

THE DEATH OF ABEL

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PLEASE before you read:

If I could read hearts, I would carefully preserve this little book from falling into the hands of those who will not be able to appreciate it. It has been seldom that I have come across such unique reading, words that have meant so much to me.

My copy of **The Death of Abel** is a tiny 3' by 5' leather bound volume printed in 1833 from a book written by Solomon Gessner in 1762. We bought it, along with a trunk full of other mostly worthless old books, and it was several years before I got past the discouragement of the microscopic print to read the message. It was a beautiful experience. The feeling of being transported to a setting just outside of Eden was so vividly real as I read what had seemed at first to be an excess of "flowery" speech. I have had that experience five times through the years, and each time I have gained new depth from the message. I have tried to analyze just what it is that makes the story (though it is only a novel based on the scriptures, and it should be read as such) seem so like an enlarging of the small glimpse the Genesis record gives of the lives of our first parents and their children. Perhaps the secret lies in the repeated references of each one to the realization of what life had been before the fall, as compared to their present griefs; or it may be the utter devotion in thought and word and action toward God, their constant awareness that He was the core of their thought and existence, in contrast to our often ineffective efforts to work Him and His influence into our daily existence, somehow. Part of the beauty lies in the fact that no corrupt and degraded form of love had been practiced, to tarnish the purity of love, so that the feelings and devotion felt among the members of the first family were so sweetly and unashamedly spoken. I appreciated, too, the fact that the Calvinistic beliefs of predestination and depravity of children

are not expressed in the book, though they were certainly prevalent at the time it was written. Being a novel, there are areas of conjecture on the part of the writer, but I did not notice any that were in direct conflict with the scriptures.

When Adam and Eve left the Garden, they must have seen many immediate effects of their sin, and as they lived their lives, having new experiences and realizations, often through the years they would surely have seen yet another terrible thing that they had caused. Until I read *The Death of Abel* I had jokingly "blamed" Eve for various problems — but Mr. Gessner shows so poignantly how Eve must have felt every time she saw a new consequence of her sin, and I have stopped joking about something that undoubtedly brought grief to her until the day of her death.

It is my prayer that the spirit of purity and sweetness, so characteristic of this little book, may help each one to feel closer to God, with a deeper realization of His constant love and gentle care for His children.

Betty Burton Choate
Jan. 1, 1979

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THE DEATH OF ABEL

Book One

Henceforth repose in silence, thou soft pipe; no more I render thee vocal, no more I chant the simple manners of the rustic swain. Fain I would raise my voice to bolder strains, and in harmonious lays rehearse the adventures of our primeval parents, after their dreadful fall. Fain I would celebrate him, who, sacrificed by a brother's fury, his dust first mingled with the earth. Come, thou noble Enthusiasm! that warmest and fillest the mind of the rapt poet, who, during the silent hours of night, contemplates in the gloom of the thick grove, or at the side of the clear stream, glimmering with the moon's pale lamp; when seized by a Divine transport imagination takes her flight, and, with bold wing traversing the regions of created substances, penetrates into the distant empire of Possibilities, discovering with clear view the marvellous that captivates, and the beautiful that enchants. Loaded with treasure, she returns to arrange and construct her various materials. Taught by reason to choose and reject, she, with wise economy, admits only what forms harmonious relations. Delightful employment! Laudable constancy! I honour the bard, who, to excite sentiments of virtue in the yielding heart, watches the nocturnal song of the grasshopper till the rising of the morning star. Posterity will crown the urn of a poet who consecrates his talents to virtue and to innocence; his name shall not be forgot: his reputation shall bloom with unfading verdure, while the trophies of the proud conqueror shall moulder in the dust, and the superb mausoleum of the tyrant shall stand unknown in the midst of a desert where human feet have made no path. Few, 'tis true

who have ventured on these noble subjects, have received from nature the gift of singing well; but the attempt is laudable: to it I consecrate all my moments of leisure, and all my solitary walks.

The tranquil hours had just given Aurora the tint of the rose, and dispelled the vapours of night that had hovered over the shadowy earth, while the sun, beginning to dart his first rays behind the black cedars of the mountains, tinged with radiant purple the half-enlightened clouds, when Abel and his beloved Thirza left their leafy couch, and repaired to a neighboring bower, composed of interwoven jessamine and roses. The tenderest love and the purest virtue shown with mildest beams in the fine blue eyes of Thirza, and gave attractive graces to the carnation of her cheeks; while her fair locks, waving in ringlets on her snowy neck, and hanging with a becoming negligence down her back, added to the beauty of her fine and delicate form. Thus she walked by the side of Abel, whose high forehead was shaded with ringlets of the palest brown, reaching no lower than his shoulders. An air of thought and reflection was agreeably mixed with the sweet serenity of his looks, and he moved with the easy grace of an angel, who, charged with the gracious behests of the Most High, becomes visible to the enraptured saint in a human form: but the veil he assumes is of such ravishing beauty that through it shines the angel. Thirza, with a look of affection, and a tender smile, cried, "O, my love! now the birds awake, and begin to chant their morning song, let me hear the hymn you yesterday sung in these smiling pastures: let me also join in the rapturous employment of praising the Lord. The melody of thy lips inspires my heart with an holy transport, and nothing can charm me more than to hear thee utter, in proper terms, the sensations I feel, but am unable to express."

