ark, he suddenly 'fell back from his seat, and his neck brake;' and, though he doubtless ob-

tained forgiveness, yet he seemed to fall under the heavy stroke of God's displeasure.

I would here make a few remarks upon the proper use of kindness, and the administration of discipline and correction, in the education of children, grounded on these examples from sacred writ :

‘ A particular kindness, we allow, is due to children, for they have an indisputable claim to a large share of our affections. But, if we resign our authority to them, and permit them to follow their own devices without restraint, we are admonished by this history that we shall provoke God, betray his cause, strengthen the hands of the wicked, and bring a curse upon ourselves. Let us call the attention of indulgent parents. How are your houses governed? Are not your sons or your daughters “making themselves vile?” Examine their conduct and their tempers. Are not you answerable for their ignorance, ambition, extravagance, and profaneness? Have you done all in your power to prevent, or to correct, those abuses in them, which are an offence to the church of God? Are you not partakers of Eli's guilt, because you “restrained them not?”

‘ You reply, perhaps, “ We have seen the bad effects of severity, and our tender regard for our off-

spring will not allow us to adopt any rigid discipline." That is, you spare the rod, and hate the child; and, as Solomon expresses it, you will not "deliver his soul from hell." Do you believe the depravity of our nature; and do you not therein perceive the necessity of something more than instruction and advice? The vicious inclinations and vain schemes of young people must be opposed and repressed; and you are intrusted with authority for that very purpose. Are you aware of the destructive consequences of sin, both here and for ever? Surely, then, you will exert your utmost strength to preserve, or to rescue, those who are committed to your care. Otherwise, talk not of your love to them; for to leave them to their own management is cruelty of the most horrid kind. By indulging their folly and vanity, you will most effectually defeat your own plans for their advancement in life. Probably, through your fondness, they may be reduced to infamy and distress; and reproach and misery may be entailed upon your posterity for ages yet to come. Nay, did you consult only your present comfort, you would "have your children in subjection." So long as their violence of temper is unrestrained, your houses must be full of strife and confusion. But more than this, the curse of God will follow them; and could your

eyes behold all that sin and wretchedness, which may arise from your weakness and negligence, it would be more than your hearts could endure.’ *

In corroboration of the above sentiments I would here introduce two authentic histories: that of a noble youth, who, either from a bad education, or from suffering his good principles to be corrupted by the practices of the world, ended his days by a most shocking catastrophe—a deliberate suicide! and that of a most amiable young lady, rightly instructed, and most affectionately treated, who closed her short angelic career of virtue deeply loved and regretted by all who knew her.

‘The Honorable Mr. Damer, the eldest son of Lord Milton, was five-and-thirty years of age when he put a period to his existence by means perfectly correspondent to the principles on which he had lived. He had espoused a rich heiress, the daughter-in-law of General Conway. Nature had endowed him with extraordinary talents; and, if he had employed them to nobler purposes, his death must have made the deepest impression on every bosom. Unhappily, however, a most infatuated love of dissipation destroyed all the powers of his mind, and some of the more excellent qualities of his heart. His houses, his carriages, his horses, his live-

* Robinson’s Scripture Characters, Vol. II. p. 10—12.

ries, surpassed in magnificence and elegance every thing that is sumptuous in the metropolis of England. The income he enjoyed was splendid; but, not being quite sufficient to defray all his expenses, he felt himself under the necessity of borrowing, and he obtained a loan of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. A large portion of the money was immediately employed to succour those of his friends who appeared to be distressed; for his sentiments were tender and compassionate: but his sensibility to the wants of others at length obliged him to open his eyes to his own. The situation in which he found his affairs led him to despair: he retired to a brothel, sent for four women of the town, and passed four hours with infinite gaiety and spirits in their company. On the near approach of midnight, he requested they would retire; and in a few moments afterwards, drawing from his pocket a loaded pistol, which he had carried about with him all the afternoon, blew out his brains. He had passed the evening with these women in the same manner as he had been used to pass many others with different women of the same description, without insisting on favours which they would most willingly have granted. The common conversation of such interviews, or, at most, the liberty of a salute, was all he desired or expected

from them in return for his money. The gratitude he felt for the temporary oblivion which these intercourses occasioned ripened in his bosom into all the feelings of the warmest friendship.

‘ A celebrated actress on the London theatre, whose *conversations* had already drained him of considerable sums of money, requested of him, only three days before his death, to lend her five-and-twenty guineas. He returned an answer, that he had not at that time more than eight or ten guineas at his command, and these he sent to her; but he immediately borrowed the remainder, and gave her the sum she required.

‘ This unhappy young man, shortly before the fatal catastrophe, had written to his father, and disclosed the real state of his affairs; and the night, the very night on which he terminated his existence, his affectionate parent, the good Lord Milton, arrived in London, for the purpose of paying all the debts of his son. Thus lived and died this destitute and dissipated man! How different from the life and death of the innocent and virtuous!’

I shall next relate the history of a young lady, of whom the interesting historian says—

‘ I can with great truth say of her, as Petrarch said of his beloved Laura, “ The world is unacquainted with the excellence of her character; for

she was only known to those whom she has left behind to bewail her fate."

' Solitude in her mind supplied the place of the world; for she knew no other pleasures than those which a retired and virtuous life affords. Submitting with pious resignation to all the dispensations of Heaven, she sustained, although naturally of a weak constitution, every affliction with undiminished fortitude. Mild, good, tender, yet enduring her incessant sufferings without a murmur or a sigh; timid, reserved, but disclosing all the feelings of her soul with a kind of filial enthusiasm; of this description was the superior character of whom I now write; a character who convinced me, by her noble fortitude under the severest misfortunes, how much strength solitude is capable of conveying to the minds even of the feeblest beings. Diffident of her own powers, she relied with the most perfect confidence upon God, and guided herself in every thing by my precepts. Taught by my experience, submitting to my judgment, she felt for me the most ardent affection; and, without making any professions, convinced me by her actions of its sincerity. Willingly would I have sacrificed my life to save her; and I am satisfied she would have given up her own for me. My greatest happiness consisted in doing every thing that I thought was

most agreeable to her. She frequently presented me with a rose, a present from which she knew I received considerable delight ; and from her hand it was superior to the richest treasure. A malady of almost a singular kind, an hemorrhage of the lungs, suddenly deprived me of the comfort of this beloved child, even while I supported her in my arms. Acquainted with her constitution, I immediately saw the blow was mortal. How frequently, during that fatal day, did my wounded bleeding heart bend me on my knees before my God, to implore her recovery ! But I concealed my feelings from her observation. Although sensible of her danger, she never communicated the least apprehension. Smiles arose upon her cheeks whenever I entered or quitted the chamber. Although worn down by this fatal distemper, a prey to the most corroding griefs, the sharpest and most intolerable pains, she made no complaint. She mildly answered all my questions by some short sentence, but without entering into any detail. Her decay and approaching dissolution became obvious to the eye ; but to the last moment of her life her countenance preserved a serenity equal to the purity of her mind and the affectionate tenderness of her heart.

‘ Thus I beheld my dear, my only daughter, after a lingering sufferance of nine long months, expire

in my arms! Exclusive of the usual internal appearances which attend a consumption of the lungs, the liver was extremely large, the stomach uncommonly small and contracted, and the viscera much overcharged. So many attacks, alas! were needless to the conquest. She had been the submissive victim of ill health from her earliest infancy: her appetite was almost gone when we left Switzerland; a residence which she quitted with her usual sweetness of temper, and without discovering the smallest regret, although a young man, as handsome in his person as he was amiable in the qualities of his mind, the object of her first, of her only affection, a few weeks afterwards put an end to his existence in despair.

‘The few happy days we passed at Hanover, where she was much respected and beloved, she amused herself by composing religious prayers, which were afterwards found among her papers, and in which she implores death to afford her a speedy relief from her pains. She wrote also many letters, always affecting, and frequently sublime, during the same period: they were filled with expressions of the same desire speedily to re-unite her soul with the Author of her days. The last words my dear, my well-beloved child uttered, amidst the most painful agonies, were these—‘To-day I shall taste the joys of Heaven.’

‘ We should be unworthy of this bright example, if, after having seen the severest sufferings sustained by a female in the earliest period of life, and of the weakest constitution by nature, we permitted our minds to be dejected by misfortunes, when by the smallest degree of courage we may be enabled to surmount them :—a female who, under the anguish of inexpressible torments, never permitted the sigh of complaint to escape from her lips ; but submitted with silent resignation to the will of Heaven, in hope of meeting with reward hereafter. She was ever active, invariably mild, always compassionate to the miseries of others. But we, who have before our eyes the sublime instructions which a character thus virtuous and noble has given us under the pressure of a fatal disease, under the horrors of continued and bitter agonies ; we, who, like her, aspire to the attainment of the glorious seat of happiness and peace, refuse to submit to the smallest sacrifice, make no endeavour to oppose the storms of fortune by the exertion of courage, or to acquire that patience and resignation which a candid examination of our own hearts, and a silent communion with God, would certainly afford.’

* Zimmerman, p. 77—81.

CHAP. IX.

THE CRIME OF SUICIDE POINTEDLY EXHIBITED
AND REPROBATED.

‘ Si genus humanum et mortalia temnitis arma
At sperate Deos memores fandi atque nefandi.’

VIRGIL.

‘ Of mortal justice if thou scorn the rod,
Believe and tremble, thou art judg’d of God.’

Objections of Infidelity—False Notions of the Termination of Existence—Heathen Sentiments imbibed in a classical Education—Corruptions of the Stage—Suicide encouraged in Tragedy—Addison’s Cato—Severe Laws requisite to restrain from Suicide—Juries—Bishop Fleetwood’s Opinion—Soothing Remedies addressed to the Agitated—Clayton’s Suggestions—Lessons of Contentment and Resignation—Dr. Cheyne’s History of his own Depravity, and his Cure by Temperance and Religion.

BUT what says the infidel philosophy of the day?
—‘ We are independent agents, entirely freed from any superior restraint; our lips, our lives, are our own: who is lord over us? Why need we stay longer in the world than we choose? We entered

it without our consent, and need not continue in it if we please to make our exit. Where is the crime of diverting a few ounces of blood from their natural channel ?

These are the licentious ideas propagated by infidelity, which prompt to deeds of atrocity, and multiply suicides among us.

Mr. Hume's 'Essay,' in which the above sentiment is uttered, 'has been a source of incalculable evil. How affecting is the thought, that he should have spent his last hours in "forming a project for destroying the souls, and abridging the lives, of his fellow-creatures !"' It is said that, having presented this piece to an intimate friend, such was its effect on his mind, that he first returned his thanks to the author, and immediately afterwards put an end to his existence.'

But let it be remembered that 'suicide is forbidden by all our interests and hopes beyond the grave.

'It is common to see announced in our vehicles of public intelligence that such an one, in a melancholy hour, "put an end to his own existence." It were well for those who live and die in rebellion against God if death were really the termination of their existence ; for, hideous as is the thought of sinking into the gulf of annihilation, even this gulf would

be preferable to the abyss of the damned. But, alas! wretched as this hope is, it is cherished in vain. The infidel, indeed, will tell me that death is nothing; that it is only “diverting from its ordinary channel a portion of that red fluid” which appears necessary to the vital functions; that, in destroying his own life, he only alters the modification of a small portion of matter—only arrests the motion of an animal machine. For, let it be distinctly remembered that there is no class of men, who go so far in denying the real honours and trampling on the noblest prerogatives of human nature, as those who are ever prating about the dignity and perfectibility of man. These are the proud teachers, who would persuade us that man is a machine—that the soul is a nonentity—that eternity is a dream—and, of course, that the destruction of life is a trifle unworthy of notice. But woe to the unhappy mortal who, embracing this impious delusion, lifts the murderous hand against his own life! How will he be astonished and confounded to discover that the extinction of this mortal life is something infinitely more serious than had ever been told him; that it is cutting the “slender thread on which hang everlasting things;” that it is terminating the day of grace; that it is putting an end to every opportunity of repentance

and reformation; that it is hurrying an immortal spirit before the tribunal of its Judge, and fixing the condition of the soul in endless misery or in endless joy.'

Would this be the language or the conduct of men, through gross ignorance of the Gospel, if infidelity had not left the mind without guardianship? Moral and religious principle is neglected among us; it is overlooked too much in our system of education. The judgment is not informed; the passions are not kept in subordination; self-denial is not practised; nor are our youth taught to live as candidates for immortality. The Bible should be daily read in our schools and in our houses; zeal should be awakened, to discountenance the infidel publications of the age; we should guard our youth from perusing those works of imagination, where strange adventures, visionary speculations, and un-governed passions, are exhibited to imitation, and lessen in the mind the guilt of suicide.

It is of importance, in the present infidel age, to guard and restrict the study of the Greek and Roman classics. These elements of a learned and elegant education contain in them the seeds of poison; they convey the most dangerous notions of honour, and false glory, and imaginary greatness; and some of the Pagan philosophers and

heroes whom we are taught most to admire even praise and extol the crime of suicide. Others, however, under the midnight darkness of Paganism, reprobated the practice. But in this day of Christian light we should guard our youth against the corruption of Pagan principles and Pagan practices. We should take care that Brutus, and Cassius, and Lucretia, do not familiarize them to tragical scenes till they admire them; nor that the revenge of Achilles, the violence of Ajax, nor all the wild passions of the heroes of Pagan antiquity, do not make our youth in love with that resentful, unforgiving, and sullen character, for which the greatest hero in the Grecian story was so celebrated.

‘Impiger iracundus implacabilis acer!’

Let the antidote be at hand to counteract the poison—let the Bible correct the bad impression made by the Grecian or the Roman story. Let the tutor carefully point out the courage, spirit, and magnanimity, which adorn the human character, and the audacity and malignity which disgrace it. Thus we should not see our youth led away by the *ignis fatuus* of false honour into miry depths or over perilous precipices, but guided and animated by the safe and cheering beam of true glory.

We must also guard our youth against the corruption of the stage. How many vices are praised,

imitated, and held up to ambition, on the stage! and suicide finds there its highest encomiums and its greatest honours. It is exhibited as the crowning point in a great and admired hero; nor can the most sober moral tragedy be excepted from this accusation so long as, in the most distant manner, it softens or encourages the crime of self-murder.

‘Addison’s “Cato,” it may be said, is an admirable, and a moral composition too. I grant it, with much exception and qualification. It contains poison: and it is so much the more dangerous, because the destructive ingredient is concealed, by the delightful admixture of sound taste and fine sentiment. But, how does Cato *die*? And what was the effect of the exhibition on the mind of the unhappy Mr. Budgel, who, on retiring (as it is supposed) from the theatre, plunged into the Thames, and was found with this defence on his person:—

“What Cato did, and Addison approv’d,
Must needs be right.”

‘Let not the young people in this assembly complain if their superiors deny to them the gratifications of the theatre. There characters are represented at once charming and inconsistent, and while you gaze you are enamoured and undone. The restraint, of which you sometimes feel the inconvenience, is salutary, and may become the means of

securing your principles from injury, and preserving you from many presumptuous crimes. Archbishop Tillotson observes, that the exhibitions of the theatre are as much the ordinances of Satan for the damnation of souls, as the instituted means of religion are appointments of God for the salvation of them.'

Really the crime of suicide is become so general and notorious, that we seem to want something besides the Divine law to forbid it. The law of the land must, without misjudging lenity, by the faithful investigation of jurymen, who shall refuse to bring in a verdict of *lunacy* upon every self-murderer, be rigorously executed ere sufficient terror is held out to restrain these evil-doers from this act of rashness and barbarity. The law decrees that the body of a *felo de se*, or self-murderer, shall suffer contempt by an ignominious interment; his goods and chattels be confiscated; and his name and family be branded with marks of infamy. This appears too severe to jurymen; and, in compassion to the surviving family, they pronounce the self-murderer a lunatic. But I would here quote the words of Bishop Fleetwood:

'If the self-murderer were sure that the sentence of the law would be fully executed, perhaps he

would give way to calmer counsels, and be content to bear a little shame and pain and loss, till God saw fit to put an end to all his sufferings by natural means; and therefore an instance or two of such severity as is legal, well and wisely chosen, might prove a greater preservative against these violences than such a constant and expected mercy as we always find on these occasions. For men have now no fear of the laws; and, when they have laid aside the fear of God, they go about this business with great readiness—they are sure of favour in this world, and they will venture the other.’

But I would rather suggest remedies which may calm the agitated, and prevent them from rushing on the dreadful deed. As a Christian minister, I would endeavour to cheer the distressed with the consolations of the Gospel of peace; and say, Listen, listen to the voice of your gracious Saviour—‘Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ I would not have myself or my brethren expose ourselves to the rebuke—‘The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.’

‘It has pleased God,’ said Mr. Clayton, in his Sermon on Suicide, ‘in many instances to bless the labours of the pulpit, for preventing the sin of self-murder. I have lately been introduced to a well-educated, and, as I hope, a sincerely pious female, who, under the influence of religious melancholy, not unaided by mental distraction, made several direct attempts at self-destruction; but who was diverted at length from her purpose, and considerably tranquillized in her spirit, by being taken (as we generally say) casually to worship at Tooting, where, to her great surprise and consolation, the venerable and excellent minister* who stately officiates was directed to take for his text, “Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool.” In viewing so remarkable an occurrence, who can forbear saying—herein is the finger of God!

‘I am much indebted to the esteemed and honored pastor of the Church, with whom we are worshipping this day, for the communication of an authentic and original anecdote, well calculated to

* Rev. J. Bowden, for whom the author gladly avails himself of this opportunity to express his respect and affection.’

illustrate and confirm these remarks. It records a fact which occurred nearly seventy years ago. †'

† Mr. Pitts, who at that time was the assistant of the Rev. Thomas Bradbury (the venerable grandfather of the present pastor), was led one afternoon, in his discourse, to mention an anecdote of the celebrated Mr. Dod, which Flavel, in his "Mysteries of Providence," relates in these words: "I find it recorded of that holy man, Mr. Dod, that, being late at night in his study, he was strongly moved, though at an unseasonable hour, to visit a gentleman of his acquaintance. Not knowing what might be the design of Providence herein, he obeyed, and went. When he came to the house, after a few knocks at the door, the gentleman himself came to him, and asked him whether he had any business with him. Mr. Dod answered, 'No; but that he could not be quiet till he had seen him.' 'O, sir,' replied the gentleman, 'you are sent of God at this hour; for just now' (and with that he takes the halter out of his pocket) 'I was going to destroy myself.' And thus the mischief was prevented."—Flavel's Works, vol. ii. p. 157.

'That same afternoon, before the last prayer, two notes were handed up to the preacher. One had been given to the clerk in the early part of the service, but he retained it till the sermon was finished; the other was given to him during the singing after sermon.'

'March 11, 1743-4. Prayers are earnestly desired for one, who is afraid his own prayers are an abomination to the Lord. He thinks there are some circumstances in his sins may be unpardonable, because the more he repents, and all sorts of humiliation he uses, he thinks the more his affairs are in distress and in confusion, so thinks to leave off prayer quite; which want of communion with God grieves him

May we all learn contentment in the station in which Providence places us! whether high or low, rich or poor, to bear the calamities of life, as appointed by God for the wisest ends, and removable at his pleasure: above all to seek for the strength of religious principle, and the consolations of the Gospel; to forsake those ways and those companions which have led us into sinful indulgences and violent excesses; and to make the word of God our guide, and the good and wise our companions and friends.

As example is more powerful than precept, I shall conclude this chapter with the remarkable account which the famous Dr. Cheyne gives of himself, and his return to former good principles, more, though he thinks prayers of others may be of service. He cannot see why he may not shorten a miserable life, which every day he thinks of doing. So he begs he may have a clear way of thinking; and, above all, that he might be kept in his senses, to be enabled to bear with patience his adverse affairs; that Providence would overrule his affairs; and that, if it please God, he may meet his numerous family in better circumstances than his melancholy suggests.'

'Is it not a surprising providence, that I, who am an utter stranger, should be directed into this meeting-house, and have such a story, and such a discourse, so suitable to the note I brought in, and which, I believe, will save my soul? for I was much tempted to destroy it through melancholy apprehensions. Thus Mr. Dod has visited me.'

in his book entitled 'The English Malady,' page 325 :

'I passed my youth in close study and application to the sciences, and consequently in great temperance. Upon my coming to London I all of a sudden changed my whole manner of living. I found the bottle-companions, the younger gentry, and free livers, to be the most easy of access, and most quickly susceptible of friendship and acquaintance ; nothing more being necessary for that purpose than to be able to eat lustily and to swallow down much liquor ; and thus constantly dining and supping in town, and in the houses of my acquaintances of taste and delicacy, my health was in a few years brought into great distress by so severe and violent a change. On this occasion all my bouncing, protesting, undertaking companions forsook me, and dropped off like autumnal leaves. They could not bear, it seems, to see their companion in such misery and distress, but retired to comfort themselves with some *cheering-up* cup, leaving me to pass the melancholy moments with my own apprehensions and remorse. Even those who had shared the best part of my profusions, who in their necessities had been assisted by my false generosity, and in their disorders relieved by my care, did now entirely relinquish and abandon me ; so that

I was forced to retire into the country quite alone, being reduced to the state of Cardinal Wolsey when he said "That, if he had served his Maker as faithfully and warmly as he had served his prince, he would not have forsaken him in that extremity;" and so will every one find when union and friendship are not founded on solid virtue, and in conformity with the divine order, but in sensual pleasures and mere jollity. I retired (I say) into the country, into a fine air, and lived low. While I was thus forsaken by my holiday friends, and my body was, as it were, melting away like a snowball in summer, being dejected, melancholy, and much confined at home by my course of mineral medicines and country retirement, I had a long season for undisturbed meditation and reflection (my faculties being as clear and quick as ever), which I was more readily led into, as that I concluded myself infallibly entering into an unknown state of things. Having had a liberal and regular education, with the instruction and example of pious parents, I had preserved a firm persuasion of the great and fundamental principle of all virtue and morality; viz. the existence of a supreme, infinite, and perfect Being, the freedom of the will, the immortality of the spirit, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments. And I had then the

consolation to reflect, that in my loosest days I had never pined to the vices or infidelity of any, but was always a determined adversary to both. I then called to mind who it was of my acquaintances who constantly lived up to their convictions under the commonly received principles and plain consequences of Christianity: in a word, who it was I could remember to have had received, and lived up to, the plain truths and precepts contained in the Gospel, and more particularly in our Saviour's sermon on the mount. I fixed on a worthy and learned clergyman of the Church of England to settle my mind and quiet my conscience; I resolved to purchase, study, and examine carefully, such spiritual authors as I knew this venerable man did most approve and delight in. In this manner I collected a set of books and writers of most of the first ages since Christianity, and the more spiritual of the moderns, which have been my study and delight in my retirements ever since; and on these I have formed my ideas, principles, and sentiments. I never found any sensible tranquillity and amendment till I came to this firm and settled resolution in the main; viz. "To neglect nothing to secure my eternal peace, more than if I had been certified I should die within the day; nor to mind any thing that my secular obligations and duties demanded

of me less than if I had been insured to life fifty years more." This, though with infinite weakness and imperfection, has been made my settled intention in the main there.

God grant, reader, that it may be yours and mine! then God shall bless us with his peace, which passeth all understanding, and ere long bring us to that blessed world where sorrow and sighing shall be done away. 'For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead us to living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.'

CHAP. X.

ULTIMATUM OF DEPRAVITY, AND POWER OF
RELIGION.

‘Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crime,
Unwhipt of justice! Hide thee, thou bloody hand!
Thou perjured’——

Gradations of Depravity and Atrocity—Williams, the Murderer of Marr and Williamson, and their Families, thrown into Coldbath Fields' Prison, and murders himself—Judas his own Executioner—Thompson's Poem on Williams's Atrocities—Standley murders Dale, in December, 1821, and becomes his own Executioner in Southwell Prison—Infidelity grand Cause of Suicide—Power of Religion in staying the uplifted Dagger—Poetical and historical Illustrations from Dale—The Caliph of Egypt, from the 'Adventurer.'

