

YAMBOO.

A TALE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

YAMBOO;

OR,

THE NORTH AMERICAN SLAVE.

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE BRAVO OF BOHEMIA.

Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in black and white the same.

COWPER.

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YAMBOO.

CHAP. I.

SEATED by the bed-side of the suffering Yamboo, whose recovery he hardly dared allow himself to expect, Henry, or indeed the whole world, were of too little importance to withdraw his attention from its more interesting object. It is true he read the letter, because the feeble Yamboo had entreated him to do so; but it served only to remind him more forcibly of the ungrateful guest to whom he owed his present heavy affliction.

“For he to be the detested fiend!” exclaimed he, “whom I received with hospitality—he is one of the vile friends who is leading him to ruin!”

Scarcely had Leviston lost sight of Alvington, than he met, as he said, by appointment, his tool, Forrester, between whom and himself the conversation had passed, which he so faithfully repeated on his return to Henry. Satisfied that he had at last completed the sanguinary work for which he had taken his Welsh journey, and for which Forrester had been sent thither some months before—tired of the suspense they were kept in as to his proceedings—and fearful of risking letters, expressive of their disapprobation of such tardy progress, Leviston proposed visiting the scene of action, as he termed it, and for which Henry’s encreasing embarrassment gave him a good plea; but the unexpected contrition of their vile engine, Forrester, whom hardened nature, more than half subdued by the benevolence of the exemplary being whom he had pledged himself to destroy, threatened to mar their well-concerted plan, since it promised rather to preserve than remove the obstacle to avarice and revenge: hence his insinuations of Yamboo’s passion for his wife—a stimulus he well knew could not fail to operate on a disposition so violent as was Forrester’s, who had been too long subservient to his convenience to leave him unacquainted with his character.

This man had formerly lived with Leviston’s father in the capacity of a groom, at which time he was in high estimation with his young master, who was, at that early age, no less attached to the stable than his father had ever been; and who, to his extravagant fondness for horse-racing and other pursuits, no less prejudicial to his fortune, but small, owed that ruin which, at his death, left a worthy woman, but far less worthy son, in indigence. Happily for the latter, his mother’s merits procured them friends, to whom he owed a commission in the line, of which, however, he contrived to dispose; and to their interest, through her intercession, he was afterwards indebted for a respectable situation in a large banking-house: while Forrester, less fortunate, continued, through idleness and a series of bad habits, to remove from one service to another, till he at last contrived to join one of those desperate gangs who continue to infest every public road, to the terror of the passing traveller, and into whose merciless hands Leviston was destined to fall on his return to London.

Late one evening, from an excursion little less honourable, he was rudely commanded to stop, by a man who at the same moment seized his horse’s bridle, and presented a pistol to his breast. Determined not to be robbed by a single footpad, he braved the fire, and attempted to spur his horse on, which the fellow perceiving, struck him with the but-end of the pistol, which was not charged: the scuffle which ensued

ended in Leviston's being dismounted; but proving, on equal ground, much too powerful for his man, very soon brought him to the ground, when the rays of the moon, falling full upon his face, discovered features with which he was well acquainted.

No sooner had he pronounced—"Forrester! is it possible?" than the other, equally surprised, exclaimed—"Mr. William, is it indeed you? Never, had I known it, would I have dared to lift my hand against so good a master! but, indeed, had I never lost your worthy father, I had been at this moment an honest man. Now," he continued, falling on his knees, "now my life is in your hands, and I have no right to expect mercy!"

Leviston, at this period of his life, did not want humanity; but he wanted judgment to discriminate between a laudable exertion of it, and the false sentiment which now bid him spare the life of a villain, who would not have hesitated to take his, had he possessed the means: but what weighed still more in favour of Forrester's safety, Leviston was then in want of a servant; and though it was not absolutely requisite that among the desired qualifications he was to possess, he should be quite as well acquainted with the business of the road as he evidently was, still there were many traits in his character which Leviston still remembered, that made him willing to take him into his service.

After a moment's hesitation, therefore, he said—"Forrester, what extremity could drive you to such a fearful and dangerous mode of life? You are young, and able to work."

"Ill advice and bad company, your honour," said the practised villain; "but this is the first time I dared to earn the wages of sin, though I own, with shame, I have too long shared them; but from this moment, if my life was spared, I would renounce my evil ways and this way of living, even though I were to beg my bread; but that I dare not expect."

"If I could depend upon your sincerity," said Mr. Leviston, hesitating, "could be assured that you were willing to get an honest livelihood, and, moreover, that your gratitude would bind you to my service, I might be induced to bury this disagreeable business for ever, and provide for you in future myself; but you are aware that you are now in my power, and have, by the laws of your land, forfeited a life, which I am nevertheless inclined, from my former knowledge of you, to save."

Neither promises of amendment, or protestations of that eternal fidelity which must bind him a slave to the preserver of his life, were spared; and it was agreed, on parting, he should attend his new patron on the following day, which he did, punctual to the hour of his appointment, after taking an honourable leave of the gang to which he belonged, many of whom rejoiced in his departure, because less hardened villains than himself; while the rest, pitying his want of spirit, in preferring a life of servitude to their glorious freedom, heard his intention with perfect indifference.

Leviston had daily more reason to be satisfied with the strange chance that had thrown Forrester in his way, who was even servilely attentive to his smallest wishes: but a short period sufficed to shew their convenience to each other; and few difficulties occurred to the master, from which the man did not contrive some plan to emancipate them, till mutual obligations nearly rendered them upon an equality, when the latter made a proposal, which at once surprised and staggered Mr. Leviston. It was no less than permission to marry a mistress of his, who, though somewhat declining in favour, he had taken no steps to part with, or indeed formed any resolution towards doing so: but a short deliberation proving the advantages resulting from the timely removal of this burthen, he

availed himself of what he, nevertheless, deemed Forrester's presumption, by giving his consent to the union, provided Mary's could be obtained: this was a less difficult task than he had believed possible.

In personal advantages Forrester was his superior, and his rank in life more suited to that in which she had moved before her elevation to one of infamy, as the mistress of Leviston. He had seduced her from parents, who, though in humble life, were themselves too virtuous long to survive the disgrace of an only child; and when, after repeated instances of his affection for her, Forrester entreated her to marry him, she had no hesitation in accepting the alternative allowed her, and gladly resigned the further protection of Leviston, who equally congratulated himself upon his newly-recovered freedom, and was lavish in the comforts he provided for the new-married couple.

Forrester, though naturally of a violent disposition, attached himself with even extravagant fondness to his wife, which rather increased than diminished on the birth of little William, for whom Mr. Leviston offered to stand—a favour that was accepted by his father, who, nevertheless, kept strict guard on the conduct of both his wife and master, till perfectly satisfied that indifference on each side left him nothing to fear; and he continued his services till the period when Leviston, knowing what an able ally he could command at will, volunteered to extricate Longford from the insurmountable difficulty of which he complained in the person of his brother, whom he steadfastly adhered in pronouncing an impostor: and for this purpose Forrester was convened, the plan laid open, and a liberal reward offered, in the name of the injured Longford, for the completion of such a meritorious act, with suitable instructions for his journey, which he was to begin immediately, and to secure its safety alone; but to this article Forrester objected—his wife was to accompany him—he was to be allowed his own time for the work—and only upon these conditions he promised to execute it faithfully. There was no alternative, and he was permitted to follow his own plan, which, on his first arrival in the neighbourhood of Alvington, every thing appeared to favour.

Previous to his leaving London, he had sent for a brother, who had applied to him for assistance, and whom he intended also to take with him into Wales; but his whole proceedings were inexplicable to Mary, who was told that he had been employed by a friend of his master, to perform a signal service for him, which, if he succeeded in, would be so handsomely rewarded, as to leave him for ever independent of Mr. Leviston, who would then take Edwin into his service, and he should have the satisfaction of providing comfortably for his brother; but her astonishment increased as she listened to Forrester's conversation with the old man Darwin, and still more when she was given to understand she must, for a short time, forego every comfort, and become the inmate of a wretched hovel, without being permitted to know or even ask the reasons which made such a change in their appearance requisite, as Forrester had provided clothes of the coarsest kind, and which he said were better suited to the purpose of their journey.

He had been told that captain Longford's intellects, having been materially injured by the wounds he had received in India, he was become altogether the dupe of an artful black servant, who had been sent home with him, and who had acquired such a complete ascendancy over him, as not only to have prevailed on him to disinherit and turn his own son out of doors, but had actually persuaded his master into a belief that he was himself his natural child; while the captain, wholly governed by him, countenanced the falsehood, and had made over an immense property to him, which, in case of his

death, must come to a very liberal fine-spirited young man, who would know how to reward those who would undertake to remove this black gentleman, which might easily be accomplished, as he was in the habit of wandering about constantly alone, and whose death no one would trouble themselves to inquire much about. Not so the story told by Darwin and his rustic neighbours, among whom Yamboo was an oracle.

Forrester reluctantly heard the different account, and endeavoured to persuade himself, this favourite, in whose praise they were so eloquent, had purchased their good opinion, which, at all events, must not bias his; and firm to the cause in which he had embarked, he began to make the necessary observations, for the better arrangement of his future plan, previous to the completion of which he intended to remove all suspicion, by leaving the place with his family; but this Edwin's disastrous accident unavoidably delayed, while the generous benefit heaped upon him tended to disarm the savage purpose he meditated, and made him curse the moment he proposed taking his brother with him. To this was added the loss of his habitation, an event which at first promised a plea for his leaving that part of the country; but after the steps taken by captain Longford and his son, for the accommodation of his family, had he still persisted in going, what could have rendered Mr. Longford's death more suspicious, had it followed his departure? and how, if he staid, could he raise his hand against such an undeserved friend? Hence arose his sullen acceptance of the hermitage—hence his irresolution—when the superior agent of the dark plot presented himself at Alvington, the first time, and only proceeded to the next town, for the purpose of apprising Forrester of his arrival, appointing an interview with him, and leaving the letter, which was to furnish him with an excuse for quitting the manor, when he might think it most expedient to do so.

Forrester's proceedings had hitherto been very unpromising, and he soon saw the necessity of spurring this minion to a task his compunction had magnified; this his walk to the hermitage with Yamboo furnished means for; judging him by people of colour, Mrs. Forrester's charms, though less brilliant than when he had robbed her of innocence, were still captivating, had been the magnet of all Yamboo's boasted generosity; he therefore watched him closely; but it afforded him no plea to suspect, even for a moment, that this could have been the case; and reluctantly saw the purity of soul, the spotless integrity, that breathed in every sentiment, and dignified every action of this destined victim; but this rendered it more expedient to arm Forrester against him, and to do this it was alone requisite to name his wife. It was then no longer the fancied injuries of another which he was to redress, but his own real ones; and all the passions which had combined in early life to render him a finished villain, were at once aroused; vehemently he swore to be amply revenged, and cursed his own folly for needing another to point out what his now jaundiced eye fancied he might have seen in a thousand instances: and Leviston, satisfied that he had placed all things beyond the reach of failure, left him in triumph, and returned to London, where, no less anxious than Longford, he waited the result, which they mutually concluded would reach them in a pathetic entreaty from Captain Longford, that Henry would hasten into Wales, to console him, and supply the place of his lamented brother, and which almost promised to be the case.

A few days previous to the arrival of Mr. De Lasaux's letter, Yamboo, after accompanying Mr. Leviston to the extremity of the park, was returning to the house, when his attention was arrested by the sound of William Forrester's voice, exclaiming—“Look, sir! look at William's horse!” when, to his great amusement, he beheld the little

fellow mounted on a large goat, which two of his companions were leading by the horns. Highly amused, he waited till the cavalcade approached, when, fearful the animal would be teased much more than his humanity thought proper, he gave the boys a few halfpence to release him, and told William he should walk with him to the manor for some fruit. This promise far outweighed the pleasure of his ride, and he continued chatting till he reached the house, where Yamboo found tea waiting for him; after which, as captain Longford declined walking, and his sister thought the evening too damp for her to venture, he set out with an intention of seeing William partly through the park; but having gathered from his little prattle that uncle Edwin was not so well as he had been, Yamboo proceeded to the hermitage, where, to his astonishment, he found Mrs. Forrester in visible distress of mind. She had been recently crying violently; and Edwin, who appeared little less agitated, was striving in vain to comfort her. Judging some new calamity had befallen them, which must relate to Forrester, as he alone of the family was absent, he eagerly inquired after him.

“He had but just left the house,” she said, “but she could not tell where he was gone.”

He then ventured to ask the cause of her distress, in which his generous and feeling heart sincerely sympathized.

“Would to God, sir,” she replied, bursting into tears, “that I might tell you! but I dare not; and yet how to act I know not.”

“But I do,” said Edwin, “and will tell his honour, for we have no other friend; and, though it should be my death, I will say what I suspect.”

More than ever amazed, Yamboo listened in silence, while he continued—“Some one, I am sure, sir, has persuaded my brother that all your great kindness to us has been on his wife’s account, for he has owned that he was told you had confessed you loved her, from her first coming here, and had got this place fitted up to keep her near you; and we suspect it must be the gentleman who has been on a visit at the great house, though he will not acknowledge it, nor indeed do we know that he has seen him, or what could have made him so wicked as to say it; but brother has been here in a great passion, and after using his wife very hardly, swore, on leaving the hermitage, she should never see him again; but I hope he will repent, and come back to her, for he must know it is all a story, only he is so violent, nobody can make him hear reason. Indeed, but that he went from home very well to-day, I should believe he was hurt in his head, for he will not listen to us.”

“Yes, he will be convinced when he hear me,” said Yamboo, meekly; “only some person, not so happy as himself, try to make him less so; but he will believe me more than strangers.”

“Indeed I have too much reason to fear, sir,” replied Mrs. Forrester, (as she returned from an inner room, where having put William into bed, and promised him, with a kiss, not to cry any more) “that my poor Forrester has left me for ever; I have too much reason to suspect who has tried to deceive him so cruelly, but I dare not tell you.”

Yamboo wanted no information; the ungrateful Leviston stood confessed in the business; his base insinuations left him no room to doubt that he had been, in part, the purport of his morning’s visit to the hermitage; and feeling only for the misery into which it had plunged Forrester, bade his wife be comforted, and endeavour to conceal, as much as possible, the cause of her sorrow from the knowledge of her neighbours, as there was

no doubt but her husband would come back very shortly, when reason had got the better of his passion. Then he added—"Him own heart will tell him I a friend, and not the villain some one make me. Now it grow late, and captain Longford wonder what keep me so long. If Forrester come back to-night, say he must stay in him house till I come to-morrow morning, and see what must be done."

"'Tis done now!" said the insatiable villain, plunging a knife into his side as he stepped from the threshold of the hermitage to leave it, round which Forrester, like an evil spirit, had hovered to deliberate, not whether he should strike the fatal blow, for that was already determined; but when his ungovernable passion had left him no power to conceal the information he had received, and in every bitter invective poured on Yamboo's head, his innocent wife was included, frantically he vowed never to see her again, and with frenzied eagerness darted from the house, in hopes of meeting the benefactor, against whose life he was doubly armed, and who he knew generally walked of an evening, and mostly alone: but chance did not favour his design, and again he wandered towards the residence of his injured wife, when, through the small casement, though nearly concealed by ivy, he discovered Mr. Longford seated between Mary and Edwin, a sight which at once revived his love for her, and stronger detestation of the man who had tried to lure her from him. Placing himself near the door, he endeavoured to hear what passed; but they spoke too low, and he was again retreating to wait for his departure, that he might, undiscovered, follow his footsteps to a convenient distance, when he heard him approach the door, and, as he opened it to pass, pronounce the last sentence; his murderous hand had already grasped the fatal weapon, and now, trembling with rage, performed the deed; but of the promised reward which was to have followed, he thought no longer. Staggered by the blow, Yamboo reeled back, when Mrs. Forrester, who had followed him to the door, clasped him in her arms, and, with a dreadful shriek, fell with him lifeless to the ground. Still maddened with unsubdued passion, he rudely tore him from her feeble grasp, and would have dashed him on the floor, had not the awful appeal to his brutality transfixed him with horror to the spot.

"Forrester! Longford, him not deserve this; but a bad man deceive you, and the friend you murder pardon and forgive you from him heart; fly then before some one hear what you do, and it be too late—go instantly!"