Abel, tenderly embracing her, replied, "My lovely Thirza, instantly I will grant thy request: I no sooner read thy wishes

in thine eyes, than, with a lover's haste, I strive to fulfill them." They then seated themselves in the fragrant bower, whose entrance was gilded by the morning sun, and Abel thus began:

"Retire, O sleep, from every eye! Fly, ye hovering dreams! Reason again resumes her throne; again she illumines the mind, as the morning sun enlightens the fertile earth. We hail thee, resplendent sun who dartest thy beams from behind the cedars! thy friendly rays give light and colour to reanimated nature, and every beauty smiles with new-born graces.

"Retire, O sleep, from every eye! Fly, ye hovering dreams, to the shades of night! Where are now the shades of night? They have fled to the grove; we shall find them there, and be refreshed by their coolness during the sultry heat of noon. See where the new-born day first wakes the eagle; where, on the glittering summits of the rocks, and the shining sides of the mountains, the exhalations ascend and mix with the pure air of the morning, as the smoke of burnt-offerings arise from the altar. Thus Nature celebrates the returning light, and pays to Nature's God the sacrifice of grateful praise. Praise Him all things that exist; praise Him whose wisdom and goodness produced and preserves all. Ye springing flowers, exhale the sweets He gave you in His praise. Ye winged inhabitants of the grove, pour forth the warbling of your little throats to Him who gave you voice and melody; while the majestic lion pays Him honour with the terrors of his mouth, and the caverns of the rocks resound His praise. Praise God, O my soul! praise God, the Creator and Preserver. Let the voice of man reach Thy throne, O Lord! before that of Thy other creatures. In the gray twilight, at the dawn of the morning, while the birds and beasts yet sleep, may my solitary song find acceptance, and invite the reviving creation to praise Thee, the Creator and Preserver. How magnificent are thy works, O God! Wisdom and Goodness are stamped

on all. Wherever I turn my eyes, I perceive the traces of Thy bounty; each sense is transported, and conveys their infinite beauties to my ravished mind. O God! weak and frail as I am fain would I attempt Thy praise. What induced Thee, thou Self-existent, to form man out of the dust, and to give him the breath of life? It was Thine infinite goodness: Thou gavest him being that Thou mightest confer on him happiness, O smiling morn! in thee I see a lively image of the work of the great Creator. When the sun disperses the vapours of the earth, and drives night before his steps, all Nature revives with renewed lustre. The Almighty spoke; Darkness fled, and Silence heard His voice: He commanded, and myriads of living creatures emerged from the teeming earth, fluttered in the air with variegated plumage, and rendered the astonished woods vocal with the praises of the beneficent Creator. Earth again hears the voice of her Almighty Maker: the heaving clods rise in innumerable shapes and burst into life and motion. The new-formed horse bounds over the verdant turf and neighing, shakes his mane: while the strong lion, impatient to free himself from the cumbrous earth, attempts his first roaring. A hill teems with life; it moves; it bursts, and from it stalks the unwieldy elephant. These are Thy works, O Thou Omnipotent! Each morn Thou callest Thy creatures from sleep, the image of non-existence; they awake surrounded by Thy bounties, and join unanimous to chant Thy praise. The time will come when Thy praise shall resound from every corner of the peopled earth; when Thine altars shall blaze on every hill, and man shall celebrate Thy wondrous works from the rising to the setting day."

Thus sang Abel, seated by his beloved Thirza. He ceased: yet she, filled with a divine transport, seemed still to hear. At length, encircling him in her snowy arms, while her eyes beamed tenderness, she cried, "O my love! the music of thy lips raises my mind to God. Thy endearing care not only pro-

fects my feeble body, but under thy direction my soul itself takes her flight: thou art her guide, amidst the obscurity of doubt and darkness: thy wisdom dissipates the clouds, and turns her astonishment into devout ecstasy. How often have I, inspired by gratitude, rendered thanks to God Most High, for having created me for thee, and thee for me. O my love! unanimous in every wish, we were formed to bless each other."

While she spoke, conjugal tenderness diffused inexpressible graces on every word and every gesture. Abel remained silent: but his softened look, while he snatched her to his bosom, and the tear just starting from his glistening eye, spoke unutterable love. Thus happy was man, thus pure in his delights. The fruitful earth refreshed and fitted him for action by her bounties. Contented with necessaries, he asks of Heaven only Virtue and Health. Luxury and Discontent had not yet filled him with insatiable desires, which, inventive of numberless wants, bury happiness under a load of splendid miseries. An union of heart then formed the nuptial tie. No fear of wasting penury, or the frown of a tyrannic parent; no low ambition; no want of lands or gold, then kept the soft maid from the fond bosom of the youth she loved. These cares are thy gifts, O Luxury!

Abel and Thirza were still seated when Adam and Eve entered the bower. They had listened with delight to the song of Abel, and had heard Thirza vent the effusion of her fondness. They now tenderly embraced their children, while their hearts expanded with parental affection, and a lively joy glowed on their cheeks.