DEPRAVITY has its gradations: the heart once tender and impressible may, by a course of sinning, become callous to all remorse, till it commits all iniquity with greediness, and rushes onward into the most detestable excesses. It may be seared as with a red-hot iron till it perpetrates the most savage atrocities.

‘ Oh ! how will sin
Engender sin ! Throw guilt upon the soul,
And, like a rock dashed in the troubled lake,
’Twill form its circles, round succeeding round,
Each wider than the former.’

COLMAN.

We should never believe the capabilities of evil existing in the heart of man, were they not exhibited to us by atrocities which astonish the mind and shock all the feelings of the soul. ‘ The heart of man is desperately wicked ! who can know it ? ’ The suicide of Williams in Coldbath Fields’ prison does not surprise us, after the tale of bloody deeds with which his name has stained the page of historic facts. Through a vile thirst of gold, as the means of sensual gratification without labour, this sanguinary wretch murdered four persons one evening—one an infant in the cradle ! On the 17th December, 1811, about twelve o’clock at night, Mr. Marr, a respectable tradesman in Ratchliffe Highway, sent out his female servant for some oysters. On her return she was unable to obtain admission. A neighbour, whom she alarmed, entering the back way, beheld the dreadful spectacle of the whole family, consisting of Mr. Marr, his wife, a shop-boy, and an infant of four months old, weltering in their blood, and mangled in a manner almost too shock-

ing for description. On the night of the 19th of the same month, before the horror occasioned by this murder had subsided, and while the utmost exertions were making by the police to discover its perpetrators, another murder, almost similar, was committed in New Gravel Lane, Wapping. Mr. Williamson, of the King's Head public house, his wife, and servant, were all savagely butchered, a little before midnight, as they were about to retire to rest. The alarm was given in this case sooner than in the other, by means of a lodger, who overheard the work of death, but who appears to have been too much under the influence of terror to prevent it. The vigilance of the police traced both these murders to the same hand. One Williams, an Irishman, was so circumstantially and clearly proved to have been implicated in them as to leave little doubt of his guilt on the minds of any one. Whatever doubt remained, the wretch himself removed it by an act of suicide in prison.

It seems as though he had no remorse for his first crime; for, while every tongue around him was dwelling on its atrocity, and such active exertions making on all sides for its discovery, he boldly ventured almost within hearing of the scene of the first murder, to assassinate in cold blood three more

of his fellow-creatures. But the particular providence of God, by a variety of minute circumstances, too many to detail, pointed out the murderer.

‘ Blood will have blood !’

‘ He that sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’ His conscience, however hardened before, now seems to have stung him beyond bearing: remorse, perhaps, pierced his hardened soul, as it did the avaricious disciple Judas, who, when he beheld his Master taken through his treachery and crucified, threw down the wages of iniquity, exclaiming ‘ I have betrayed the innocent blood !’ and went and hanged himself. Perhaps Williams, who feared no crime, and possibly felt no remorse, shuddered to meet the eyes and tongues of an execrating community; and insupportable shame and fear might have driven the wretch to fly at once to all the apprehended horrors of an unknown world to come. He at last imbrued his guilty hands, tinged with the blood of seven innocents, in his own blood. This wretch, so prodigal of crime, sunk into eternity under the last and worst of crimes—suicide; and rushed unsummoned into the presence of an offended Deity.

The following strongly expressive stanzas were composed immediately subsequent to this desperate

suicide; and are highly descriptive not only of the detestation which such accumulated depravity must naturally excite in the heart of man, but (what is of far more importance) of its atrociousness, also, in the sight of an offended God :

THE SUICIDE.

‘ What vengeance must await

The wretch that, with his crimes all fresh about him,
Rushes, irreverent, unprepared, uncalled,
Into his Maker’s presence!’—PORTEUS.

‘ O’er the suicide’s grave shall no death-prayer be said,
No blessings be heard o’er the murderer’s tomb,
Who struck when the demon of homicides bade ;
Whose guilt, unforgiven, by conscience dismayed,
Dared the vengeance of Heaven, and rushed to his doom?

O’er his relics is whispered no requiem farewell ;
No friend o’er his ashes in sympathy weeps ;
No wafting to peace with a death-boding knell—
No dirge to the criminal’s memory shall swell,
Nor hallow the dust where the suicide sleeps.

His sins unrepented, with fear on his soul,
He broke the Eternal’s unchanging decree :
Existence a burden, he spurned its control,
And the Angel of Judgment his fate shall enrol
Who rush’d from his Maker’s restraint to be free.

No ear caught the echo of life’s parting groan
When, unsummon’d, he dared Heav’n’s tribunal to brave ;
The hand bathed in nature’s red blood was his own !
To Eternity’s gulf he fled forward alone,
And shrouded his crimes in the gloom of the grave.

Yet the tale of his infamy all shall retain ;

The path where he slumbers by thousands be trod ;
And ne'er shall oblivion efface the deep stain,

But, crimsoned with gore, shall the weapon remain

Which was rais'd in rebellion 'gainst Justice and God !

Unlamented, dishonoured, his form shall decay,

Nor Pity e'er shed for his sufferings a tear ;

And, till Heav'n's flaming seraphs proclaim the last day,
When the seas shall retire from their shores in dismay—

Until earth, wrapt in lightnings, in fire melts away—

Shall shame and disgrace mark the suicide's bier.*

THOMPSON'S POEMS.

* The strength of the expressions in these stanzas may render it needful to observe, that they were composed immediately after the remarkable suicide of Williams, and under the most powerful impression of feelings arising from that event, connected as it was, by blood and crime, with the mysterious murders of the Marrs and Williamsons. Self-destruction is, however, generally considered an act so revolting to humanity, as to render no language of reprobation too strong, and no epithet of invective too severe; though incidental circumstances may sometimes lead to make its guilt appear less aggravated, and the memory of the offender less disgraceful. It is a crime which every law, divine and human, joins to deprecate; and they must be something more than infatuated who, fearing to meet the common ills of life, thus rush, unsummoned, into the presence of an offended Deity, arrest the progress of that life they cannot give, and break His sacred *fiat*, who has said 'Thou shalt do no murder !'

The assassin Williams above referred to terminated a career of guilt by suicide, in Coldbath Fields' Prison, on Thursday, Dec. 26, 1811.

To this may be added the following determined suicide lately committed through the overpowering convictions of a guilty conscience, and fear of public ignominy :

‘MURDER AND SUICIDE.

‘JANUARY, 1822.—The *Nottingham Review* of Dec. 21, contained a paragraph, announcing that the body of a young man, named John Dale, a hawker, from Chesterfield, had been found in Winkburne Wood, in a sad state of putrefaction, he having been murdered by some person or persons unknown, in the month of July preceding. We also expressed a hope that the murderer would not long escape the hands of justice. That hope has in some measure been realized, and it now becomes our sad duty to enter more fully into the particulars of the case. A murder of this atrocious nature, committed with circumstances of great cruelty upon a young man travelling through the country in open day, pursuing his ordinary occupation, naturally excited a very intense feeling ; and, when it was considered that money or goods to the amount of about eighty pounds had been taken by the murderers, it was thought impossible that the guilty wretches should long escape detection ; and the circumstance, trivial in itself, which led to the development of the long-concealed mystery, proves

that murder has a thousand tongues, and that Divine Providence, by some means or other, will bring to light the perpetrators of this darkest and most odious of all crimes. The following particulars, which we have been at some trouble in collecting from authentic sources, may, we believe, be depended upon ; but we have heard that a more full detail will speedily be published for the benefit of Dale's widow and fatherless babe. There is a family of the name of Standley residing at Winkburne : the father and head of this family has been for nearly thirty years gamekeeper to Peter Pegge Burnel, Esq. of Winkburne ; and one of his daughters, the week before last, brought a piece of sprigged leno to Miss Chamberlains', the dress-makers, in Southwell, to be made up into a cap. It was observed at the time that the article was not in the state in which it is generally delivered from a shop, and that it was considerably soiled. Mr. Sandaver, the constable of Southwell, had, some time back, a daughter at Miss Chamberlains' to learn the dress-making, and, in the course of conversation, one of the apprentices happened to mention the circumstance to Miss Sandaver, who named it to her father. Dale's father was then in Southwell. The leno was immediately inspected ; and, as there was young Dale's private mark upon it,

the necessity was soon apparent of tracing how it came into the possession of Standley's daughter. An inquiry was immediately instituted, and, in consequence, the constable and Dale's father set out for Carlton-Limdric, on the other side of Worksop, where Henry Standley, the brother of the girl, resided, in the situation of under-keeper to Robert Ramsden, Esq. On searching his house some of the property was found, and he was taken into custody at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, and brought to Southwell on the following day, Monday, January 28th, in a cart. On the same day, the Rev. J. T. Becher, a very active magistrate of Southwell, went over to Standley's mother, at Winkburne; and, after some conversation, she produced several bundles from under the hay in the stable, which contained part of the property which Dale had with him when he was murdered. The mother was taken into custody, and was actually confined in the house of correction till the Wednesday following, when she was by some means liberated on bail! The very day that Standley was brought to Southwell he underwent an examination in the round tower, before the Rev. J. T. Becher, William Wylde, Esq. Colonel Coape, and other magistrates, when (and we mention it as a proof of the commendable activity used on this occasion to

further the ends of justice) the depositions of no less than sixteen witnesses were taken, amongst whom were the prisoner's father, mother, and two sisters! There were several other examinations in the course of the week in the round tower; but the principal, and, indeed, final one, took place on Saturday last. It seems that the magistrates were desirous that the examination should be public; and, as many more persons had applied for permission to be present than the round tower could possibly hold, they directed that the examination should take place in the chapel, and this spacious room was quite filled on the occasion. We are not in possession of the minutes of the examination, and therefore cannot vouch for the truth of the statement, that an intimate acquaintance deposed that, the evening before the murder, he and the prisoner were together, when Standley asked, if he would "join him in a job the next morning?" The acquaintance is said to have replied, "What job?" and Standley to have rejoined, "On the road—I have plenty of money, and a brace of good pistols." It is also said that another witness, a boy, opened the gates for Standley to pass through on the fatal day with a wheelbarrow, loaded with goods, supposed to have belonged to the unfortunate deceased. This, however, we have on the best authority, that

the prisoner stood the greater part of the examination with his hands in his coat-pockets, but appeared at times greatly agitated, particularly when the shoes and watch of the deceased were produced, and identified by Dale's father. The watch was found in the possession of Standley's wife's mother in Broad Gate, near the Wheatsheaf, Lincoln; and the shoes had been sold by the prisoner to a person at Retford. When these were produced, the remembrance of past guilt seemed to harrow up his inmost soul, and curdle his young blood; the colour left his cheeks, he gave a convulsive start, and dropped senseless on the floor! The effect upon the magistrates and the audience was like an electric shock. Who, indeed, could then doubt his guilt? The prisoner soon recovered; the examination was speedily concluded; and the warrant was made out for his commitment to Nottingham county gaol, to take his trial for the horrid offence. At a little before five o'clock he was re-conducted to his cell, No. 44, and was seen and spoke to about six. Mr. Barton, the keeper, having received instructions to take all possible care of his prisoner—and, in order the more effectually to prevent any attempt to escape before Monday morning, to put a pair of irons on his legs, such as prisoners usually wear when they are conveyed to

the county gaol—proceeded, about half past seven o'clock, along with Thomas Haywood, one of the turnkeys, and a prisoner of the name of George Guest holding a lantern, to lock up the prisoners in the New Prison, and, on coming to the cell where the prisoner was confined, Haywood called to him several times to come out of that cell, and go into another where there was a bed; but the call was in vain, no answer was made. Guest went in with the lantern, followed by the keeper, who discovered Standley suspended behind the door, from a peg in the wall! The peg was so low that the man was down on his knees, and, when the keeper lifted him up, it was found he was dead! Haywood immediately cut the handkerchief with which Standley had hung himself; and the attendance of Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Forster, surgeons, was forthwith procured, but all means to restore animation were in vain. Oh, what a leap in the dark was here! —the murderer of a fellow-creature finished his career by murdering himself, and thus rushing, unbidden, into the presence of his Maker, with all his crimes upon his head! The instrument with which he performed this last tragedy was a single checked muslin kerchief, which he had worn round his neck, and which is believed to have been part of the fruits of the first murder; and it is astonishing that with so weak an instrument he should

have accomplished his end ; for, doubtless, had the whole weight of his body been upon it, it must have broken ; but he seemed resolved upon this desperate finishing stroke, and from the blood upon the wall, and other circumstances, it is concluded his death must have been very painful. On Monday an inquest was held upon the body, before W. H. Barrow, Gent. coroner, the jury being composed of six persons, inhabitants of the town of Southwell, and six prisoners, not convicted of felony ; and, after investigating the facts, they returned a verdict of *felo-de-se*. The body was then directed to be buried at some place where four roads meet ; and the churchwardens, overseers, and constable of the parish, have agreed that it shall be deposited in the crossing of Mill Lane, near to the house of correction ; and that the stake found in the wood, with which it was supposed the murder was committed, shall be shod with iron, and thrust through his body. This disgusting ceremony is to be performed tomorrow (Saturday) morning, at ten o'clock, the body having been exposed one hour previously. We have heard that the reason of the burial, if so it may be termed, being deferred till Saturday, is this—he committed the murder on a Saturday ; he was fully committed for trial on a Saturday ; he hanged himself on a Saturday ; and, to complete the history, is to be interred on a Saturday ! Stand-

ley, unlike most criminals of his class, was a very good-looking, nay, handsome young man, twenty-five years of age, and stood about five feet nine inches high. Doubtless, in the opinion of many persons, his fainting away at the sight of the shoes and watch, and his tragical end, will be considered tantamount to the most complete confession of his guilt.'

Infidelity chiefly emboldens the suicide to commit this last and worst crime. If faith in the unseen world, and what revelation assures us of, takes possession of the mind, to whatever excesses a man's passions may prompt him, he will still feel an awful dread of rushing into futurity—the dread of God and a miserable eternity will stay the uplifted dagger, and dash far away the poisoned bowl; it will even nerve the arm in the day of strife to prolong existence :

' When from my sabre shrank the foe,
 Thou know'st not, and thou canst not know,
 What nerv'd my stern unsparing hand—
 What thought gave keenness to my brand :
 It was not Hate that fired my eye,
 Nor even the pride of victory;
 No, Azor, no—I fear'd to die!
 Doubt darkens o'er thy clouded brow,
 And half exclaims, " It cannot be !"
 Thou deem'st it strange my soul should bow
 To lay its weakness bare to thee.
 But mark me, youth ! no hostile sword,
 Nor sabre, in my life-blood gor'd ;

No insult of a vaunting foe ;
 No abject craven's heartless blow ;
 Nor the keen throb of life's keen sigh ;
 Nor all of shame and agony
 That wrath can wreak or guilt can bear ;
 It is not these, but HEAVEN, I fear.'

One view of a glorious and a dreadful eternity through the telescope of faith will fill the mind with solemn awe ; and, instead of rushing out of life to avoid his troubles, a man's conscience will thunder louder than the storm that swells and roars around him :

' And 'mid the horrors of the storm
 Still Fancy paints some spectre form ;
 And each deep echo seems to be
 A summons to eternity !'

And the picture drawn of the restless mind of the captain of a band of robbers, who had apostatized from the faith, till the Evangelist St. John went after and reclaimed him, may well be introduced, as a salutary feeling arising from religion, which, in the worst excesses, will prevent the crime of suicide, and may also operate upon the mind till it completes its cure :

' Wild, restless as the thin leaf, cast
 At random by the driving blast,
 Each path my soul is doom'd to trace,
 And never find a resting place :
 No soft reviving dews of sleep
 My brows in calm oblivion steep ;

Through night's still shade dread thunders roll
 Prophetic o'er my conscious soul;
 And spectres shriek my future doom,
 And dark fiends beckon to the tomb.
 Oh! how I wake, and watch for day,
 To drive those dreary dreams away!
 And what is fame so dearly won,
 Whose early rays so brightly shone?
 'Tis faithless as the clear blue stream
 Which veils the deep abyss below;
 'Tis fleeting as a lovely dream,
 From which the dreamer wakes to woe.'

DALE'S OUTLAW.

A persuasion of the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Divine Being, is the best preservative from suicide. 'The Adventurer' tells a beautiful tale of a Caliph of Egypt, who gave himself up to despair for the sudden death of his only son, by an arrow from an unknown hand, and retired to the gloomiest grotto in the neighbouring mountains:

"Can that God be benevolent," he cried, "who thus wounds the soul, as from an ambush, with unexpected sorrows, and crushes his creatures in a moment with irremediable calamity? Ye lying Imans, prate to us no more of the justice and the kindness of an all-directing and all-loving Providence! He, whom ye pretend reigns in Heaven, is so far from protecting the miserable sons of men, that he perpetually delights to blast the sweetest flowerets

in the garden of Hope ; and, like a malignant giant, to beat down the strongest towers of Happiness with the iron mace of his anger. If this Being possessed the goodness and the power with which flattering priests have invested him, he would, doubtless, be inclined and enabled to banish those evils which render the world a dungeon of distress, a vale of vanity and woe. I will continue in it no longer !”

‘ At that moment he furiously raised his hand, which Despair had armed with a dagger, to strike deep into his bosom ; when suddenly thick flashes of lightning shot through the cavern, and a being of more than human beauty and magnitude, arrayed in azure robes, crowned with amaranth, and waving a branch of palm in his right hand, arrested the arm of the trembling and astonished caliph, and said, with a majestic smile, “ Follow me to the top of this mountain. Look from hence,” said the awful conductor ; “ I am Caloc, the angel of peace ; look from hence into the valley.”

‘ The caliph instantly beheld a magnificent palace, adorned with the statues of his ancestors wrought in jasper ; the ivory doors of which, turning on hinges of the gold of Golconda, discovered a throne of diamonds, surrounded with the rajas of fifty nations, and with ambassadors of various habits and

different complexions ; on which sat Aboram, the much-lamented son of Bozaldab, and by his side a princess fairer than a houri.

“ Gracious Alla ! it is my son,” cried the caliph ; “ Oh, let me hold him to my heart !” “ Thou canst not grasp an unsubstantial vision,” replied the angel : “ I am now showing thee what would have been the destiny of thy son, had he continued longer on the earth.” “ And why,” returned Bozaldab, “ was he not permitted to continue ? Why was not I suffered to be a witness of so much felicity and power ?” “ Consider the sequel,” replied he that dwells in the fifth heaven. Bozaldab looked earnestly, and saw the countenance of his son, on which he had been used to behold the placid smile of simplicity and the vivid blushes of health, now distorted with rage, and now fixed in the insensibility of drunkenness : it was again animated with disdain, it became pale with apprehension, and appeared to be withered by intemperance ; his hands were stained with blood, and he trembled by turns with fury and terror ; the palace, so lately shining with oriental pomp, changed suddenly into the cell of a dungeon, where his son lay stretched out on the cold pavement, gagged and bound, with his eyes put out. Soon after he perceived the favorite sultana, who before was seated by his side, enter with a bowl of poison, which she compelled Aboram to

drink, and afterwards married his successor to the throne.

“Happy,” said Caloc, “is he whom Providence has, by the angel of death, snatched from guilt! from whom that power is withheld, which, if he had possessed, would have accumulated upon himself yet greater misery than it could bring upon others.”

“It is enough,” cried Bozaldab; “I adore the inscrutable schemes of Omniscience! From what dreadful evil has my son been rescued by a death which I rashly bewailed as unfortunate and premature; a death of innocence and peace, which has blessed his memory upon earth, and transmitted his soul above the skies!”

“Cast away the dagger,” replied the heavenly messenger, “which thou wast preparing to plunge into thine own heart. Exchange complaint for silence, and doubt for adoration. Can a mortal look down, without giddiness and stupefaction, into the vast abyss of Eternal Wisdom? Can a mind, that sees not infinitely, perfectly comprehend any thing among an infinity of objects mutually relative? Can the channels which thou hast cut to receive the annual inundations of the Nile contain the water of the ocean? Remember that perfect happiness cannot be conferred on a creature; for perfect happiness is an attribute as incommunicable as perfect power and eternity.”

CHAP. XI.

INFIDELITY THE CAUSE OF SUICIDE, AND RELI-
GION THE CURE.

‘Quo moriturus ruis?’—VIRGIL.

Why wilt thou rush on death?

‘Conduct me, Thou, of beings cause divine,
Where’er I’m destin’d in thy great design;
Active I follow on, for, should my will
Resist, I’m impious, but must follow still.’

The Mischief of Infidelity—Influence of Temptation, and Acquaintance with Infidelity, illustrated in Cowper’s Attempts at Suicide, and his Abhorrence of it by Belief in Religion—Conversion to God—True Religion the Cure of Melancholy—Case of the late Dr. Bristow, Vicar of St. Mary’s, Nottingham—Religion not the Cause, but the Cure, of Cowper’s Melancholy—The Christian Observer’s Opinion.

INFIDELITY, I am persuaded, must take full possession of the mind of that man, who, if his senses are in exercise, commits the horrid crime of self-murder.

Perhaps this was never more exemplified than in Cowper’s case, which I shall here relate more at large, to show the weakness of man and the power

of temptation, and the cowardice of mere human nature, unassisted by a principle of religion, and a sense of duty and obligation to honour God, and do the work assigned us; and also to prove, by his subsequent conduct, the potency of faith in a future world, and the dread of a judgment to come, to deter from the commission of these deeds of atrocity.

Being appointed to the clerkship of the journals of the House of Lords, he found that his abilities were not sufficient to manage its duties and cope with the faction which was making head against him. Let us hear his own account :

‘ About the beginning of October, 1763, I was again required to attend the office, and to prepare for the push. This no sooner took place than all my misery returned. Again I visited the scene of ineffectual labours; again I felt myself pressed by necessity on either side, with nothing but despair in prospect. To this dilemma was I reduced, either to keep possession of the office to the last extremity, and, by so doing, expose myself to a public rejection for insufficiency (for the little knowledge I had acquired would have quite forsaken me at the bar of the House); or else to fling it up at once, and, by this means, run the hazard of ruining my benefactor’s right of appointment, by bringing his discretion into question. In this situation, such a fit

of passion has sometimes seized me, when alone in my chambers, that I have cried out aloud, and cursed the hour of my birth; lifting up my eyes to Heaven, at the same time, not as a suppliant, but in the hellish spirit of rancorous reproach and blasphemy against my Maker. A thought would sometimes come across my mind, that my sins had perhaps brought this distress upon me—that the hand of Divine vengeance was in it; but, in the pride of my heart, I presently acquitted myself, and thereby implicitly charged God with injustice, saying, “What sins have I committed to deserve this?”

‘ I saw plainly that God alone could deliver me; but was firmly persuaded that he would not, and therefore omitted to ask it. Ask it, indeed, at *his* hands, I would not; but, as Saul sought to the witch, so did I to the physician, Dr. Heberden; and was as diligent in the use of drugs, as if they would have healed my wounded spirit, or have made the rough places plain before me. I made, indeed, one effort of a devotional kind; for, having found a prayer or two, I said them a few nights, but with so little expectation of prevailing that way, that I soon laid aside the book, and with it all thoughts of God, and hopes of a remedy.

‘ I now began to look upon madness as the only

chance remaining. I had a strong foreboding that so it would one day fare with me; and I wished for it earnestly, and looked forward to it with impatient expectation. My chief fear was, that my senses would not fail me time enough to excuse my appearance at the bar of the House of Lords, which was the only purpose I wanted it to answer. Accordingly the day of decision drew near, and I was still in my senses; though in my heart I had formed many wishes, and by word of mouth expressed many expectations, to the contrary.