However he might have meditated flight, the power to do so was over; and, as if to add tortures to his guilty soul, an almost instantaneous conviction of Mr. Longford's innocence flashed on his bewildered mind, and told him he had been made the dupe of Leviston's more consummate villany, damning proofs of which his own knowledge of his character supplied him with; and frantically lamenting what he had done, on his knees implored forgiveness, while he tore the apron from his still insensible wife, and forming it into bandages, began eagerly to staunch the yet bleeding wound.

Yamboo, feeling himself faint with loss of blood, entreated Edwin, who stood in speechless agony over him, to go to the manor for assistance, that he might see his father before he died.

"Yes, fly!—go!" said Forrester, in wild delirium, "and let them take me to my fate! Tell them I have murdered my friend, my benefactor, and, lastly, my wife!"

"Unhappy man," returned Yamboo, "why you not go as I bid you? Perhaps I not die, then you come back; but I never say whose hand I fall by."

Every word was a dagger to the repentant Forrester, to which his wife's reproaches added.

When, restored to sense, she beheld the state of Yamboo—"Frantic wretch!" she exclaimed, "what have you done? where shall I go? what shall I do?"

"Go to the manor, I entreat," said Longford, exerting his little remaining strength; "say you left me wounded, but you not know how; I must tell all myself, to save your husband."

"To save your murderer!" she returned. "Oh, no; though I die with him, and that I shall do, it must not be."

"I will go to the manor!" said Forrester, rushing from the house as he spoke, before any one had time to stop him. In his road he overtook two of the servants, who, terrified at his wild appearance, scarcely knew how to act, when he entreated them to procure assistance to remove Mr. Longford from the hermitage, where he lay in a wounded state, while he proceeded for the surgeon, and in an instant was out of hearing.

At first they proposed returning to the house, but as they were still nearer to the hermitage, agreed to hasten there, where, to their astonishment, they found their young master scarcely able to beg he might instantly be conveyed home.

"For God's sake, what does all this mean?" said Peter, in a trembling voice; "who has dared to injure such a god-like creature?"

"No one is able to answer your question, Peter; you need not ask what no one know to tell you; but——" and, incapable of finishing the sentence, he fainted.

"You, at least, must know, Mrs. Forrester, something about it?"

"Oh, I dare not tell you all I know," she answered, "for Mr. Longford bound me to secrecy: but if he dies," she added, with a wild stare, "all, all must be known! Now I entreat you to convey him into the air—it may revive him."

"We must get him home," said Peter, while tears streamed down his aged cheeks, "for no time is to be lost. Think you, William," turning to his fellow-servant, "we can convey him thither in a blanket?"

"Oh I can assist!" said the distracted Edwin. "And I," said his no less distressed sister, "too can help you!" and in this manner they were proceeding slowly across the path towards the house, from which the whole family issued, followed by the surgeon, who, directed thither by Forrester, had just arrived, and given the first alarm.

Mute agony alone portrayed the feelings of captain Longford, when he beheld this beloved son to all appearance lifeless; and so wholly occupied was every one in executing the surgeon's orders, and conveying him to bed, that no inquiries as to the cause of the accident interrupted the profound and even awful silence which was observed throughout the house: but no sooner had he examined the wound, and pronounced it not in itself dangerous, than a gleam of hope restored the powers of recollection, of which surprise and terror had deprived them; but it was only momentary, when he added, that though, from the direction of the weapon, no vital part was affected, every thing was to be apprehended from loss of blood, which had so exhausted him, as to leave his recovery even more than doubtful.

Fervently did captain Longford implore Heaven for even a momentary restoration of his senses, that he might have a plea for hope—and his afflicted prayer was heard.

Yamboo, after proper restoratives, opened his languid eyes, and fixed them pensively on his father, whose extravagant joy might have been fatal to the son, had not

the surgeon assured him that only on a promise of his not uttering a word, or in any way disturbing his patient, could he be allowed to remain in the room, where he should himself continue while there was a prospect of his benefiting his young friend by doing so, and from which any person was excluded not essentially requisite to the same purpose.

Mrs. Forrester, too wretched to remain in any one place, had flown back to the hermitage in search of her husband, and Edwin had followed as fast as his strength would allow, dreading those questions which would too certainly be put to him, and which he also had promised Mr. Longford not to answer, without his permission—a promise he had extorted from them the moment Forrester left the house, but which his wife vowed only to keep while he lived.

Revived by the assurance that the wound was not mortal, and once more assembled in their own apartment, the servants naturally reverted to the cause of this dreadful catastrophe. Who could have perpetrated the deed, and for what purpose? were the leading inquiries. As it most assuredly had happened at the hermitage, who but Forrester could have been the assassin? but he had first given the alarm, and actually procured the surgeon; still they could not acquit him in their own minds; and while they execrated the base ingratitude of such an act, knowing, as they did, the extent of his obligations to Mr. Longford, mutually agreed that at least he ought to be secured till his innocence could be proved; and for this purpose William and Peter again set out for the hermitage; but it was destitute of an inhabitant; and concluding guilt only could have caused their flight, they proceeded to the village for legal assistance to apprehend them; but here a different scene presented itself.

Forrester having met the surgeon near the gates of Alvington, returning from visiting a patient, urged his immediate presence at the manor, to which, wounded, if not already dead, they were conveying Mr. Longford; adding, he was himself going on to the village with further orders; and immediately proceeded to the magistrate, who resided a short distance only from it, to whom he gave himself up as the murderer of Mr. Longford; but so evidently deranged was his whole appearance, as to leave the worthy magistrate reason to believe his confinement should rather be that suited to a maniac than a murderer; and having given orders for his security, humanely dispatched a messenger to the village, for the purpose of gathering some intelligence relative to the extraordinary business. Here he met his anxious wife, who, after sending Edwin in search of her husband, had, unable to remain at home, followed him in wild despair; to add to which, was the now too certain knowledge that Forrester was actually in confinement for the foul crime of murder.

At this crisis the servants arrived, and fully confirmed his guilt, by relating the state of their master, affection for whom rendered them even unjust to the wretched woman, whom they implicated in his guilt, as well as the brother, both of whom Peter asserted were with Mr. Longford when they entered the hermitage.

“Though they endeavoured to impose upon us,” said William, “with a fine story of some promise they had made my master——”

At that moment Yamboo’s words occurred to Peter, who replied—“I wish to ask them no questions, and hope they will be able to prove their innocence, though I do not see how that can be; and am certainly of opinion that Forrester at least should be detained till the captain’s pleasure is known, or my young master out of danger.”

This happened much sooner than any one had reason to expect. The surgeon's unremitting care, aided by the placid disposition of his patient, in a few days promised much; and the painful solicitude of his father, the watchful kindness of Miss Longford, and incessant prayers of the whole family, were shortly rewarded by daily conviction of his increasing strength, when the incident which had, during his indisposition, been the sole topic of conversation, both in the neighbourhood and adjoining town, gave place to a circumstance no less surprising. This was the emancipation of Forrester without a trial, and the re-establishment of himself and family at the hermitage.

The first moment Yamboo was allowed to speak, he exacted a solemn promise from his father, that he would not prosecute Forrester, whom, from their conversation, he discovered to be in confinement, assuring him, that if he lived, he alone could justify him, and if he died, no one could convict him. Strange as this appeared, captain Longford made the desired promise; and no sooner was he pronounced out of danger, than orders were sent to the magistrate for his release.

Forrester, during his confinement, had sunk into a stupor, from which even the kindness of his wife, who was allowed to attend him daily, could not arouse him; he neither spoke to her, or noticed his little William, of whom he had ever been so fond, and appeared perfectly indifferent to life itself. When told Mr. Longford was perfectly recovered, he said, with a deep-drawn sigh—"My God, I thank thee!" but when informed he was at liberty to return with his family to the hermitage, he merely said—"Wherefore should I leave my dungeon?" and relapsed into his usual absence of mind.

To this removal captain Longford had strongly objected, alledging he never could be happy while that man resided so near to them; but when assured by his son it was his particular wish, he no longer hesitated to consent, though he still believed Yamboo had been lenient to a fault—an opinion in which the surgeon joined, who, from his unwearied attention to himself, Mr. Longford had included in the conference with Miss Longford and his father.

When satisfied that he was out of danger, he explained, at their earnest entreaty, the whole business, slightly passing over the deed, but strongly dwelling upon the dreadful motive which urged Forrester to it, whose penitence he expressed in glowing colours; adding—"Who not pardon him? who say what they not do who love a wife so well? The man who persuade him, and not Forrester, only to blame. Now it all over, if he go back to him house, every body know me innocent—he long since feel satisfied I never wrong him: but suppose he not go there, then the world say he must take him wife away from Mr. Longford; and, perhaps, because him a stranger, poor, and just got out of prison, no one befriend him, no one find him a house to stay in—no, no, he must go to the hermitage."

"But who could persuade him?" said captain Longford, only half convinced.

Yamboo then related what had passed with Mr. Longford, and said that on him alone his suspicions fell; but did not wish these suspicions named till he was himself enabled to question Forrester, which he should take a future opportunity of doing. But the very step he had taken to prove his innocence, and satisfy his humanity, by still protecting Forrester's family, had a contrary effect upon the less liberal; and the rumour of Forrester's return was no sooner circulated, than some, with a significant nod, thought there must have been good grounds for such violent jealousy—some reason why such an atrocious deed was not to be publicly investigated; and others pitied his mean spirit, in

taking his wife back to the park: but of all these unjust remarks, the two beings most interested in them were alone insensible.

Forrester, on the second night of his release from prison, had absconded from the hermitage, leaving his wife inconsolable for his loss; and captain Longford's recent fatigue of mind and body having proved too much for his strength, Yamboo's whole time and attention was occupied in watching by the sick-bed of his indulgent parent, where a dirty letter, which Peter had picked up in the garden, addressed in an indifferent hand to Mr. Longford, was delivered to him. On opening it, he read—

“HONOURED SIR,

“IF you have any pity for so base a wretch, protect his wife and child, who have not a friend in the world beside him who they will never see again; for on you or them I can never look without horror; yet if I dared to pray, I would do so for you, who have given life to the miserable, vile

FORRESTER.”

“Strange man!” said Yamboo; “all this prove him not right, not sensible,” and for a moment he doubted if Leviston had really been as base as he suspected, for every account he had gathered of Forrester's proceedings tended to convince him his brain was injured; and having acquitted Leviston in his own mind, only regretted he had ever been induced to name the conversation that had for one moment caused him to suspect him. At all events, he determined to extend that protection so anxiously solicited by Forrester for his family, and desired Peter would not fail to assure Mrs. Forrester of his intention to provide for her till her husband's return, which he had no doubt would be very soon: but her distress of mind was extreme; no one, save the kind Edwin, consoled or comforted her; as for the neighbours she had ever known in that part of the world, they rather shunned than noticed her. Miss Longford felt little inclination to see her; and indeed the increasing indisposition of her brother, while it left her no leisure to do so, continued to spread a heavy gloom over the late cheerful mansion, portentous of the oppressive clouds of sorrow which were already collecting to overwhelm it, and prove the mutability of all sublunary happiness.

Henry Longford rapidly approached that precipice of guilt to which natural depravity had hurried him a voluntary slave; he had not, like too many unfortunate young men, one plea to offer in palliation of his many atrocities; no fortuitous circumstances had hurled him into dissipation, and its concomitant vices. On his arrival in London, he had assiduously, he had deliberately and willingly sought it under every form, with the alternative placed before him; he had preferred the evil to the good, not the hidden but glaring road of vice to the rose-strewn path of happiness, honour and virtue, to which his fortune, friends, and prospects in life, gave him every pretension, but which his heart had always rejected, as unworthy his pursuit. Foiled in his promised success with Louisa De Lasaux, by the watchful care of her parents, for he believed himself too secure of her affections (notwithstanding the lovely timidity which heightened the value of his prize) to allow her any credit for the part she had taken in this unexpected removal from home, he became at once the avowed enemy of her whole family, and as resolutely determined their utmost policy should not long keep her concealed from his knowledge.

Open and ingenuous in their own nature, they had no idea that any artifice was requisite in the step they had taken, from the most laudable motives; for satisfied, with such fortitude as she was known to possess, how soon Louisa would conquer any lingering preference she might feel for a man who her own good sense convinced her was neither calculated to promote her happiness, or that of her tenderly beloved parents, they felt no farther uneasiness on her account; and much as was their opinion of Henry Longford reluctantly altered, it would never have occurred, when lamenting the fall of so fine a young man, and still more sincerely pitying the anguish it would occasion his worthy father, (whose silence daily more surprised Mr. De Lasaux) that he could for a moment basely premeditate the step which wholly engrossed his mind, and made him for the time less vulnerable to the keen disappointment which awaited him in another quarter; when Leviston, almost dreading the effects of his unwarrantable passion, ventured to pronounce the failure of Forrester's undertaking, but who, he nevertheless averred, had returned to them a blacker agent of iniquity than when he left London.

"Goaded," he added, "by disappointment, for which he was not less prepared than ourselves—maddened by the vile imprisonment, from which his proud spirit recoiled—and still furious with unappeased jealousy, he has forsaken his wife and child, to bind himself to our interest, and is ready for the further execution of any plan we may dictate; on these conditions I have again received him into my service; and we have only now to advise in what manner best to employ the abilities of this our still faithful ally."

"Be that the subject of future consideration," said Henry, with eagerness; "at present I have other business on hand. Chance, my dear fellow, has this day discovered to my delighted senses the residence of Louisa; and now may her proud brother, this long anxiously expected resemblance of myself, who arrived two days since, vaunt the superiority which his military livery gives him over me, and whose supercilious glance, as he eyed me on our introduction to each other, I have not yet forgotten."

"'Tis, however, devilishly unlucky that he should have arrived at this crisis," replied Leviston, "when we could have so well dispensed with his presence; for brothers are in general outrageous defenders of a sister's honour, particularly your fighting gentlemen, for whom I never had any very great *penchant*."

"But as, in the present case, Leviston, it is not likely you will be called upon to fight my battle, should I have the honour of engaging in one with this scarlet hero, you must not damp my ardour in the cause," returned Henry.

"On the contrary," said his servile adherent, (still keeping the future reward of villany in view) "I am ready to embark in it, with as much spirit as though I were to share in the fair harvest which is to crown our labours: name then your commands, and Leviston is as ever your devoted friend and servant."

Henry then proceeded to inform him, "that in conversation at the dinner-table, Mr. De Lasaux, jun. (for neither his age or brilliant achievements have as yet, he added, obtained him a more important title in the army) named his intention of setting out for Hampstead, assigning as a reason for so doing his impatience to see Louisa, without appearing to notice either the information which had been so long carefully concealed, or the kind of look which I nevertheless fancied he pointedly fixed on me. I thanked him most sincerely in my heart for the intelligence, and as secretly resolved to pay my visit there also on his return. Mrs. De Lasaux merely said how surprised the dear girl will be to see the alteration so visible to us all; and his father observed he had better set out early, if

he meant to return the same night; and then changed the conversation. I want no other clue," continued Longford, "and having once reconnoitred the ground, which I will contrive to do without his military skill, and revived the faded hopes of my banished fair one by a fond epistle, I will return to consult the best measures for my future proceedings; after which Mr. Forrester must be again set to work, though, by the bye, I begin to think him a less profitable servant than you proclaim him, Leviston; at all events, he has made a confounded jumble of this business, after all his great bustle and violent professions; and if we are not aware, he may contrive, in some of these half-finished performances, to drag us upon the stage, as a preservative to his own neck; in which case neither you or I will profit much by the possession of my hard-earned though lawful property."

Leviston was more sanguine, and pledged his life for the firmness with which Forrester would resist the disclosure of his employers, even though the rope was round his neck. At that moment he forgot the pusillanimity which, to save him from condign punishment, had sold him to a master, who, for this single act of interested humanity, had exacted from him the performance of many deeds, far more deserving the cognizance of the law, and whom he yet expected to forfeit, for his advantage and that of his base friend, every hope of salvation, if happily he was so fortunate as to escape with that life which, polluted with a benefactor's blood, he might hereafter be permitted to drag on in endless misery, as a partial punishment of the vile ingratitude which must inevitably be his condemnation to utter darkness in an endless world—a sentence from which he had no appeal, and which at this moment hung awfully over his devoted head; for he had indeed, as Leviston reported, returned to him, with an avidity to sin, which, after his late remorse of conscience, somewhat staggered his no less guilty master; but mistaking it for regret at his late disappointment, and willingness to prove his sincerity in the cause, he was again admitted, even more largely than ever, into his confidence—acquainted with all that passed during his absence, their success at the table, hair breadth escapes from detection, and the bold attempt of one of the fraternity, who, as a self-inflicted penance for having lost more than by the rules of their community he was allowed to do at one time, had taken, as he said, an evening ride upon one of the public roads, from which he returned with a much larger booty than his play would have brought into the honourable fund, "which at present," continued Leviston, "is in a tolerable state; therefore we can dispense with the Welsh property a little longer, and by so doing lull suspicion; but in the meantime, your services may be required in another channel."