Mahala, Cain's spouse, had followed the footsteps of her mother, and had been witness of the happiness of her brother and sister. Her pure mind was free from envy, baleful passion! yet dejection sat on her countenance, a mild langour

appeared in her eyes, sorrow had faded the bloom once seen on her now pallid cheek. She had heard Thirza express her gratitude to heaven for having been created for Abel, and he for her. Their mutual tenderness forced tears from her eyes, and sighs from her pained bosom, while sad remembrance drew the comparison between the two husbands. But soon she wiped away the pearly drops, and with a graceful smile entered the bower, where, with cordial affection, she saluted her brother and sister.

At the same time, Cain, passing by the fragrant shade, had heard Abel's melodious voice, and had beheld his delighted father tenderly embrace him. At this sight envy fixed her envenomed sting in his heart, and he, giving a furious look at the bower, cried, "What signs of joy are here! What fond caresses! I too might sing, were my days, like his, spent in idly reclining in the shade while the flocks were sporting, or cropping the green herbage. But I am not made for singing. Rugged labour is my inheritance. Though I turn the glebe, though I break the stubborn earth, curst for my father's sin with barrenness, yet my fatigues meet no such fond rewards. Did my soft brother but toil like me, one day beneath the scorching sun 'twould spoil his music; he'd trill no songs.—What, more embraces! How I hate this effeminate dalliance! But, if that fair youth be pleased, no matter what I hate."

Cain then with hasty step walked on. He had been overheard, and his discontent had filled the happy family in the bower with deep concern. Mahala became still more pale, and dissolving in tears, sunk down by the side of Thirza; while Eve, reclining on her husband, lamented the obduracy of her first-born. "O my much loved parents!" cried Abel, "I will follow my unhappy brother: I will embrace him, and say whatever fraternal love can dictate to engage his affection: I'll try every art of persuasion to make him forget his anger: I will not leave him till he promises to love me. I have

searched into the very bottom of my soul, to know by what means I may regain him, and find a way to his heart. Sometimes I have kindled his extinguished love: but, alas! too soon the gloom returns, and sullen sadness damps the sacred flame."

With troubled look, Adam answered, "I myself, my beloved Abel, will go to your brother. Reason and paternal love shall unite their force to combat his obduracy: he will not, surely, resist the authority and tenderness of an afflicted father. O Cain, Cain, with what torturing cares dost thou fill my heart! The tumult of tyrannic passions has chased from thy soul every sentiment of benevolence and virtue. O sin! fatal sin! terrible is the desolation thou spreadest in the human breast. What gloomy presages torture my sad bosom when I look through futurity and behold thy ravages among my unhappy offspring! — " Thus spoke the father of mankind. Grief sat heavy on his venerable brow. He left the bower and with hasty steps sought his first-born.

Cain beheld him coming and, ceasing from his labour, thus began: "What means this sternness in my father's look? It was with no such air of severity thou camest to embrace my brother. Why do thine eyes reproach me?"

"Thou wouldest not, my son, have read reproach in mine eyes," returned Adam, "wert thou not conscious thou deservest it. Yes, Cain, thou deservest reproach, and thy offended father is come to thee in all the bitterness of grief."

"Without any love," interrupted Cain; "that sensation is reserved for Abel."

"With love also," resumed Adam: "Heaven is my witness, I love thee with a father's fondness. These tears,

these inquietudes and anxious cares that agitate me, and no less her who brought thee forth with pain, have their source in the most affectionate love. 'Tis this tender love and concern for thy happiness that casts a gloom over our days. 'Tis this love that causes the silence of the night to be interrupted by our sighs and lamentations. O Cain, Cain! Didst thou love us, it would be thy most earnest care to dry up our tears and to dispel that cloud of grief which darkens our days, and fills them with horror. Ah! If thou still retainest in thy breast any regard for the Omniscient Creator, to whom the inmost recesses of thine heart are open; if the least spark of filial love to us, thy parents, still remains in thy obdurate soul, I conjure thee by that regard and that love to restore to us our lost peace: — Restore, O my son! our extinguished joy. Nourish no longer against thy brother, against thy brother who loves thee with a sincere affection, this ruthless hatred. He longs to embrace thee. Gladly would he clear from thy mind the tares of discontent with which it is overrun. O Cain! thou wert my firstborn, the beginning of my strength. When thine infant eyes opened to the light, I beheld thee with all the father in my heart. Wherefore then is thy soul disquieted? Why does envy dwell in thy bosom, because I rejoice too in thy brother? His refined and exalted piety drew from us tears of joy, and we, in the sweet transport, caressed him. The angels, who surround us, applaud every good action. The Almighty Himself looks down from Heaven's high arch, and regards with complacency the grateful offerings of a thankful heart. Wouldest thou change the invariable nature of beauty and goodness? This is not in our power; and if it were, Cain, how must we be depraved, before we could wish to withstand the noble joy, the tender, the exquisite feelings, that high raised devotion and exalted virtue create in the enraptured soul! Darkness, storms, and the thunders of Heaven, call forth no gentle smile on the human countenance; as little do the agitations of boisterous passions cause joy to spring up in the human heart."