‘ Now came the grand temptation; the point to which Satan had all the while been driving me-- the dark and hellish purpose of self-murder. I grew more sullen and reserved, fled from all society, even from my most intimate friends, and shut myself up in my chambers. The ruin of my fortune, the contempt of my relations and acquaintance, the prejudice I should do my patron, were all urged upon me with irresistible energy. Being reconciled to the apprehension of madness, I began to be reconciled to the apprehension of death; though formerly, in my happiest hours, I had never been able to glance a single thought that way without shuddering at the idea of dissolution. I now wished for it, and found myself but little shocked at the idea of procuring it myself. Perhaps, thought

I, there is no God; or, if there be, the Scriptures may be false; if so, then God has nowhere forbidden suicide.'

It seems that he met with companions equally tinctured with infidelity, who encouraged him in the atrocious design of suicide:

'One evening in November, 1763, as soon as it was dark, affecting as cheerful and unconcerned an air as possible, I went into an apothecary's shop, and asked for a half-ounce phial of laudanum. The man seemed to observe me narrowly; but, if he did, I managed my voice and countenance so as to deceive him. The day that required my attendance at the bar of the House being not yet come, and about a week distant, I kept my bottle close in my side-pocket, resolved to use it when I should be convinced there was no other way of escaping. This, indeed, seemed evident already; but I was willing to allow myself every possible chance of that sort, and to protract the horrid execution of my purpose till the last moment. But Satan was impatient of delay.

'The day before the period above mentioned arrived, being at Richards' Coffee-house at breakfast, I read the newspaper, and in it a letter, which the further I perused it, the more closely it engaged my attention. I cannot now recollect the purport

of it; but, before I had finished it, it appeared demonstratively true to me, that it was a libel, or satire, upon me. The author appeared to be acquainted with my purpose of self-destruction, and to have written that letter on purpose to secure and hasten the execution of it. My mind, probably, at this time began to be disordered. However it was, I was certainly given up to a strong delusion. I said within myself, "Your cruelty shall be gratified; you shall have your revenge!" and, flinging down the paper in a fit of strong passion, I rushed hastily out of the room, directing my steps towards the fields, where I intended to find some house to die in; or, if not, determined to poison myself in a ditch, when I should meet with one sufficiently retired.

' Before I had walked a mile in the fields, a thought struck me, that I might yet spare my life; that I had nothing to do, but to sell what I had in the funds (which might be done in an hour), go on board a ship, and transport myself to France. There, when every other way of maintenance should fail, I promised myself a comfortable asylum in some monastery—an acquisition easily made, by changing my religion. Not a little pleased with this expedient, I returned to my chambers, to pack up all that I could at so short a notice; but,

while I was looking over the portmanteau, my mind changed again, and self-murder was recommended to me, once more, in all its advantages.

‘ Not knowing where to poison myself— for I was liable to continual interruption in my chambers, from my laundress and her husband—I laid aside that intention, and resolved upon drowning. For that purpose, I immediately took a coach, and ordered the man to drive to the Tower Wharf, intending to throw myself into the river from the Custom-house Quay. It would be strange, should I omit to observe here, how I was continually hurried away from such places as were most favorable to my design, to others where it was almost impossible to execute it; from the fields, where it was improbable that any thing should happen to prevent me, to the Custom-house Quay, where every thing of that kind was to be expected; and this by a sudden impulse, which lasted just long enough to call me back again to my chambers, and which was then immediately withdrawn. Nothing ever appeared more feasible than the project of going to France, till it had served its purpose; and then, in an instant, it appeared impracticable and absurd, even to a degree of ridicule.

‘ My life, which I had called my own, and claimed as a right to dispose of, was kept for me by Him

whose property indeed it was, and who alone had a right to dispose of it. This is not the only occasion on which it is proper to make this remark; others will offer themselves in the course of this narrative, so fairly, that the reader cannot overlook them.

‘I left the coach upon the Tower Wharf, intending never to return to it; but, upon coming to the Quay, I found the water low, and a porter seated upon some goods there, as if on purpose to prevent me. This passage to the bottomless pit being mercifully shut against me, I returned to the coach, and ordered the man to drive back again to the Temple. I drew up the shutters, once more had recourse to the laudanum, and determined to drink it off directly; but God had otherwise ordained. A conflict that shook me to pieces suddenly took place; not properly a trembling, but a convulsive agitation, which deprived me in a manner of the use of my limbs; and my mind was as much shaken as my body. Distracted between the desire of death and the dread of it, twenty times I had the phial to my mouth, and as often received an irresistible check; and even at the time it seemed to me that an invisible hand swayed the bottle downwards, as often as I set it against my lips. I well remember that I took notice of

this circumstance with some surprise, though it effected no change in my purpose. Panting for breath, and in a horrible agony, I flung myself back into a corner of the coach. A few drops of the laudanum, which had touched my lips, besides the fume of it, began to have a stupifying effect upon me.

‘ Regretting the loss of so fair an opportunity, yet utterly unable to avail myself of it, I determined not to live; and, already half dead with anguish, I once more returned to the Temple. Instantly I repaired to my room, and, having shut both the outer and inner door, prepared myself for the last scene of the tragedy. I poured the laudanum into a small basin, set it on a chair by the bed-side, half undressed myself, and laid down between the blankets, shuddering with horror at what I was about to perpetrate. I reproached myself bitterly with folly and rank cowardice, for having suffered the fear of death to influence me as it had done, and was filled with disdain at my own pitiful timidity. But still something seemed to overrule me, and to say, “Think what you are doing!—Consider, and live.”

‘ At length, however, with the most confirmed resolution, I reached forth my hand towards the basin, when the fingers of both hands were so closely

contracted, as if bound with a cord, and became entirely useless. Still, indeed, I could have made shift with both hands, dead and lifeless as they were, to have raised the basin to my mouth; for my arms were not at all affected. But this new difficulty struck me with wonder; it had the air of a divine interposition. I lay down in bed again, to muse upon it; and, while thus employed, I heard the key turn in the outer door, and my laundress's husband came in. By this time the use of my fingers was restored to me. I started up hastily—dressed myself—hid the basin; and, affecting as composed an air as I could, walked out into the dining-room. In a few minutes I was left alone; and now, unless God had evidently interposed for my preservation, I should certainly have done execution upon myself, having a whole afternoon before me.

‘ Both the man and his wife being gone, outward obstructions were no sooner removed, than new ones arose within. The man had just shut the door behind him, when the convincing Spirit came upon me, and a total alteration of my sentiments took place. The horror of the crime was immediately exhibited to me in so strong a light, that, being seized with a kind of furious indignation, I snatched up the basin, poured away the laudanum into a phial of foul water, and, not content with that, flung the

phial out of the window. This impulse, having served the present purpose, was withdrawn.

‘ I spent the rest of the day in a kind of stupid insensibility, undetermined as to the manner of dying, but still bent on self-murder, as the only possible deliverance. That sense of the enormity of the crime, which I had just experienced, entirely left me ; and, unless my Eternal Father in Christ Jesus had interposed to disannul my covenant with death, and my agreement with hell—that I might hereafter be admitted into the covenant of mercy—I had at this time been a companion of devils, and the just object of his boundless vengeance.

‘ In the evening a most intimate friend called upon me, and felicitated me on the happy resolution which he had heard I had taken, to stand the brunt, and keep the office. I knew not whence this intelligence arose ; but did not contradict it. We conversed awhile, with a real cheerfulness on his part, and an affected one on mine ; and, when he left me, I said in my heart, “ I shall see thee no more ! ”

‘ Behold into what extremities a *good sort of man* may fall ! Such was I, in the estimation of those who knew me best. A decent outside is all a good-natured world requires. Thus equipped, though all within be rank atheism, rottenness of

heart, and rebellion against the blessed God, we are said to be good enough ; and, if we are damned, alas ! who shall be saved ? Reverse this charitable reflection, and say, if *a good sort of man* be saved, who shall then perish ? and it comes much nearer the truth : but this is a hard saying, and the world cannot bear it.

‘ I went to bed, as I thought, to take my last sleep in this world. The next morning was to place me at the bar of the House, and I determined not to see it. I slept as usual, and awoke about three o’clock. Immediately I arose, and, by the help of a rush-light, found my penknife, took it into bed with me, and lay with it for some hours directly pointed against my heart. Twice or thrice I placed it upright under my left breast, leaning all my weight upon it ; but the point was broken off square, and it would not penetrate.

‘ In this manner the time passed till the day began to break. I heard the clock strike seven, and instantly it occurred to me that there was no time to be lost. The chambers would soon be opened, and my friend would call upon me to take me with him to Westminster. “ Now is the time,” thought I ; “ this is the crisis ; no more dallying with the love of life.” I arose, and, as I thought, bolted the inner door of my chambers, but was mistaken ;

my touch deceived me, and I left it as I found it. My preservation, indeed, as it will appear, did not depend upon that incident; but I mention it, to show that the good providence of God watched over me, to keep open every way of deliverance, that nothing might be left to hazard. Not one hesitating thought now remained; but I fell greedily to the execution of my purpose. My garter was made of a broad scarlet binding, with a sliding buckle being sewn together at the end: by the help of the buckle I made a noose, and fixed it about my neck, straining it so tight, that I hardly left a passage for my breath, or for the blood to circulate; the tongue of the buckle held it fast. At each corner of the bed was placed a wreath of carved work, fastened by an iron pin, which passed up through the midst of it. The other part of the garter, which made a loop, I slipped over one of these, and hung by it some seconds, drawing up my feet under me, that they might not touch the floor; but the iron bent, and the carved work slipped off, and the garter with it. I then fastened it to the frame of the tester, winding it round, and tying it in a strong knot. The frame broke short, and let me down again. The third effort was more likely to succeed. I set the door open, which reached within a foot of the ceiling; and by the

help of a chair I could command the top of it ; and the loop being large enough to admit a large angle of the door, was easily fixed, so as not to slip off again. I pushed away the chair with my feet, and hung at my whole length. While I hung there, I distinctly heard a voice say three times "'Tis over!" Though I am sure of the fact, and was so at the time, yet it did not at all alarm me, or affect my resolution. I hung so long, that I lost all sense, all consciousness of existence.

' When I came to myself again, I thought myself in hell ; the sound of my own dreadful groans was all that I heard ; and a feeling, like that produced by a flash of lightning, just beginning to seize upon me, passed over my whole body. In a few seconds I found myself fallen with my face to the floor. In about half a minute I recovered my feet, and, reeling and staggering, stumbled into bed again. By the blessed providence of God, the garter, which had held me till the bitterness of temporal death was past, broke, just before eternal death had taken place upon me. The stagnation of the blood under one eye, in a broad crimson spot, and a red circle about my neck, showed plainly that I had been on the brink of eternity. The latter, indeed, might have been occasioned by the pressure of the garter ; but the former was cer-

tainly the effect of strangulation; for it was not attended with the sensation of a bruise, as it must have been, had I, in my fall, received one in so tender a part. And I rather think the circle round my neck was owing to the same cause; for the part was not excoriated, nor at all in pain.

‘Soon after I got into bed, I was surprised to hear a noise in the dining-room, where the laundress was lighting a fire. She had found the door unbolted, notwithstanding my design to fasten it, and must have passed the bedchamber-door while I was hanging on it, and yet never perceived me. She heard me fall, and presently came to ask if I were well; adding, she feared I had been in a fit. I sent her to a friend, to whom I related the whole affair, and dispatched him to my kinsman, at the coffee-house. As soon as the latter arrived, I pointed to the broken garter, which lay in the middle of the room; and apprized him also of the attempt I had been making. His words were, “My dear Mr. Cowper, you terrify me: to be sure you cannot hold the office at this rate—where is the deputation?” I gave him the key of the drawer where it was deposited; and his business requiring his immediate attendance, he took it away with him; and thus ended all my connexion with the Parliament House.’

Now let us observe the difference of his feelings; and his dread of death and suicide, the moment his mind had a thorough conviction of the truth of religion :

‘ To this moment I had felt no concern of a spiritual kind. Ignorant of original sin, insensible of the guilt of actual transgression, I understood neither the law nor the Gospel—the condemning nature of the one, nor the restoring mercies of the other. I was as much unacquainted with Christ, in all his saving offices, as if his blessed name had never reached me. Now, therefore, a new scene opened upon me. Conviction of sin took place, especially of that just committed; the meanness of it, as well as its atrocity, were exhibited to me in colours so inconceivably strong, that I despised myself, with a contempt not to be imagined or expressed, for having attempted it. This sense of it secured me from the repetition of a crime, which I could not now reflect on without abhorrence.

‘ Before I arose from bed, it was suggested to me that there was nothing wanted but murder to fill up the measure of my iniquities; and that, though I had failed in my design, yet I had all the guilt of that crime to answer for. A sense of God’s wrath, and a deep despair of escaping it, instantly succeeded. The fear of death became much more

prevalent in me now than even the desire of it had been. A frequent flashing, like that of fire, before my eyes, and an excessive pressure upon my brain, made me apprehensive of an apoplexy; an event which I thought the more probable, as an extravasation in that part seemed likely to happen in so violent a struggle.'

How feelingly he sums up the result of his bitter experience and his conviction, after deep mental agitation in the ways of vice and pleasure, and the long trials by which he arrived at true felicity, in the following lines :

'Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
 Their only point of rest, Eternal Word !
 From thee departing, they are lost and rove
 At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
 From thee is all that soothes the life of man,
 His high endeavour and his glad success,
 His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
 But oh ! thou bounteous Giver of all good,
 Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown !
 Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor ;
 And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away.'

From all that I have investigated, I am fully persuaded that an acquaintance with true religion is the most effectual cure for melancholy and despondence. I hesitate not to assert this, because I had a demonstrative proof of it in the case of the late Dr. Bristow, Vicar of St. Mary's, Nottingham.

When a variety of unexpected troubles almost deranged his intellects, he sent for me, as his Curate, one day at six in the morning. ‘O sir!’ says he, ‘mark my words: my physicians may flatter me; but, mark my words: I know I shall go mad, and then I shall die. My chief concern is to be accepted with God: how shall I give an account at the last day of a parish of thirty thousand souls, of which I have had the charge?’ Those around him attempted to sooth his mind, by reminding him of his excellent character and good conduct. ‘I want not your flatteries,’ he said; ‘I wish to know the worst of myself, and to seek mercy, as a sinner, of my God, through Jesus Christ.’ He requested me to administer to him the sacrament, after which he desired them all to leave the room; and then, while alone with me, he entered into a review of his conduct, and a contemplation of his great account. He sought to religion as his only refuge—he imbibed its truths as his best cordial.

His friends the next morning attempted to divert him with the petty news of the day: he wished to see me. His friends desired me not to speak to him of religion: I told them it was the only subject that he fled to for comfort; and I begged them to allow me to apply its consolations to him as the only source: this they refused, and never allowed me

to see him again. The rest of his tale is well known : he became deranged ; was confined in a private asylum at York ; had an interval of reason for a few days, in which he acknowledged the justice, and fled to the mercy, of God in Christ ; and then died, as I understood, after making many earnest and kind inquiries after me.

I have always been of opinion that, had the consolations of religion been timely applied, he might not have been so long a melancholy sufferer.

The case of the amiable poet Cowper is strong on this point, which I here subjoin, as stated by the 'Christian Observer' for the year 1805 :

'The first attack of morbid melancholy which Cowper experienced was owing in no degree to his religion. The malady was unquestionably constitutional. His bodily frame was naturally nervous and irritable ; and his mind, even in his boyish days, peculiarly timid. He was early assaulted, as he himself states, with "gloomy thoughts led on by spleen;" and this natural propensity was greatly aggravated by a disappointment in love, an union with the object of his attachment having been prevented by the friends of both parties on prudential grounds. At length, when it became necessary for him to enter on his office of reading-

clerk to the House of Lords, his terror and agitation were so violent as to deprive him of his reason; and he sunk into a state of the severest mental depression. This grievous calamity continued with little or no abatement from December, 1763, to July, 1764. He then began, under the kind care of Dr. Cotton, to emerge from the depth of his despondency. But the circumstance which was chiefly instrumental in restoring him to soundness of mind was, without doubt, the new view which he had been led to take of religion during his residence with Dr. Cotton.

‘Cowper, though in his youth he professed a belief in revelation, yet had felt nothing, according to his own acknowledgment, of the practical influence of Christianity. He called himself a Christian, and in his conduct was far more decorous than the generality of his youthful associates: yet he affirms that, previous to the change of sentiment of which we now speak, he had never abstained from a bad action, or performed a good one, from religious motives, or because he was a Christian. It was not possible for any man to open his Bible, and read it with an earnest desire to know the will of God, without discovering that such a state of mind was there condemned in terms the most awful and

affecting. That this discovery, unaccompanied by a soothing sense of the mercy and loving kindness of God, is calculated to aggravate, and even to create, mental depression, will readily be admitted; we are far, therefore, from saying that the strong impression made on the mind of Cowper of his sinfulness, guilt, and danger, did in no way add to his disquiet. It probably did. But then this was an effect no more to be deplored than the pain attending some course of medicine, or some operation in surgery, which is to issue in relieving the patient from a threatened mortification, and restoring him to perfect health. Without such a view of our guilt and danger as is attended with painful emotions, without deep sorrow and contrition on account of our sins, it is evident that there can be no due preparation for the grace of the Gospel, and that no effectual cure can be wrought in the soul. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But what is it to repent? Is it not to feel that we are "*miserable sinners,*" in whom "there is no health?" Is it not that "the remembrance of our sins has become *grievous* to us, and the burden of them *intolerable*?" Is it not to deplore our past transgressions, and earnestly to seek deliverance from them, as well as from future punishment?

The morbid state of Cowper's mind may, without doubt, at this period, have given to his remorse of conscience too much of the colour of despair; but let no man, therefore, infer that the depth of penitential sorrow, and the awful dread of the just judgments of God which Cowper experienced, were not salutary feelings. Such feelings, in kind, though not in degree, are essential to salvation: they are the solid groundwork of true peace and consolation. To a mind which is a total stranger to this godly sorrow the Gospel of Christ can possess but comparatively feeble attractions: for its grand object is to deliver man from the guilt and power of sin and from the fear of divine wrath, and to introduce him to the enjoyment of that heavenly peace which arises from the promises of forgiveness, of reconciliation with God, of grace here, and of glory hereafter.

‘It pleased God that Cowper should not long remain under the influence of those terrors which a view of the violated obligations and extensive demands of the divine law had excited. He was judiciously directed to the Bible, though it had been in some measure the cause of his distress, as the only source of true consolation; and in that blessed book he found the relief which he sought.

The third chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, by which his attention might possibly have been drawn to the sins of his heart and life, was made the means of conveying to him, in the first instance, such a view of the grace of Christ as dissipated his terrors, and inspired him with a lively trust and confidence in the mercy of God.* Thus, to use the words of his biographer, "were his ideas of religion changed from the gloom of terror and despair to the lustre of comfort and delight."

'It will be more satisfactory, however, to hear the account which Mr. Cowper himself gives of this important event. "I know well," he says, in a letter to Mrs. Cowper, "that I passed upon my friends for a person at least religiously inclined, if not actually religious; and, what is more wonderful, I thought myself a Christian when I had no faith in Christ, when I saw no beauty in him that I should desire him; in short, when I had neither faith nor love, nor any Christian grace whatever, but a thousand seeds of rebellion instead, ever more springing up in enmity against him. But, blessed be God, even the God who is become my salvation, the hail of affliction and rebuke for sin has

* The particular passage which excited these feelings was Rom. iii. 24—26.

swept away the refuge of lies. It pleased the Almighty, in great mercy, to set all my misdeeds before me. At length, the storm being past, a quiet and peaceful serenity of soul succeeded, such as ever attends the gift of lively faith in the all-sufficient atonement and the sweet sense of mercy and pardon purchased by the blood of Christ.”—
(Vol. I. p. 42.)

‘ The same event is recorded in most beautiful verse at the close of the poem entitled “ Hope :”

“ As when a felon, whom his country’s laws
Have justly doomed for some atrocious cause,
Expects, in darkness and heart-chilling fears,
The shameful close of all his mispent years ;
If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne,
A tempest usher in the dreaded morn,
Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play,
The thunder seems to summon him away ;
The warder at the door his key applies,
Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies :
If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost,
When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost,
The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear,
He drops at once his fetters and his fear ;
A transport glows in all he looks and speaks,
And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.
Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs
The comfort of a few poor added days,
Invades, possesses, and o’erwhelms the soul
Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.

'Tis heaven, all heaven, descending on the wings
 Of the glad legions of the King of kings ;
 'Tis more—'tis God diffused through every part—
 'Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.
 Oh, welcome now the sun's once hated light ;
 His noon-day beams were never half so bright.
 Not kindred minds alone are called to employ
 Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy ;
 Unconscious Nature, all that he surveys,
 Rocks, groves, and streams, must join him in his praise."

' Cowper's own case is also alluded to in various other passages of his poems ; and probably in the following lines :

" Thus often unbelief, grown sick of life,
 Flies to the tempting pool or felon knife ;
 The jury meet, the coroner is short,
 And lunacy the verdict of the Court :
 Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known—
 Such lunacy is ignorance alone :
 They knew not, what some pastors may not know,
 That Scripture is the only cure of woe :
 That field of promise, how it flings abroad
 Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road.
 The soul, reposing on assured relief,
 Feels herself happy amidst all her grief,
 Forgets her labour as she toils along,
 Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song."

' His health now rapidly mended, and in June, 1765, he had so far recovered, that it was no longer thought necessary that he should continue under

the roof of Dr. Cotton, and he took up his abode at Huntingdon.

‘He seems after this to have enjoyed a happy state of mind, which continued without interruption during the whole of his stay at Huntingdon, as well as during the first part of his residence at Olney.’

CHAP. XII.

THE SUICIDE MOTHER PRESERVED.

(An Authentic Narrative.)

' And thou, sad sufferer under nameless ill,
 That yields not to the touch of human skill,
 Improve the kind occasion, understand
 A Father's frown, and kiss his chastening hand.
 To thee the day-spring, and the blaze of noon,
 The purple evening, and resplendent moon—
 The stars that, sprinkled o'er the vault of night,
 Seem drops descending in a shower of light—
 Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
 Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine.
 Yet seek Him ; in his favour life is found,
 All bliss beside a shadow or a sound ;
 Then Heav'n, eclipsed so long, and this dull earth,
 Shall seem to start into a second birth ;
 Nature, assuming a more lovely face,
 Borrowing a beauty from the works of grace,
 Shall be despis'd and overlook'd no more,
 Shall fill thee with delights unfelt before ;
 Impart to things inanimate a voice,
 And bid her mountains and her hills rejoice ;
 The sound shall run along the winding vales,
 And thou enjoy an Eden, ere it fails.'

The Judgment and Mercy of God exhibited in his Dispensations—Mrs. D———’s Letters to the Author—The Circumstances of her throwing herself into the New River detailed—Restoration by the Humane Society—Mental Agitation—Penitence—Instructive Lessons to those who decline from the Ways of Religion.

THERE cannot overtake us a sorer judgment than to be permitted to pursue the evil ways which our hearts have chosen without check or control. When men have long despised instruction and refused reproof, then God may be provoked to say to them, as to Ephraim of old, ‘Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.’ God is a just, a righteous, and a merciful God. ‘He willeth not the death of a sinner;’ but that the sinner turn from his evil way, and live. He, therefore, is pleased to give repeated warnings, to humble us with chastisements, to soften us with mercies, to entreat us by his Gospel; but, if all fail of effect, then ‘he hides himself from us in wrath;’ and the consequence is, that, without his restraining grace, ‘we go on frowardly in the way of our heart.’* And, when God thus leaves any one to his own depraved will and his hasty passions, what may be apprehended but the worst excesses? All this has been true in the case of thousands in all ages; and the day of judgment will disclose the history of thou-

* Isa. lvii. 17, 18.

sands who have thus insulted Omnipotence and outraged Divine patience, who will 'reap the wretched fruit of their own doings,' and 'lie down in sorrow.'