Forrester professed himself ready for any purpose which might occur, but was in turn very importunate that his master, in explaining his unfortunate failure to Mr. Longford, should not fail to bind him down in a promise not to employ any other person in the future execution of that which had taken him into Wales—adding, that as he had already risked his life, it was but fair he should have a second chance; alledging farther, that no one could be more interested in accomplishing it, because no one was so deeply injured as himself; and that he trusted Mr. Leviston would not allow any steps to be taken without his knowledge, as he should certainly dispute the right of being his own avenger.

"And so you shall, my honest-hearted fellow," said Leviston, "for I know no one so capable of doing you justice: but how the devil could you make up your mind to leave Mary and the boy behind? I thought you said, when going into Wales, you could not live without them."

Forrester had his motive for both; and nothing could be more opposite than that with which he had taken his wife there, and now left her at Alvington; but as his confidence was somewhat more limited than his master's, he chose only to explain the matter, which was, he said, as a spur to his revenge in the next attempt; for he had no doubt that while he was away, Mr. Longford would visit the hermitage, fearless of his intruding, which he should perhaps do when least expected, when he would take care to leave him no opportunity of telling the story.

Nothing could be more plausible than all this; and Leviston, perfectly satisfied, sought Longford, to communicate what had passed between them, who in turn left him to seek Stukely, the promised companion of his ride to Hampstead, the result of which was too fatally explained to captain Longford, in the following letter from Mr. De Lasaux.

CHAP. II.

“TAKE,” he said, “unhappy man, since I am destined to give it, your share of those pangs which now rend my heart, and will fall doubly heavy on your own; because to your false indulgence, ill-timed liberality, and disregard of my letters, I owe it all. Had you followed my advice, and removed your son, as I entreated you to do before it was too late, instead of countenancing his extravagant follies, by the payment of ill-contracted debts, I had not at this moment beheld the anguish of a fond mother, as she hangs with unutterable woe over the bleeding and wounded form of her adored and only son; or rather, why, when regardless of my admonition, you neglected even to answer my letter, why did I hesitate to shut my doors against the serpent whom I cherished, till his galling sting penetrated my unsuspecting bosom, by aiming to destroy the peace of one of my children, and basely depriving me of another? for, oh! too, too faint are my hopes that my Horatio, my promising gallant boy will be restored to his agonized father! Pale and weltering in his blood was he this day brought to the parents whom he left in health and safety, and his assassin, ah, my God! his vile assassin, is, I tremble to name it, the son of my friend, even your child! Yes, Longford, he has done a deed which, should it prove fatal, will assuredly plunge his guilty soul in eternal perdition! for never was victim more innocent, brave, or honourable, than that which he has basely murdered! But tell him, if to you he has flown for protection—tell him, should he survive my child, that no quarter of the globe, however remote, not even a father's protecting arm, can screen him from that just Being, who will not fail to avenge the injured

DE LASAUX.”

During captain Longford's indisposition, the contents of that letter respecting the increasing ill conduct of Henry, and Mr. De Lasaux's advice that he should be allowed to return into Wales, at least for a short time, had frequently occurred to his anxious mind; and after various determinations, he concluded it would be most advisable for his sister to write to Henry, stating his father's extreme illness, and wish of seeing him, to spend a few weeks at Alvington; this he thought must effectually do away every suspicion of complaint against him from Mr. De Lasaux, while that gentleman would decidedly see, in

the tenor of the invitation, the delicacy observed towards himself, to whom, on his more perfect recovery, he meant to write in confidence.

Miss Longford's letter was in consequence forwarded, but at a time when Mr. Longford, having no wish to leave London, did not choose either to avail himself of the pressing invitation, or notice its receipt; in consequence of which Mr. De Lasaux remained a stranger to its arrival, while the family at Alvington continued hourly to expect Henry; when the letter, which at once pronounced his atrocities, and shut his father's doors against him, reduced captain Longford once more to the debilitated state from which he was even then but slowly recovering.

The dreadful situation into which Henry had plunged himself—a knowledge of his base character, to which he had too late become fully sensible—and the too probable ignominy of his future fate, were in themselves evils of too great magnitude for his imbecile state to encounter; but the poignant, and he felt in part undeserved, reproofs of his friend, who in the agony of his own feelings had so cruelly lacerated his, was a bitter aggravation of his own already hard trial. “Never, never,” he said, “in the first paroxysm of passion, “never shall that ingrate enter these doors;” and before Yamboo, whose heart sickened at the vibration, had power to check the sentence, he had sealed the denunciation of his wrath with an oath, over which the accusing angel might indeed have dropped the commiserating tear, when he remembered it must stand on record, till that awful day in which a guilty erring father would blush for having uttered it.

In vain did his exemplary son entreat him to recal the fatal words, while passion might extenuate their utterance—in vain strive to mitigate their mournful tendency.

Captain Longford was immoveable.

“Yamboo,” he said, “with firmness, “you have too often pleaded for him with success; I too often falsely acquiesced. See the cutting reproofs, which include your generous intentions with mine; mark of what we are accused—acting with duplicity, only to countenance villany: now then, you too must promise——”

“Not,” said Yamboo, with trembling agitation, “not to shut my heart to my brother! Now him father have shut him door, Yamboo's heart must open wider; when all the world forsake Henry, him brother never do so!”

Disdaining the tears which would have proved him more than half-subdued by such disinterested goodness, captain Longford turned his head to conceal it, as, with assumed sternness, he added—“Mark me, Yamboo! Over your actions I can have no controul, for your nature is too superior to need a Mentor, weak and erring as I have been through life; but in this I will be obeyed. That you will never urge me to a conference with Henry, convey any letter written by him to me, or sanction any steps which he may take to enter my house, unauthorized by myself, are promises which, as a father, I demand from you; still more, that, as you value a father's love, you will never recede from such a promise given, without my previous consent. It may be, that time and future events may alter my determination; then, and then only, will I release you from it, unless my death should first do so.”

In the short moment allowed him to deliberate, one gleam of hope darted on Yamboo's intelligent mind, and he hailed its happy influence with rapture. Miss Longford was not then present, of course not included in the harsh decree. Her inclination, unfettered by the dreadful promise, would be at liberty to act unrestrained; and to her he would instantly fly, to secure the only resource left for his fugitive brother,

whom together they could secure from the rigour which threatened him in every quarter; and with trembling lips, and in faltering accents, he made the promises exacted with such authority by his father, whose presence he left to seek Miss Longford; but new difficulties awaited his generous purpose.

Miss Longford, though no one's enemy, was far from being Henry's friend, and now less than ever inclined to serve him. For her brother's sake, she had accepted the charge of his early years, and had religiously fulfilled the trust, though often worn out by his irritable temper, and the ungrateful returns which, even as a child, he made for her unwearied attention to his smallest wishes. Repeated instances of his vicious disposition and unbounded extravagance, which had often made her tremble for her brother's fortune, and as resolutely determined her not to let him touch her's, left her little inclination to aid Yamboo's wishes.

"Do you well consider," she said, "the extent of his guilt? If Horatio De Lasaux has fallen fairly, as it is termed, in a duel, what is it but legal murder? but Mr. De Lasaux's letter implies more than that; he calls him a vile assassin, a base murderer: something therefore must be wrong, and are we justified in protecting a murderer?"

"But him my brother," said his generous advocate; "nothing shut a brother's heart, and Yamboo would hide him here," placing his hand on his own, "till every one forgive him. Suppose he come soon, no one speak to him, no one comfort him, all say him father never see him again, then him go and sin worse, and him family, not Henry, to blame; no one dare be him friend now but you. Ah! say," he continued, taking her hand, "say only you will comfort him—make him father speak peace to him."

"I can make no promise," she replied, "without first seeing my brother, and consulting his peace of mind; hitherto his will has ever been my law, and however inclined to gratify you, which I would do at the expence of my own inclination, I must first see him before I do so."

Disappointed, he returned to his own room, to mourn over his brother's unhappy destiny, and determine what plan he should next pursue, should Henry seek an asylum at Alvington. The servants next occurred; but old and faithful as they were, he dared not impart to them the fatal secret; and too painfully he remembered Henry had few friends among them. Perhaps his father would neglect to give the necessary orders, when they would of course admit him; in which case, though his lips would not dare to plead in his behalf, he might, on his knees, supplicate by a thousand looks, no less eloquent than speech, for a brother's pardon.

Mrs. Forrester next crossed his mind, and though he almost shuddered at a recollection of the scene which had passed at the hermitage, determined to walk thither, for the purpose of preparing her to receive Henry, who it would only be requisite to say had, in some instance, offended his father, but that a short time would reconcile the difference; during which he wished to remain wholly unknown in the vicinity of the park: the rest he left to chance, happy in the promised success of this new idea, and unconscious that his good angel had withdrawn his protecting arm, and once more left him to struggle with trials, to which his chequered destiny had never yet exposed him.

Captain Longford, whose health always yielded to the stronger passions of his mind, was, as his sister expected, again thrown on the bed of sickness, from which he had so lately risen in a convalescent state, and required even more attention than either herself or Yamboo were equal to, to keep his mind in that state of composure which was

requisite to his recovery, when Mr. De Lasaux, sensible that the poignancy of his own sorrow had made him write with too much severity to his friend, now somewhat relieved from the affliction he anticipated, while his son was in danger, forwarded a second letter, in which he said—"The ball having been extracted, there were hopes of Horatio's recovery, which would still be long and tedious: but I write," he said, "merely to satisfy your worst fears; for God knows," he added, "you have still enough to dread, in the fate of a young man whom nothing can save from destruction, and who I have reason to believe does not possess one principle of honour or humanity, else would he have met my unfortunate boy as a gentleman, not an assassin; for there is too just grounds to believe, that, in accepting the challenge, he went determined on his death, as he violated those laws which, dreadful as they are, nevertheless give the duellists an equal chance: this Horatio was not allowed, and in consequence fell. Mr. Longford, with his equally dishonourable second (a notorious gamester), absconded, and, for your sake, I have caused no inquiries to be set on foot for them. It is probable some new demand upon you will make you acquainted with his place of concealment, in which case I entreat you to warn him, as he would avoid my just resentment, to recal the vow he made, never to cease persecuting my gentle Louisa with addresses, which she voluntarily and solemnly rejects, and which her family never can in justice sanction; otherwise I shall be compelled to seek redress from that law to which he lays himself open."

This letter, in some degree, removed the heavy weight which oppressed captain Longford's mind, more on Mr. De Lasaux's account than his own; but while he rejoiced in the expected recovery of his son, he more obstinately adhered to his determination of punishing Henry, for such ungrateful and unpardonable conduct: and having strictly forbid the servants admitting him, without previous orders from himself to the contrary, and exacted a similar promise from his sister to that he had compelled Yamboo to make, he endeavoured, as much as possible, to banish the painful subject from his mind; but the fiat was gone forth, which destined his closing scene of life to be a mournful expiation of all the follies which had marked his past years, and his present trial to prove but a prelude to sorrow, far beyond what the little fortitude he had ever possessed was adequate to sustain.

Henry, determined upon seeing Louisa De Lasaux, had kept his intention of visiting Hampstead on the return of her brother, and was too indefatigable to be long in tracing the family with whom she resided; a suitable letter was instantly forwarded, expressive of that distraction with which he pretended so long vainly to have sought her, and entreaties that she would allow him a private interview. Ignorant of the real character he was addressing, and persuading himself he had been too successful an advocate for his letter to be easily rejected, one whole day was devoted to the anticipation of an answer, which still came not; and he returned to London, maddened by the disappointment, but not less intent upon a purpose which no difficulties was to surmount. As usual, his able counsellors were convened; and Forrester, ever ready for service, desired to hold himself in readiness for a secret enterprize, for which no one expressed more eagerness.

A few evenings succeeding this arrangement, Horatio De Lasaux had accompanied his sister, and a small party of friends, to the opera; during the performance, feeling the heat oppressive from a crowded house, he left the box with one of the gentlemen, to take a turn in the lobby, in which numbers were promenading, apparently for the same purpose. Three gentlemen, whose steps they were more immediately

following, appeared in high spirits, laughed immoderately, and talked very loud, when one of them suddenly exclaimed—"Where the devil is Longford, after all? I thought he was to have been among us this evening."

"Pardon me, my dear sir," said another; "he is in pursuit of better sport, in the vicinity of Hampstead. I saw Stukely just before they set out, in a prodigious bustle, as Charles always contrives to be; but he promised me to dispatch the important business as soon as possible, and at all events to be at the club to-morrow night."

De Lasaux, without appearing to notice what had passed, returned to his sister's party, but so totally abstracted from all that was going forward, as to occasion several pointed remarks from the ladies on his inattention; his mind was, however, so much engrossed by the conversation he had just heard, as to render every thing around him irksome; and the conclusion of the performance was hailed as a welcome release. His own anxiety prompted him to set out immediately for Hampstead; for having been acquainted by his father with the laudable motive which had removed Louisa thither, and that misconduct on the part of Henry Longford which had led to it, no doubt remained upon his own mind that he was still, in defiance of her family's wishes, following up his addresses to Louisa, while a half-formed apprehension that his sister's fortitude might not stand the test of such perseverance, distressed and agitated him: but as it was not possible to leave home for a night, on a pretence so sudden, without assigning the real motive, and as that would have caused uneasiness to his father, he postponed his journey till the morning; and after passing a restless night, left London at an early hour, leaving word he should be at home in the course of the day.

Within a few miles of town he met Longford, and, as he conjectured, the Mr Stukely, who was said to have accompanied him, on horseback. De Lasaux merely bowed on passing them, as even from the first interview, Henry had never prepossessed him in his favour, and a farther knowledge of his character had converted that indifference into contempt.

The unexpected appearance of her brother heightened the natural fine glow of Louisa's complexion, and evidently increased an agitation which she endeavoured to conceal before the family; but had no sooner engaged him for a walk, than with all her native candour, and unconscious that her sincerity could involve the safety of this beloved brother, she told him that Henry Longford had discovered her residence, and found means of conveying two letters to her, which she had returned unopened, with a message by the bearer of the last, who she understood was a friend of his, purporting her firm determination of neither seeing or hearing from him in future. "And now, my dear Horatio," she added, "I have nothing farther to apprehend, though I own it has agitated me a little; for Mr. Longford must have too much delicacy to persevere, now he knows my resolution: added to which, Mr. Fitzgerald proposes beginning his little tour early in the ensuing week, and as my father has promised Mrs. Fitzgerald that I shall accompany them, having seen you, I shall accept the offer of doing so with pleasure."

Delighted with this candid explanation, which so fully proved the sincerity of her sentiments, Horatio highly approved her conduct; and having spent a few hours with her, returned, as he said, to make her intentions known to the family, who would, of course, wish to see her previous to her quitting Hampstead. But far less satisfied in his own mind that Louisa was freed from any farther persecution on the part of Longford, and determined to see that gentleman on the subject of his late visit, he left a note for him in

his own apartment, stating his wish for a private interview, which, as it related to his sister, he should, for many reasons, prefer taking place wherever he might think proper to name, in preference to his father's house; to which Longford returned for answer, that as he believed Miss De Lasaux had been removed from home merely on his account, and against her own inclination, he felt authorized to use every means of seeing her in his power; and as he supposed that to be the purport of her brother's business with him, no personal interview was requisite, as it would not alter his fixed determination.

This was not to be endured; and De Lasaux, having engaged a friend to accompany him, instantly appointed a place himself, for such an interview, he said, as Mr. Longford's own feelings would point out to be alone satisfactory to the wounded honour of a gentleman. It was as readily accepted on the part of Henry, who, previously instructed and attended by Stukely, met him punctual to the hour fixed on, but who still adhered to what he had already asserted, that he never would relinquish his pretensions to Miss De Lasaux's hand, while he knew and was satisfied that her attachment to him merited his perseverance.

"At least," replied her brother, "I have the satisfaction of knowing, sir, that you are deceiving yourself, if you believe her capable of esteeming a character with which she is so well acquainted, and which has long since forfeited every pretension to that of her family's."