Cain sternly answered: "Is reproach then all that I am to hear from a father's lips? If my face does not always wear a pleasing smile, if tears of tenderness do not follow each other down my cheek, am I for this to be branded with detestable vices? Born with more firmness, bold enterprises and severe toils have ever been my choice. Nature has stamped on my forehead a manly gravity. I cannot weep or smile at every trifle. Does the towering eagle coo like the timorous dove?"

Adam, with majestic gravity, returned: "Thou deceivest thyself; thou harbourest in thy bosom horrid sentiments that will rankle in thine heart and render thee wretched, if they are not stifled. O Cain! it is no manly gravity that is stamped on thy brow; it is envy, sorrow, and gloomy discontent. These are seen in thine eyes; the disturbance of thy mind is visible in thy whole deportment. Thine inward dejection, O my son! has spread a cloud over all thy prospects. Hence arise thy continual murmurs, thy peevishness and passion during the labours of the day: hence thy unsocial aversion to us: hence the black melancholy to which thou art a prey. Tell, oh, tell thine affectionate father what will give thee ease! It is his ardent wish that thy days may pass serene as the vernal morn. What cause hast thou, O Cain, to be disquieted? Are not all the springs of happiness open to thee? Indulgent Nature offers to thee all her beauties. The good, the useful, the agreeable, are they not thine as well as ours? Why then dost thou leave the blessings of Heaven untasted, and complainest of wretchedness? Is it because thou art dissatisfied with the portion of happiness the Divine bounty has been pleased to bestow on fallen man? Is not every blessing the undeserved gift of infinite goodness? Dost thou envy the lot of angels? Know, that the angels were susceptible of discontent, and, by aspiring to become Gods, forfeited Heaven. Wouldst thou arraign the dispensations of the Most High towards his sinful creatures? While the whole creation, in universal concert, praises the Creator, shall guilty man, a worm

sprung from the mud, dare to lift up his head, and carp at Him whose infinite wisdom regulates the wide expanse of Heaven; to Whom all futurity is present, and who, by His unerring providence, can cause evil to be productive of good? Be cheerful, O my son! Cast far from thee this sadness and discontent: let it no longer disturb thy thoughts, no longer throw a frightful gloom over the natural serenity of thy countenance. Open thine heart to every social affection, and look with graceful complacency on all the innocent pleasures which Nature displays before thee."

"What need of all these exhortations?" cried Cain. "Do I not know that, was my heart at ease, everything around me would give me delight? But can I silence the storm, or bid the impetuous torrent flow in a placid stream? I am born of woman, and from my nativity sentenced to misery. On my unhappy head the Almighty has poured forth the cup of malediction. It is not for me Nature displays her beauties; nor do the streams of bliss, of which you take such plenteous draughts, flow for me."

"Alas! my son!" said Adam, with a voice rendered almost inarticulate by his strong emotions and his tears, 'Tis but too true that the Divine malediction was pronounced on all born of woman. but why, oh! why shouldst thou believe that God has poured on thee, our first-born, more of his wrath than on us, the first transgressors? No, this is not, this cannot be the case: Sovereign Goodness contradicts it. No, my dear son, thou wert not born for misery; the beneficent Creator never called any of His creatures into being to render them unhappy. Man may, indeed, by his own folly, make himself wretched. If he suffers his reason to yield to impetuous passions, ignorant of true felicity, he may render his life a burthen, and convert what is naturally good and salutary into a destructive poison. Thou canst not silence the storm, nor stop the rapidity of the torrent; but thou canst dispeil the

clouds of discontent that obscure thy reason, and restore to thy soul its original light. Thou canst force into subjection every impetuous passion, every irregular desire. Gain, O my son, this noble victory over thyself, and it will refine thy sentiments: thy whole soul will be illuminated: darkness and distress will vanish like the mist of the dawn before the solar ray. There was a time, my dear son, when I have seen even thee shed tears; when, from the gratulations of conscience, joy has spread itself through all thy powers; delightful fruit of virtuous actions! I refer it to thyself, Cain, wert thou not then happy? Was not thy soul, like the clear azure of the Heavens, unclouded, unspotted? Recover that beam of the Deity, Reason: let her clear light direct thy steps, and Virtue, her inseparable companion, will restore joy and permanent felicity to thy purified heart. Listen, O Cain, and comply with the advice of thy father. The first injunction that Reason lays on thee is to embrace thy brother. With what joy will he receive the endearments! With what tenderness will he return them!"

"Father," replied Cain, "When at the heat of noon I rest from my labour, I will embrace him. I cannot now leave the field. I promise I will obey thee and embrace my brother: but—while I breathe, my firm soul will never be dissolved to that effeminate weakness that so endears him to you, and makes your eyes run over with transport. To a softness like this we all owe the curse denounced against us, when, in Paradise, you weakly suffered yourself to be overcome by a woman's tears. —But what do I say? Dare I reproach my father? No, my venerable parent, I reverence thee, and am silent." Thus spake Cain, and returned to his labour.