The following authentic narrative will exemplify these remarks, and exhibit the triumph of mercy over judgment, to the praise and glory of the grace of God; and I pray it may suggest a lesson of comfort to the troubled, and of admonition to the negligent.

The sermon preached on the providential deliverance of Mr. Furneaux from suicide, amongst other effects, produced the following letter:—

'Nov. 23, 1821, Clerkenwell.

'Rev. Sir,

'Having been guilty of the dreadful crime of attempting to take away my own life, by throwing myself in the New River, and God having, in mercy, snatched me from the jaws of perdition, I desire to return my sincere thanks to Almighty God for his great and boundless mercy in sparing me to my husband and children. I wish, Reverend Sir, that you would preach a sermon in the parish church on this awful crime, to warn all to walk in the fear of the Lord, and to inform them of the goodness of God, who stretched out his Almighty arm, and snatched me from the deep. In a few hours, when I came to my senses, what were the horrors of my

conscience? All was hell within and horror without; but God granted me a penitent heart, and then I fled to the throne of grace. The Father of mercies heard my prayer, brought me up from the pit, restored me to my numerous family, and made me a monument of his mercy. May all who hear of my crimes and horrors beware of provoking God to anger! and may all who are wives and mothers think of the bitter reproach I felt when I perceived my weeping husband and six beloved children standing around my apparently lifeless frame, lamenting that one who should have lived to comfort them had basely deserted them, and left them to the wide and pitiless world! May God keep and protect me, and give me a grateful heart for his unbounded mercy!

‘I am,

‘Rev. Sir,

‘Your obedient humble servant,

‘D——.’

‘To the Rev. S. Piggot,

In consequence of this letter I made a personal call on Mrs. D——. I found her in a neat habitation, of a respectable appearance, and surrounded with a family of six children, most of whom were grown up, and two of them upwards of twenty-one. She was much affected at the occasion of

my visit, and her children sympathized with her in her feelings. She did not on this occasion relate all the particulars. She promised shortly to call on me, and give me a full account of the circumstances in a private interview. She made good her promise in a few days; and, after stating that her feelings would not allow her to enlarge upon particulars before her family, or to hurt their minds by the recital, she was ready, she said, now to relate the tale of sorrow circumstantially. ‘Was it trouble or dejection of mind,’ I said, ‘which prompted you to the dreadful deed?’ ‘No,’ she said; ‘let me not cloak my sin, and thereby add to my guilt.’

She then proceeded in nearly the following words, which I took down in short hand as she spoke:—

‘I had a brother, a sensible man, but not always master of himself when the temptation of liquor was before him. He prevailed upon me one afternoon to accompany him in a walk. I left at four, but, contrary to my intention, did not return till eight o’clock. In the mean while my husband returned, and, finding that my eldest daughter was absent, he remained to take care of my little family, and, upon my entering the house, upbraided me with my neglect. The severity of his expressions

induced me to retaliate, and a quarrel ensued. My vexation was now wrought up by provocation to the utmost, and, rising in a sudden gust of passion, I hastened out of the house, and desperately made for the New River, which was not far distant from my home; and, rushing through the west gates of Sadler's Wells Theatre, the nearest way to the water, with as much eagerness as if to seize a prize at the end of my race, I plunged into the stream! My head struck against the sand in the bed of the river, and I lost all mental power, so that of what followed I knew nothing till I awoke from my death-like lethargy, in indescribable agonies, the next morning. The deed was perpetrated at nine o'clock in the evening, and it was not till five the next morning that I came to my senses and a full perception of my awful condition. A dog, as I was informed, gave the first alarm, and attracted the notice of a porter, who stood still, observing me struggling in the water. Just then a young man coming out of the theatre plunged in at the risk of his life, and brought me to shore. Others came to his assistance, and one had nearly lost his life in the benevolent attempt. I was instantly conveyed away to the Blue-Coat Boy public house, in the City Road (a receiving house of the Humane Society), where the proper persons used the means prescribed

by that excellent institution, which, in the mercy of God, were blessed to my recovery. At five in the morning I came to my senses ; and then, if ever poor creature felt the horrors of hell, I was that person. When the guilty deed which I had attempted to perpetrate rushed into my mind, and I was left to my own reflections, no tongue can describe the agonies I felt. The pangs of remorse seemed like a knife cutting my very vitals within me. My husband and my daughter came to me, and tenderly watched and attended me till I was sufficiently recovered to be brought home, where my own doctor, Dr. Sk——, of Hatton Garden, attended me. I was then bled, and blistered, and leeches, and lay ill three weeks with scarcely any hope of recovery ; and I feel the effects of it even till now. But so distressed was I in my mind, that, if I had not met with a physician for my soul, in vain would have been the help of man. But God was merciful to me ; and, as I came to my recollection, he graciously vouchsafed me the power of praying to him : he melted my heart with compunction for my guilt. I had thought before of God, of hell and heaven, and of the mercy of God in Christ ; but never till then did I think so strongly, so deeply, so feelingly, of them. My heart was, indeed, pained within me.

I thought within myself, "Who has delivered me?"
When a voice seemed to say—

"THE LORD OF EARTH AND HEAVEN."

"That voice went straightway to her heart,
And instant from her couch she sprung
With sudden and convulsive start!

And pale as lifeless marble grew
Her sunken cheeks' sepulchral hue;
And shuddering dread and deep amaze
Were mingled in her first wild gaze,
As if the form that frown'd by night
Arose to blast her waking sight.

So, when the phantom-seer arose,
Dread herald of impending woes,
Aghast the destin'd monarch stood—
Fear fix'd his eye and froze his blood!

But soon, that causeless awe controll'd,
No bloodless shade her eyes behold;
No spectre of unearthly mould:

It was her friend, her guide, her sire—
The Mighty One, with eyes of fire,
Now seated on his awful throne,

Yet round the throne the rainbow shone."

'I was overwhelmed with shame, self-aborrence, and remorse; but I had power given me to flee to the throne of mercy for pardon, through Christ Jesus.

'Upon my being rescued from the water I was a dreadful object to be seen, being swollen to twice my natural size. Leeches were copiously applied to me. An inflammation had spread over my head

and face, and preyed with fury on my bowels, and no one expected the night following that I could live; they thought me dying. I never expected I should survive. I thought God had restored me to my life to ask for pardon of my sins ere I was called to his bar; but I never asked for longer life. I dared not lift up my guilty eyes to Heaven, or put up one petition for the lengthening of that life which I had so wickedly attempted to throw away. I thought then that God alone had a right to dispose of my life: how wicked then appeared the daring attempt to destroy it!

‘It was a most distressing case to reflect upon. There were my six children, some very young, who, but for the mercy of God, would have become motherless by my rash atrocity. Still I despaired of recovery, and I dared not ask for it. The sight of my numerous children penetrated me with the keenest anguish and distress. That I should be transported with such furious vexation as never to have thought of my six poor children, and that God might have spared me for years to be of service to them, had I not wickedly deprived myself of life, was a reflection that brought torment with it.

‘I was fully convinced that, if I had found a watery grave, I should have perished eternally in my sin; but, so great was my compunction, my

gratitude, my admiration of God's mercy through Christ Jesus, that I was enabled to hope and rejoice; and I believed that, if God should call me, I should obtain mercy with him, and be admitted into his kingdom. My gratitude was so great that I cared not for my reputation; though I wished all the world might hear of my case, that they might admire with me the Divine mercy. "Christ was indeed precious to my soul" in a manner and degree which I had never known before. No human being could have been overwhelmed with greater gratitude, or abounded in more heartfelt thankfulness: and I wish you, Sir, to improve the gracious dispensation, as you did last Sunday in another case, for the benefit of others; that, through my wicked attempt, you may caution all against yielding to the tempter, against complying with evil, pursuing any rash measures, or indulging a hasty temper;—to pause with the fear of God before them, and a thought of their relative duties; and, above all things, to fear to offend God, and dread rushing heedless and unprepared into his presence.

' Here, however, I cannot but mention an awful instance of the distinguishing providence of God. He spared me from destruction when just rushing into it; but in a moment he took away my brother, in full health, without the power of craving his

mercy ! He had been in one of those wretched indulgences of intemperance which sometimes lasted for a week ; when, lifting up the cup to his mouth in Whitecross Street, on the 19th of September following, he fell down dead in a moment through the rupture of a blood-vessel in his brain ! My sin far more deserved so sudden a judgment. In my case, I must say, “ Judgment is God’s strange work, whereas mercy is his delight.”—“ Come, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.”

‘ But I must add here one remark, which I think of vast consequence for the instruction of those who decline from religion, upon a review of my wretched case. I believe God left me to myself till I rushed forward and committed this desperate deed, as a punishment for my ingratitude and departure from him. I was a backslider in heart. I had often departed from God. I had for some time together attended a place of worship, and obtained benefit to my soul : then I left off the good practice, and became careless and indifferent about religion.

‘ God had often chastened and corrected me with alarming spasms, pains, and illness, by which I was brought down to the grave : yet “ I turned not for all this.” He then cut down, in full health

and bloom, a daughter, to whom I was much attached, at the age of seventeen, by a typhus fever; yet this did not bring me back to him. At length he caused me to know, by this last tremendous judgment, "what an evil and bitter thing it was to depart from the living God." He suffered me to become the worst of characters—a self-murderer; to attempt the worst of crimes—suicide! The sense of this sin will never be erased; and, could I tell any poor distressed creature the thousandth part of distress and agony which I have endured in body and mind for this sin, however wretched, however distressed, the sufferer would start from the tale with horror. If my case should prove of benefit to one poor straying soul, I should rejoice unspeakably.'

Observing her anxious desire that I should mention the Lord's goodness, and the tears of gratitude with which she declared the several instances of it, I could not but exclaim—'O, how amiable is gratitude, especially when it has the supreme Benefactor for its object! I have always looked upon gratitude as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and, if I may be allowed the term, generously devout. Repentance indicates our nature fallen, and prayer turns chiefly upon a regard

to one's self; but the exercises of gratitude subsisted in Paradise, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in Heaven, when "God shall be all in all." The language of this sweet temper is, "I am unspeakably obliged; what return shall I make?"

There is one important lesson to be drawn from the crime which Mrs. D—— was permitted to attempt, which should not be neglected by those who peruse the history of her deliverance. The frailties, the sins, the negligences, and the punishments of others, should be reflected upon for our own improvement; for, as for us they suffer, so for us they are preserved, and for us they die.

The lesson to be applied to ourselves is, 'That the conduct of God, in his treatment of individuals, should teach us the fearful depravity of man and the awful justice of Almighty God.'

When warnings and exhortations have been long used in vain, and means neglected, God is provoked to leave sinners to themselves, as he did Pharaoh, who sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, till, at length, he presumed to pursue the Israelites into the midst of the sea, when the anger of God overwhelmed him with the returning tides of the piled-up ocean. Professors of true religion have sometimes for their unfaithfulness been left of

God, and suffered to go on frowardly in the way of their hearts, till their own wickedness has corrected them by its tremendous effects, as David's crimes reprov'd, punished, and restored him; or as Solomon's experience taught him the vanity of earthly treasures and sublunary beauty, and led him to God as the fountain of felicity and honour. The case related teaches the lesson, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall: be not high minded, but fear.' But her deliverance and restoration also encourage us to hope in the forgiving love of God under all circumstances; for, to the penitent, his mercy reacheth unto the heavens. Great as his majesty is, so is his mercy. Thousands of penitents can join her song, and say 'Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercy.'

CHAP. XIII.

RELIGION INSPIRING PATIENCE UNDER TROUBLES;
OR, THE HISTORY OF MR. WILLIAM HORNE, OF
SHOREDITCH, WHO DIED NOVEMBER, 1821.

‘Durate et vosmet rebus servati secundis.’—VIRG.

‘Endure and conquer; live for better fate.’

Mr. Wm. Horne's Case—Distresses, Privations—The Widows' Friend Society—Providential Relief—Cheerfulness, Resignation—Religion his Cordial—Sickness—Dr. Birkbeck's generous Attendance—Hopeful Death—Lessons of Patience and Submission—Milton's Patience.

RELIGION will arm the mind to meet the trials of life with fortitude, and to bear them with patience. This I shall illustrate in the case of a young man not thirty years of age, over whom I was called upon by his dying request, and the desire of his widow, to read the funeral service at Shoreditch church. I knew him well, for he lived in my house three months as my pupil. I had been acquainted

with him two years. I had sufficient opportunity to observe his piety, patience, and resignation, under losses, privations, afflictions, and distresses of no common kind; and I visited him in his last hours, and saw his faith when his tongue had lost the power of uttering the feelings of his heart. He, like other penitents, had been a gross backslider: before I became acquainted with him he had known God in his youth; he had professed to serve him; had joined a religious community; had walked in the fear of God; and been looked up to in his circle. But it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. Alas! what may a man be tempted to by evil companions, an evil heart, and an evil adversary? He was seduced to depart from God, to turn aside to folly, to live in sin. But God, who is rich in mercy, was pleased to deliver him—to lift him up out of this miry clay, to set his feet on a rock, and establish his goings. He brought him out of the horrible pit; he gave him repentance for all his sins; he enabled him to turn effectually from them, and to walk in the way of God's commandments. He determined to devote himself to the service of God, and to spend his future days in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to his fellow-men. He had resolved at one time to offer himself to the Church Missionary Society,

to preach the Gospel to the Heathen; but the infirm state of his constitution, and his ill health, prevented. He prosecuted his classical studies, however, with persevering diligence, notwithstanding he was much interrupted by the pressure of poverty, sickness, and suffering, which successively fell upon him. In attempting, after his marriage, to establish a boarding-school academy near Bethnal Green, he was ruined: he then had recourse to private tuition and an humble day-school for subsistence, which he commenced in Paul Street, Shoreditch parish; but the pittance earned from private pupils and from his school was insufficient for the support of himself and his wife, and he was reduced to the necessity of pledging every moveable article of furniture for their subsistence. At this time I recommended him to the Rev. Mr. Budd, and his Widow and Sick Man's Friend Society; and with a promptitude which doubles the value of their exertions, and with a Christian benevolence which trebles it, they proceeded to visit him. The last article was gone, and nothing left even to purchase six pennyworth of food for supper. Every plan was thought of and rejected: at last he was upon the point of determining to go to a pupil's, in the hope of being invited to tea, and bringing home a trifle for his wife; when in came the benevolent visitors

of the Widows' Friend Society. They had no sooner ascertained the real state of his affairs than they redeemed all his goods from pawn, brought back his apparel, and clothed him decently, put him upon a weekly allowance, and immediately recommended him some private pupils, and continued to befriend him till his death. He now became classical assistant in Mr. Leman's academy, City Road. A typhus fever, however, ere long laid himself and his wife on a sick bed, during which he was much oppressed with poverty and want; and, upon his recovery, I fear, had not sufficient to nourish and invigorate his frame after a disorder so potent and agitating.

During all these privations and distresses I never heard him murmur; he was not only patient, but cheerful, referred it all to the will of God, and still confided in his providence and care; and abated nothing of that industry and activity which were natural to his disposition; and his unwearied efforts would have met with better success, I am persuaded, in a short period. I thought, when I saw him a few weeks before his death, his health and strength were greatly improved; and his own uncomplaining modesty did not allow him to mention to me his pressing wants: he bore them with Christian heroism and silence, afraid to trespass farther

on the benevolence of his friends. There was only one subject of distress which occupied him—his inability to repay his creditors, and especially one of his best friends, who had boarded and educated him, about twelve pounds for which he was indebted to him. A fortnight before his death, he said to his wife, while standing at the window, ‘ I shall not be here long; I shall soon leave you to travel the world alone: but, thank God, come death when it may, I am prepared. I have not left my religion to a sick bed and a dying hour: I have endeavored, whatever my worldly distractions, not to leave the great business betwixt God and my own soul unsettled and unprovided for. Whatever my privations in this life, my chief object has been not to lose my portion in the kingdom above. I have had no wealth here, but I have looked to a treasure in the heavens. My soul is safe in the hands of Christ, who has redeemed it, to whom I have committed it. He has washed me from guilt in his atoning blood, and turned my heart to love and serve him by his Spirit; and, therefore, I doubt not he will admit me into his presence. But, whenever I die, I know I shall die distracted: but I fear not that; distraction will not alter my condition with God; my soul will be still as safe; and, come suffering, pain, distraction, and death, thank God, through Christ, I am prepared.’

It is sometimes permitted to the faithful to discern gleams of glory beaming through the chinks of their falling tenement; and this patient, suffering, resigned young man, seemed to have a glimpse of the better portion awaiting him in that world where want and woe can never enter. As soon as I heard of his illness I applied in his behalf to Dr. Birkbeck, stating that he had been my pupil, had read some lessons in company with his son at my house, was reduced to difficulties; but that, if his life was spared, I trusted, from the exertions he was making, it would be a valuable and an useful life, and solicited his charitable attendance. Dr. Birkbeck, with his usual benevolent promptitude, generously hastened to his relief, and prescribed every means which kindness and skill could devise. But his case had been too long neglected; his complaint had gone too far to be arrested.* I saw him on

* It is an act of justice and respect due to Mr. Leman, in whose school Mr. Horne was an assistant for four months, to state that he has had the generosity to make a collection for Mr. Horne's widow among his pupils, by which she was enabled to discharge the bills of the apothecaries who attended him; but Dr. Birkbeck was too generous to make any charge for his benevolent services.

Mr. Sherwin and Mr. Northover, who had most kindly visited him in behalf of the Widows' Friend Society, did not forsake him in his last illness; they kindly relieved him, they constantly visited him during his illness, and most generously took upon themselves the charge of the funeral

Tuesday evening, Nov. —. A gleam of reason darted across his clouded senses, agitated as they were with the application of leeches and bandages, and the confinement of his limbs, for an hour, while I stayed. He knew me! He exclaimed, ‘Mr. P——, the Bible—the Bible!’ and stretched forth his hand, which I grasped for the last time: he kept pointing upwards at times during the night, and once said ‘I am happy.’ The next morning, at five o’clock, he went to Heaven!

Behold the contrast. Here were sickness, poverty, disappointments, losses, privations, distresses, of no common kind and degree, pressing

expenses, and set on foot a subscription for the widow. His death was occasioned, according to Dr. Birkbeck’s opinion, by the rupture of a vessel in the brain, owing, as he conceives, to intense anxiety and agitation respecting a brother who had not been heard of for a fortnight, and who, he was apprehensive, had come to some untimely end, as he feared, by his own hand. ‘If I could but hear of his being at sea, gone abroad, or any thing else, I should be satisfied,’ said he. In a fortnight they learned he was safe; but the mental stroke was inflicted; the effusion of blood on the brain occasioned that continued derangement, which was broken only by a few gleams of reason, till his death.

What another argument is here suggested against suicide, or the attempt at it, which may occasion so much anxiety in our friends as to occasion their speedy and untimely death!

upon a young man not thirty years of age, who had, when an attorney's clerk, lived in comparative affluence: yet he bore it all patiently; he bowed to the burden with submission; he did not throw it from him, and rush out of life, as if to carry his complaints in person to the bar of his Maker. He stood to his post, however harassing, till his dismissal arrived. What was it that supported him? Religion—a hope in God through Christ, a confidence in his paternal love and care, and providential appointment of all his troubles. 'Tis this alone can make a man truly courageous to endure afflictions, and encounter losses and trials. The man that murmurs, repines, and sinks under his troubles, has not the staff of true religion to lean upon—has no God to go to. The Christian casts his burden upon the Lord, and he sustains it for him; but the worldly man has no God to flee to. The suicide is a coward; he flees from ills which he has not courage to sustain. That is the true hero who bears up under the storms of adversity, and holds on his course through the most tumultuous waves of trouble till God guides him into harbour! Oh, if trouble, difficulty, disappointment, the world's scorn, and the treachery of friends, should ever harass, perplex, and distress us, let us not cowardly fly to a halter or a pistol to gratify a

foolish pride, a mad revenge, or to rid us of temporary vexation and uneasiness; but learn from the Bible to suffer as well as to *do* the will of God; to acknowledge all events as appointed by his hand for our good; to say, 'Thy will be done;' and to resolve to wait all the days of our appointed time, whether long or short, till our great, final, momentous, and unalterable change comes! And then, if we have faithfully served God, farewell sin, and sorrow, and suffering; and welcome everlasting peace and joy!

A reverence for the word of God, a delight in his revealed truth and Gospel, are the grand preservatives against despondence, and the grand sources of hope and consolation amid the troubles of life and in the dark night of death. If men learned from this word to rest their dependence upon God, they would hope and trust that, through his loving kindness, though heaviness might endure for the night, yet joy would come in the morning. Did they seek guidance from its precepts, grace for the day of adversity, and remember the example and sufferings of the Redeemer, they would not be faint and weary in their minds, but be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. If, when afflicted, they learned to pray, they would be enabled to cast their burden on the Lord, and he would

sustain them by his grace and providence; he would never leave them nor forsake them; he would not cast out their prayer, nor turn his mercy from them.

Here I would also produce the great and immortal Milton as an example of resignation. Let us hear how pathetically he describes his case, and how calmly he contents himself in the hope of final acceptance with his Sovereign Maker:—

‘ When I consider how my life is spent,
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent, which is death to hide,
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul were bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest he, returning, chide—
 “ Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ?”
 I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies, “ God doth not need
 Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best
 Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best: his state
 Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
 And post o’er land and ocean without rest;
 They also serve who only stand and wait.”

Ye that are in any trouble and distress, receive the word of exhortation. Be content with what your Heavenly Father has appointed. Remember he hath said, ‘ I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.’ Keep his sabbaths—repair to his temple; and then you may meet with those who may sym-

pathize with your griefs, sooth your sorrows, and contribute to your peace; and you may yet be spared to praise and honour God; you may be repentant and restored, and joyfully praise the God of your life, and declare the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, and invite all to learn from your experience the loving-kindness of the Lord.

CHAP. XIV.

THE GRAND MORAL PREVENTIONS OF SUICIDE.

' For, though I fly to 'scape from Fortune's rage,
 And bear the scars of Envy, Spite, and Scorn,
 Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,
 Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn.
 For Virtue lost, and ruin'd Man, I mourn.
 O Man! Creation's pride, Heaven's darling child,
 Whom Nature's best, divinest, gifts adorn,
 Why from thy home are Truth and Joy exil'd,
 And all thy favorite haunts with blood and tears defil'd?

BEATTIE'S MINSTREL.

*Occasions of Suicide—Female Sex pitied—Deceivers warned,
 and the Wretched comforted—Crabbe's affecting Tale of
 Ruth—Judgment and Reason should rule in Affairs of the
 Heart—Tale of Constantia of Nottingham, in February,
 1822, preparing a poisonous Draught, and preserved from
 Suicide by reading the Author's Sermon on 'Suicide provi-
 dentially arrested.'*

IT is owing to the neglect of the word of God, to
 their ignorance of the proofs and evidences of Gospel
 truth, and the supports of true religion, that men are

transported by the gusts of passion, roused by anger, stimulated by pride, carried away by resentment, maddened by revenge; and then, having been treacherously misled by evil companions, corrupted by atheistical principles, dissipated by neglect of religious duties, swollen with pride, vexed by disappointment of romantic speculations, goaded by reflection, familiarized to suicide in our demoralizing theatres, and by the frequent examples in the daily prints, they are goaded, beguiled, and hurried on, till, in a rash moment, they seize some deadly instrument, which terminates that life which no mortal power can restore, and destroy that immortal soul which worlds want wealth to buy.