The distance was then measured, and each took their ground; but before De Lasaux was prepared to fire, Longford aimed his pistol, the ball of which penetrating De Lasaux's thigh, he fell, before his astonished friend had time to recover himself, much less remark, which De Lasaux had done, Longford's having advanced two or three paces in discharging his pistol, and of which, conscious himself, he had left the ground with precipitation, followed by his dishonourable and inhuman second, by whose advice, aided by the desire of revenge, he had thus acted; while Mr. De Lasaux's friend, having summoned the postillion who was in waiting with a chaise, conveyed Horatio to his father's house, which Longford had for ever abdicated; but Stukely's was open to receive him, and there he impatiently waited the issue of an event which, upon cool reflection, he half repented.

Knowing how severely captain Longford would resent a conduct which had nothing to justify it, through Forrester's means they obtained every information relative to the state of De Lasaux; to which was added, (though a falsehood) that as that gentleman had declared unfair means were used towards him, every step had been taken to apprehend both Mr. Longford and his companion, and which was still carrying on, with a perseverance that left them little chance of escape.

From a prison, and the test of a trial, Longford shrunk appalled, for cowardice is ever the accompaniment of guilt; therefore, to avoid both, he concluded his only security was in leaving England, till De Lasaux's recovery enabled him to return; but to effect this purpose, money was an essential article; neither would a trifling sum suffice for the inordinate desires of a man who had ever been accustomed to squander it with profligate extravagance. Those who had on all occasions looked up to him for it, were ill calculated to assist him in return; and the general fund, seldom adequate to the profuse demands made upon it, was unfortunately said to be at this important crisis in a declining state. To captain Longford he dared not apply in the present situation of things; and, in this extremity, Yamboo, the detested Yamboo, was the only hateful resource to him; therefore

he must write, and entreat a supply sufficient to secure his safety, and remove him out of the kingdom; the reflection galled him; and Stukely, having secretly enjoyed the warring passions of his mind, ventured to ask, if he had also determined to leave this minion of his father in quiet possession of a fortune to which he alone was entitled, and the peaceable enjoyment of those comforts from which he was to be excluded in a foreign land, without a friend?

“Shall I not have Stukely?” he replied, “and our banishment will be but short.”

“Oh, that is a precarious calculation!” returned his friend. “Longford’s recovery is doubtful, and at best may be tedious; neither will it be convenient for me to leave England, without some certainty of a provision, of which, at present, I see no visible prospect.”

Longford looked his surprise, but before he had formed a reply, Stukely continued—“All this is the result of Mr. Leviston’s *well-projected schemes*; had his lukewarm agent taken less time to deliberate upon the work of a moment, you would have been long since in quiet possession of Alvington, as captain Longford’s sublime affection for his black son is of much too violent a nature to have allowed of his long surviving him—but this comes of procrastinations: now all must be blown in that quarter; and having once succeeded in shutting his father’s doors against you, this excellent brother will take special care to bar your future entrance.”

“But it is not yet too late,” replied Longford; “Forrester is still ready to complete his work, and only waits for fresh orders to proceed to Alvington.”

“Hear me, Longford,” said Stukely, interrupting him. “I could advise you how to act; but since Leviston succeeded in duping your father so neatly out of five hundred pounds, my advice has been of less value than formerly.”

“There, at least, you wrong me, Charles,” exclaimed Longford, emphatically; “for to your counsels I have paid implicit obedience, and you have, on all occasions, been my guide. When I agreed to Forrester’s being first employed in this business, at the request of Leviston, it was because, understanding the fellow had formerly been upon the road, I naturally concluded him better adapted to the performance of such a deed as we required, than a more conscientious person would have been; and as he is now no less interested in the removal of this scourge than myself, whom can we appoint with better security to ourselves?”

“I will tell you,” replied Stukely; “there is something in this Forrester I never liked, and have my suspicions that at this time he is acting a double part. There is a mystery in his having left his family in Wales, notwithstanding Leviston’s easy belief, which I do not altogether comprehend; and, after all, should he prove a spy, instead of the servile engine he is willing to be thought, will Leviston’s faith in his villany make ours appear less glaring?”

Agitated by the phantom raised with so much success by his perfidious counsellor, without stopping to contemplate the dark abyss which was already gaping to receive him, and on the very verge of whose fatal brink he hovered, Longford, after a momentary pause, replied—“I will go myself to Alvington!”

“Nobly resolved!” said Stukely, “and——” He paused, while Henry added, “and seek first an interview with Yamboo, to discover how my father has taken this business.”

“Ha! ha! ha!—and having learned that he will not suffer you to approach him, taking a trifle to bear your expences from your kind informer, coolly withdraw yourself,

and return to publish your ruin to those who, less interested in your welfare than myself, will not fail to claim the payment of those debts, which you have no earthly means of discharging. Bravely resolved, indeed!" said Stukely. "I thought you were going to prove the dauntless soul, which, rather than depend upon another, who may take advantage of the confidence so placed, had acquired firmness to become its own avenger."

"And so it shall," answered Longford, agitated with passion, and galled by the irony which still vibrated on his ear, "if I find my father has been incensed against me by my hateful enemy."

"And think you," returned the other, "either that Mr. De Lasaux has not done his part, or your interested brother availed himself of so fair a pretext to effect your ruin? Already you know his power to be unbounded, and never will such an opportunity of limiting it be allowed you. Every one will suppose you to have left the kingdom; your father never suspect you to be in his neighbourhood, where it will be an easy matter to conceal yourself, till you can, by a thousand stratagems, appoint a meeting with Yamboo in the grounds, previous, as you may give him to understand, to your quitting the country: this effected, a pistol can do the rest, and the darkness which favours it will befriend your flight. On these conditions I pledge my honour, unknown to any one, to meet you at a given rendezvous, with a supply of at least as much cash as will be requisite to serve us, till De Lasaux's recovery, and your father's pardon, will oblige you to return; for as no suspicion can possibly be attached to you, he will of course be anxious to save his only son. But if Forrester is to be employed in the business, or Leviston ever acquainted with the arrangement, I withdraw myself entirely; and you will, perhaps too late, blame the rashness which, thus warned, compelled you to trust to a third person, even that secret which is only safe in our own breasts. We can instantly set out for a sea-port, from which I will write, as if on the eve of our embarking, and which will effectually lull every suspicion in the mind of Leviston, whom we will caution to write, as soon as he thinks De Lasaux's recovery will admit of our returning with safety; at which time, we can also hint it will be expedient to turn our thoughts again towards the business at Alvington, and for which purpose Forrester must still be kept in readiness."

Henry listened with breathless agitation to this deliberate scheme of villany, irresolute how to act. The promised security of his own life, and attainment of future property, made him deliberate; and as those who do so in a wrong cause are too often lost, so it was with Longford; his evil spirit had conquered, and now left him to enjoy the air-built visions which followed the fatal resolution he had formed. This was, once in possession of his father's fortune, to be less a villain than he had hitherto been; never to plunge into the excesses which had now left him but one painful alternative; for much as he detested Yamboo, and would have rejoiced in his death, he would still gladly any hand but his own had performed the deed which must deprive him of it: but the emergency of his situation urged him on, and in a fatal hour he set out for his father's residence, which (having finished his journey) he approached under cover of the night.

All was silent, dark, and dreary—heavy clouds rolled over his devoted head—a cold wind blew around him—and a chilling mist made him wrap his large coat closer to his bosom; but it infused no kindly warmth to his deadened heart, which, racked with varying sensations, and palsied by fear, felt even colder than the bleak atmosphere, which threatened an approaching storm. Shrinking from his own reflections, lest they should divert him from his now too-fixed purpose, he looked only to the future; and a thousand

times, during his gloomy walk, he wished it were possible he might meet Yamboo either going to or returning from the hermitage—for that he would continue to visit Forrester's wife, during her husband's absence, he had no doubt; and as often he wished the hermitage uninhabited, because nothing could have afforded him a better asylum. The purport of his present walk was to select a spot most favourable to his escape, having accomplished the bloody work, and which he meant to point out to Yamboo for their meeting; but the increasing tempest left no hope of his being abroad in it; and having satisfied himself the western gate of the park was best calculated for the purpose he meditated, he returned to the miserable hut, called an inn, in which he meant to take up his abode for the present.

On the following evening he again sallied forth from his concealment, when the twilight screened him from every one's knowledge but his own; there the dark assassin stood confessed; but he dared not contemplate the picture, and hurried on till he reached the hermitage, around which he hovered, in momentary expectation of seeing Yamboo issue from it. The door at length slowly opened, and a young man came out, with a basket on his head, taking the direct road towards the manor; Longford followed him, and inquired if he belonged to it?

Edwin, whom he was addressing, answered—"No; but that he was going thither on an errand."

"Shall you see young Mr. Longford?" he asked.

Edwin said it was most probable he should, as the captain was much better than he had been of late, and Mr. Longford oftener left his room.

"And in case you should see him, my lad," returned Henry, "could I depend on your delivering a letter in private to him?"

"Indeed you may, sir," he replied; "for there is nothing I would not do for so good a gentleman."

He then gave him one, in which he had previously written, in a disguised hand—"A friend, who has something of importance to communicate, but which, as it relates to a third person, demands secrecy, requests an interview, but it must be late in the evening; and as a retired situation in the grounds, where they will not be liable to observation, will be most proper for the meeting, no place can be better adapted than the green-house, near the western gate of the park."

"Should you not see him," said Henry, "the letter must be returned to me; and I will wait till you come back at the gate leading to the road."

Edwin promised to use speed, and was there much sooner than his employer expected; but was sorry to inform him there was no possibility of seeing Mr. Yamboo, as the captain was worse again, and his son never left his room when that was the case; "and as your honour forbid my giving the letter to any other person, I have brought it back:" adding, "as the captain often has these bad bouts, he may be better to-morrow, when, if you please to trust me with it again, I will try to see Mr. Longford himself."

Henry said he would see him on the following evening, if it was requisite; and giving him half-a-crown for his trouble, at the same time cursing the disappointment, returned once more towards his comfortless abode, by the fireside of which, in what was termed the kitchen, he observed a miserable-looking creature, who had, apparently, from his mutilated figure and tattered uniform, been a soldier in his more youthful days. He was inquiring of some one near him, if the family at the manor was all in good health?

and expressed much concern when told the captain had been seriously indisposed, and still remained in a very precarious state. "Indeed," added his informer, "he has never been well since a strange business, which happened about a fellow's wife, whom it was said his son had taken some liberties with, for which her husband attempted to murder him; and though he did not succeed in doing so, nevertheless deserved hanging, for he was certainly a great rascal, though some people do say there was grounds for his jealousy: but I fancy there would have been much more, if young harum-scarum had been at the manor—for he was far more likely to seduce a poor man's wife than his brother Yamboo, who, though his face is black, has, by all accounts, a much whiter heart than Mr. Henry."

"I know nothing of the captain's other son," said the old soldier, who had listened with much attention, "but I felt the bounty of Mr. Yamboo, when I was last in this part of the world; and as it is not likely I shall ever come this way again, I shall make bold to call at the great house in the morning, before I quit the country, to inquire after his honour, and his honour's father, who will neither of them let old Samuel go from their door without a good breakfast, and a shilling to help him on; and Miss Longford will give me a few rags to keep my poor stump clean and warm," putting his hand to his shoulder, as if the pain left him still sensible of the loss he had sustained in his arm.

Henry was very attentive to the conversation; it had given him a still better chance of conveying his letter, while the comparison he had just heard drawn between himself and Yamboo exasperated him to madness. Early on the following morning he arose, and in hopes of seeing the decrepid mendicant in his way to the manor, bent his own steps thither, and fortune for once befriended him; he was sitting by the road-side, eating a dry crust, when Henry approached him—"You are on your way then, friend, to the great house, I perceive?"

"Yes, your honour," he replied, awkwardly bowing.

"And do you think you shall be lucky enough to see your friend?"

"I hope so, sir," he returned.

"Will you then undertake to deliver a letter for me in private to that gentleman, Mr. Yamboo Longford I mean? for which I will gladly reward you on your return, and will wait for you in the small road at the back of the park. Do you know it?"

"Oh, very well, your honour," said the man eagerly; "but I am afraid your patience will be worn out before I get back; for I am now so crippled, and withal so dim with the only eye I have left, that I cannot travel as I used to do in a long march."

"Never fear," replied Longford; "only promise to be careful of my letter, and your reward shall be certain when you bring an answer."

The man having carefully folded it in a piece of woollen rag, deposited it in his bosom; and with one crutch, and a short stick, hobbled off at a tolerable pace. Arrived at the gate, one of the female servants, of whom he had entreated charity, returned to procure some broken victuals for him, with which she shortly came back: he then inquired if Mr. Yamboo Longford was at home, and being answered in the affirmative, begged she would tell him, a very poor man, whom he could greatly oblige, and who had a favour to beg of him, requested to see him for one moment only. The spirit of humanity which characterized the superiors of the family, descended to every domestic; and the girl immediately delivered her message to Yamboo, who was then at breakfast with Miss Longford. He attended the summons; and on being told the letter required an answer, desired the old man to sit down for a few minutes; at first he conjectured it was from

Forrester; but the contents convinced him it related to Henry, of whom he had so long waited in anxious expectation of hearing something. It was doubtless some friend, whom he had sent to plead for him with his father, and who wished to see him first; or, probably, Henry himself, who was thus anxious to be concealed.

Having therefore written in answer—"Yamboo will be at the small green-house, near the west gate of the park, at eleven o'clock; the moon will be up; no one see him unknown friend but himself—no one hear them conversation;" he sealed his letter, and gave it to the old man, with strong injunctions for his delivering it in safety, to which he added a shilling; and hastened back to Miss Longford, who, surprised at his stay, demanded what important business he had been transacting with his military friend, "as his coat," she observed, "appeared once to have been scarlet."

Yamboo replied, he wanted assistance, for which he was not prepared without returning to his own room, which had detained him; and it was probable he should not have been relieved so soon, had he not recollected she would be waiting breakfast for him. Though this was exactly the truth, it was an evasion, and his heart beat high as he uttered it, for it was contrary to his principles; and he felt happy when the removal of the breakfast-table gave him an opportunity of returning to his father's apartment.

Captain Longford had rested ill, and was still low and feverish; but as he dreaded the confinement which his indisposition imposed upon his son would be prejudicial to his health, he requested him to walk, while the beauty of a fine morning invited him to do so; and to oblige him he strolled into the park, where the first person he met was Edwin.

"I was coming," said the latter, "to bring home the pistols, which I have cleaned, as your honour desired me yesterday morning;" presenting a small pair, which Henry had left at home, and which had hung in a neglected state in the room he occupied when at the manor, till the late unfortunate affair, when Yamboo having accidentally looked at them, as he was lamenting Henry's fate, for the first time noticed their condition, and, knowing how much his brother had formerly prized them, took them down, when recollecting that he had seen Edwin a few days before cleaning a fowling-piece belonging to Peter, he requested him to put them also in good order.

"I had them with me last night," said Edwin, "but as your honour desired me to deliver them to you only, when they were cleaned, and as I could not get an opportunity of seeing you, I took them back; indeed, I had another reason for wanting to see you, as I had a letter to deliver; but the person who gave it to me took it again, and I am, I believe, to bring it to-night."

It now first occurred to Yamboo to make some inquiries as to the kind of person who had given him the letter, which he had neglected to do of the old soldier, as he had no doubt of its being the same which he had already received.

Edwin replied, it was quite dusk when he overtook him in the park, and that he had on a very large hat, and a great-coat which entirely concealed his figure; but from the height, as Edwin described it, and the precaution used, no doubt remained in Yamboo's mind of its being his brother: therefore, having desired him, should the same person send him again to the manor, not to leave it without first seeing him, he took the pistols and proceeded towards the green-house, ruminating as he walked upon the probability that a very few hours would enable him to offer Henry a safe asylum, till the anger of captain Longford was blown over.

He had not yet, as he had at first proposed, told Mrs. Forrester in what manner she could so essentially serve him; for though he had actually set out for that purpose, a second thought told him he had better hear from or see his brother first; and, in hopes of so doing, he had still deferred it. Satisfied he could at all times command her services, and that of the grateful Edwin, he now waited but till he had seen this unknown visitor, whom, should it prove to be Henry, it was only requisite to conduct to the hermitage; and if a friendly mediator with his father, there would be no occasion for that resource. It was, doubtless, some one acquainted with the grounds, from his having appointed their meeting at the green-house; and the next step to be observed, was obtaining the key, which he desired Peter, whom he passed at work, to bring to him in the evening, as he should probably want it.