Adam remained motionless, with his hands and eyes raised to Heaven. At length, in a tone of deep distress, he cried, "O, Cain, Cain! I have deserved these cutting reproaches! But shouldst thou not have spared thy father? Shouldst thou not

have forborne this cruel charge, which, like a clap of thunder, shakes my tortured soul? Ah me! Thus will my latest posterity, when, immersed in sin, they feel the pangs inseparable from guilt, rise up against my dust, and curse the first sinner."

Having thus spoke, Adam, with pensive eyes fixed on the earth, slowly withdrew. The groans that burst from the agitated bosom of the afflicted father now struck even this obdurate son with remorse, and he cried, gazing after him, "What a wretch I am! How could I reproach so good, so tender a parent! How I have loaded him with grief: I still hear his groans—I see him lift up his supplicating hands to heaven. —Perhaps, vile as I am, he prays even for me; for me who have torn his heart with keen distress! O that I too could pray! But I am a monster—Hell is in my bosom, and, like a ravaging whirlwind, I destroy the peace of all around me. Return, O reason, return! Return, O virtue! chase from my troubled soul these wild and darkening passions!—Still—still he prays. Oh, how his emotions reproach me! —His clasped hands are again raised in agony.—He seems spent.—I will at his feet implore his pardon. O my rash tongue—my rebellious heart!"

Cain then ran towards Adam, who was leaning against a tree, with his weeping eyes fixed on the ground. He threw himself on the earth, and cried, "Forgive me—forgive me, O my father! I deserve thou shouldst turn from me with abhorrence. I abhor myself; but, while I am thus humbled before thee in the dust—while I thus grasp thy knees, despise not my repentance—despise not my tears. My hardened heart resisted thine exhortations with a sullen pride: but, O my injured father! thy distress and thy groans have melted my obdurate soul. A beam from Heaven has enlightened my benighted mind. With unfeigned sorrow and deep contrition, I see my folly—I see my guilt—I know that I am unworthy

of thy love. Yet, O my dear and venerable parent! reject not these penitential tears—reject not the sincere submissions of my heart. O my father! I implore pardon of God, of thee, and of my brother.”

“Rise, my son, rise,” cried Adam, affectionately embracing him, and raising him to his bosom: “The Most High, who dwelleth in the Heavens, beholds with complacency these tears of repentance. Embrace me, my son, and receive thy joyful father’s forgiveness and cordial embrace. Blest time! happy hour in which my son, my firstborn, restores our tranquillity. Oh my child! joy, excess of joy has weakened all my powers. Support me, my son, and let us hasten to thy brother, that my satisfaction may be completed by beholding your mutual endearments.”

Adam, leaning on Cain, walked toward the pastures. Abel, with his mother and sisters, met them in the grove; they had followed Adam at a distance; they had seen his emotions, and, with delight, had beheld the repentance and tears of Cain. Abel, the moment he saw his brother, flew to him with a strenuous grasp, unable for some time to give vent, but from his eyes, to the sweet effusions of his heart.—At length he cried, “O my brother! —my dear brother! thou then lovest me!—lovest me with fondness! —Let me hear thy lips pronounce that thou still lovest me, and my happiness will be complete.”

“Yes, my brother,” answered Cain, while he pressed him with a warm embrace, “I do, indeed, sincerely love thee. May I hope thou wilt forgive my having so long embittered thy days by my unkindness, and the fury of my boisterous passions? I too, my brother, was unhappy; but reason, like the rapid flash of Heaven, broke through the gloom, and has dispersed the baleful tempest. Never, Abel, never mayest thou remember my former darkness.”

The delighted Abel, with increased rapture, replied, "Never, my dear Cain; Be the past utterly forgotten! Who would dwell on the distressful illusions of a morning dream, when they might, like me, awake to real happiness, surrounded by multiplied delights? Oh my dear brother! words have not power to express my transports—to express the sweet joy with which my soul is filled, while I thus press thee, my friend! my brother! to my throbbing heart!"

Eve, who had with tender delight beheld the moving scene, sprang to her sons, and throwing her maternal arms around them both, while delicious tears of joyful sympathy ran down her cheeks, cried, "O my sons! my dearly beloved children! never did I, since I have borne the tender name of mother, feel such exquisite, such rapturous sensations. The griefs which, like the weight of a cumbrous mountain, oppressed my soul, are now removed. My heart will no more be torn by the unhappy disagreement of those whom I carried in my womb, and nourished with my breast. I shall now see—transported I shall see, peace and harmony, joy and love, dwell among my happy offspring. As the fruitful vine is blessed by the thirsty labourer when refreshed by its delicious fruit, so will my now united children bless me, as the instrument of their felicity. Let me, my sons, join you in this sweet embrace. Let me, too, my daughters, press you to my bosom. With what joy do I participate in this unspeakable ecstasy, visible in the faces of my dear children, and on that of my much loved husband!" She then turned towards Adam; her matron lip met his, while conjugal tenderness and parental love were seen blended in her still glistening eye.