There is one case, among the female sex, in which the heart bleeds with pity over the distracted mind of a virtuous woman, who, unsuspecting of guilt herself, has by degrees been beguiled by the serpent smiles of the base assassin of her honour, who has broken the solemn vows by which he seduced her. Thou monster! who spoilest the lily purity of the flower thou hast caressed, and then abandonest it to be trodden under foot, thy account at the bar of eternal justice will be indeed tremendous, and thy doom awfully terrible. Thou drooping flower, whose 'delicate mind,' like the

rose-bud 'steeped in a shower,' hast been roughly and rudely swung and shaken by those who were

'Regardless of wringing and breaking a heart
Already to sorrow resign'd,'

to thee would I speak a word of caution, admonition, and hope. Thou hast a Father in Heaven, who has infinite mercy to pity thy weakness, to comfort thy wretched heart, to support thee under disgrace, abandonment, and penury, and to raise thee up friends. Rush not unbidden into his presence; hope in him; and keep thy post till he is pleased to relieve and comfort thee: thou mayest yet be preserved to glorify God and do service to man.

There are some griefs which cannot be told, and are too mighty for the soul to bear without the arm of Omnipotence to help us; but, perhaps, no case is stronger than that in which

' Might is right, and violence is law ;'

where authority would compel us to do that which principle and inclination violently resist, and where Misery and Wretchedness rise up before us as the monsters that will seize us upon refusal! Such was the touching case of Ruth, related by Crabbe; but I would preface the quotation by observing

that, in such a case, religion should teach the oppressed to look up to a Father and a Friend in Heaven; and to think that 'He can make a way to escape;' and that, should a workhouse be our lot, it is better to sustain that in dependence upon God than rush unbidden into his awful presence!

POOR RUTH'S HEARTRENDING SUICIDE.

'Ruth—I may tell, too oft had she been told—

Was tall and fair, and comely to behold;

Gentle and simple in her native place,

Nor one compared with her in form or face.

She was not merry, but she gave our hearth

A cheerful spirit that was more than mirth.

There was a sailor boy; and people said

He was, as man, a likeness of the maid:

But not in this—for he was ever glad,

While Ruth was apprehensive, mild, and sad.

A quiet spirit hers, and peace would seek

In meditation—tender, mild, and meek!

She lov'd the lad most truly; and, in truth,

She took an early liking to the youth.

To her alone were his attentions paid

As they became the bachelor and maid.

He wish'd to marry; but so prudent she,

And worldly wise, she said it could not be.

They took the counsel, may they be approv'd;

But still they grieved and wailed, hoped and loved.

They were as children; and they fell at length:

The trial, doubtless, is beyond their strength

Whom grace supports not: and will grace support

The too-confiding, who their danger court?

Then they would marry, but were now too late—
All could their fault in sport or malice state ;
And though the day was fixed, and now drew on,
I could perceive my daughter's peace was gone.
She could not bear the bold and laughing eye
That gaz'd on her—reproach she could not fly ;
Her grief she could not shun, her shame could not deny.
For some with many virtues come to shame,
And some that lose them all preserve their name.
Fix'd was the day ; but ere that day appeared
A frightful rumour through the place was heard :
War, who had slept awhile, awak'd once more,
And gangs came pressing till they swept the shore.
Our youth was seiz'd, and quickly sent away,
Nor would the wretches for his marriage stay ;
But bore him off, in barbarous triumph bore,
And left us all our miseries to deplore.
Then were wives, maids, and mothers, on the beach,
And some sad story appertained to each.
Most sad to Ruth ; to neither would she go,
But sat apart, and suffer'd matchless woe !
And there she staid, regardless of each eye,
With but one hope—a fervent hope to die.
Nor cared she now for kindness ; all beheld
Her who invited none, and none repelled :
For there are pungent griefs that sufferers hide,
And there are griefs that men display with pride :
But there are other griefs, that so we feel,
We care not to display them, nor conceal :
Such were our sorrows : on that fatal day
More than our lives the spoilers tore away :
Nor did we hear their insult—some distress
No form or manner can make more or less.

A single day had Thomas staid on shore,
He might have wedded, and we asked no more ;
And that stern man who forced the lad away
Might have attended, and have grac'd the day.
There is compassion, I believe ; but still
One wants the power to help, and one the will.
Thus my poor Ruth was wretched and undone,
Nor had a husband for her only son.
Nor had he father ; hope she did awhile,
And would not weep, although she could not smile ;
Till news was brought us that the youth was slain,
And then, I think, she never smiled again ;
Or, if she did, it was but to express
A feeling far indeed from happiness !
Yet did she all that duty ever ask'd,
And more, her will self-govern'd and untask'd ;
With meekness bearing all reproach (all joy
To her was lost), she wept upon his boy—
Wish'd for his death, in fear that he might live
New sorrow to a burdened heart to give.

There was a teacher where my husband went,
Sent, as he told the people. What he meant
You cannot understand, but—he was sent.
This man from Meeting came, and tried to win
Her mind to peace, by drawing off the sin ;
Or what it was that, weighing in her breast,
Robb'd it of comfort, confidence, and rest.
He came and reason'd, and she seemed to feel
The pains he took—her griefs began to heal.
She ever answered kindly when he spoke,
And always thanked him for the pains he took.
Still Ruth was pretty, in her person neat ;
So thought the teacher when they chanc'd to meet.
He was a weaver by his worldly trade.

We had seen how shy
 The girl was getting, my good man and I;
 That, when the weaver came, she kept with us,
 When he his points and doctrines might discuss;
 But in our bit of garden, or the room
 We call our parlour, there he must not come.
 She lov'd him not; and, though she could attend
 To his discourses as her guide and friend,
 Yet now to these she gave a listless ear,
 As if a friend she would no longer hear.
 This might he take for woman's art, and cried,
 "Spouse of my heart, I must not be denied!"
 Fearless he spoke, and I had hop'd to see
 My girl a wife—but this was not to be.

My husband, thinking of his worldly store,
 And not, frail man, enduring to be poor;
 Seeing his friend would for his child provide,
 And hers, he griev'd to hear the man denied;
 For Ruth, when press'd, rejected him, and grew
 To her old sorrow, as if that were new.
 "Who shall support her?" said her father; "who?
 Can I, infirm and weak as I am now?
 And here a loving fool"——This gave her pain
 Severe indeed, but she would not complain;
 Nor would consent, although the weaver grew
 More fond, and would the frighten'd girl pursue.
 This fondness grew her torment; she would fly,
 In woman's terror, if he came but nigh;
 Nor could I wonder he should odious prove—
 So like a ghost that left a grave for love.

But still her father lent his cruel aid
 To the man's hope, and she was more afraid.
 He said no more she should his table share,
 But be the parish or the teacher's care—

“Three days I give you ; see that all be right
On Monday morning—this is Thursday night.
Fulfil my wishes, girl, or else forsake my sight !”

I see her now ; and she that was so meek,
It was a charm that she had power to speak,
Now spoke in earnest—“ Father, I obey,
And will remember the appointed day !”
Then came the man ; she talk’d with him apart,
And, I believe, laid open all her heart.
But all in vain ; she said to me, with tears,
“ Mother, that man is not what he appears :
He talks of Heaven—and let him, if he will—
But he has earthly purpose to fulfil.
Upon my knees I begg’d him to resign
The hand he asks—he said, ‘ It shall be mine.’
Oh, my dear mother, when this man has power,
How will he treat me ? first may beasts devour,
Or death in every form that I could prove,
Except this selfish being’s hateful love.”
I gently blamed her, for I knew how hard
It is to force affection and regard.
Ah, my dear boy ! I talk to you as one
Who knew the misery of a heart undone :
You know it not ; but, dearest boy, when man,
Do not an ill because you find you can.
Where is the triumph ? When such things men seek,
They only drive to wretchedness the weak.
Weak was poor Ruth, and this good man so hard,
That to her weakness he had no regard.
But we had two days’ peace ; he came, and then
My daughter whisper’d “ Would there were no men !
None to admire or scorn us ; none to vex
A simple, trusting, fond, believing sex ;

Who truly love the worth that men profess,
And think too kindly for their happiness."

Poor Ruth! few heroines in the tragic page
Felt more than thee in thy contracted stage;
Doom'd to a parent's judgment—all unjust—
Doom'd the chance mercy of the world to trust,
Or to wed grossness, and conceal disgust.
If Ruth was frail, she had a mind too nice
To wed with that which she beheld a vice;
To take a reptile, who, beneath a show
Of peevish zeal, let carnal wishes grow;
Who would at once his pride and love indulge,
His temper, humour, and his spite, divulge.
This the poor creature saw;—a second time,
Sighing, she said, "Shall I commit the crime,
And now untempted? Can the form, or rite,
Make me a wife in my Creator's sight?
Can I the words without a meaning say?
Can I pronounce 'Love, honour, and obey?'
And, if I cannot, shall I dare to wed,
And go a harlot to a loathed bed?
Never, dear mother! my poor boy and I
Will at the mercy of the parish lie;
Reproved for wants that vices would remove,
Reproach'd for vice that I could never love;
Mix'd with a crew long wedded to disgrace,
A vulgar, froward, equalizing race;
And am I doom'd to beg a dwelling in that place?"

Such was her reasoning: many times she weigh'd
Her evils all, and was of each afraid:
She loath'd the common board, the vulgar seat,
Where Shame and Want, and Vice and Sorrow, meet;
Where Frailty finds allies, where Guilt ensures retreat.

But peace again is fled : the teacher comes,
 And an impatient haughty air assumes.
 No hapless victim of a tyrant's love
 More keenly felt, or more resisting strove
 Against her fate : she look'd on every side,
 But there were none to help, nor none to guide ;
 And he, the man who should have taught her soul,
 Wish'd but her body in his base control.

She left her infant son on Sunday morn—
 A creature doom'd to shame ! in sorrow born !
 A thing that languish'd, nor arriv'd at age,
 When the man's thoughts with sin and pain engage.
 She came not home to share our humble meal ;
 Her father thinking what his child would feel
 From his hard sentence : still she came not home—
 The night grew dark, and yet she was not come.
 The east wind roar'd, the sea returned the sound,
 And the rain fell as if the world were drown'd.
 There were no lights without, and my good man,
 To kindness frighten'd, with a groan began
 To talk of Ruth, and pray ; and then he took
 The Bible down, and read the holy book,*
 For he had learning ; and, when that was done,
 We sat in silence—"Whither could we run ?"
 We said ; and then rush'd, frighten'd, from the door,
 For we could bear our own conceits no more.
 We call'd on neighbours ; there she had not been :
 We met some wanderers—ours they had not seen.
 We hurried o'er the beach, both north and south ;
 Then join'd, and wander'd to our haven's mouth,

* Perhaps this passage—'Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.'

Where rush'd the falling waters wildly out.
 I scarcely heard the good man's fearful shout,
 Who saw a something on the billow ride,
 And "Heaven have mercy on our sins!" he cried,
 "It is my child!" and to the present hour
 So he believes, and spirits have the power.
 She heard no more the angry waves and wind;
 She heard no more the threatening of mankind:
 Wrapt in dark weeds, the refuse of the storm,
 To the hard rock was borne her lovely form.

But, oh! what storm was in that mind! what strife!
 That could compel her to lay down her life?
 For she was seen within the sea to wade
 By one at distance, when she first had pray'd.
 Then to a rock within the hither shoal,
 Softly, and with a fearful step, she stole:
 There, when she gained it, on the top she stood
 A moment still, and dropp'd into the flood.
 The man cried loudly; but he cried in vain:
 She heard not then—she never heard again!
 She had, pray Heav'n! she had that world in sight
 Where frailty mercy finds, and wrong has right;
 But sure in this her portion such has been,
 Well had it still remain'd a world unseen!

CRAEBE'S TALES OF THE HALL.

The following tale of the heart is told of Mary Wolstencroft, when deserted by Imlay; but told by Beloe, in his *Sexagenarian*, in a manner far too light and sarcastic for so grave a crime as suicide attempted or completed:

'The lady did not, indeed, in imitation of Sappho,

precipitate herself from another Ieucadian rock ; she chose a more vulgar mode of death : she put some lead into her pockets, and threw herself into the water. She did not, however, use lead enough, *as there was still gas sufficient left in her head to counterpoise it.* She was rescued from a watery bier, and lived again to experience the feverish varieties of the tender passion.*

The following, of John Bateman, is told in a manner still more remarkable for its sarcastic levity :

‘ An ironing-day ’s an iron age to me—
 Too sad a truth, although ’tis *irony* !
 I pace the garden, heavy as a sledge,
 “ Linen,” as Falstaff says, “ on every hedge.”
 Each holly-bush, tall shrub, or painted post,
 A pallid spectre seems, or green-eyed ghost !
 From boughs suspended, bodied gowns I see,
 As if a *Bateman* hung on every tree !”*

* The ever-memorable Mr. Bateman, a pattern to all true lovers, suspended himself from the bough of a tree, in the garden belonging to the young lady who was the object of his passion. Mr. Bateman’s biographers differ in one respect : some say that he committed the rash act at the *chamber-door* of his mistress, and others that he hung himself on a *cherry-tree* ! Now a third party (the commentators) start an idea, which is probably the truth, as it reconciles both the former accounts ; and which is, that the unfortunate Mr. Bateman hung himself *twice* ; once at the *chamber-door*, and secondly on an *apple-tree* ! They go so far as to add

A tale of the heart, where not love, but spite, is concerned, is told of the Chinese women :

‘Monsieur de Guignes, in his “*Voyages à Peking,*” assures us that the Chinese women will

(but whether true or not we cannot say) that the particular tree on which he hung himself bore that species of fruit called the *Apple-John* ; and that it derived its name from this circumstance ; for, on consulting the parish register, it is found that his Christian name was *John*, the son of *Joannes* Bateman. Thus it appears that to the fate of Mr. John Bateman we owe the denomination of that delicious fruit called the *Apple-John* ! a fruit of which the lady in question was very fond. But to proceed : in the first instance, when Mr. Bateman suspended himself at the chamber-door, the noise very naturally alarmed the lady, who, coming out in time, cut him down with her scisshrs, which she happened just then to be using, her left hand being thrust into a silk stocking, with a new Whitechapel needle stuck therein. This peculiar incident was categorically noticed at the coroner’s inquest, and considered of *very material* consequence. The lady, however, not relaxing in her cruelty, Mr. Bateman’s ‘tragic job’ was the next day completed in the orchard !

There is no doubt but the account here given is the true one ; and the reason why it has been hitherto suppressed is, because it reflects hard upon the lady ; and, perhaps, is the only part of her conduct that is reprehensible ; for, say what we will, if she did not mean to give his passion a suitable return, why did she feed him with hopes even to the last ? For was not this feeding him with hopes—false hopes ? Let any lover imagine himself hung up in the same manner, and thus cut down by the fair hand of his mistress !

suicide from a wish to involve their husbands in trouble, merely for the scrape that their relicts get into! This is going farther still than the Roman matrons, who would die for their husbands.'

Judgment and reason should rule in matters of the heart; but, if we let scepticism, despair, and frantic passions sway us, what may be expected but that we should be hurried forwards, like the horse rushing into the battle, into the unknown perils of jealousy, destruction, murder, and suicide?

'Though lovers, of all creatures tame or wild,
Can least brook argument, however mild;
Yet let a poet (poetry disarms
The fiercest animals with magic charms)

On reviving, would not *hope* be the first thing he would catch hold of? Would not he naturally say to himself, Ah, she *wishes* me to live! she has indeed *saved* my life; and *consequently* means to make me happy! Alas! alas! Mr. Bateman, like *most* lovers, *argued* wrongly! Poor dear man! He remains a memorable example of ill-fated love, and his mistress a remarkable instance of implacable cruelty! Mr. Bateman was not a frivolous *every-day* lover; but such a one as all *moderate* minded young ladies would wish for. His was real affection; no mimicking, make-believe, counterfeit, passion; but downright, doleful, deep, desponding, pensive, pining, poring, solemn, sighing, sobbing, serious, sentimentality!

. ' *He who hangs, or knocks out h's brains,
The devil's in him if he feigns!*'

Risk an intrusion in thy pensive mood,
 And woo and win thee to thy proper good.
 Pastoral images and still retreats,
 Umbrageous walks and solitary seats,
 Sweet birds in concert with harmonious streams,
 Soft airs, nocturnal vigils, and day-dreams,
 Are all enchantments in a case like thine ;
 Conspire against thy peace with one design ;
 Sooth thee to make thee but a surer prey,
 And feed the fire that wastes thy power away.
 Up !—God has formed thee with a wiser view,
 Not to be led in chains, but to subdue ;
 Calls thee to cope with enemies, and first
 Points out a conflict with thyself—the worst.
 Post away swiftly to more active scenes ;
 Collect the scattered truths that study gleans ;
 Mix with the world, but with its wiser part ;
 No longer give an image all thine heart :
 Its empire is not hers, nor is it thine ;
 'Tis God's just claim—prerogative divine !

COWPER'S RETIREMENT, VOL. I.

CHAP. XV.

RELIGION THE PRESERVATIVE FROM SUICIDE ;
OR, THE HISTORY OF CONSTANTIA.

‘ I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says you must not stay ;
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.’

‘ The bane and antidote are both before me.’

Constantia and Honorius—Their early Acquaintance—Providential Deliverance of Constantia by means of a Thunder Storm—Long Separation—Renewal of Acquaintance—Her Life saved by Honorius—Distress of Mind—Deliverance from Suicide by Means of the Author’s Sermon, entitled ‘Suicide Providentially Arrested’—Peace of Mind bestowed by true Religion.

I SHALL now introduce a remarkable tale of a young lady, who had purchased the materials of self-destruction, through melancholy despondency in an affair of the heart, and was prevented from the commission by a singular providence, in which

true religion was concerned, just before the moment of execution. It was received by me in a letter, the 23d of March, 1822; and the fact may be depended upon as faithfully correct, and known to many in the populous town where the parties resided. The gentleman who writes it is a classical scholar. Though long, the letter is much abridged.

‘ Reverend and Dear Sir,

‘ My friend and I took an early opportunity of visiting Constantia’s mother: the good old woman received us with tears in her eyes. It was with no little regret we heard that she had, within the last half year, refused an advantageous offer, though backed by a parent’s consent, and even wishes, and against which she herself could urge no reasonable objection, or refuse on any other grounds than that she had no desire to change her condition.

‘ Well acquainted with her history, and interested about her, I frequently saw Constantia, as well as her mother, during my stay. Previously disposed, as has been before noticed, to serious reflection and thoughtfulness, she became daily more and more a prey to pensive dejection, which rapidly grew into a hopeless despondency, beholding herself with abhorrence, and looking on herself as an unfortunate and lost being, doomed to know no peace of mind here, and ensuring to herself eternal misery here-

after. In this state of mind it was that Honorius, one evening, at the close of an interview he had endeavored to apply in furthering her highest interests, incautiously made use of an expression which her already broken spirit felt with an indescribable degree of pain and poignancy: her altered manner was mistaken by Honorius, and attributed to a wrong cause, which he accordingly beheld rather with satisfaction than otherwise.

As appeared afterwards, Constantia was for several days after this interview drowned in tears, to which succeeded a morbid melancholy; and it was now that the great enemy of our souls seized the opportunity to make one of his blackest and most fatal suggestions in her disordered mind: but the overruling hand of Providence was again conspicuously stretched forth to rescue this weak and fragile vessel from eternal shipwreck. Calling on her at this crisis, (as some would say, fortuitously,) I was struck with her manner, and the evident dejection of mind under which she labored; and which was the more obvious, as, although more sedate of late, as before mentioned, she was naturally of a cheerful disposition in company. Without any other idea than that of its general tendency to do good, I left with her a publication which I had the day before received from a much-esteemed friend in

London. She promised to peruse it; a promise I was aware she would forthwith keep, knowing the interest with which she always received and read any thing I offered to her consideration. Deeply interested about this amiable and hapless female, in whose mind appeared, I thought, a dawning of divine light, it was not more than a day before I again visited her.

‘ On my first accosting her, a more cheerful air appeared, I thought, to pervade her countenance and manner: it quickly, however, subsided, and we had not conversed many minutes when her countenance gave evident symptoms of her heart being full of some weighty and important matter: in a few seconds I perceived the tear-drop starting into either eye; while her lips, tremulous with expression, seemed laboring to find utterance: at length, clasping convulsively my hand, and bursting into tears, she exclaimed, in all the eloquence of grief, blended with other passions, “ My deliverer!—my guardian angel! sent to my rescue!” and then, in the sweetest accents, broken by her fast-falling tears, she uttered her imperfect prayers to Heaven for every blessing on my head. “ Oh, sir!” continued she, “ but for you I had not been at this moment among the living—I had now ceased to exist! But for you, this body had now been cold

in death; and my guilty soul, hurried by its own deed into the presence of its Maker, had now known its final doom! But God has been graciously pleased to make you the means of rescuing me from such a dreadful fate; and, oh, sir! I know not how to praise him for such a deliverance: help me to pray for power and strength, and that I may yet live to offer praises and prayers that may be acceptable!"

'I shuddered at the ideas which this address gave rise to; but a momentary pause enabled me to perceive all. The fact was as she now explained—

'The unhappy Constantia, determined to rid herself of a now hateful existence, had meditated the commission of a crime of no less magnitude than the awful one of suicide. But the night before the intended execution of this demoniac act (to effect which a quantity of "oxalic acid" had been purchased) I called with the publication above alluded to. She was led to read the book, as the last she should ever look into: it was deferred to her last act; previous to which, I have reason to believe, she had composed and written letters to Honorius and her mother, and had arranged some trifling bequests to them, to myself, and to an infant cousin, about two years old, who, it appeared, to

gratify her wish, had been named after my friend. The evening drew on which was to have been her last; and so diabolically deliberate did Satan cause her to proceed in the execution of the deed, that, having spent some time in completing the arrangements just alluded to, she sat down, as a concluding act and duty, to peruse, as she had promised, the publication I had left with her, having *previously* written, in a scarcely legible hand, on a slip of paper attached to the title-page with a pin, these words: "The accompanying is returned to her friend with thanks; but they will be her last. Before E***** gets this, the unfortunate Constantia, tired of an existence which makes those she most loves unhappy, will be no more."

' But, my dear sir, mark the providential event; and finding yourself a party so intimately connected with its conclusion will, I am sure, make it sufficiently interesting to you. The publication here mentioned Constantia read—happily to tell us that it proved not, as she had foretold, her last; for, in the hands of God, it was the means of saving her from death temporal; and may I not be deceived in the fond hope I now entertain that it has also been the chief instrument of saving her from death eternal. The perusal of it stayed the rash act; and, while it thus averted the awful, the horrid catastrophe, I

feel a strong assurance that it was the messenger of lasting good to her immortal soul.

‘And now, my dear sir, let me not, in concluding, attempt to describe what I felt, and what my reflections now are, at being made an unconscious instrument in this striking work of Providence; nor let me imagine that I can adequately conceive your feelings when you are told that this publication was no other than your excellent “Sermon on the Providential Arrest of Suicide,” in that astonishing case of Mr. F——’s. You will conceive, far better than I can express, what I feel at this event; indeed your own sensations thereupon will amply supply my want of words. Truly may we exclaim, in the words of the amiable and pious Cowper,

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.”

‘Were I to describe, as the subject would admit, the *striking* and *total* change in the character and conduct of Constantia produced by this event, as well as what passed in the minds of Honorius and her mother, with subsequent circumstances, it would, I find, carry me on to a much greater length: suffice it to say, that the anguish of mind which they felt, after being made acquainted with these appalling facts, was only removed by witnessing the happy and almost miraculous change wrought in the (I may

say in every respect) resuscitated Constantia, who continued to grow in grace daily, and in true knowledge; and whom I left, not only possessing composure of mind, but in the enjoyment of a serenity and happiness to which hitherto she had been an entire stranger. A pious female friend, to whom her story was imparted, was introduced by me to Constantia, and has since continued her friendly visits, I trust, with the happiest effects. Judge of our delight on hearing the object of our solicitude apply the language of the poet, and exclaim,

“This is the way I long have sought,
And mourn’d because I found it not:
My grief a burden long has been,
Because I could not cease from sin.

The more I strove against its power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more;
Till late I heard my Saviour say,
‘Come hither, soul! I am the Way.’

Lo, glad I come! and thou, blest Lamb!
Shall take me to thee as I am.
Nothing but sin I thee can give,
Nothing but love shall I receive.”