He then returned to the house, but never was day so tedious in its progress; in vain he attempted either to read or write; every hour increased his anxiety; and, as if to add to his embarrassment, Miss Longford had more than once asked if he was unwell—inquiries which increased his agitation. Evening at length came, and he attempted to beguile its tardy movement by a second walk; through every part of the garden he wandered, unmindful of those sweets which were wont to arrest his attention. Peter, on leaving it for the night, brought, as he had desired, the key of the green-house, which he requested him to be careful of not leaving in the door, as there were many valuable plants which he might lose from its being so near the road; adding, “if your honour is going there this evening, it is almost time, for the daylight is fast closing.”

Yamboo promised to be careful of the door; and to avoid suspicion, walked towards the west gate; but it yet wanted some hours of the appointed time, and he half regretted not having appointed an earlier one; but he had no alternative; he knew the stranger would not venture while any one was stirring—the darkness would then prevent his doing so, till the moon afforded him some assistance, and she would hardly give any light before that time: again, therefore, he returned, and remained with captain Longford till the usual hour of his taking leave for the night; he did the same of Miss Longford, and then sought his own room, agitated by impatience.

CHAP. III.

AT one time he had almost resolved to tell her of what he was in expectation, but she never mentioned Henry by any chance; and he determined now, at all events, to see the writer of his letter, before he made known its purport to any one. The house at length was still, but, on looking at his watch, he discovered he had already exceeded his time by at least half an hour; and having softly descended the stairs, and closed the doors after him, he rather flew than walked through the grounds, though he could scarcely discern the path he took; for louring clouds nearly obscured the full-orbed moon, and the breezes murmuring through the lofty trees, in hollow accents, threatened a storm; but, heedless of its approach, he hastened on till he reached the green-house. Here no stranger waited his approach—all was still as death—no footstep gladdened his listening ear—no friendly mediator, to plead a brother’s cause with his offended father, came—and his heart sickened with apprehension, lest some accident had occurred to prevent his doing so.

Suspense became insupportable, and, almost without knowing why, he walked on to the hermitage; its humble tenants had long since retired to sleep, and no light glimmered through its small casement. At one moment he determined to awake Edwin, and ask if he had seen the stranger since they parted; but having done so, he would surely have come to him; and it was useless to disturb them at such an hour, with unreasonable, and, too probably, fruitless inquiries. Again, therefore, he returned to the green-house, which he had left open, but it was still empty; the night was spending fast, and large drops of rain began to beat against the solitary windows. Irresolute how to act, still more at a loss what to think, he mournfully locked the door; but in the extreme perturbation of his mind, neglected to take the key with him, as he slowly proceeded homeward, every instant turning round, to catch, if possible, the welcome step which might occasion him to return; but in vain he listened; and having at last reached the house, was entering his own room, when captain Longford, satisfied he heard a footstep, desired William, the servant, who slept in his apartment, to ask who was there. Yamboo, more than ever vexed, replied, it was him, who had been down stairs. The man, satisfied, closed the door, and Yamboo, having shut his, retired to his bed.

Restless and uneasy sleep had scarcely closed his eyes, when his imagination was tortured by dreams destructive of all repose; and the sun had no sooner penetrated his window with its earliest rays, than he left his pillow, and having dressed himself, sat down to watch for the servants rising, that he might walk out, still anxious to discover if there was any appearance of footsteps besides his own near the green-house, which he thought might easily be discovered on the yet wet ground. To divert the time, he had opened a favourite book, on which he became so intent as to have remained insensible of the period he had been reading, till some one tapped at his door; on his opening which, Peter stood before him, but in a situation that rivetted him to the spot with astonishment. Large drops stood on his face, over which a ghastly paleness had spread a livid hue; his lips quivered, and, in a faltering voice, he begged to speak with him. Yamboo, unable to utter a word, receded a few steps into the room, which Peter entered, gently closing the door after him.

“In God’s name, sir,” he said, in a whisper, “what have you done?”

Unconscious of his meaning, but dreading he knew not what, Yamboo replied, little less agitated—“What you mean, Peter?”

“Mean,” he said, “that I have lived much too long; that these aged eyes,” and they swam in tears as he spoke, “will see the destruction of all they loved and valued. My young master murdered! his father broken-hearted! and you——Oh, sir, tell me what I can do to save you?”

Horror-struck, though still unable to comprehend the old man—“Where then is your young master? Ah! tell all you know.”

“Would I knew less,” he said, “or had known enough to have prevented this dreadful business! Would I had never given up the key! but ’tis too late. What could induce a heart like your’s to do it?”

“To do what?” said the still more and more astonished Yamboo, faintly.

“To murder your brother!” he replied.

“God of Heaven!” exclaimed Yamboo, “me who wait so anxious to receive him, to hide him from every one—me murder him! only the wretch who do so dare say it!”

Peter shook his head in mournful distrust. "Why did you want the key?" he asked; "why go so late to the green-house? Oh! my dear, dear master, how will you bear the sight I have just seen!"

"Take me, take me to it!" replied Yamboo, in agony; "I waited long to see him, but he came not."

"Would indeed he had not come," said Peter, "for the fatal deed is too clear! Who will believe you innocent? But it is not me who am to judge you; too many will be ready to do it who love you less."

Yamboo no longer heard or saw anything distinctly; his murdered brother engrossed every thought; and in speechless agony he sought the spot, around which the servants were already collected, and which was at the back of the green-house nearest to the road. Rushing wildly through them, he beheld the corpse of Henry, weltering in blood, drenched with rain; an old horseman's coat, which was thrown open, shewed the wound he had received to be near his breast; his head was uncovered, and a large hat lay very near him; in short, his whole dress was evidently a disguise: but his present situation, not his dress, was the topic of conversation among the affrighted servants, not one of whom had power to utter what all nevertheless believed, that Yamboo alone could have perpetrated the deed.

Peter had given him the key of the green-house; another had heard him moving about the house long after the family had retired to rest; William had actually spoken to him in the passage after midnight; and the house-maid recollected the circumstance of the old man's pressing entreaty to see him in the morning: while Peter, who had again accidentally looked into the green-house, discovered the pistols, which had been recently cleaned and used, and every servant could vouch for the state in which they had been hanging in Mr. Henry's room, even within the week, and from which no one had missed them. These were strong proofs against him; and such was the nature of the crime he had, in their opinion, committed, that though every creature present knew his exalted nature, and adored his character, it served but to aggravate the horrid scene before them; while Yamboo, regardless of their remarks, and totally unable to comprehend what he saw, stood over the breathless Henry in mute despair—but a greater trial now awaited the whole group.

Hitherto the dreadful business was known only to themselves, and their mutual astonishment had rendered them unmindful that it could no longer be concealed from the world. Returning recollection now suggested the necessity of removing the body; this could not be done till a coroner was summoned: who then was to disclose the fatal truth?—who break it out to their revered captain?—who awaken that justice, whose power would demand their no less beloved Mr. Longford? Each looked at the other, incapable of moving, till Yamboo entreated them to take his brother to the house.

"Alas! that we dare not do," said Peter, "but some one must go there and inform Miss Longford, for she only is capable of telling my master; and never, never," he continued, "can he survive such a blow! Where will this misery end?"

A stupor, worse than madness, had oppressed every faculty of Yamboo's mind; and, almost unconscious of an action, he hurried back to the house, from which Miss Longford, unable to account for the strange desertion of every servant, was coming. Taking Yamboo's passive hand, she entreated him to tell her what was the matter; her

soothing voice aroused his torpid feelings, and looking steadfastly at her, he burst into an agony of tears.

“Henry,” he said, after many attempts to speak, “Henry is dead, and them say Yamboo him murderer!”

No less terrified at his wild appearance than at what she heard, she knew not what to say. A confused remembrance of his conduct on the preceding day darted on her mind; he had been restless and agitated, from the period of his parting with the old soldier, to the moment of their separating for the night; and nothing could be more singular than his being out of his room at the hour of the morning in which William had spoken to him, and which she had heard from her own maid; but scarcely had she prevailed on him to take a glass of water, and sit down in the breakfast-room, to which she had conducted him, when Peter, tottering into it, exclaimed, hiding his eyes with both his hands—“They will be here in a moment! Oh, my beloved master, fly, if it be possible; for never, never can these aged eyes behold you conveyed to prison.”

“What!” said the agonized sufferer, starting from his seat, “who dare take Yamboo to prison?—what they take him for?”

This was to be too soon proved, but not before the awful intelligence, which it was impossible to conceal any longer from captain Longford, had reached him, nothing mitigated of all its horrors; for the magistrate’s inquiries, who shortly after arrived, and the situation to which Yamboo was reduced, left no one an opportunity of concealing their own surmises, that he alone was privy to the murder.

Why the key and pistols were found in the green-house? were questions which Peter was desired to answer; the former, with a trembling voice, he averred to have given his young master on the preceding night—of the pistols he knew nothing further than that he had found them there. Where were they? was the next interrogation, and which Edwin, who now appeared among the distressed group, undertook to answer, by relating why they had been given to him to clean, and that he had delivered them to his benefactor, whom he afterwards saw turning into the green-house, where he supposed he had left them by accident: but there had been powder in them—that also Edwin could explain; he had tried them after cleaning, by firing two or three rounds, before he gave them out of his own possession.

The magistrate shook his head, and Yamboo was desired to state why he had gone to the green-house, and for what purpose he was out of his own room during the night? questions which Henry’s lifeless form could have solved as readily as Yamboo. Heavy and convulsive sighs told that he lived, but he was no longer blest with the powers of sensibility; his eyes rolled wildly in every direction, but his tongue had lost the faculty of speech.

Other witnesses were then examined, but their evidence tended rather to criminate than clear him. Of Henry’s being in the neighbourhood, no one could give the least account, save Edwin, who eagerly related the secret commission with which he had been charged, but that he had taken the letter back to the stranger, whom he had not seen again till now; but did not hesitate to proclaim it was the same person, by the dress, who had given it to him. Again the mendicant soldier occurred, whose business with Mr. Longford might possibly have been to deliver this letter; why then had Yamboo concealed the circumstance from Miss Longford? The servants knew their young master was not to be allowed an interview with his father, should he request it, but he had made no application,

unless thus privately; and that his brother, to whom it appeared to have been made, and who had interceded so often and tenderly for him, should have so basely murdered him, surpassed belief. "It must," Miss Longford said, "have been done in self-defence."

The magistrate asked if the letter in question could possibly be found, and Yamboo was instantly searched; to this he submitted without resistance; and the fatal letter, which shewed the appointment to have been made, was produced: the hand-writing was unknown, but its purport proved that Yamboo was left to suppose the third person alluded to, rather than the writer, was Henry. To this note there had doubtless some kind of answer been returned; this it was of consequence to obtain; and it was almost instantly produced from the waistcoat pocket of the deceased, and its contents combined to blacken the transaction. The magistrate confessed his duty obliged him to remove Mr. Longford from his father's house, till some new light was thrown on the affair, during which period every attention should be paid to him, consistent with honour and humanity.

Miss Longford heard no more; a faintness seized her, and, during the continuance of her insensibility, Yamboo, passive as an infant, was conveyed to the magistrate's house, amidst the tears and entreaties of weeping domestics and sorrowing spectators, among whom Mrs. Forrester was a sincere and silent mourner. Not so captain Longford; a frenzy of the most alarming kind deranged every faculty; he raved, by turns, for his murdered Henry, his innocent Yamboo; and nothing could appease, no one sooth his distraction, till nature, wearied with its own exertions, and to which his already exhausted strength was unequal, left him no longer the power of resistance; and he sunk into a melancholy madness, which threatened to end but with his life. For hours together, with folded hands, he paced the room in silence, or watched at the window from which he had first seen Henry's corpse conveyed into the house, and afterwards Yamboo torn from it; then, with a convulsive shudder, hide both his eyes, and anon, with hysteric laughter, exclaim—"Oh, I knew they would bring him back, innocent of the murder! His father only was guilty! I made him swear to keep Henry from me; dared him to breathe his name in my presence! I, I did the deed! See," he would add, in a lower tone, to his attendant, "here comes Yamboo's mother! Hark! she will ask me for her child! Shall I say I sold him? No, no; tell her he is gone to find Henry in heaven! See how they mock their cruel father! They have left him to dig their own grave, chained him to the earth, while they flit through yonder clouds, sport among the stars, unmindful of his sorrow! Stay, Yamboo, stay for your penitent father! He should have gone before you! Where are you, my child? Hear me, Yamboo, I beseech you; no one heeds your feeble father, now you are gone: no one," he continued, mournfully shaking his head, "no one wipes the scalding tears from his burning cheek." Then relapsing into a silent fit, no entreaties could prevail on him to utter a word.

Miss Longford, though wholly engrossed by the distressed situation of her brother, abated nothing of that solicitude which Yamboo demanded; he had been removed to the county-gaol, where, as it yet wanted some weeks of the assizes, he was to endure all the horrors of an ignominious confinement, branded as a murderer, and, still worse, a fratricide; perfectly sensible of the full extent of all his misery, and the mournful anticipation of a trial, for which he was unprepared with one testimony to prove his innocence, or acquit him of the foul deed, save his own solemn asseveration. But Yamboo, contrasted with his wretched father, was, at this period, comparatively happy. Reason had resumed its empire, and had given energy to his mind; conscious innocence

told him he had every thing to hope, while faith in that mercy he knew to be boundless—faith, the believer's anchor of the soul, triumphed over despair; and he awaited, with becoming fortitude, the awful crisis, in which every one else read his condemnation.

The certainty of what his father's situation must be, was the source of his greatest affliction; and, with that affectionate and dutiful solicitude which had through life bound him to his only parent, he still continued anxiously to inquire after him of every part of the family, who daily visited him; adding his entreaties, that they would comfort him with assurances of his return to him, and which they promised to do, long after destiny had added, to other causes for affliction, the loss of his parent; for no one had ventured to tell him he had no longer a father. Happy to see the tranquillity of his mind, they wished to defer the intelligence, which could not fail to disturb it, and humanely endeavoured to conceal, as long as possible, this additional aggravation of all his woes; while he for whom he sorrowed slept in his peaceful grave—his memory no longer tortured by a recollection of those errors, which he steadfastly believed, while sense remained, had called down the vengeance of Heaven upon his devoted head—his heart no longer lacerated by the vile conduct of one ungrateful child, or his paternal affection anxiously racked for the safety of another: all were alike forgotten. His cold insensible breast, so often the seat of each tumultuous passion, no longer heaved the sigh of contrition over youthful follies, or beat high at the welcome promise of pardoning grace. He had heard that son, in whom he believed there was neither sin or guile, pronounced a murderer; had seen him dragged from the protecting arms, which, feeble as they were, would have clasped him, while he had power to do so, to his beating heart, and a father could bear no more; the ligament which bound them to each other was of too fine a texture to bear this violation, and snapped, while the commiserating angel, who had so long watched over his penitent hours, and marked their sincerity, to spare him the last sad scene, when the awful sentence, *guilty*, left nothing for hope, kindly closed his eyes in a long and lasting sleep.

CHAP. IV.

SUCCESSING days, as they followed each other in cheerless succession, tardily brought onward that so important to the fate of Yamboo, whose sorrowing calendar had on record many a tribute paid to the memory of his first and early benefactors, whom no consideration could induce him to acquaint with his degraded situation. Sometimes he would say—"Yamboo once think he have no pride; what else make him conceal him change of destiny from colonel Beresford? Yet why make good Mrs. Beresford sorrow for him? Ah! why fill Miss Emmeline's lovely eyes with tears for Yamboo? When him dead, the precious tear will fall on him mournful grave; alive, they never know how much he need them: yet who will say to them, Yamboo die innocent, when him gone? Then he must convince him colonel, for he knew him heart—knew he ever despise a falsehood."

But this half-formed resolution to address colonel Beresford faded before the attempt; he still wanted resolution to explain the dreadful business, and still remained irresolute; while that gentleman, rich in the possession of every earthly happiness, dispensing around his hospitable mansion those blessings so bountifully bestowed on himself, and satisfied that his *protégée*, no less favoured by the gifts of fortune, could not fail to be equally happy, continued to enjoy, in the society of his family and surrounding friends, more real felicity than usually falls to the lot of even the good man.