The beauteous sisters, though silent, shared the general rapture. Mahala, Cain's spouse, when disengaged from her Mother's fond embrace, said, while vivacity and joy sparkled in her altered features, "Let us, my dearest Thirza, choose the fairest flowers to deck our bower, delightful seat of peace and happiness! We'll strip the bending branches of

their luscious load, to form the rich repast. This day, this happy day, we'll consecrate to mirth and innocent festivity; indulging every virtuous transport, we'll with united hearts, welcome the new-born joy." She then, with nimble feet, followed by Thirza, ran to prepare the sweet refreshing banquet.

Adam and his spouse, attended by their sons, walked slowly on. Ere they had reached the bower, the active sisters had, with lavish hand, bespread the green carpet: fruits of various sorts offered their juices, while variegated flowers lent their odours, and cheered the eye with their bright tints. Their feast was elegant; but it was the elegance of nature: no darts of death, hid in rich sauces, struck with inhospitable blow the unthinking guest. Contentment sat on every face; in every eye beamed sweet complacency. Social converse and unmixed delight gave rapidity to the flight of time, while the unheeded hours brought on mild evening.



BOOK TWO

While the first family of the world were in the bower, indulging domestic bliss, the father of mankind thus spoke: "It is now, my children, you experience the delight of self-approbation. The recollection of a good action diffuses a pleasing serenity through the soul. Nothing, my sons, nothing but the practice of virtue, can render us truly happy. Virtue makes us capable of the enjoyments of those pure spirits who surround the throne of God. While we follow the dictates of reason, while we enjoy with gratitude and love the blessings of nature, and have humble hope and confidence in God, our Maker, we anticipate the delights of Heaven; but if we suffer our passions to degrade and subdue us, inquietude, distress, and misery will darken all our prospects: in vain will the heavens smile, in vain will the fruitful earth pour forth her bounties. Believe me, my dear children! believe a father, made wise by his own fatal experience, the joys of sin are followed by shame, sorrow, and bitter repentance. O Eve!" continued Adam, "once the dear partner of my distress, as now of my happiness, could we have thought, when with streaming eyes, and hearts torn with anguish, we took leave of Paradise, that so much felicity was to be found on earth? Never will the horrors of that dreadul hour be effaced from my mind.—"

"My father," returned Abel, "if the recital of past griefs will not be displeasing; if the recollection will not throw a gloom on this hour of reconciliation and joy, gladly would I hear from thee the events of thy life, from that fatal moment to the present time."

All looked on Adam with the eye of expectation; all seemed pleased with the request of Abel, and the first of men replied, "What, my children, can I refuse in this day of joyful gratulation? I will relate to you the principal occurrences of those times of affliction and grief, of consolation and mercy, when God, even that God whom we had offended, deigned to cheer, by his promises, fallen man. Where, O Eve! dear companion in every woe and in every delight! shall I begin the interesting narrative? Shall it be from our first leaving of the garden of God?—But I see thy tears already flow."

"My tears," returned our generous mother, "are now those of devout thankfulness and humble love, not the bitter ones of shame, sorrow, and sad regret. Begin, dear Adam, at my taking a last look on the forfeited seat of bliss. In that dreadful moment, shame and remorse for the past, and agonizing fear for the future, raised such a conflict in my wretched bosom, that I sunk into thine arms, wishing for the immediate execution of a threatening that was to confound me with my original dust. What I then felt, permit me to describe. Thy tenderness for me will, I know, make thee pass too lightly over the melting scene."

"The angel of the Lord, on whose countenance shone benignity and soft compassion, was commissioned to drive us out of Paradise. He soothed us with gentle words, cheered us with promises, and bid us hope and put our trust in the clemency of our All-merciful Creator: but the sword in his hand flamed terribly. At Eden's gate he stopped. 'I guard,' said he, 'this passage; no more must enter here aught that defiles.' We were now travellers on the vast earth; Paradise was irretrievably lost; the country we crossed seemed one wide and dreary desert; no fruitful trees, no flowery shrubs, no fertile spot cheered our sad eyes. Adam held my hand. I frequently cast despairing looks towards the seat of lost felicity, not presuming to raise my guilty eyes to the victim

of my folly, and companion of my misery. Sorrow bent his head to the ground, and we walked on distressed and silent. Adam surveyed, with anxious eye, the uncultivated earth, then cast a pitying look at me, and, to soothe my flowing sorrows, gently pressed me to his breast.