‘I should here mention that the part which seemed particularly to have had the first effect described was from the thirty-fifth to the forty-second pages inclusive; and it was on referring to the copy she had that I discovered the slip of paper before alluded to, which in her agitation she had omitted to

detach : the whole, however, has been so read by her as to make a lasting impression, and be attended, I trust, with the happiest effects. Reflecting on the numerous instances of suicide our country exhibits, and which led the poet to exclaim

“ Self-murder! name it not—our island's shame !”

I cannot but express a wish that, after what I have seen effected by it, such a discourse should be universally known and read, as well as the volume you are so laudably about to publish on the subject. May it have the widest circulation, excite universal attention, and be attended with the happy effects which its forerunner has been made the instrument of.

‘ Thus, then, I conclude, without attempting to make any application, feeling my inability to do it as the subject demands, and knowing to how much better hands I commit this important and requisite part; nor do I remember that I have any thing now to add, except it be thought worth mention that the trifling bequest to myself mentioned before, was a lock of hair, which I have since had formed into a ring, and which I value not more for the giver's sake than as a memorial of this wonderful interposition of Providence.

‘ I am, my dear sir,

‘ Most gratefully and sincerely yours,

‘ E. L. G.’

How many thousands rush headlong without being thus graciously arrested! It is a mistaken sentiment that suffering can atone for guilt: the sinner must look to the Redeemer's atonement for expiation of offence. With this exception, and not to encourage suicide, but to console the friends of some poor broken-hearted sufferer, we quote the following tender lines:

' Sad daughter of distress! who, in the bloom
Of beauty, bow'd with misery and woe,
In the dark grave art laid untimely low,
Rest! Life's bleak storm is past. Though, by the doom
Of ruthless man, beneath unholy ground
Thy corse, amid the beaten pathway cast,
Lies where the wild birch quivers in the blast;
Yet soft descending, through the stony mound,
The dew of Heaven shall bathe thy clay-cold breast:
Yet shall thy sufferings, scorn'd on earth, atone,
Where Mercy dwells on high, for life's sad close;
And Pity, musing oft at eve alone -
On the green sod where grief and pain repose,
Shall sooth, with hymns of peace, thy soul to rest.'

SOTHEY'S SUICIDE.

CHAP. XVI.

THE PATH TO CONSOLATION.

‘Omniscient Master, omnipresent King,
 To Thee—to Thee my last distress I bring.
 Thou that canst still the raging of the seas,
 Chain up the winds, and bid the tempests cease,
 Redeem my shipwreck’d soul from raging gusts
 Of cruel passion and deceitful lusts.
 From storms of rage and dangerous rocks of pride
 Let thy strong hand this little vessel guide
 (It was thy hand that made it!) through the tide
 Impetuous of this life ; let thy command
 Direct my course, and bring me safe to land.’

PRIOR’S SOLOMON.

Inquiry if any Suicide can be saved—Melancholy and Despondence from worldly or religious Causes dispersed by the Light of Heaven—Illustrated by a German Fragment on the first Spring discovered by Adam and Eve after the Fall—Exemplified in Cowper’s Melancholy, and the Means of his Recovery—Balm for every Wound—Summary of Arguments against Suicide.

PERHAPS it may be asked, ‘Can we entertain no hope of the final salvation of one who destroys his own life?’ This is a question which it ill becomes

a blind and erring mortal to decide with confidence. It is possible that a true child of God may be so far under the power of mental derangement as to rush unbidden into the presence of his heavenly Father. I believe that instances of this kind have sometimes occurred; and, if so, concerning the salvation of such persons no doubt can be entertained. But it may be questioned, on very solid ground, whether a real Christian, in the exercise of his reason, ever became his own executioner. Let those who incline to adopt a more favorable opinion ponder well that solemn declaration of the Spirit of God, 'No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.' How small, then, is the proportion of self-murderers for whom we can cherish the least hope beyond the grave! When men leave the world in an act of daring and deliberate rebellion against God, distrusting his providence, agitated by the worst of passions, and trampling upon all the obligations which bind them to their Creator and their fellow-men, how can Charity herself avoid considering them as 'strangers to the covenant of promise,' and weeping over them as 'children of perdition?'

This conclusion will be confirmed if we look into the sacred history, and examine the characters of Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas, the only instances of suicide which the pen of inspiration has recorded.

Do we discover in the last moments of these wretched self-destroyers any thing to warrant a hope concerning their state after death? Alas! no. We find them throughout manifesting that spirit of pride and enmity to God, and that hateful compound of malice and despair, which characterize the fiend, and which torture the bosoms of the accursed in their dark abodes.

With what solemn language, then, does the consideration of his future destiny address every one who contemplates this mode of terminating his earthly sorrows! Pause, O man! and recollect, before the irrevocable step be taken—recollect that thou art to exist beyond the grave! Art thou, then, prepared to die? Art thou sure—miserable as thy present state may be—art thou sure that death will not land thee in still greater misery, in that prison of eternal despair, ‘where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,’ and where the heaviest calamities of this life will sink into nothing when compared with that ‘torment, the smoke of which ascendeth for ever and ever?’

Such are the guilt, the folly, and the doom of the self-murderer. May God, of his infinite mercy, preserve us all from an infatuation so deplorable, from a crime of such complicated malignity! ‘Let

me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'—Amen.

The sweet rural poet of Britain possessed at times a melancholy which arrayed in gloom the brightest objects of nature.

It is possible to be brought by afflictions, sorrows, and distresses, into a situation in which Melancholy sheds her mildews upon every object. Far worse, however, are the gloom and distress occasioned by a sense of guilt. Then clouds of blackness seem to darken the horizon, and thunders of wrath to roll over our heads; whilst the forked lightnings disclose to us only a wintry scene—trees stripped of their foliage—the ground barren, desolate, and bound with impenetrable frost: not a bud seems to peep forth from the desert plains and naked groves; but all seems sterility, destitution, want, and wretchedness. But when humility has bended the proud knees, compunction softened the obdurate heart, penitence rendered sin hateful, and prayer encouraged us to lift up our desponding eyes to Heaven, then the face of Nature begins to relent into a smile, the barren trees bud with nascent foliage, verdure again gladdens the plains, and flowers adorn the margin of the purling stream: the heart awakens from its despondence, takes cou-

rage to look up to the God of Heaven, hopes that there is mercy yet in store, and that a brighter day is dawning, when we shall receive the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And the man who erst was ready to plunge himself into the stagnant pool now goes smoothly forward, like the streamlet gliding at his feet; and carols with the birds, instead of suspending himself to the tree on which they perch; and resolves to live, to be of use among the creation of God, to sip the comforts of existence, or to bear with fortitude its trials, confiding in the goodness of a gracious God, who loves while he chastens, and refines us for a better world while he tries us in the crucible of worldly troubles. As examples bring home so powerfully to the heart the speculations and precepts of the mind, I shall add the following beautiful illustration of the above sentiments:—

ADAM AND EVE.

‘Autumn was coming on, when Adam and Eve descended, weeping, from the heights of Paradise. They were quitting its gay blooming flowers, and verdant prairies, ever smiling in the robes of Spring, for a dreary and desolate clime; and its woodlands and brakes, where innocence loved to

sport, were to be exchanged for wild forests, already struck with the curse of the Creator. Their look was lost in terror at the gloomy depth of the valleys they were henceforth to inhabit. A drizzling haze spread itself before them, exhaling a freezing dampness, which chilled their blood, and covering the whole country with a veil of a cold pale whiteness. Eve turned round ; Adam turned back likewise ; and both, for the last time, cast, in mournful silence, a long and lingering look on Paradise. Light airy clouds were hovering over it, gilded with the last rays of the setting sun. The cherub had lowered the point of his flamy sword : he raises it again, and seems to shut out hope for ever. At the sight a faintish sickness entered her heart, and the first cold shivering ran through the veins of our common mother.

‘ They descend from the mountain amid the darkness of night. They hear the crash of the hurricane among the trees, and the torrents sweeping over the pointed cliffs, and foaming and dashing from rock to rock, and hurrying down to the bottom of the valley. Behind them, like the lightning, glistens the terrible sword of the cherub. Its distant blaze, dimly and partially flashing on the savage scene around them, throws on it an appearance even still more awful and terrific. By its

light they distinguish their own shadows stretching themselves far before them. At the sight they are troubled ; Eve is seized with new fear.

‘When they had reached the bottom of the valley, the angel of the Lord approached them. “Adam,” said he, “receive these grains from Paradise ; thou hast been commanded to cultivate the earth by the sweat of thy brow ;” and he presented him some grains of wheat, in the shell of a cocoa-nut. Immediately he takes flight. His sword cleaves the air with a noise like the roaring thunder, and is re-echoed with tenfold violence from rock to rock, and from valley to valley.

‘Adam and Eve prostrate themselves on the damp earth : darkness environs them, and their prayer is wafted to Heaven on the dews of the evening. Then they saw before them, rising majestically above the pines of the mountain, the star of night sailing in all her glory, and following a steady course amid an ocean of pearls. For the first time was she a source of consolation to weary man. The eyes of Eve are suffused with soft tears ; and, rising, she tenderly supports herself in the arms of Adam.

‘The propitious light of the moon enabled them now to perceive close at hand a grotto, hollowed out in the face of the rock. The ivy and the wild

vine clambered around it, and, falling back in long rich clusters, were washed by a clear brook that trickled past; and the light branches undulating in the opposing stream raised a soft gentle murmur, inviting sweet repose. Adam and Eve felt as if invited to enter this asylum: they had learned to profit by the impulses which the unseen hand of Providence still vouchsafed them: they entered. Their eyes were closed in slumber; light visions of bliss flitted around them, and, dissipating the clouds of melancholy, brought balmy consolation to their souls.

‘The night was tranquil; but at daybreak Adam was awakened by the sobs of his wife. “It is then true,” said they, looking around, “it is then true; we are banished from Eden; we have fallen, alas! from our state of innocence.” They rose—again they looked at the scene before them—they wished to commence the labours of the day, and they had not courage to do so. Adam tried to sooth his companion, again to re-animate her soul with hope; but his pale cheeks, his quivering lips, his faltering voice, exposed what was passing in his breast, and showed that the sentiments of his lips were far, far removed from the thoughts of his heart.

‘Meanwhile they sought for roots and wild herbs,

to support exhausted nature. But here the trees were not clothed with that tender greenness which formed so fresh, so beautiful, a feature of Eden revelling in everlasting spring. The foliage of the forest turned day by day of a more sombre hue: even that was soon exchanged for the pale yellow die of departing autumn. Already did the exiles hear the hurried rustle of the leaves, as the wind swept them along the ground. Eve, in gathering an apple, tore off by chance the frail bough which supported and the dry leaves which surrounded it. "See," said she, trembling, to Adam, and pointing to the withered scene around, "see! in gathering an apple have I stripped the earth of its fairest ornaments."

"Yet," replied Adam, "all trees have not faded away; look at the orange-tree, the holly, and the laurel: see how the cedar and the pine of the mountain still tower above the forest, covered with their rich, though gloomy, foliage—the simple ivy, creeping over our rocky dwelling, still rejoiceth us, as we rise from slumber, with its dark green leaves—and even the drooping branches of the willow beside the brook preserve still fresh the greater part of their covering."

'But the time came when the favorite weeping willow lost its pale foliage too. What then was

the grief, the hopelessness, that sickened the hearts of our first parents? The flowers—the trees, which were like companions in their exile—were all faded, or fast fading away, leaving them solitary and helpless beings amid bleakness and desolation; and they expected soon to see the orange, the laurel, and the pine, despoiled also of their covering. Adam, however, in obedience to the angel, sowed towards the south the grains he had received from Paradise; but this duty he performed more with the passiveness of despair than the light exultations of hope.

‘ Some days after he is filled with astonishment and joy at seeing a tender braird peeping above the soil of the first field laboured by man.

‘ Thus did the two spouses pass their first winter, taking charge of a little flock, and with pain and difficulty seeking sustenance for themselves. In dreams were they taught the elements of the first arts necessary for life. It was thus they learned to find in the flint and wood the source of fire, by which they were warmed and cheered—that Adam was instructed to fashion the bow for preserving his flock from the wolves. It was thus that the lovely Eve was taught to load the distaff with the soft wool of her lambs.

‘ One day Adam, having uprooted a tree, was

about to cleave it into billets. A sharp flint served him for a wedge, a large stone for a mace. Eve approaches him, holding in her hand a basket filled with roots and the produce of her rude dairy. She wipes the moisture from his burning brow with the sweet-scented leaves of the orange-tree, and soothingly allures him to take a little nourishment—a little repose. He seats himself on the trunk of the tree: Eve is about to place herself beside him, but suddenly she exclaims, “Adam! hast thou sown here, too, the grains of Paradise? See, see how their verdure shows itself in the midst of that withered-up spot, like the sun rising to the world after a long and stormy night!” “No,” said Adam, “I have sown nothing here; what thou perceivest must be new grass.” It had grown in little tufts, under the shelter of the tree which Adam had recently struck down. Joy flushed the cheeks of his spouse; and, throwing herself with rapture into his arms, she exclaimed, “Adam, God hath blessed thy labour! the sweat of thy brow hath moistened the earth as the dew of Heaven; and the kindness of the Most High hath fertilized it like the rays of the sun.’

‘Adam reflected a moment. “Eve,” said he, “we have been blinded by grief. For some days past I have seen the banks of the rivulet clothed

with fresh verdure, but my cast-down soul heeded not what I saw. Thy discovery, Eve, hath vanquished my doubts." Rising, they went onwards, sometimes embracing, sometimes stopping to look at the quickening scene around them: suddenly they hear a noise; they turn back; a young ram was struggling in vain to extricate his horns, fastened in a thick tuft of the pliant cornel: it had been allured by the young shoots of that tree, its yellow flowers, and the buds, already green, of the cytisus. Adam disengaged it, and it bounded away to its flock. Eve sat down on the renovated turf; Adam sat down beside her: the hearts of both were bursting with joy, and with gratitude they offered up their prayer to Heaven; for they had seen the young buds of the cypress—they had perceived, for the first time, the yellow flowers of the cornel-tree. Icy winter was melting away, and flowers, fair as the morning, were again visiting the earth. They ran to the bower near their grotto—it was bursting into verdure: the willow was covered with buds, and all around was variegated and enlivened by the flowers of the wood-anemone and the primrose.

‘ From this time every day came to them loaded with new flowers, with new verdure. If, perchance, their hearts were at times puffed up with vain pride at this seeming return of the days of Paradise, their

cheeks were soon suffused with the blush of shame and repentance—a blush which mounted up to Heaven, the place whence it had come. Then the recollection of the days of their innocence humbled their souls to the dust; again they felt themselves solitary insignificant strangers on the face of the earth, whose only wisdom was foresight, whose only happiness was hope.

‘Already were the trees half-clothed with a foliage of the softest green; already those destined to furnish food for the exiled pair were covered with a snow of rich blossoms: the sweetness of their odure perfumed all around, and seemed as incense offered to the Deity for the return of genial spring.

‘One fine evening, after the labour of the day, they sat themselves down at the foot of a palm-tree which grew near their rural abode. The evening star was glancing through the branches lightly waving in the wind. The clear moon shone high in the cloudless heavens, and, reflected in the babbling brook, seemed to tremble on the pure bosom of the water. Adam rises, urged by a feeling of which he knew not the cause, and softly disengages himself from the unwilling arms of his spouse: receding from her sight, he disappears in a grove of flowering pomegranates and almonds, loaded with their fruit.

‘ Soon, however, he returned, holding a handful of the first ears of corn. He shows them exultingly to his companion. “ See ! ” said he, “ the seed of Eden has been fruitful even in the valley of tears ! ”

‘ Every thing around them was in harmony with the sweet pensiveness that possessed their hearts. All nature was calm—their minds were calm likewise. Suddenly that sublime silence is interrupted ; from the bosom of the weeping willow the nightingale pours forth her notes of melody. The first song of the nightingale breathed a spirit of joy over the earth. Tears, but they were tears of gratitude and joy, trickled down the cheeks of Adam and Eve. The notes of the winged songster reached the bottom of their heart. Unable to speak, they fall, weeping, into each other’s arms ; then, kneeling, they adore in silence the goodness and mercy of their God, who had breathed consolation and hope to their sinful souls—who had converted the wilderness around to a Paradise worthy of the blessed.’

Never, perhaps, was this natural imagery more strongly exemplified in actual experience than in that of the sweet poet of Nature—the pious and immortal Cowper. After attempting, under the

influence of infidel principles, to murder himself, as the last of those acts into which a course of sinning had betrayed him, he passed through a long track of gloom, horror, and despair. Let us hear his own description :

‘ I dined alone, either at the tavern, where I went in the dark, or at the chop-house, where I always took care to hide myself in the darkest corner of the room. I slept generally an hour in the evening; though it was only to be terrified in dreams; and, when I awoke, it was some time before I could walk steadily through the passage into the dining-room. I reeled and staggered like a drunken man. The eyes of man I could not bear; but when I thought that the eyes of God were upon me (which I felt assured of), it gave me the most intolerable anguish. If, for a moment, a book or a companion stole away my attention from myself, a flash from hell seemed to be thrown into my mind immediately; and I said within myself, “ What are these things to me, who am damned ? ” In a word, I saw myself a sinner altogether, and every way a sinner; but I saw not yet a glimpse of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

‘ Life appeared to me more eligible than death, only because it was a barrier between me and everlasting burnings. My thoughts in the day became

still more gloomy, and my night visions more dreadful.

‘One morning, as I lay between sleeping and waking, I seemed to myself to be walking in Westminster Abbey, waiting till prayers should begin. Presently I thought I heard the minister’s voice, and hastened towards the choir. Just as I was upon the point of entering, the iron gate under the organ was flung in my face, with a jar that made the Abbey ring. The noise awoke me. A sentence of excommunication from all the churches upon earth could not have been so dreadful to me as the interpretation which I could not avoid putting upon this dream.

‘Another time I seemed to pronounce to myself, “Evil, be thou my good.” I verily thought that I had adopted that hellish sentiment, it seemed to come so directly from my heart. I arose from bed to look for my prayer-book, and, having found it, endeavored to pray; but immediately experienced the impossibility of drawing nigh to God, unless he first draw nigh to us. I made many passionate attempts towards prayer, but failed in all. Having an obscure notion of the efficacy of faith, I resolved upon an experiment, to prove whether I had faith or not. For this purpose, I resolved to repeat the Creed: when I came to the second period of it, all

traces of the former were struck out of my memory, nor could I recollect one syllable of the matter. While I endeavored to recover it, and when just upon the point of doing so, I perceived a sensation in my brain, like a tremulous vibration in the fibres of it. By this means I lost the words in the very instant when I thought to have laid hold of them. This threw me into an agony; but, growing a little calm, I made an attempt for the third time: here again I failed in the same manner as before.

‘I considered it as a supernatural interposition, to inform me that, having sinned against the Holy Ghost, I had no longer an interest in Christ, or in the gifts of the Spirit. Being assured of this, with the most rooted conviction, I gave myself up to despair. I felt a sense of burning in my heart, like that of real fire, and concluded it was an earnest of those eternal flames which would soon receive me. I laid myself down, howling with horror, while my knees smote against each other.

‘In this condition my brother found me, and the first words I spoke to him were, “Oh! brother, I am damned! think of eternity, and then think what it is to be damned!” I had, indeed, a sense of eternity impressed upon my mind, which seemed almost to amount to a full comprehension of it. My brother, pierced to the heart with the sight of

my misery, tried to comfort me ; but all to no purpose. I refused comfort ; and my mind appeared to me in such colours, that to administer it to me was only to exasperate me, and to mock my fears.

‘ Satan plied me closely with horrible visions, and more horrible voices. My ears rang with the sound of torments, that seemed to await me. Then did the pains of hell get hold on me, and, before daybreak, the very sorrows of death encompassed me. A numbness seized the extremities of my body, and life seemed to retreat before it. My hands and feet became cold and stiff ; a cold sweat stood upon my forehead ; my heart seemed at every pulse to beat its last, and my soul to cling to my lips, as if on the very brink of departure. No convicted criminal ever feared death more, or was more assured of dying.

‘ At eleven o’clock my brother called upon me, and in about an hour after his arrival that distemper of mind, which I had so ardently wished for, actually seized me. While I traversed the apartment, in the most horrible dismay of soul, expecting every moment that the earth would open and swallow me up—my conscience scaring me, the avenger of blood pursuing me, and the city of refuge out of reach and out of sight—a strange and horrible darkness fell upon me. If it were possible

that a heavy blow could light on the brain, without touching the skull, such was the sensation I felt. I clapped my hand to my forehead, and cried aloud through the pain it gave me. At every stroke my thoughts and expressions became more wild and incoherent; all that remained clear was the sense of sin, and the expectation of punishment. These kept undisturbed possession all through my illness, without interruption or abatement.'

But mark the gradual means by which this hopeless prospect was brightened. Before his senses were affected he had sent for his friend, Mr. Madan :—

'I knew that many persons had spoken of shedding tears for sin; but when I asked myself, whether the time would ever come when I should weep for mine? it seemed to me that a stone might sooner do it.

'Not knowing that Christ was exalted to give repentance, I despaired of ever attaining to it. My friend came to me; we sat on the bed-side together, and he began to declare to me the Gospel. He spoke of original sin, and the corruption of every man born into the world, whereby every one is a child of wrath. I perceived something like hope dawn in my heart. This doctrine set me

more upon a level with the rest of mankind, and made my condition appear less desperate. Next he insisted on the all-atoning efficacy of the blood of Jesus, and his righteousness, for our justification. While I heard this part of his discourse, and the Scriptures on which he founded it, my heart began to burn within me, my soul was pierced with a sense of my bitter ingratitude to so merciful a Saviour, and those tears, which I thought impossible, burst forth freely. I saw clearly that my case required such a remedy, and had not the least doubt within me but that this was the Gospel of salvation. Lastly, he urged the necessity of a lively faith in Jesus Christ; not an assent only of the understanding, but a faith of application, an actual laying hold of it, and embracing it as a salvation wrought out for me personally. Here I failed, and deplored my want of such a faith. He told me it was the gift of God, which he trusted he would bestow upon me. I could only reply, "I wish he would!"—a very irreverent petition, but a very sincere one, and such as the blessed God, in his due time, was pleased to answer.'

Mark also the judicious medical means used to restore him: he was not sent by his friends to a public mad-house, but to Dr. Cotton, at St. Albans, with

whom he had an acquaintance; and who was recommended to their choice not only by his skill, but by his well-known humanity and sweetness of temper. At this place his brother visited him:

‘As soon as we were left alone, he asked me how I found myself: I answered, “As much better as despair can make me.” We went together into the garden. Here, on expressing a settled assurance of sudden judgment, he protested to me that it was all a delusion; and protested so strongly, that I could not help giving some attention to him. I burst into tears, and cried out, “If it be a delusion, then am I the happiest of beings.” Something like a ray of hope was shot into my heart; but still I was afraid to indulge it. We dined together, and I spent the afternoon in a more cheerful manner. Something seemed to whisper to me every moment, “Still there is mercy.” Even after he left me, this change of sentiment gathered ground continually; yet my mind was in such a fluctuating state, that I can only call it a vague presage of better things at hand, without being able to assign a reason for it. The servant observed a sudden alteration in me for the better; and the man, whom I have ever since retained in my service, expressed great joy on the occasion.

‘I went to bed, and slept well. In the morning

I dreamed that the sweetest boy I ever saw came dancing up to my bed-side; he seemed just out of leading-strings, yet I took particular notice of the firmness and steadiness of his tread. The sight affected me with pleasure, and served at least to harmonize my spirits; so that I awoke for the first time with a sensation of delight in my mind. Still, however, I knew not where to look for the establishment of the comfort I felt; my joy was as much a mystery to myself as to those about me. The blessed God was preparing me for the clearer light of his countenance by this first dawning of that light upon me.