Matilda had married a gallant and deserving officer, in that regiment from which her father had been allowed to retire with honour; while Emmeline, not less fortunate in her choice, shared the hand and fortune of a gentleman who resided on his paternal estate in their own neighbourhood, and devoted her whole time to the happiness of a husband whom she had married from choice, and parents whom she revered; daily proving, that, however conscious of her duties as a wife, she remembered also that she was a daughter before she became a wife.

Seated at the breakfast-table with his happy family, colonel Beresford had been diverting them with a ludicrous paragraph in the morning paper, which excited such a general laugh as scarcely to have been suppressed, when his exclamation—"Tis impossible!" attracted their attention, but with sensations widely different. Trembling with agitation, he continued, still gazing on the paper, "then by this time all is over! Emily, our poor Yamboo—"

"What of him?" said the generous Emmeline, rising before her mother could speak, "what of my kind preserver?"

"Alas! my child," said colonel Beresford, "he has been through life the sport of fortune; he is now indeed an awful lesson to thoughtless erring fathers, and dies for the cruel brother who has so often persecuted him, and whom he has now murdered."

"Impossible!" replied Mrs. Beresford; "appearances may be against him; the world may have condemned him; but he has a soul too pure for the perpetration of such a crime. Say, have they really inhumanly destroyed him? is there no hope?" she added; "can no friendly interference stop the progress of the law? Do not let us join in his condemnation, my dear Beresford. Ah! why did we ever part with him? beneath our roof only was he safe."

"I am at a loss how to act," returned the colonel, "and would this moment set out for Wales; but if I should arrive only to hear an awful confirmation of his sentence, I do

not think I could support it; and, if all should be over, what will the tribute of affection, paid on his cold grave, avail its peaceful inhabitant?"

"Yet if happily he still lives," said Mrs. Beresford, "what comfort may your unexpected presence not impart? and if you succeed but in obtaining a temporary reprieve, who knows what may transpire to save him from the dreadful fate which awaits him? But what is said of the transaction?—how is it accounted for?—on what grounds have they accused him?"

Colonel Beresford again took up the paper, and read the following paragraph:—

"Melancholy occurrence.—A catastrophe, of the most horrid nature, occurred a short time since at Alvington, the seat of captain Longford, where the body of a very fine young man, son of captain Longford, was found in the park murdered; and no doubt remaining of his brother having performed the deed, he was in consequence apprehended, and after undergoing an examination before the magistrate of the county, committed to prison. It appears on evidence, that on account of some irregularities on the part of his youngest son, captain Longford had forbidden him his house; that, after many ineffectual attempts either to see his father, or get a letter conveyed to him, he had succeeded in obtaining a private interview with his brother, Mr. Yamboo Longford, who, it is supposed, only made the appointment to effect the dreadful purpose he had meditated of destroying him, which he did by shooting him through the heart."

"No doubt therefore can remain," said colonel Beresford, "of its being our unhappy Yamboo, whom, at all events, I will see, if it is possible to do so, before he closes an eventful life, which he has had too much reason to curse his father for ever giving him; but his punishment, wretched man, must be severe indeed. Situated as his children were, it was hardly possible that fraternal affection, natural to brothers, could exist between them; but an event like this comes not within the scale of probabilities; however, if it is only to learn the particulars, which can never reach us properly authenticated here, and as a duty I feel due to my poor friend, I will go——"

"And," said Emmeline, with tears in her eyes, "the duty due to the preserver of your child's life."

"True," replied her father; "but if this is really true, I shall wish he had been much less to us; nor will I henceforth trust in human perfection, for of all human beings did I believe Yamboo Longford least likely to err: but to raise his hand against a brother's life—to become a fratricide—no, it cannot be! Some foul agent has again been set to work him evil, or my heart misgives me."

Thus argued his generous and benevolent friends, who, one and all, pronounced him innocent. No time was wasted in preparing for a journey too important for delays; and the colonel, accompanied by Mr. De Clifford, his son-in-law, who insisted on becoming his companion, set out for Wales; and as much depended on expedition, darkness was not allowed to obstruct their travelling: the evening of the third day therefore was far spent before they reached the stage at which they meant to sleep for the night, when the chaise suddenly stopped; and before either gentleman could ascertain the cause, their money was demanded by a man on horseback, who presented a pistol to colonel Beresford's breast, at the instant he put down the glass; when Mr. De Clifford, seeing they had no chance of saving their property, resolutely fired, before the highwayman had appeared to notice there was any person in the chaise beside the gentleman whom he had first attacked. The horse instantly plunged forward with his

unhappy rider, and the postillion, dreading the arrival of others, who he imagined might be lurking near, spurred his own horses, who shortly overtook the robber's, with its master—a circumstance which terror made him conceal; and as they had but a few miles to proceed, he continued his pace till they reached the inn-yard, when he declared the highwayman must either be dead or severely wounded, as he had certainly been left on the road.

Assistance was soon procured, and they returned towards the spot where they had been stopped, a short distance only from which they discovered the wretched man, totally deprived of life, laying by the road-side, and his horse still standing near the corpse of his rider; the ball had entered his breast; but the vital spark had issued from the wound, for no appearance of life whatever was visible. He appeared to have been a genteel-looking young man; and as colonel Beresford examined his features by the lights which were held around him, it struck him that somewhere he had seen a strong resemblance of the deceased; but memory foiled his efforts to ascertain where; when some one, in searching the body, took a letter from his breast pocket, addressed, Charles Stukely, Esq. The colonel no longer hesitated to believe that Charles Stukely and the highwayman were the same, and that he saw in him the young man who had joined Mr. Henry Longford and himself, when returning to London with Yamboo from Portsmouth—a supposition the contents of the letter corroborated, while it unmasked a scene of villany surpassing belief, but which no one understood, except colonel Beresford, to whom it was delivered, and who, having opened it, read—

“ALL is going on well, Charles, and you will no longer have reason to blush at your friend's want of perseverance to complete what he has undertaken. To avoid suspicion, I have made no attempt whatever to see my father, who is no less ignorant of my being in his neighbourhood, than the rustics who gaze upon me as a perfect stranger; but through the assistance of an old veteran, who was begging alms at the great house, as he termed it, I have contrived to convey a letter to its black inhabitant, who professes himself impatient to meet me, which I intend he shall have the pleasure of doing, at the hour he has himself appointed (eleven at night); though, by the bye, he has no idea who he is to meet, for that explanation was not requisite on my part; therefore I only gave him to understand, a person who had business of importance with him solicited a private interview: night, therefore, will witness the termination of a business which has so long marred all my comforts, and to-morrow hail me the undoubted heir of Alvington. Hasten, therefore, to meet me at the appointed rendezvous, from which we can set out together; and having performed my task, I shall need all your excellent spirits to drown reflection; for after all, Stukely, I wish it was over; but I have now gone too far to recede: money I must have, and necessity urges me to——Pshaw! it will be dark. Why did you not let Forrester come with me? He is used to such work, and he was Forrester's enemy—so he is mine. Welcome the thought! Come, all ye accursed fiends of malice and revenge, speed me success, and guide my hand! when 'tis over, I will lull remorse in festive pleasures, drown thought in flowing bumpers. Recalled from a distant kingdom, to hear the lamentable story, and take possession of fortune and a father's relenting affection, who will dare to suspect Henry? Time steals on; every minute I look at my watch, but the envious sun neglects to whirl onward his blazing chariot; and day, as if to mock my purpose hesitates to furl its hateful light, that I may steal forth to deposit this in

a channel to meet you. Fly, when it has done so, to comfort—no, to congratulate your friend, and share his hard-earned fortune, purchased by *blood!* Yes, Stukely, it would out, and the very word has made the paper offensive. My brain is heated! Adieu!

Your's ever,
HENRY L——."

Of this letter, having perused it to the end, colonel Beresford claimed possession; it was a testimony of importance to his journey; and after explaining, to the magistrate who attended, the danger of even the slightest delay to his young friend, was allowed to proceed without further detention; and on his arrival at * * * * *, the first intelligence he obtained was that the assizes had commenced that morning, but, from the crowded state of the court, it was not possible to gain admission; still less, that he stood any chance of seeing the prisoner, whose trial was expected to come on first, as the most important. This Mr. De Clifford thought a favourable circumstance, as the agitation occasioned by the meeting at such an awful moment might affect each party too much, and be of material consequence to Mr. Longford, by increasing the perturbation which would, too probably, be construed into a confirmation of guilt; but nothing could deter colonel Beresford from going into court, though he wished to be as much concealed as possible from his suffering friend, till an opportunity presented itself for the timely interference of his friendship.

It was not, as had been expected, the first cause brought forward; but as the others were of a trifling nature, they soon gave place to that which appeared to engross all hearts, all ears; for the avidity with which every one present listened to the several witnesses by turns examined, and the expression of interest which sat on every countenance, plainly told the anxiety of every mind. The venerable Peter was first called upon for his evidence; his hoary locks, wintered by age, partly concealed the dim eyes, from whose fount the big tear continued to roll down the furrowed cheek, and his tottering limbs scarcely supported him, as, in faltering accents, he related the state in which he had first discovered the body of his young master; with such further evidence as was required of him.

Edwin was next summoned, who, in a firm and clear voice, answered every question put to him relative to the letter given him by the stranger, as also the pistols. Other witnesses were then examined, but their testimony went no farther than to prove the old soldier having been at the gate in conference with Mr. Longford, and the excellent character, the humanity, mildness of manners, and, above all, the brotherly affection the latter had ever expressed for the deceased—testimony which Miss Longford corroborated in the strongest terms; explaining all that had passed between the prisoner and herself on the subject of Henry's expulsion from his father's house, and the entreaties he had used to obtain her interest with his father, all of which, unhappily, she added, she had rejected: that, at her own request, the prisoner had for some time ceased to speak of him; and, to oblige her brother, no one ventured to do so in the house.

She then related her observations on the prisoner's conduct after he had seen the mendicant soldier; and regretted, with the court, that this man, after whom the strictest search had been made, had not been apprehended; nor did it occur to Yamboo, till some time after his own solitary confinement, that the old beggar might, in some instance, have

been accessory to his brother's death, if not actually the perpetrator of the deed; but these suggestions were confined to his own breast, and when called upon for his defence, every heart throbbed with agony. Colonel Beresford scarcely breathed; but when, for the first time since he entered the court, from the situation in which he stood, he caught a full view of Yamboo's face, his mind became more tranquil.

No agitated fears of guilt shook his frame; no hesitation of speech, no evasive answers, proved him to have violated truth; sorrow for the loss he had sustained in his father, and which could no longer be concealed, when he had entreated an interview with Miss Longford, previous to his trial, oppressed his brow, and gave a mournful cast to his once bright eyes; but conscious innocence sat in calm dignity on every feature; an expression, which guilt never can assume, or innocence become divested of, irradiated his whole countenance; and with a deportment, at once manly and interesting, he explained every circumstance, from the moment of his being summoned to the gate, at the request of the mendicant, to that of Peter entering his room on the following morning, with perspicuity and exactness. The letter he had received was then again produced, and read in court; he was then asked if he was really ignorant that the person he consented to meet was his brother? and when he answered he was, every heart appeared ready to vouch for the truth of his assertion.

Having summed up the evidence, the jury were about to withdraw, previous to giving in their verdict, when colonel Beresford, in consequence of a message he had sent to the bench, was desired to come forward. At the sound of that well-known name, a faintness seized Yamboo, who, overcome by surprise (from which his friend would willingly, had it been possible, spared him), leaned against the bar for support; but, as if comfort was connected with the very name of a being so dear to him, a moment sufficed to revive and give him power to listen, while that gentleman explained how he came in possession of the letter which he delivered to the court, and which would at least prove not only the pains taken by the deceased to conceal himself from the knowledge of the prisoner, but also the dreadful purpose which had caused that personal concealment, and which he trusted would operate in favour of the prisoner, of whose inestimable, and even exemplary character, he believed no one more adequate than himself to bear testimony.

A general whisper of heartfelt applause ran through the court, and hope again animated every breast—but it was transient. Miss Longford, previous to her being taken out of court, where she had fainted, had sworn to the letter being Henry Longford's handwriting, and Peter, to whom it was also shewn, had done the same; but though it unveiled a dark and horrid plot, it in nowise acquitted the prisoner of the charge on which he had been so fully committed—the murder of his brother! On the contrary, appearances still told against him; it was a dark mysterious business, on which only one circumstance could throw any previous light, and this was only to be done by apprehending the man who had delivered the former letter, and whose escape was still more singular, when the description given of his feeble state left his evasion of pursuit next to impossible; but no trace whatever of such person was to be obtained, as all inquiries after him, which, from the general confusion, had been set on foot too late, had hitherto proved fruitless; therefore the jury, however inclined to judge favourably, had little to balance in the scale of justice, which demanded blood for blood. To acquit the prisoner was impossible; to condemn him, they felt much against that humanity which pleaded so powerfully for him; and they could only recommend him to that mercy which it rested not with them in equity

to extend. Horror appalled every sense, when the judge, little less unmanned, arose to pronounce the awful sentence; but when the words—guilty, *death!* had passed his trembling lips, and Yamboo, clasping his hands, exclaimed—“Oh, no, no!” all was tumult. Numbers, crowding to the bar, implored his reprieve only till the soldier could be found, while many pledged themselves to bring him, if he yet existed.

Yamboo, unable to support the conflict, was conveyed to his prison in a state of insensibility, and colonel Beresford, supported by his son, followed him thither, entreating permission to be left with him; the indulgence was allowed him; and never father more tenderly hovered over the expiring breath of a beloved son, than he now hung over the persecuted Yamboo, for whose release he almost ventured to implore Heaven, before the arrival of that hour which was to see him dragged to an ignominious death, for a crime of which he even now believed him no less innocent than himself.

Yamboo was permitted the satisfaction of recognizing his benefactor, and still firm friend, on his partial recovery from the faintness which had overcome him. Taking the hand of colonel Beresford, and clasping it with agony to his beating forehead, he said—“Oh, how much Yamboo thank you! Say, tell him before they take him away—say only you think him innocent!”

“My heart assures me that you are so, my poor sufferer,” replied his friend; “and God——”

“Yes, yes,” replied Yamboo, interrupting him, “God know him innocence! Ah, why he not take him to himself? Tell Mrs. Beresford,” he added, “tell both your children, Yamboo bless them before he die; but never, never say,” he continued, as if agonized by the idea, “never say how him die! all but that him heart could bear—that never!”

Wild delirium now flashed in his eyes; a raging fever rushed through every throbbing vein, and procured for him that reprieve, which, dreadful as it was, aided the persevering exertions of his numerous friends, who ranged every part of the county, still believing the object of their search must be concealed near the neighbourhood.

On the second day of their unsuccessful search, some men, who were employed in spreading manure, which had been laying in heaps on a field within a short distance of Alvington manor, entangled a fork in some old rags, which appeared to have once been a soldier’s jacket; the man instantly swore he had got a prize, as there was something heavy in it, which, on being shook out, proved to be a small pocket pistol. On examining the jacket, or rather the fragments of what had been a jacket, it was discovered that one arm was tacked up, as if worn by a cripple; and, little less pleased than if they had actually found the wearer, whom they, one and all, pronounced to have been the identical man of whom such strict search was then making, carried it instantly to the public-house where the man had begged a night’s lodging, previous to the day in which he was said to have delivered the letter to Mr. Longford. The people of the house identified it, and the circumstance fully proved some deception had been practised in that quarter; as the dress being left there, fully evinced its having been used as a disguise, or why so much pains taken to conceal it? The pistol was also examined, and could never have belonged to a mendicant, for it was mounted in silver; and, on a nearer inspection, was discovered to have the initials H.L. neatly engraven near the lock. Both were immediately conveyed to the magistrate, and the pursuit, to which this discovery had given new energy, was continued with added zeal in the cause; but Yamboo’s hopeless recovery left little chance of his becoming sensible of the exertions used in his behalf, by every one whom his

situation had interested for him, or the yet more striking instance, which was about to prove, that the righteous man is never forsaken—that innocence, however oppressed, calumniated, and degraded, will yet shine forth with added lustre, when Divine Mercy, boundless in its operations, has dispersed the transient cloud permitted to obscure it.

On the fourth morning after his trial and condemnation, a number of people were observed returning to the town, but at a distance too great to ascertain if they brought with them the person of whom they had been in search; till a boy, breathless with the speed which urged him to be the welcome herald, reached the prison-door, exclaiming, as he gasped for breath, “He is coming in a waggon! the real murderer is coming!”

“Is it the soldier?” was the first interrogation.