“We had ascended an high hill, and now going down the declivity, every step diminished our view of Eden: my heart was rent with agony, and my grief deprived me of motion.— ‘Now, now,’ cried I, sobbing, ‘I behold, for the last time, Paradise, my native soil: blessed seat of innocence and joy, for the last time I behold thee! Ye flowers, once cultivated by my careful hand, who now enjoys your sweets? What eye is charmed by your bright colours? Ye trees, who now shall prop your loaded branches? who now shall taste your rich produce? Delightful bowers, farewell!—farewell, dear shades! no more shall these sad eyes behold your verdure, banished forever from your sweet retreats. ’Twas there, dear partner of my sin and shame! thou asked of heaven an helpmate, to double and to share thy bliss. Alas! thy prayer was granted, and thine own side produced thy ruin. Our Maker formed us pure and spotless. While innocent, the happy spirits who behold the face of God deigned with complacency to visit our blest abode: deigned to instruct us in our duty; to warn us of our danger. What are we now?—dreadful degradation! O Adam! thy perfidious wife has involved thee, by her seductions, in sin and sorrow. Yet, dear accomplice, to whom with awe I raise my pitying eye, do not hate me! Thou hast a right to curse me;—but, O dear spouse! if I may still call thee by that tender name, use it not! for thou art my sole support. By that God whom we have offended, by the cheering promises of his indulgent goodness, I conjure thee not to forsake me! All I request is that I may follow and serve thee—I will watch thy looks—I will anticipate thy commands; happy, if my obedience, my weak services, gain from thee a pitying smile, a look of soft compassion.’

“Here my strength and voice failed; I was sinking to the earth, but my dear husband caught me in his arms, and pressed me, with a look of affection, to his heart.

“ ‘O Eve,’ he cried, ‘whom I still, and always will, tenderly love, let us not heighten our keen distress by self-reproach. Our God, in the midst of punishment, has remembered mercy. He has softened his chastisements by His promises. Veiled as these promises are in a sacred obscurity, the Divine Goodness appears with sensible radiance, and we will hope in His mercy. We will not reproach ourselves—we will not reproach each other. Oh my dearest! had God only consulted His just indignation, where should we both have been now? We will praise Him for His goodness; our lips shall bless His name. Our voice shall only be heard in thanksgiving, humble supplications, and expressions of endearment and love. Our Judge is omniscient: with Him there is no darkness.—He sees the humiliation of our souls: He beholds our gratitude, our sincere contrition: He knows our weakness, and will accept of our feeble efforts to regain perfection. Embrace me, my dearest wife! Let us, by mutual tenderness and acts of kindness, endeavour to alleviate our calamity.’ Adam ceased speaking. His words and tender caresses gave ease to my oppressed heart, and strength and activity to my enfeebled limbs. We proceeded to the bottom of the hill, where we found a grove of poplars, which extended to the foot of a rock.”

Eve then giving her husband a look of affection, was silent, and Adam thus continued: “We advanced, my children, through the grove, and found in the rock a cavity that formed a grotto. ‘See, dearest Eve,’ said I, ‘see the convenience offered us by nature: this grotto will afford us shelter, and this pure spring, that murmuring flows from its side, will slake our thirst. We’ll here prepare our lodging:but, my dearest wife, before we sleep, I must secure the entrance,

to keep us from being surprised by nocturnal enemies.' 'What enemies?' returned Eve, with emotion: 'What enemies have we to fear?' 'Hast thou not marked, my love,' said I, 'that the curse of our sin has fallen upon the whole creation? The bands of friendship are broken between the animals, and the weak are now become the prey of the strong. I have seen a young lion pursue with fatal rage a frightened roe. I have beheld a war in the air among the birds. We can no longer claim the right to command the animals; the spotted leopard, the brindled lion and fierce tiger no more fawn on us, nor play their wanton gambols in our sight, but cast against us frightful roarings, while their blazing eyes threaten destruction. We will try to gain, by our kindness, those among the beasts that are most tractable, and Providence has given us reason which will teach us to secure ourselves from the most savage.'

"Eve, with timid looks, keeping me in her sight, went to gather flowers and leaves to form our bed, and fruit for our repast. In the mean time I secured the entrance of the grotto with entwined brambles. My spouse, hastened by fear, quickly performed her task, and returning, rested herself before me on the tender grass.

"We soon after entered the grotto, and seating ourselves on our bed of intermingled leaves and flowers, began our frugal meal, seasoned, however, with mutual endearments and grateful converse; when a gloomy cloud suddenly obscured the declining sun. It spread over our head with increasing darkness, and the black veil which covered the earth seemed to presage the destruction of all nature. A tempestuous wind arose; it bellowed in the mountains; it overthrew the trees of the forest: flames darted from the clouds, and loud bursts of thunder augmented the horrors of the tremendous scene. Eve, struck with terror, threw herself, scarce breathing, into my arms, and clinging to my breast, cried, 'He comes:

—he comes! in flames he comes to bring the threatened death!—How dreadful!—For my sin He comes to give death to us, and to all nature:—O Adam!—O my love:—’ Here her voice failed, and she remained trembling and pale on my bosom. ‘Be calm, my love!’ I cried: ‘compose thyself! We will with bended knees and contrite hearts adore our God, who, in terrible majesty, comes riding on the clouds. His thunders proclaim his approach: the darting fires mark his passage. O Thou Eternal, who with benignity and goodness tempered the insupportable radiance of thy dignity, when I first came from Thy creating hand, Thou art terrible in judgment, yet suffer us not to be consumed by Thy wrath! Destroy us not, O God! in Thy hot displeasure.’

“We then prostrated ourselves at the entrance of the grotto, and with pale countenances and trembling lips, offered up our adorations, expecting when our awful Judge would from the clouds pronounce by His thunders, ‘Die, ye ungrateful! and let the earth that bore you be dissolved by the fire of my indignation.’