‘Within a few days of my first arrival at St. Albans, I had thrown aside the word of God, as a book in which I had no longer any interest or portion. The only instance in which I can recollect reading a single chapter was about two months before my recovery. Having found a Bible on the bench in the garden, I opened it upon the 11th of St. John, where Lazarus is raised from the dead; and saw so much benevolence, mercy, goodness, and sympathy with miserable man, in our Saviour’s conduct, that I almost shed tears even after the relation; little thinking that it was an exact type of the mercy which Jesus was on the point of extending towards myself. I sighed, and said, “Oh,

that I had not rejected so good a Redeemer—that I had not forfeited all his favours!” Thus was my heart softened, though not yet enlightened. I closed the book, without intending to open it again.

‘ Having risen with somewhat of a more cheerful feeling, I repaired to my room, where breakfast waited for me. While I sat at table, I found the cloud of horror, which had so long hung over me, was every moment passing away; and every moment came fraught with hope. I was continually more and more persuaded that I was not utterly doomed to destruction. The way of salvation was still, however, hid from my eyes; nor did I see it at all clearer than before my illness. I only thought that, if it pleased God to spare me, I would lead a better life; and that I would yet escape hell, if a religious observance of my duty would secure me from it. Thus may the terror of the Lord make a Pharisee; but only the sweet voice of mercy in the Gospel can make a Christian.

‘ But the happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a clear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the win-

dow, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the 3d of Romans—"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement he had made, my pardon sealed in his blood, and all the fulness and completeness of his justification. In a moment I believed, and received the Gospel. Whatever my friend Madan had said to me, so long before, revived in all its clearness, with demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

' Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have died with gratitude and joy. My eyes filled with tears, and my voice choked with transport, I could only look up to Heaven in silent fear, overwhelmed with love and wonder. But the work of the Holy Spirit is best described in his own words—it is "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Thus was my heavenly Father in Christ Jesus pleased to give me the full assurance of faith; and, out of a strong unbelieving heart, to "raise

up a child unto Abraham." How glad should I now have been to have spent every moment in prayer and thanksgiving! I lost no opportunity of repairing to a throne of grace; but flew to it with an earnestness irresistible, and never to be satisfied. Could I help it? Could I do otherwise than love and rejoice in my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus? The Lord had enlarged my heart, and "I ran in the way of his commandments."

' For many succeeding weeks tears were ready to flow, if I did but speak of the Gospel or mention the name of Jesus. To rejoice day and night was all my employment. Too happy to sleep much, I thought it was but lost time that was spent in slumber. Oh that the ardour of my first love had continued! But I have known many a lifeless and unhallowed hour since; long intervals of darkness, interrupted by short returns of peace and joy in believing.

' My physician, ever watchful and apprehensive for my welfare, was now alarmed lest the sudden transition from despair to joy should terminate in a fatal frenzy. But "the Lord was my strength and my song, and was become my salvation." I said, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord: he has chastened me sore, but

not given me over unto death. O give thanks unto the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever."

The following extract from his letter to Lady Hesketh contains the glowing sentiments of his heart, and some valuable hints to physicians in mental distresses :

‘Huntingdon, July 4, 1765.

‘I reckon it one instance of the Providence that has attended me throughout this whole event that, instead of being delivered into the hands of one of the London physicians, who were so much nearer that I wonder I was not, I was carried to Dr. Cotton. I was not only treated by him with the greatest tenderness while I was ill, and attended with the utmost diligence; but, when my reason was restored to me, and I had so much need of a religious friend to converse with, to whom I could open my mind upon the subject without reserve, I could hardly have found a fitter person for the purpose. My eagerness and anxiety to settle my opinions upon that long-neglected point made it necessary that, while my mind was yet weak, and my spirits uncertain, I should have some assistance. The doctor was as ready to administer relief to me in this article likewise, and as well qualified to do it, as in that which was more immediately his pro-

vince. How many physicians would have thought this an irregular appetite, and a symptom of remaining madness ! But, if it were so, my friend was as mad as myself, and it is well for me that he was so.

‘ My dear cousin, you know not half the deliverances I have received ; my brother is the only one in the family who does. My recovery is indeed a signal one ; but a greater, if possible, went before it. My future life must express my thankfulness, for by words I cannot do it.’

How sweetly he pours forth the feelings of his grateful heart in the following lines :

‘ Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine :
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child ;
How’er performed, it was their brightest part
That they proceeded from a grateful heart :
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil and accept their good :
I cast them at thy feet ; my only plea
Is what it was—dependence upon thee ;
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed, nor shall it fail me now.’

I cannot better close this melancholy history of

suicide, this cheering contrast of patience and resignation, than with the following pious lay on

‘THE BALM FOR EVERY WOUND.

‘When the heart, torn by anguish, awhile seeks to rest
From its wearying watch on the pillow of care;

When by slumber we hope to expel from the breast
The keen searching pangs of remorse and despair;—

What power can hush the tumultuous swell,
Bid the heart cease to flutter, the pale eye to weep?

O! how can the conscience-stung mortal dispel
The visions of horror that sport in his sleep?

“Tis Reason,” says one, “whose unlimited pow’r
Can disperse the dark clouds that roll over the mind,
Afford consolation in pain’s keenest hour,

And give the torn heart’s sullen cares to the wind.”

But can Reason unburden the conscience, when Time
Inflicts a fresh pang at each stroke of his wing?

If Reason has failed in preventing a crime,
It surely must fail in preventing its sting.

“It is Time,” says a second, “whose touch can efface,
By gradations unnoticed, the woes of the heart,

Bid the smiles of contentment illumine the face,
And the last lingering vestige of sadness depart.”

But can Time ever cause the sweet streamlet of peace
Again through the breast in its fulness to flow?

Will Memory’s intrusive soliloquies cease
At his mandate to torture the aching heart?—No!

’Tis said that in Pleasure repose you will find,

From her cup the oblivion of woe you must seek—
That her nectar alone is the balm of the mind,

Its deep flush the bright hue that should vermeil the cheek.

Yes ! awhile it may banish the phantoms of fear,
 But reflection will break through the slight-woven spell ;
 It will give horror's pangs to her votaries here,
 Hereafter will add to the torments of hell.

But others assert that Religion alone
 Is the angel to comfort when sorrows annoy ;
 And, when the illusions of Pleasure are flown,
 Change her depth of despair to the fulness of joy.

Yes, daughter of Heaven ! the sinner's last stay,
 As his fainting soul bows to the chastening rod !
 When faith and repentance have opened his way,
 Thou restor'st the lost sheep to the fold of his God !'

To this I would subjoin a pointed summary :—

‘ DISSUASIVES AGAINST SELF-MURDER.

‘ If you are distressed in mind, *Live* ; serenity
 and joy may yet dawn upon your soul.

‘ If you have been contented and cheerful, *Live* ;
 and generally diffuse that happiness to others.

‘ If misfortunes have befallen you by your own
 misconduct, *Live* ; and be wiser for the future.

‘ If things have befallen you by the faults of
 others, *Live* ; you have nothing wherewith to re-
 proach yourself.

‘ If you are indigent and helpless, *Live* ; the
 face of things may agreeably change.

‘ If you are rich and prosperous, *Live* ; and do
 good with what you possess.

‘ If another hath injured you, *Live*; his own crime will be his punishment.

‘ If you have injured another, *Live*; and recompense it by your good offices.

‘ If your character be attacked unjustly, *Live*; time will remove the aspersion.

‘ If the reproaches are well founded, *Live*; and deserve them not for the future.

‘ If you are already eminent and applauded, *Live*; and preserve the honours you have acquired.

‘ If your success is not equal to your merit, *Live*; in the consciousness of having deserved it.

‘ If your success hath exceeded your merit, *Live*; and arrogate not too much to yourself.

‘ If you have been negligent and useless to society, *Live*; and make amends by your future conduct.

‘ If you have been active and industrious, *Live*; and communicate your improvement to others.

‘ If you have spiteful enemies, *Live*; and disappoint their malevolence.

‘ If you have kind and faithful friends, *Live*; to protect them.

‘ If hitherto you have been impious and wicked, *Live*; and repent of your sins.

‘If you have been wise and virtuous, *Live*; for the future benefit of mankind :—and, lastly,

‘If you hope for immortality, *Live*; and prepare to enjoy it.’

Let the distressed read and ponder over these arguments, and then let them humbly use the prayer which Prior puts in the mouth of Solomon, and expect the same gracious answer :

“Father of Heav’n,” I said, “and Judge of Earth !
Whose word called out the universe to birth,
By whose kind pow’r and influencing care
The various creatures move, and live, and are;
But, ceasing once that care, withdrawn that pow’r,
They move, alas! and live, and are no more;
Omniscient Master, omnipresent King,
To thee, to thee my last distress I bring.

Thou that canst still the raging of the seas,
Chain up the winds, and bid the tempests cease,
Redeem my shipwrecked soul from raging gusts
Of cruel passion and deceitful lusts;
From storms of rage and dang’rous rocks of pride,
Let thy strong hand this little vessel guide
(It was thy hand that made it), through the tide
Impetuous of this life; let thy command
Direct my course, and bring me safe to land.

If, while this wearied flesh draws fleeting breath,
Nor satisfy’d with life, afraid of death,
It haply be thy will that I should know
Glimpse of delight, or pause from anxious woe,

From now, from instant now, great Sire ! dispel
 The clouds that press my soul ; from now reveal
 A gracious beam of light ; from now inspire
 My tongue to sing, my hand to touch the lyre ;
 My opened thought to joyous prospects raise,
 And for thy mercy let me sing thy praise :
 Or, if thy will ordains I still shall wait
 Some new hereafter and a future state,
 Permit me strength my weight of woe to bear,
 And raise my mind superior to my care.
 Let me, howe'er unable to explain
 The secret lab'rinth of thy ways to man,
 With humble zeal confess thy awful pow'r,
 Still, weeping, hope, and, wond'ring, still adore." ^W
 And, lo ! what sees my ravished eye ? what feels
 My wond'ring soul ? an op'ning cloud reveals
 An heav'nly form embody'd and array'd
 With robes of light. ; I heard ; the angel said,

“ Cease, man, of woman born, to hope relief
 From daily trouble and continued grief.

This is the series of perpetual woe
 Which thou, alas ! and thine, are born to know.
 Illustrious wretch ! repine not, nor reply ;
 View not what Heav'n ordains with Reason's eye ;
 Too bright the object is, the distance is too high.
 The man who would resolve the work of fate
 May limit number and make crooked straight :
 Stop thy inquiry, then, and curb thy sense,
 Nor let dust argue with Omnipotence.
 'Tis God who must dispose, and man sustain—
 Born to endure, forbidden to complain :

Thy sum of life must his decrees fulfil;
 What derogates from his command is ill,
 And that alone is good which centres in his will.

Yet, that thy lab'ring senses may not droop,
 Lost to delight, and destitute of hope,
 Remark what I, God's messenger, aver
 From him who neither can deceive nor err.
 Far from thy race distinguished, One shall spring
 Greater in act than victor, more than king
 In dignity and pow'r; sent down from Heav'n
 To succour earth. To him, to him 'tis giv'n
 Passion, and care, and anguish, to destroy;
 Through him soft peace and plenitude of joy
 Perpetual o'er the world redeemed shall flow:
 No more may man inquire or angel know.

Now, Solomon, rememb'ring who thou art,
 Act through thy remnant life a decent part:
 Go forth; be strong; with patience and with care
 Perform and suffer; to thyself severe,
 Gracious to others, thy desires suppress,
 Diffused thy virtues, first of men, be best.
 Thy sum of duty let two words contain,
 O may they graven in thy heart remain!—
 Be humble and be just."—The angel said:
 With upward speed his agile wings he spread,
 Whilst on the holy ground I prostrate lay,
 By various doubts impelled, or to obey
 Or to object; at length (my mournful look
 Heav'nward erect), determined, thus I spoke:

"Supreme, all-wise, eternal Potentate!
 Sole author, sole disposer, of our fate!

Enthroned in light and immortality,
Whom no one fully sees, and none can see!
Original of beings! Power divine!
Since that I live and that I think is thine,
Benign Creator! let thy plastic hand
Dispose its own effect: let thy command
Restore, great Father, thy instructed son,
And in my act may thy great will be done!"

APPENDIX.

ANTIDOTE TO GAMBLING, AS THE OCCASION OF
 FORGERY AND SUICIDE, DUELLING AND MUR-
 DER.—ADDRESSED TO THE YOUNG.

‘Straight be thy course, nor tempt the maze that leads
 Where fell Remorse his shapeless strength conceals.’

BEATTIE.

*Adventurers and Gamblers described—Mischiefs of Gambling—
 —The London Hells—The History of Thurtell, the Mur-
 derer of Weare—Vices practised on Board a Man of War—
 A Gamester’s Honour and Honesty—Hardihood of a Mur-
 derer—Holberg’s Cain, the Fratricide—Reverend Mr.
 Fletcher’s Courage, in disarming a Gamester and a Murderer
 —Various Ways of Suicide described by Jay—Family
 Pride, Avarice, and Parental Tyranny—Edwin and Emma
 —The sweet Maid of Richmond Hill—Duelling reprobated
 by Owen and by Rowland Hill.*

IT is astonishing that the arm of the law cannot reach the number of adventurers who prey upon each other and the public; who support themselves on the ruin of the young, the thoughtless, and the inexperienced; and whose crimes hurry themselves, but especially the unfortunate subjects of their villainy, to robbery, murder, and suicide. The

race is extensive of those who disgrace honour and humanity, who deal in practices, which should brand them with infamy, and which throw an indelible stain on the British character. Their object is gain, and to arrive at this they scruple not to draw the young into their net, to strip the heir of his property, to deprive mothers and children of their inheritance, and plunge them into poverty, wretchedness, and misery. They also frequently add murder to their other crimes, for the purpose of repairing the losses of the gaming-table, and gratifying their revenge against their more successful companions.

Alas! gaming is the shame of our nation! It tarnishes the coronet of the noble; it withers the green laurels of the warrior; it turns our statesmen into swindlers; it shatters the fortunes which have been acquired by merit, industry, and valour; it blasts the prospects of a congratulating family, bankrupts the richest estate, pierces Honour with a dagger, and slays enfeebled Virtue; it makes the peer stoop to be the companion of jockeys, and to lie under obligations to footmen; and last, and most fatal, of all its consequences, it hurries even heroes to the cowardice of suicide.

Oh! could the eyes of our countrymen be opened to the *fiends* which occupy the *London hells*—could

they but behold them lurking in ambush to disgrace, plunder, and eventually destroy, both them and their families, by the vilest deceits and the most palpable system of treachery and connivance—they would flee the gaming-house as a pest-house, and the gambler as the basest of robbers, and the worst and most remorseless of assassins.

Could they behold the wife of their bosom, at present reposing amid every luxury—and their children, now smiling in the lap of abundance—dragged to a workhouse, distracted and forlorn, bewailing the accursed love of play which seduced the husband and parent from his domestic circle of bliss, and made him the sport of men who are denominated *Rooks* and *Blacklegs*, and tempted him in evil hour to commit the never-pardoned crime which suspended him a felon on the gallows;—could they but behold all this, surely they would shudder at the sight, and rush from the illuminated Pandemonium to liberty, peace, and safety!

• The fatal effects of gaming have been lately most awfully exemplified in the notorious case of Thurtell, a man who was born of creditable, affluent, pious, and charitable parents. Example of the best kind was before him; and, had he been content to tread the path of honesty which they had

travelled, he might have been in manhood the stay of their age, as he was in youth their pride.

But Thurtell was ambitious. He entered the marines, and sailed to a foreign land, where he seems to have learned foreign vices, and to forget and despise the virtues of his own country.

A mind inclined to vice will find a *man of war* a hot-bed, in many respects, to ripen his evil inclinations: no wonder, therefore, that every noble principle was there forgotten by Thurtell—that every loose companion was his friend, and the vices of the *ward-room* his delight. There, it seems, he became a sceptic libertine, laughed at religion as the cant of priestcraft, and deemed the terrors of hell and the joys of Heaven nothing better than a *hum*. The whispers of conscience were drowned amidst wanton song and daring blasphemy, and then sunk into silence! There deeds of blood dispelled pity from his breast; and his hardened soul looked on the swelling surges and the sweeping tempest unawed, and could behold ships founder with cool insensibility. The Defence-line-of-battle ship, of which Thurtell formed one of the crew, foundered in returning from the Baltic: eleven only were saved of the whole number, of which Thurtell was one, as if Providence designed to preserve an

individual whose example might show that mercy fails to touch with gratitude the heart which infidelity and vice had steeled ; and that extended life to such only affords the scene for displaying a greater 'multitude of sins.' Till the war was concluded he pursued the same vicious life ; and, when Peace spread her halcyon wing over the nation, Thurtell retired only for a short period to the quiet home of his father, till he had obtained a supply to his exhausted purse, with which he hastened back to London, to form schemes of swindling and treachery, to *live upon the town*, and to plunder the unsuspecting !

In this scene of gaiety, vice, and injustice, he found a multitude of companions ready to unite with him in every lawless practice. Thieves, swindlers, pickpockets, blacklegs, and spies, abound here in every quarter, and, mixed with the gentlemen of fashion, play at *rouge et noir*, in the well-known, but guarded, haunts of gamblers. Half-pay officers here staked their quarter's pay upon the cast of a die ; here, to use their own expressions, the skilful rooks pluck the thoughtless *pigeons* ; and here was, therefore, the ocean on which this corrupted tar steered his privateer for a prosperous cruise. The *tilbury* here was purchased with an

useless bill ; and goods ordered and never paid for, and resold at a low rate for ready cash.

Houses were opened for merchandise, which was never deposited in them ; and insurances formed for pretended property : after which the places in which it was said to be deposited were set on fire by the desperate conspirators, to hide their treachery and fill their purse.

But at the London hells, the gaming-houses which we have mentioned before, Thurtell found his richest prizes. These were his earthly paradise, where he met with terrestrial fiends ready to join him in every scheme of cheating at faro, roulette, rouge et noir, and hazard. These gaming-houses are adorned with magnificence and splendour, and abound with gratifications suited to every palate. The brilliant chandeliers throw around the vast apartments the splendour of a palace, and the richest viands tempt to intoxication. But the greatest circumspection is necessary to gain admittance and a knowledge of the secret signals, by which alone the gamester can make his way through the winding labyrinths, the numerous doors and massive bars, and the vigilant porters, who will open the last wicket to this modern Pandemonium only to those who can give the secret countersign. There

Thurtell and Weare held their frequent meetings, and, by false cards and dice, plundered the inexperienced; and there, with lawyers, broken tradesmen, and horse-jockeys, they aped the men of fashion and title in dress and insolence.

How many victims, stripped of their all by these harpies in these dens of thieves, have been thrown out upon a pitiless world, pennyless and heart-broken, and have rushed, amid the distraction of their brains, inflamed with a keen sense of shame and remorse, to find a pistol or a halter, to rid themselves of a life become odious! How many gentlemen, seduced into the haunts of these unprincipled gamblers, have plunged from the pinnacle of wealth into the grave of a felon, by the decree of that justice which would stamp upon the wretched suicide the mark of public infamy, to deter others from the vices which impel to madness and self-destruction!

The gambler preys on the gambler, and by the arts which he has been taught circumvents his teacher; and, being first ruined by thieves, ruins them in return—like the sharks devouring each other when they meet with no other prey. Such was the case with Thurtell and Weare. Thurtell was defrauded at the gaming-house of every shilling by his *friend* Weare; and there, amid the in-

toxicating draught, he planned the horrid scheme of making his way to his lost treasure through the heart of his companion in the game. His honour was sufficient to make him acknowledge his loss, but not to prevent him from revenging himself for it. So much, then, for a gamester's honour! His honesty forced him to surrender his money; but plotted a scheme of *robbery*, to enable him to get it again. So much, then, for a gamester's *honesty*! Fraud is the basis, an atrocious love of gain the superstructure, and murder forms its pinnacle.

From the scene of infamy Thurtell retired, maddened with his loss, and threatening revenge! He imparted the atrocious scheme to Hunt, another *bosom friend*! Hunt applauded the scheme of assassination, and showed his *friendship* for Thurtell by betraying him, when the deed was done, into the hands of justice! So much for the *friendship* of gamesters.

The particulars of the horrid transaction are too well known to the public to require repetition here. The prime mover and executor of it, Thurtell, became the chief victim of justice: he was torn with the mingled workings of indignation at the baseness and cowardice of his accomplices, with the strugglings of conquered pride, and with efforts to defend his desperate cause from conviction. After

obtaining the delay of a month, in consequence of the irritation of the public mind, during which time he prepared an energetic and resolute defence, he was put upon his trial. The jury were somewhat impressed in his favour by the apparent sincerity and boldness of his manner in reading his defence; but the judge on the bench was shocked at the lies he so firmly asserted, and the blasphemous appeals he made to the Searcher of all hearts, respecting an atrocity which appeared to him as clearly proved against him as if he had witnessed it with his own eyes. A British jury were not to be deceived by the glare of his eloquence and his artful distortion of facts; they brought him in guilty.

Then the mask dropped: he confessed himself satisfied with the verdict; but the same obduracy which had prepared him for the commission of the greatest crime emboldened him to support an intrepidity and contempt of death which was his pride and boast.

Such was the fate of one who might have lived the consolation of his aged parents and the companion of an affectionate brother; but his avarice and his love of gaming brought him to an ignominious death in the prime and vigour of his life, leaving a lesson to the young to beware of forgetting

parental counsel, of forsaking Christian principles, of contracting evil habits, of joining loose companions, of preying upon the community by fraud and gambling, and of indulging a malignant spirit of revenge. ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.’ ‘Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, and sitteth not down in the seat of the scornful.’ ‘My son, avoid the path of the wicked; turn from it, and pass away; for they rest not except they have done mischief; they sleep not except they cause some to fall! They lie in wait for blood; they hunt for the precious life.’ ‘The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding.’ And even Thurtell, it is said, sought some gleams of composure in reading, the night before his execution, the prayers of the Church.

The voice of thy brother’s blood will cry from the ground to every murderer.

From the genius of Holberg is given us the following picture of Cain, the fratricide, on the seashore:

‘Whither doth frantic horror urge
 My hurried steps? Oh, woe is me!
 These dark waves roll a sanguine flood—
 No, no! they are the sea!

To the broad earth's remotest verge
 The wrath of God before me flies,
 And, with a voice that tears my soul,
 "Vengeance, eternal vengeance," cries.

I am accursed; my brother's blood
 Dashes against this wild sea-shore;
 It shrieks upon the hollow blast,
 It thunders in the torrent's roar.

As round the craggy wave-worn rock
 Whirls the impetuous eddying flood,
 So fiercely terror racks my brain,
 From God's decree for Abel's blood.

Lay bare thy depths, thou great profound!
 Show me the womb of Night, thou deep!
 Vain prayer! the Avenger waits me there:
 His eyes are flame—they never sleep.

Plunged in thy bottomless abyss,
 Abel's pale form would meet my sight,
 As, flying—flying now—I see it
 On the tall mountain's topmost height.

E'er since my brother's blood was spilt,
 Oh, woe is me! Oh, woe is me!
 My steps the Avenger's curse pursues,
 It follows—ever follows—me!

NEW MONTHLY MAG. Nov. 1822.

The contrast to this is well illustrated in the following tale of courage in the presence of a murderer, and of the power of conscience in arresting his arm:—

VICAR OF MADELEY AND THE DUELLIST.