The boy replied—“He could not tell; but whatever he was, he was dying, which made them come so slowly.” He was then conducted to colonel Beresford, who would have purchased a confirmation of Yamboo’s innocence at any price, and who now, in ecstasy, for even this vague intelligence, handsomely rewarded the bearer of it.

The cavalcade now advanced, and the prisoner, under a strong guard, followed, as the boy had said, in a waggon; but a new consternation prevailed, when it was rumoured, that, instead of the old soldier, they had brought Forrester, who had confessed himself to be the murderer, and was accompanied by a clergyman, who had taken his confession in writing, from an apprehension that it was not possible he could survive the journey. He, however, entreated permission to see Mr. Longford, before as many witnesses as they thought proper; he declared he must do so; in vain he was told the prisoner’s situation made it useless, for he would not know him.

“Yes, yes, he will know the wretched Forrester!” he exclaimed, impatiently; “and without his pardon, Heaven will never extend its mercy to such a sinner.”

He was then supported from the waggon to the cell in which Yamboo lay, who, unconscious of his presence, still rolled his eyes, starting with fever, in every direction, entreating them to take down the gibbet.

“Ah! my friend, my benefactor, have I brought you to this?” said the exhausted Forrester; “I, who sold my eternal salvation to save your valued life! Do I come too late?”

Fearful he would lose the time, which might more effectually substantiate the testimony which he had taken in writing, the worthy clergyman, who had attended him, begged he might be removed to a proper place, and such means used as might tend to prolong his existence; this was accordingly done, and his wife and child then permitted to see him. Edwin had already done so, for he was one of the party who had first seen the waggon in which they were conveying him to the county gaol, where Yamboo was in confinement, and had first recognized his unfortunate brother, who, languishing under all the tortures of mental and bodily sufferings, had hardly power to ask after his wife, whose distress now so augmented his own, as to oblige her to be removed from him till after the examination, which it was requisite, if possible, he should go through. Every medical assistance was procured; and such was his apparent eagerness to live, at least, he said, till it was over, that he took every medicine prescribed for his recovery, every nourishment that could recruit his exhausted strength; and on the following day was carried, on a litter, into court, which was even more crowded than before.

He entreated the paper, which his good friend the clergyman had in his possession, might be first read, after which he would answer any questions the court might think proper to put to him; this was allowed; and the worthy ecclesiastic then rose,

and after stating, that about a fortnight since he was summoned to attend the prisoner, who had some days previous to that, with many other passengers, sustained material injury, from the overturning of a stagecoach, added, that the prisoner had informed him, he at first entertained hopes of being able to pursue his journey, which was of the utmost consequence, but that he found himself getting worse and worse, which still increased the necessity of his doing so; but as his death, if it took place before he reached the place of his destination, must be fatal to the life of a gentleman, who had been the preserver of himself and family, he wished to unburthen his mind to him, by relating particulars, which must, at all events, be made public, and entreated he would take down what he had to communicate in writing, which he would attest before a magistrate; “after which,” he continued, “should I still live, I must be removed to * * * * *; and should I even die on the road thither, it will prove to my benefactor I did every thing in my power to preserve him.”

“I immediately proceeded,” said the clergyman, “to write down what he dictated, and then sent for a magistrate; when, after administering the sacrament, at his own request, to the prisoner, he signed the paper, and took the proper affidavit; after which, the vomiting of blood, to which, since his accident, he had been accustomed, returned, accompanied by fever, which rendered it totally impossible to remove him: but, as he continued sensible, I promised, in case of his death, to be myself the bearer of this paper.” He then produced it in court, and it was read aloud by the proper officer, while a solemn silence pervaded.

“In me, sir,” it began, “you behold a wretched sinner, for whom there is no mercy; for I have transgressed from my youth, and shall never be permitted to see a respectable old age, since vengeance has overtaken me already. In my youth I was placed at a charity-school, by the clergyman of our parish, who respected my father; but I no sooner left it to get my own bread, than I became a hardened sinner; swearing was an early practice, and has led to the commission of every other atrocity. I lived some years with a Mr. Leviston, as his groom, and became the favourite servant of his only son, who, though a gentleman, was no less addicted to vice than myself. Here I continued till my master’s death obliged me to seek another service; but I was too indolent to stay any where long, and roved from place to place, till I became enlinked with a gang of footpads, of whose successful plunder, and lawless villany, I became a willing partner for many months; when having one evening stopped a gentleman on horseback, I was overpowered, and, unhappily for myself, through his means, rescued from that punishment to which the laws of my country would have justly condemned me.

“It proved to be Mr. Leviston’s son, who, in recollecting me, promised to conceal the transaction for ever, if I would consent to remain with him as his confidential servant. In a fatal hour I consented, for my guilt had hitherto been trifling, compared to what I have since, at his instigation, plunged myself into. I soon discovered his whole dependence was gaming; his companions men of dissipated lives, though they passed for gentlemen: but ’tis needless to enter into particulars, with which my present destiny is not connected. Among his greatest favourites, and most intimate friends, was a Mr. Stukely, and a Mr. Longford; the first spent much of his time with him, the latter I knew but little of, only as I repeatedly heard them speaking of him as their dear friend, who had been cheated out of a very handsome fortune by a black servant, whom his father had brought home from India, and who had had the art to persuade captain Longford that he was

actually his natural son. This story I was continually told, and at last promised a reward, far surpassing my expectation, if I would agree to remove, by any means I might think proper, this vile impostor, to which my master privately offered me a second if I succeeded; telling me, in confidence, that as Mr. Stukely had once undertaken to do so, and failed in the attempt, which was to have been done by forcing him on board a man-of-war, he was the more desirous of proving his friendship for Mr. Longford, by doing it effectually—‘which can only, Forrester,’ he added, ‘be by death; and of what consequence will the death of a black fellow, like that, be to you or me? whereas it will be the making of a very fine young fellow, who will, no doubt, richly repay his obligation, by heaping benefits on yourself and family.’

“The comfort of that family was every thing to me, and I rashly consented to do whatever was required of me; and was accordingly sent into Wales, with my wife, child and brother, neither of whom had the slightest suspicion of my horrid errand, and in vain entreated to know what were my reasons for compelling them to live in a solitary hovel; while I procured work, as a labouring man, at a farm-house, the better to conceal the real motives of my residence in that neighbourhood. There I learned a very different story from that told me by my base employers; the black servant, whom they represented as a villain, was, I found, the friend of all mankind—the protector of the poor—the sick man's comfort—the dying one's consolation! Feign would I have shut my ears to praises that wrung me to the soul, and a thousand times I endeavoured to persuade myself, he had, like many others, purchased his good name by the charities he exercised: but my injustice was to be doubly proved; my vile ingratitude to hold me up as a monster of iniquity to my fellow-creatures.

“My brother nearly lost his life by an accident, and Mr. Longford became his nurse, his friend, and provided for all his necessities during his confinement. My house was then burned to the ground; he only saved my whole family from the flames, and provided another to receive us—yet this man's life I still meditated to deprive him of; but as often as I attempted to perform the promise I had made, something stopped my hand, when, to my utter astonishment, Mr. Leviston arrived at Alvington, obliged me to meet him privately, and upbraided me severely with the failure of my word to him, who, having once saved my life, had a right to command my strict obedience. But that was not all; he cruelly convinced me of what I had never once suspected—that all the benefits I had received from Mr. Longford was on my wife's account; and that, during two days he had passed at the manor on a visit, as the friend of Mr. Henry Longford, Mr. Longford had owned to him, not only that he loved my wife, and had placed her at the hermitage in the park to be near him, but was satisfied of a return to his passion.

“My cruel revenge wanted no other spur; my wife was the whole world to me; and what I had so long hesitated to do for my employers, even for a rich reward, I now flew, unrewarded, to perform. Unhappily I found him at my house, where, though the kindest motives had brought him, I stabbed him with savage brutality; but his calm forbearance towards his assassin, his mild assurance of innocence, and the pity he expressed at my being thus deceived, spoke daggers to my repenting soul; while his entreaties that I should fly from the justice which awaited me, rivetted me to the spot, till I believed him dying; then only I could persuade myself to leave him; and having first given the alarm to his servants, and procured a surgeon, I gave myself up to that fate which I had so justly merited. A thousand times I determined to explain the dreadful

secret, which racked me incessantly, the motive for my going to Alvington, and by whom sent; but I had no evidence to support my story, and who would give it credit? it would only be believed that I had fabricated the whole to save my own life; and in this state I awaited the trial, from which I had nothing to hope, when my pardon was sent, and I was not only at liberty to leave my prison, but allowed, with my family, to return to the hermitage, which my benefactor still insisted on my inhabiting.

“Still I was irresolute how to act; days I had spent in that gloomy reserve, for which no one could account, when, after fixing on various projects, it occurred to me I had but one resource. My knowledge of the transaction left me no room to doubt that if I gave it up, some other person would be employed to perform the dreadful deed, for that they had determined Mr. Longford should not live, I was well aware: my only chance, therefore, was to return, express, a well-feigned regret at my past failure, and, to induce them to employ me again, become a still greater villain than before. By this step, I hoped to be entrusted with the whole proceedings, by which alone I could be enabled to preserve the life of my benefactor, which I resolved to do at the hazard of my own. I might then, should a second attempt be made, procure such proofs as would expose the whole conspiracy, and secure the vile projectors of it; and to this purpose, I extorted a promise from Mr. Leviston, that no steps whatever should be taken without my knowledge.

Mr. Longford was, he told me, at that time wholly occupied by an affair of gallantry at Hampstead, to which place a young lady, much attached to him, had been removed by her family; and it was probable my assistance would first be required there, as he was determined to convey her from thence, be the consequence what it might. Eager to impress Mr. Longford with a favourable opinion of my readiness to serve him on all occasions, I offered to undertake any thing that could do so; but secretly determined, at the same time, to take some opportunity of acquainting the young lady, when I had found out who and what she was, with her danger, for I was now only a villain to appearance; my heart had undergone a total change, and I waited only for the moment, when, having an opportunity of justifying my conduct at Alvington, which I had left in a mysterious manner, deserting even my wife and child (but who I trusted would find friends at the manor), I should, by living a very different life, prove that I was not a hardened sinner: but, alas! the opportunity was never allowed, and a far different fate awaited me. Mr. Longford was called out by the young lady’s brother, whom he shot, and for which he was obliged to fly, as did his second, Mr. Stukely, to whom, from some cause or other, Mr. Leviston became all at once less partial. He had taken it into his head that he had prejudiced Mr. Longford against him, and felt that he was less in the confidence of both than formerly.

“This intelligence alarmed me seriously; and for some days, during which my master had learned no news of them, I was half distracted with apprehension, lest some new agent had been employed in my room, and could scarcely conceal my fears before Mr. Leviston, who, I fancied, read something more than common in my looks. He, however, returned one evening, much discomposed himself, and at last ventured to say—‘There is something going forward between Stukely and Longford, which I am not acquainted with; I have seen both, but there is an air of mystery in their manner which I cannot comprehend, and was more sensible of than I believe they wished me to be. I learned, however, that they are on the wing, to insure, as they tell me, Longford’s safety;

but that is not altogether the purport of their journey, I am satisfied, neither do I see the necessity for it, as De Lasaux is daily recovering, though Stukely persists to the contrary; and they hardly dare employ any person to go into Wales but yourself, without indeed they are heroic enough to perform the deed themselves, without an agent. Since Stukely has ventured on the road, he may have become more courageous; but, if caught in their own snare, let them be careful how they impeach me.'

'A cold trembling seized every limb, and Mr. Leviston looked at me with amazement; when, seeing the necessity of deceiving him still further with regard to myself, I said, apparently in a violent passion—'And if Mr. Stukely has gulled me of my promised reward, after the risk I have already run to obtain it, let him also beware of my revenge; but how are we to know? only by following them into Wales, if they are really going there.'

'And, at all events, you may satisfy yourself of your wife's safety, and return again if the ground is clear,' replied Mr. Leviston.

'This was all I aimed at; and having urged him to let me set out instantly, I did so without loss of time, but could get no satisfactory intelligence to my cautious inquiries on the road for two gentlemen, for I still supposed them travelling together. Within a few miles of Alvington, I put on a dress, with which I had provided myself, that could not fail to disguise me from every one's observation who had formerly known me. I had seen too many deceptions practised in London, to be at a loss how to conceal any one of my limbs, and now personated an old soldier, who had lost an arm; a large patch concealed one eye, as did filth and dirt my complexion; while an old wig, one crutch, and a stick, completed my disguise.

'This, sir, I am particular in describing, because the description I have given you will be recollected by all whom this information will concern at Alvington. Satisfied that neither my wife, child, or brother, would know me, should chance throw them in my way, I proceeded onward with a beating heart, determined to hover day and night round the manor, till my suspicions were confirmed, when I resolutely resolved to discover the whole plot, not sparing the part I had been induced to take in it; even though, to procure his consent to my departure, I had solemnly vowed no power, danger, or difficulty, should induce me to make use of Mr. Leviston's name.

'My dress, though I was well provided with money, obliged me to put up at the most miserable house I could find, but where I had no suspicion of meeting with the person of whom I was in search; but scarcely had I drunk my little mug of ale, when a gentleman entered, in whom, notwithstanding he was wrapped in a great-coat, and had a large hat flapped over his eyes, I suspected to be either Mr. Stukely or his companion; the light, which was soon after brought into the kitchen (by the fire of which he stood), satisfied me it was Mr. Longford himself; and I purposely entered into conversation with the people of the house respecting the family at the manor, during which I heard myself justly called the villain which I even then felt myself to be, notwithstanding the reformation in my heart, of which no one was sensible but myself. He took no part in the discourse, and very shortly after retired for the night, as did I to my miserable straw-bed, where a thousand fears assailed me, lest my undertaking should fail.

'On the following morning I arose with the day, and crawled into the road adjoining the park, and where I knew I could see every one that passed to or from the house. Very early in the morning I observed Mr. Longford approaching, still without his

friend, and, to avoid all suspicion that I was observing him, I began to take a hard crust from my dirty wallet. He stopped, and inquired if I was going to the great house for relief. I told him I should solicit a trifle from young Mr. Longford, who had sometime since assisted me as I went through the country, and would, I thought, do so then, if I could succeed in seeing him. He then offered to reward me handsomely if I would convey a letter, unobserved by any one, to the hands of that gentleman, for him, as it was of the utmost consequence to himself. Eagerly I accepted the charge of it; and as I was to bring back an answer, determined to know its contents, be the consequence what it might. His own was sealed, but I contrived, when at a proper distance from him, to make out that it was to appoint a meeting, but with whom I had yet to learn, as there was no name which I could discover. I, however, saw Mr. Longford; and so great was my terror while he was reading it, that I forgot to implore his charity; but he gave me, unasked, a shilling for my trouble; and, in delivering me his letter, appeared much pleased, strictly charging me to be careful of it. No sooner, however, had he left me than I opened the wet wafer, and read a promise of his being at the green-house, by the western gate, at eleven o'clock at night; 'when,' he added, 'no one could observe them—no one hear the conversation of his unknown friend.'

"Satisfied this meeting boded him no good, I determined at first to warn him of it, but it afterwards struck me this would be a bad plan; and I determined to be there myself at the appointed time, when I might probably overhear the whole plot—for I yet expected Stukely must be of the party, though he had hitherto kept out of sight. At all events, I should be in readiness, if violence was offered, to defend my benefactor: and having returned the answer, which Mr. Longford impatiently waited for, I received my promised fee; but as he put it in my hand, his own trembled violently. This justified my worst fears; it plainly told me something more than a mere meeting was intended; and after parting with him, I hobbled onward to the spot near which I intended to lurk for the day; and, as soon as the evening closed in, stationed myself near the western gate. Eleven was the appointed hour, but it had scarcely turned ten, when I heard footsteps cautiously approaching; it was, as I had expected, Mr. Longford, but still alone; for though the moon as yet gave no light, I could discern his figure from the place of my concealment. For a few minutes he leaned against the gate, and I fancied I heard him sigh deeply. Surely, I thought, I have been deceived again; he cannot be going to destroy his brother himself! Human nature cannot carry revenge to such a length! He can never willingly become a murderer, when another has offered to perform the deed for him! and still I listened in breathless suspense, still waited the arrival of his brother, that, from their conversation, I might better know how to act; but during this time he entered the gate, and, unwilling to lose sight of him, I continued to follow his steps. Another thought also unexpectedly occurred; if he really intended mischief to his brother, he might effect it before I could get to the spot; and if I should even prevent his escape when he had done so, what would it avail to my injured friend? and could not fail to implicate me in the murder. For who, after what I had already done, could hesitate to believe me an accomplice, if not the real murderer? which Mr. Longford, in revenge, might protest me to be; and though my following him would oblige me to come to an explanation, even this I determined to do, and leave the rest to chance.

"I had previously disposed of my crutch, where I could easily obtain it again, if required, and now walked with a step quick as his own. Startled, I suppose, by the sound,

he arose from the earth, on which he had seated himself, at the back of the green-house, and, in a half-whisper, demanded—‘Who comes there?’

‘It is me,’ I replied; ‘the old beggar.’

‘And what,’ he said, somewhat relieved from his fears, ‘what has brought you here at this hour of the evening? Do you know it is not lawful to trespass on these grounds, and that you are liable to be taken up for so doing?’

‘How then dare you venture,’ I returned, ‘and for what purpose?’

‘Insolence!’ he said, ‘By what authority do you make yourself a spy upon my actions?’

‘On that which you once gave me,’ I replied, ‘to murder your brother!’

‘Forrester!’ he exclaimed, in a trembling voice, ‘is it really you? and if so, in what light do you come to me—as a friend, or an enemy?’

‘As your friend! to save you from a foul deed, by protecting your brother’s life!’

‘Vile wretch!’ he replied, still talking in a low voice, ‘is this your boasted promise? Go to your master, and tell him I was not so easily deceived; I suspected you was all a cheat, and do not need your assistance: but I have business with my brother, and must see him, without an impertinent witness.’

‘Why then,’ I said, doubting his sincerity in turn, ‘why do you come at such a time of night, and in disguise?’

‘That is my business, sir,’ he said, with severity; ‘leave me instantly!’

‘Remember,’ I returned, ‘how much you are in my power; Mr. Leviston can confirm all I say, should I betray you. Now then return with me, or suffer me to remain till your brother’s arrival.’

‘Never,’ he exclaimed, ‘shall so base a wretch keep me in vile subjection! Cursed fate leaves me no choice, and one of us must die! Know you that I am armed?’

‘And I also have arms,’ I returned, seizing his hand, as he attempted to draw a pistol from his bosom. Madly, furiously, he resisted as I closed upon him, when, the moment I was tearing the pistol from his hand, it went off, and he fell at my feet, without one groan.

“Scarcely could I believe my own senses; I had gone there to save, not to murder, and every limb stiffened as I looked upon him. At first I thought of still remaining where I was, and confessing all to his brother, who I had reason to expect every moment; but then he might be suspected of a knowledge in the affair. If I gave myself up, I was sure to die, and who would credit my story? Now I had the chance of escape; the whole night was before me, and it was at least worth the attempt, for my wife, my child’s sake. Mr. Leviston dared not betray me; no one else could even suspect me; and, with trembling steps, I flew from the fatal spot, but not from the corpse I had left upon it. I heard it in the echo of my own footsteps—traced it in my lengthened shadow upon the ground; till the moon, as if conscious of my deed, withdrew even her faint light. The rain fell fast, and in the hollow breeze I distinctly heard Mr. Longford’s whisper; I still grasped the fatal pistol; but it was now time to change my dress, as the only means of providing for my safety; for I judged Mr. Longford, unless prevented by the badness of the night, would walk round every part of the green-house, in search of the person whom he expected, and, having discovered the body, would instantly give the alarm. Nothing was farther from my thoughts, than that he, whose goodness every one knew, should for a moment be suspected of the crime which even I had unintentionally committed. If stopped, the pistol

must condemn me; I therefore closed it carefully up in the old jacket, for which I had no further use, and deposited both in a field, where I had spent part of the day before the accident. Having gained the road, I procured a passage in a stage-coach, and reached London before the intelligence I had to impart had done so.

“Mr. Leviston, to whom I meant to reveal the whole in confidence, was absent, and did not return for two days, during which the distress of my mind exceeded all description. I endeavoured to think how much worse it would have been, knowing I had not wilfully done this, if I had really destroyed, as I once meant to have done, his more innocent brother, and what advantage I should have reaped from the promised reward of my guilt; but all would not appease my dreadful remorse; I had shed blood, and the fearful truth harassed my waking and sleeping hours.

“At length Mr. Leviston arrived, his face pale, his dress disordered, his whole frame agitated; but no sooner did he see me, than his eyes flashed the anger he felt towards me. ‘Forrester!’ he exclaimed, ‘tell me what have you done?’

‘What I never intended,’ I replied; ‘but do not you add to the horrors of my guilty soul, by condemning me; you who——’

‘Hear me!’ he said, sternly, ‘for it is the last time we meet. You have forfeited your own safety, mine is therefore no longer to be trusted in your hands. Mr. Henry Longford is found murdered in his father’s grounds; ’tis sufficient that I cannot doubt his murderer; but his brother only is accused; yet his innocence may be proved. Stukely is still absent; he, of course, will suspect us, and who can tell what advantage he may take of his power over us? I have long suspected his treachery, and will avoid it, by flying far from his reach; you must take your own chance. Fool that I was, to consent to your going on the accursed business!’

‘Tell me,’ I eagerly demanded, without attending to his reproofs, ‘tell me, I conjure you, is Mr. Longford really accused, or even suspected?’

‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘and, perhaps, before this, safe in prison. Perhaps you may have humanity to take him out, and own the part you took, unauthorized to do so;’ saying which he left me, rivetted like a senseless statue to the spot.

“My brain was on fire; I believed that nothing could save Mr. Longford, and immediately set out again for Wales, by the first conveyance. Day and night I travelled, without rest, almost without food, intent only on giving myself up, on the moment of my arrival, to that justice I had too well evaded; when, within a few miles of this place, the coach overset, and I was taken up for dead. You, sir, know best how I was conveyed to this house, and how long I remained insensible; for I understand your humanity led you to inquire into my situation. Almost on first recovering my senses, I heard the whole particulars of the murder, and that nothing could save Mr. Longford, unless the beggar could be found, who was strongly suspected to be a party concerned, if not the murderer, so much was every one inclined to believe Mr. Longford innocent. I instantly sent for you, and have fully proved, I trust, that I am indeed the beggar, the murderer of Mr. Longford’s brother: take me then, in pity, while life is spared me, or fly yourself to save my generous benefactor: this evidence must empower you to do so. No one will doubt the evidence of a dying man, and I am that: but life will linger till I have seen Mr. Longford, my wife, and child—I feel that it will do so—take me then any way you please, so I but go.”

Here the narrative ended, with the signature of Forrester, and attested by proper witnesses. He was then asked as many questions as his weak state enabled him to answer, to all of which he replied, in a manner that, in leaving no doubt of his veracity, fully established Yamboo's innocence, and which was instantly proclaimed by the court, without one dissenting voice, amidst loud bursts of reiterated applause from all present; while Forrester, who could scarcely be said to exist even, totally overpowered by the laudable exertions he had made, and joy at having succeeded in rescuing his benefactor, was conveyed back to his prison, to take his trial, when his health might enable him to do so. But, as if breath only had been spared him to fulfil the purpose of his anxious soul, it now appeared to be fast receding, and was literally all that remained of his life, since his whole frame, wasted by the loss of blood, and the inward bruises he had sustained from the coach having lain some time upon him, appeared, as he said, to linger but till he had seen the completion of his wish.

A few hours only were permitted him, during which he received the personal assurance of Miss Longford, as a tribute of her gratitude for his ample justification of her nephew's innocence, that his family should be amply provided for at his death, and protected while they lived. This, and the restoration of Mr. Longford's health, was all he entreated; but the latter was a satisfaction denied him; for Miss Longford had scarcely left the room, when, resting his feeble head on the bosom of his weeping wife, as she fondly supported him, he closed his weary eyes, and breathed out the last sad remnant of a wretched life in a long and penitent sigh: nor was it till some days after he had been consigned to his parent earth, that his benefactor became sensible of ought that had passed.

It was, at length, cautiously imparted to him, by his unwearied friend, colonel Beresford, who, fearful of the consequence in his precarious state of health, allowed no one but himself to name the subject; but the intelligence he had to make known was alone wanting to restore that health, of which terror, and the dread of future curses on his memory, as a fratricide, had deprived him; and, though slowly, he evidently recovered, from the time he understood his innocence had been so fully proved to the world, though he deeply lamented the fate of Forrester. But Miss Longford's anxiety to have him conveyed from the horrors of a prison made them premature in doing so, and the result proved he was far from being as much recovered as his kind friends were willing to believe; for he was scarcely conveyed to his own apartment, before the powers of memory became too much for the state to which a dangerous indisposition had reduced him. A painful recollection of the night he had last passed in that room—the horrors which had succeeded to it—and, lastly, the loss of his beloved father, whom he had left there, when he was forcibly conveyed to a vile prison, crowded at once upon his weakened mind, and a serious relapse threatened to foil their united efforts to preserve his valued existence; but time, while it soothed the bitterness of his affliction, contributed also to a restoration of his health, and he was again raised from the bed of sickness, when colonel Beresford, who plainly saw the necessity of his immediate removal from a scene which would long continue to remind him far too keenly of the past, urged his returning with him into Sussex, and extended his invitation no less pressingly to Miss Longford, whose depressed spirits rendered the change equally desirable on her part. It was an arrangement the physicians highly approved, depending more upon the effects of change of scene and air, than on medical assistance, for Mr. Longford's recovery, which they yet

feared would be long and doubtful; but much depended upon the exertions of his own mind, and there were few who knew its strength, knew the various trials he had surmounted, or to what he was yet equal.

CHAP. IV.

THE storms of opposing destiny were now past. Returning to the bosom of colonel Beresford's family, his innocence justified to the world, pure in heart, his understanding strengthened and improved by the assiduous care of a fond father, to whom also he was indebted for the possession of a handsome fortune, which, together with that destined for his unfortunate brother, now descended to himself, what years of happiness was he not warranted to expect! Of that family from whose source he had derived so much of the heartfelt felicity that marked some of his early years, he had, during his long illness, made but casual inquiries; for the dreadful chaos of his mind left no distinct idea of friendship or affection; from this torpid state his faculties were now happily released, and he eagerly sought to know all that related to their welfare.

Colonel Beresford, with that satisfaction a fond father feels in speaking of his beloved children, first assured him Mrs. Beresford was well, and already prepared to receive and welcome his return to them; he next named Matilda's marriage, "and, in Mr. De Clifford," he added, "you see your favourite Emmeline's choice."

Yamboo felt a fullness at his heart, but he suppressed the sigh to which it gave rise; and, with a fortitude worthy of himself, rejoiced in the intelligence, while he expressed the pleasure which he felt on the assurance of their happiness. Retired to his own room for the night, he gratefully acknowledged, among other blessings, the recent information, which might spare him years of misery. Since affluence had become his lot, and his ideas had been refined by the advantages he received from the instructions of his lamented father, his memory had often reverted to the many perfections of Emmeline Beresford, which he contemplated with that respectful veneration mortals entertain for celestial beings. For him "Hope had never told a flattering tale;" but to remember what she was, to repeat what she had been wont to say, in kindness to him, as her faithful servant, was a hidden mine of happiness, not to be parted with; and while her image engrossed his whole heart, he would have deemed it profanation to have breathed her name—of so pure, so exalted a nature was his sentiments towards her. With these sentiments, would he have consented to reside again beneath the same roof with Emmeline Beresford, as Mrs. De Clifford? He felt equal to the task.

Yamboo had never studied human nature in others, but he had learned that better knowledge with which so few are acquainted; he knew himself—knew to what his heart was equal, and dared to confide in its dictates. These taught him, that in the society of such amiable women as Mrs. Beresford and her daughter, he must be happy; deprived of them, he could hardly have been said to be so: nor did he deceive himself with fallacious hopes.

Having left his affairs in Wales to the management of a worthy man, well calculated for the performance of such a charge, and prevailed on Miss Longford to accompany him into Sussex, he returned thither, with colonel Beresford and Mr. De Clifford, where Mrs. Beresford and her daughter welcomed his arrival with undiminished friendship; it could not fail to sooth him into a forgetfulness of his past trials: nor was Miss Longford less delighted by a society so desirable. Yamboo shortly after purchased an estate, as near to them as possible; and the three families at once formed a little

community, whose reciprocal attachment to each other left them few desires beyond their own circle.

Yamboo, in establishing his household, had sent into Wales for Mrs. Forrester, William, and Edwin; the former preferred becoming a domestic in his family, to any provision he could make for her. William, as great a favourite as ever, was adopted as his child; and Edwin was appointed to attend his person. Mrs. De Clifford's son was, in compliment to her preserver, named Longford; and to this child he transferred, with enthusiastic fondness, every sentiment he had once felt for its mother; he was, in infancy, its kindest nurse; and no sooner had its lisping tongue learned to pronounce a name, than it became his constant companion, when a day passed without seeing Longford De Clifford would have been considered a blank in his calendar.

Now it was that he became really happy, and lengthened periods saw no interruption of that felicity which promised to descend with him to the vale of years; this he was permitted to reach, unapproached by one of the many errors which had brought his father with sorrow to the grave, into which he at last descended, without one wish to evade the summons, which removed him, in joyful hope of meeting that God, whom he had so faithfully, under every trial of either sorrow or prosperity, served through life; and on that grave, long after his dust, mingling with its fellow clay, had lost the form so venerated, indigence paid its grateful tribute to his memory—humble merit, exalted by his means, told what he had done for them—and men *of worth* proudly boasted he was *once their friend*.

Colonel and Mrs. Beresford, not less beloved, had first paid their debt to nature, and Miss Longford he had survived some years—a loss he would have severely felt, but that Mrs. De Clifford tenderly supplied her place, as much as possible, while her lovely boy aided his mother's wishes, by attaching himself wholly to him; and to this boy, having handsomely provided for William Forrester, who had also lost his mother, with a few legacies to his faithful servants, descended the remainder of his property, which no extravagance on his own part had injured.

Mr. De Lasaux, who, during his life, had never ceased to regret the severe trial and melancholy fate of captain Longford, was spared to see the conduct of his amiable Louisa deservedly rewarded, by the attachment of an honourable young man, to whom she became an exemplary wife; nor was he less happy in the destiny which awaited both Horatio and his sister. The former, restored to the anxious prayers of his worthy parents, became no less an ornament to the regiment in which he served, than the latter was considered in that domestic circle, where her many virtues shone conspicuous.

Not so the fate of Leviston. Flying from the pursuit of that justice which he hourly expected to overtake him, he reached Dover, after the packet, in which he meant to have embarked, had sailed; but delays teemed with danger to him; and having procured a boat to follow her, though dissuaded from it, he persevered; for while he yet breathed the same air, he saw Stukely, in imagination, under every form that approached him, and dreaded the accusation he might bring against him. The vessel was still in sight; the breeze favoured his anxious wishes, and he saw himself alongside; but his eagerness to board her set caution at defiance, and, in ascending the side, he missed the rope which should have supported his fugitive steps, and in one moment plunged into the perilous wave, from which he rose no more—unconscious that the friend whom his fears had converted to a dreaded enemy had already passed the awful bourne before him.

Stukely having succeeded in persuading Longford to the perpetration of the fatal deed, for the accomplishment of which he was even more eager than his misguided friend, had no wish to encounter Leviston; and having left London, kept himself carefully concealed in the small town, where, as agreed, he was to await the arrival of Henry's letter, as a signal for his meeting him. That written on the fatal night reached him in an envelope; and satisfied that all was, as it said, going on well, he proceeded onward to the appointed rendezvous, depending on the success he had once met with on the road, for the necessary supply to their present wants; but the dreadful disappointment, for which he was totally unprepared, reached him too soon. The catastrophe, under a thousand forms, was in circulation through the country, and each relater added to or diminished the atrocious and inhuman act, as best suited his own disposition, or love of the marvellous; but Stukely gathered sufficient to satisfy him—the friend, on whose credulity he had been a too successful harpy, and on whose future fortune he had depended for no small share of affluence, was no more. With Leviston, he believed Mr. Longford could not fail to be acquitted; and a terror that Leviston might, in revenge, betray him, while it wholly disconcerted all his plans, proved the necessity of immediate flight; for this he was ill prepared; but one night's successful booty might enable him to reach the continent, where only he could defy Leviston's power over him: to this fatal resource he flew, and, in so doing, met the premature fate which seldom fails to mark the bad man's end.

FINIS.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.