Mr. Fletcher had a very profligate nephew, a military man, who had been dismissed from the Sardinian service for base and ungentlemanly conduct. He had engaged in two or three duels, and dissipated his resources in a career of vice and extravagance. This desperate youth waited one day on his eldest uncle, General de Gons; and, presenting a loaded pistol, threatened to shoot him, unless he would immediately advance him five hundred crowns. The general, though a brave man, well knew what a desperado he had to deal with, and gave him a draft for the money; at the same time expostulating freely with him on his conduct. The young madman rode off triumphantly with his ill-gotten acquisition. In the evening, passing the door of his younger uncle, Mr. Fletcher, he determined to call upon him, and began by informing him what General de Gons had done; and, as a proof, exhibited the draft under de Gons' own hand. Mr. Fletcher took the draft from his nephew, and looked at it with astonishment; then, after some remarks, put it in his pocket, and said, 'It strikes me, young man, that you have possessed this only by some indirect method, and in honesty I cannot return it you but with my brother's knowledge and approbation.' The ne-

phew's pistol was immediately at his breast. 'My life,' replied Mr. Fletcher, with perfect calmness, 'is secure in the protection of an almighty Power, nor will he suffer it to be the forfeit of my integrity and your rashness.' This drew from the nephew an observation, that his uncle, de Gons, though an old soldier, was more afraid of death than his brother. 'Afraid of death!' rejoined Mr. Fletcher: 'do you think that I have been twenty-five years minister of the Lord of life to be afraid of death now? No, sir; it is for you; you are a gamester and a cheat, yet call yourself a gentleman; you are a duellist, and for this you style yourself a man of honour. Look there, sir; the broad eye of Heaven is fixed upon us: tremble at the presence of your Maker, who can in a moment kill your body and punish your soul in hell!' The unhappy man turned pale, and trembled alternately with fear and rage: he still threatened his uncle with instant death. Fletcher, though thus menaced, gave no alarm, sought for no weapon, and attempted not to escape. He calmly conversed with his profligate relation, and, at length perceiving him to be affected, addressed him in language truly paternal, till he had fairly disarmed and subdued him. He would not return his brother's draft, but engaged to procure for the young man some immediate relief:

he then prayed with him, and, after fulfilling his promise of assistance, parted with him with much good advice on one side, and many fair promises on the other. The power of courage, formed on piety and principles, together with its influence in overcoming the wildest and most desperate profligacy, was never more finely illustrated than by this anecdote. It deserves to be put into the hands of every self-styled 'man of honour,' to show him how far superior is the courage that dares to die, though it dares not to sin, to the boasted prowess of a mere man of the world. How utterly contemptible does the desperation of a duellist appear when contrasted with the noble intrepidity of such a Christian soldier as the humble Vicar of Madeley!

'In the law of honour there is nothing to abate the demand for blood; there is no legal arbitration of the difference, no Court to inquire into the true grounds of the quarrel, and to balance the merits of the controversy: if the judgment be false, there is no equity to reverse the verdict; if rigorous, there is no mercy to withdraw the victim from suffering.

'It must be evident, from this view which has been presented of the law, that, as an injury may be committed by the most trivial occurrence, so punishment may be inflicted with the most preposterous and unequal retribution. I cannot better il-

illustrate the frivolous foundation upon which an injury may be erected than by adverting to an occurrence of sufficient notoriety in the fashionable world. Two men of fashion, incensed against each other by an accidental rencontre between their respective dogs, dropped in their warmth certain expressions, which rendered them amenable to the bloody code. Duel was declared indispensable; and, in less than twelve hours, one of the two was dispatched into eternity, and the other narrowly escaped the same fate.*

‡ The inequality of the retribution is, indeed, an inevitable consequence of that article of the code which compels men of fashion, without distinction, to decide their differences by fighting a duel. It results from this promiscuous injunction, that the

* 'For an account of this transaction see the trial of Captain Macnamara for the murder of Colonel Montgomery; in which it will appear, that, though the captain admitted the *fact*, yet the jury acquitted him of the *crime*. Such complaisance on the part of juries is particularly favorable to this summary mode of terminating differences. Fatal duels are now become almost as common as highway robberies, and make almost as little impression on the public mind. The *murdered* is carried to his grave, and the *murderer* received back into society with the same honour as if the one had done his duty in sacrificing his life, and the other had only done his in taking it away.'—OWEN'S FASHIONABLE WORLD, p. 29, 30.

peaceable man must fight the quarrelsome; that the heir of a noble family must meet the ruined esquire; and that the man who has never drawn a trigger in his life must encounter the fashionable ruffian who has all his life been doing little else. This inequality is further manifest from the different circumstances and connexions of life under which the combatants may be found. The son of many hopes may be matched against the worthless prodigal; the virtuous parent against the unprincipled seducer; and the man of industry, usefulness, and beneficence, against the miscreant who only lives to pamper his lusts and to corrupt his fellow-creatures. Nothing has here been said of the indiscriminate manner in which judgment is executed. The innocent and the guilty must both be involved in the same awful contingency; each must put his life to hazard; and the probability is, that, if one of the two should fall, it will be the man whose conduct least entitled him to punishment, and whose life was most worth preserving.

‘ Is it not, however, high time that the magistracy of the nation should resume the dignity of their office, and no longer suffer these umpires of their own disputes to proceed, without afterwards conferring upon them the dignity of the halter? I question if this *honour*, twice or thrice conferred,

would not prove an effectual remedy to so terrible a disease. When the whole race of duellists find that they are liable to be hanged as intentional murderers, for presuming to settle their disputes, excited by the mere freaks of passion, and generally in a drunken frolic, when they ought to appeal to the wholesome laws of their country, it will be much to the credit of a civilized nation.'

HILL'S DIALOGUES, Vol. II. p. 200.

So many are the deplorable consequences of vice, that a physician of no common reputation has told us that not one in a thousand die a natural death: and a higher authority has declared that the wicked shall not live out half their days. In many ways persons may be chargeable with suicide besides swallowing poison, acting the madman in a duel, or playing the fool in a balloon. Life may be taken away slowly as well as suddenly—by negligence as well as by violence. What think you of the man who indulges himself in the excesses of intemperance, which breed and nourish all manner of diseases? What think you of the man who harbours evil passions, and suffers anger to burn him, envy to gnaw him, anxiety to corrode him? What think you of the man who, by pursuing too much business, oppresses nature, injures his faculties, and deprives himself of rest,

and relaxation, and ease? He forgets that 'the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.' What think you of those who, to amass money, will deny themselves the conveniences and necessities of life? What think you of those martyrs of vanity, who, to appear in the fashion, will avail themselves of modes of apparel, I will not say incompatible with decency, but hazardous to health? What think you of those who carelessly or presumptuously disregard the beginnings of disorder, and suffer that which might be easily checked at first to become inveterate and fatal? 'A little cold,' says an original writer, 'is a little death; a little more chills us to clay, and fits us for the damps of the grave.' What think you of those who lie long and late in bed, relaxing the fibres, unstringing the nerves, evaporating the animal spirits, till they start from their own shadow? We would not have you finical and delicate; but a proper regard to health is a duty enforced by the most awful considerations.

To this may be added, what think you of the parent who, from motives of avarice, or to gratify family pride, will do violence to the strongest and most virtuous affections of the heart, which re-echoes—

'Wisdom and worth were all he had;
But these were all to me!'

Parents should guard the hearts of their children by selecting their companions and superintending their walks in life; or else, should their affections become powerfully engaged by the acquaintances which they have suffered, the intimacies they have encouraged, by the 'eye serenely mild' which they have permitted to gaze upon them, and the 'feeling heart' which they have suffered to approach them, they should weigh the business in the balance of reason and justice, and take care to deal gently with hearts too tender for any violent agitation, which a frown may sink or a denial break. Stern censure and parental pride may blight the health and peace of those whom we most love, and hurry them to the grave, and leave us to bewail our childless wretchedness and folly without hope and relief. The simple tale of Edwin and Emma most touchingly exemplifies this:—

' A mutual flame was quickly caught ;
 Was quickly, too, revealed ;
 For neither bosom lodged a wish
 That virtue keeps concealed.

What happy hours of heartfelt bliss
 Did Love on both bestow !
 But bliss too mighty long to last,
 Where Fortune proves a foe.

Her sister, who, like Envy formed,
 Like her in mischief joyed,
 To work them harm, with wicked skill,
 Each darker art employed.

The father, too, a sordid man,
Who love nor pity knew,
Was all unfeeling as the clod
From whence his riches grew.

Long had he seen their secret flame,
And seen it long unmoved ;
Then, with a father's frown, at last
He sternly disapproved.

In Edwin's gentle heart a war
Of different passions strove ;
His heart, that durst not disobey,
Yet could not cease to love.

Denied her sight, he oft behind
The spreading hawthorn crept,
To snatch a glance, to mark the spot
Where Emma walked and wept.

Oft, too, on Stanmore's wintry waste,
Beneath the moonlight shade,
In sighs to pour his softened soul,
The midnight mourner strayed.

His cheek, where health with beauty glowed,
A deadly pale o'ercast :
So fades the fresh rose in its prime
Before the northern blast.

The parents now, with late remorse,
Hung o'er his dying bed ;
And wearied Heaven with fruitless vows,
And fruitless sorrow shed.

" 'Tis past !" he cried ; " but, if your souls
Sweet Mercy yet can move,
Let these dim eyes once more behold
What they must ever love !"

She came ; his cold hand softly touched,
And bathed with many a tear :
Fast falling o'er the primrose pale,
So morning dews appear.

But, oh ! his sister's jealous care
(A cruel sister she !)
Forbade what Emma came to say—
“ My Edwin, live for me !”

Now homeward as she hopeless wept
The churchyard path along,
The blast blew cold, the dark owl screamed
Her lover's funeral song.

Amid the falling gloom of night
Her startling fancy found
In every bush his hovering shade,
His groan in every sound.

Alone, appalled, thus had she passed
The visionary vale—
When, lo, the death-bell smote her ear,
Sad sounding in the gale !

Just then she reached, with trembling step,
Her aged mother's door :
“ He's gone !” she cried ; “ and I shall see
That angel face no more !

I feel, I feel this breaking heart
Beat high against my side !”
From her white arm down sunk her head—
She shivered, sighed, and died.'

What folly, when treasures of gold are amassed,
that sordid Avarice should refuse to open the gate

to Love and Happiness, which rubies and diamonds want power to purchase ; and that pompous wealth and parental tyranny should sink the heart in despair, or drive the fired brain to madness and suicide ! A powerful example of this kind, from the hand of Maurice, we here subjoin from his ‘ Richmond Hill :’

‘ Amid this confluence of sublime delight
That bursts upon my soul, and charms my sight,
What deathful shrieks my startled ear invade,
And turn the blaze of noon to midnight shade ?
Ye blooming virgins that, delighted, rove
Sheen’s bow’ry walks, and Ham’s sequestered grove,
Pause in exulting pleasure’s full career,
To mark the martyr’d Mira’s passing bier ;
And o’er yon pavement, stained with vestal blood,
Heave the deep sigh, and pour the crystal flood.

Oh ! Reubens, for thy pencil’s magic skill,
To paint the Lass of Richmond’s beauteous Hill !
Oh ! for the moaning dove’s impassioned strains,
Or hers who to the silent night complains,
The sorrows of disastrous love to sing,
And beauty blasted in its dawning spring !
Well, Richmond, might thy echoing shades bemoan
Their glory darkened, and their pride o’erthrown ;
For she was fairer than the fairest maid
That roams thy beauteous brow or laurelled shade—
Than all the roses in thy bow’rs that bloom,
Or lilies that thy blossomed vale perfume.
Her form was symmetry itself, designed
The perfect model of her lovely kind—

Angelic sweetness, every nameless grace,
 Beamed in the beauteous oval of her face :
 Loose to the gale, in many a careless fold,
 Redundant flowed her locks of waving gold ;
 Her eye, whence Love's resistless lightning streamed,
 The dazzling brilliance of the diamond beamed ;
 While, like the virgin blush Aurora sheds
 When genial Spring its opening blossom spreads,
 In charming contrast with her neck of snow,
 On her soft cheek the bright carnations glow.

This radiant wonder was Mercator's pride,
 For whom the winds, with every swelling tide,
 Wafted rich gems from India's rubied shore,
 And, from Columbian mines, the glowing ore.
 The fatal hour that life to Mira gave
 Consigned her beauteous mother to the grave :
 Thus, when the gorgeous bird Arabia rears,
 The radiant symbol of revolving years,
 That loves to bathe amid the solar stream,
 Hatched by its heat, and cherished by its beam,
 Stretched on its costly bed of rich perfumes,
 Amidst the blaze of burning gums consumes,
 A lovelier Phoenix from its ashes springs,
 Rears its bright crest, and spreads its purple wings.

Where'er she trod, admiring crowds pursued—
 Her sex with envy, man with rapture, viewed
 Beauty that might the frigid stoic move,
 And melt the frozen anchorite to love !
 Like the bright star that gleams around the pole,
 Its central beams on all attractive roll ;
 The shining point that fixed each gazing eye,
 The cynosure of Sheen's serener sky.

Pierced by this lovelier Helen's fatal charms,
 Each youthful Paris throbb'd with soft alarms ;
 Richmond through all her bounds, like Troy, was fired,
 And in severer flames her sons expired.

Foremost and comeliest of th' admiring train,
 Thus bound in Beauty's adamant chain,
 The brave Eugenio sued ; nor Mira spurn'd
 The generous flame that in a soldier burned.
 With Love united, a sublimer guest,
 Unsullied Honour, reign'd within that breast—
 While, in the glow of life's exulting prime,
 Of aspect dignified, of port sublime—
 Skilled equally to weave the mazy dance,
 And in the battle wield the thund'ring lance—
 His manly beauty every virgin charmed,
 As Mira's every youth to rapture warmed.

Full twenty rolling summers scarce had shed
 Their ripening honours on his youthful head ;
 Yet, in th' ensanguined field with conquest crowned,
 That head a wreath of radiant laurel bound ;
 For, fired with high ambition's noble rage,
 He gave to war's rude toils his tenderest age :
 And still, where Glory showed the radiant way,
 Braving the polar ice or tropic day,
 His sabre, in the front of battle raised,
 Flamed in the trench, or on the rampart blazed—
 His soul no fear could daunt, no danger move,
 He owned no victor but all-conquering Love !

With kindred virtues, kindred passions, fired—
 For different, but resistless, charms admired—
 Far from the curious crowd's obtrusive gaze,
 In the deep windings of the bow'ry maze,

In the dark umbrage of the deepest glade,
Eugenio and his lovely Mira strayed ;
Or, wand'ring slow by Thames' majestic stream,
When Cynthia lends to Love her guiding beam,
And conscious orbs, on high, unnumbered roll,
Breathed the soft transports of the impassioned soul.
But who the unutterable strain shall tell
That from the lips of raptured valour fell,
Or paint the scarlet on *her* cheek that glowed,
As through each vein the thrilling accents flowed?
Titian! the task transcends thy vaunted pow'r,
And ever sealed be Love's mysterious bow'r!

On such distinguished worth, so fond a pair—
So valiant *this*, and *that* so passing fair—
To doubt that Heav'n would look benignant down,
And virtuous love with nuptial transport crown,
Seemed impious to the Pow'r that reigns on high,
And holds the balance of the impartial sky.
But who, mysterious Providence! shall scan
Those deep designs that mock inquiring man?
Dark rolls the tempest through the turbid air,
And through the gloom ensanguined meteors glare;
Cimmerian horrors shade th' Idalian grove,
And Furies revel in the bowers of Love.
A ravening demon, from the lowest hell,
Avarice! stalked forth from her infernal cell:
On stern Mercator rushed the haggard wight,
And each fair prospect veiled in endless night,
While Hymen with his purple train retires,
With lamp inverted, and extinguished fires.
Girded with triple steel, his savage heart
Was dead to Love, and callous to his dart;

No charms in valour could his eye behold,
 Nor worth but in Potosi's treasured gold.
 Ardent, but *secret*, was the flame that preyed
 On the adoring youth and matchless maid.
 In vain with purest fires Eugenio burned,
 And ardent love with ardour was returned :
 No Indian gems were his, nor treasured ore,
 His only fortune was the sword he bore ;
 Yet in his veins the blood of heroes streamed,
 And on his face his generous lineage beamed.
 Thus, to Despair's unpitied pangs consigned,
 Full many a moon with wasting fires they pined :
 On Mira's cheek the living roses fade,
 Corroding cares destroy the beautiful maid ;
 Nor more with festive joy Eugenio glows,
 While round the board the sparkling nectar flows.
 Despair, at length, and grief, resolve inspire—
 With trembling steps they seek the haughty sire ;
 Submissive at a parent's feet they bow,
 And all the *guilt* of spotless love avow.
 The pangs that heaved Eugenio's struggling breast
 With manly eloquence the youth expressed ;
 While sighs, and bursting tears, too well declare
 The keener anguish of the afflicted fair.
 But who the tiger's fury shall assuage ?
 Who check the southern whirlwind's wasteful rage ?
 The bare avowal of their cherished flame
 With horror shook Mercator's trembling frame.
 He saw his treasured hoards, that buried lay,
 Dragged from their deep recesses into day—
 In air Ambition's tow'ring projects blown,
 And all the labours of his life o'erthrown :

With frantic aspect, and terrific tone,
 He badè Eugenio from those walls begone—
 Then from his struggling arms his daughter tore,
 Never to clasp those angel beauties' more :
 Obsequious myrmidons rush in, and bear,
 Far from his longing sight, the shrieking fair.
 With horror filled, yet glowing with disdain,
 Scarce could th' indignant youth his ire restrain—
 Vengeance on all the dastard throng to pour,
 And deluge with their blood the crimsoned floor.
 A parent's rights and venerated name
 Checked at its height resentment's kindled flame :
 Slow he retires from all his soul held dear,
 While down his cheek descends the starting tear—
 That tear which foreign to his soul was shed ;
 That cheek by burning rage with crimson spread.
 With bolts of steel the massy gates are barred,
 And fiends, in human form, the entrance guard.

Thus from her loved Eugenio rudely torn,
 Thus doomed in endless solitude to mourn ;
 Debarred each joy the smiling Loves impart,
 When bounds, in youth's gay spring, th' exulting heart ;
 For ever bathed in tears her beauteous eye,
 And bursting from her breast th' incessant sigh ;
 Of soul-distracting pangs the hopeless prey,
 Desponding Mira passed the tedious day ;
 While, direr than the dragon, famed of old,
 That watched Hesperia's fruits of blooming gold,
 Where'er she treads a hideous hag is near,
 Whose hoarse invectives stun her deafened ear.

No Cupids hover round her evening bow'r,
 In painful vigils rolled the midnight hour ;

Or, oft invoked to suffering Beauty's aid,
 Through the dire horrors of the incumbent shade,
 If Sleep her opiate balm indulgent shed,
 Terrific phantoms glare around her bed.
 In blood now wading o'er th' embattled plain,
 She seeks her love 'mid heaps of warriors slain ;
 Or, racked with all the tortures of despair,
 Beholds him wedded to some happier fair !
 Graved on her breast the gloomy portrait reigns,
 And the high roofs resound her piteous strains !

One fatal morn, ere yet the Fount of day
 Illumed the mountains with his golden ray,
 When, by prolonged, intense, distracting thought,
 To all the fever of delirium wrought ;
 Her guardian's eyes in leaden slumbers closed,
 Those Argus' eyes, that ne'er by day reposed ;
 Soft from her tear-drenched couch, unheard, unseen,
 Stole the sweet maniac of admiring Sheen :
 To one beloved balcony urged her flight,
 Where boundless prospects charmed the roving sight ;
 For o'er the skies, with glowing crimson spread,
 Her richest vernal tints Aurora shed ;
 Eager around she rolled her streaming eyes,
 While in her soul remembered raptures rise ;
 But chief thy bow'rs, enchanting Sheen ! invite
 The groves of bliss, the gardens of delight !
 Where, with her vanquished heart's triumphant lord,
 She oft had ranged, adoring and adored !

And now inciting demons stronger drew
 His pictured form before her frenzied view—
 A form, the sainted maid with love to fire,
 Glowing with beauty—burning with desire.

Not great Alcides, in his loveliest bloom,
Waved with more majesty his warrior-plume
Than that fair image, which its outstretched arms
Impatient spread, to clasp her bridal charms.
The glittering vision fired her maddening brain,
Nor did the phantom stretch its arms in vain—
With furious transport, from that dizzy height,
Headlong she sprang, and sunk in endless night!

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THE END.

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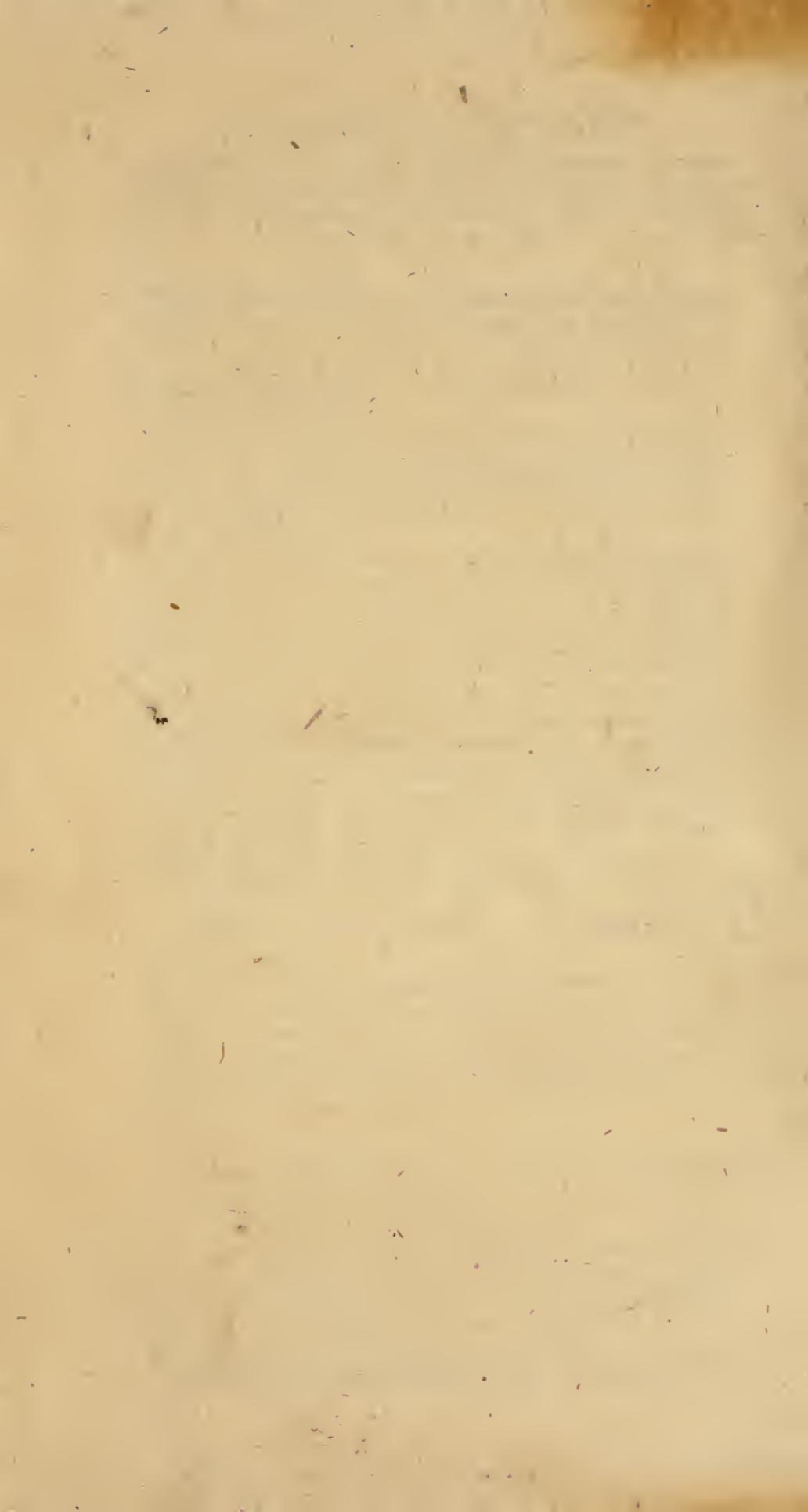
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