“The clouds now poured forth their torrents: livid flames no longer flashed from the heavens, and thunder rolled at a distance. I raised my head from the ground, saying, ‘The Almighty, my dear Eve, hath passed by. He hath not destroyed the earth: we are yet permitted to live. He hath remembered His promises. Eternal Wisdom, Everlasting Truth, repenteth not. He will fulfill the designs of His mercy; and thy seed, O Eve! shall bruise the head of the serpent.’

“We arose, and were comforted. The heavens resumed their brightness, and the setting sun spread a mild radiance through the sky, like the luminous track we used to behold in Eden when legions of angels were carried above our heads on the flying clouds. Silence reigned over the moist fields: the herbage and flowers, still glittering with the drops of Heaven,

glowed with more than usual beauty. The departing sun darted on us his last beams, while we celebrated with reverential awe, and thankful love, the wisdom, power, and mercy of our Creator.

“Thus passed the first day after our leaving Paradise. The ruddy evening gave place to the gray twilight, and soon the earth was only enlightened by the moon’s feeble rays. We now, for the first time, were chilled by the cold of the night, though a few hours before we had almost fainted under the ardent rays of the scorching sun at noon. Our beneficent Maker had condescended to gird our loins with the skins of beasts before our leaving Paradise, to show that He had not withdrawn from us His succouring hand: in these we wrapped ourselves, and lying down on our leafy bed, hand in hand, waited the approach of sleep.

“Sleep, the relief of the weary, at length came; but it was unaccompanied with that soft ease, that sweet delight, which blest our slumbers while innocent. Our imagination then presented none but smiling and agreeable images: inquietude, fear, and remorse did not then keep us waking the tedious hours of darkness, nor mingle in our dreams with fantastic phantoms. The heavens were however calm, and our rest was undisturbed; but, oh! how different from that delicious night when I led thee, my spouse, for the first time to the nuptial bower! The flowers and odoriferous shrubs charmed with new sweetness. Never was the warbling of the nightingale so harmonious: never did the pale moon shine with such radiance!—But why do I dwell on images that awaken my grief, now hushed to silence?

“We slept till the morning sun had dried up the limpid dew. When we awoke, we found ourselves refreshed and fitted for labour, and enjoyed with delight and gratitude the harmony of the birds who were celebrating with their

sweetest notes the renewed light. Their number was yet but small; for there were then no other animals on the earth but those who, instructed by Divine instinct, had after the fall fled from Paradise, that the Garden of the Lord might not be defiled by death.

“We offered up our adorations at the entrance of the grotto; after which I said to Eve, ‘We will, my love, go further, and view this immense country: our All-merciful God has given us liberty of choice. We may fix our abode where the earth is most fertile; where Nature is most profuse of her beauties. Seest thou, Eve, that river which, like a huge serpent, winds in bright slopes through the meadows? The hill on its bank seems, at this distance, like a garden full of trees, and its top is covered with verdure.’

“‘My dear spouse,’ returned Eve, pressing my hand to her bosom, ‘I shall follow with delight the steps of thee, my conductor and guard. We will pursue our walk towards the hill.’

“We were going on when we saw, just above our heads, a bird fly with feeble wing, its feathers were rough and disordered: it cast forth plaintive cries, and, having fluttered a little in the air, sunk down without strength among the bushes. Eve went to seek it, and beheld another lie without motion on the grass, which that we had before seen seemed to lament. My spouse stooping over it, examined it with fixed attention, and in vain tried to rouse it from what she believed to be sleep. ‘It will not wake!’ said she to me, in a fearful voice, laying the bird from her trembling hand. ‘—It will not wake!—It will never wake more!’ She then burst into tears, and speaking to the lifeless bird, said, ‘Alas! the poor bird that pierced my ears with his cries was perhaps thy mate. It is I!—it is I! unhappy that I am, who have brought misery and grief on every creature! For my sin these pretty

harmless animals are punished. Her tears redoubled. 'What an event!' said she turning to me. 'How stiff and cold it is! It has neither voice nor motion: its joints no longer bend: its limbs refuse their office. Speak, Adam, is this death? Ah! it is. How I tremble! An icy cold runs through my bones. If the death with which we are threatened is like this, how terrible!—What, dearest Adam! would become of me, if, like the feathered mate of this poor bird, I am left behind to mourn? Or what of thee, if death tear me from thy fond arms? Should God create another Eve to fill my forfeited place in thy loved bosom, she will not—cannot love like me, thy partner in distress and banishment!—' Unable to say more, she wept, she sobbed, and her expressive eyes, tenderly fixed on mine, made my feeling heart partake her anguish. I pressed her to my breast; kissed her cheek and mixed my tears with hers.

“ ‘Cease, dearest Eve!’ I cried, ‘these fond complaints. Dry up thy tears. Have confidence in the Supreme Being, who governs all His creatures by His infinite wisdom! Though we cannot penetrate into the designs of His providence; though His majestic tribunal is surrounded by darkness, we may rest assured that Mercy and Love remain near His throne. Why my love, should we anticipate misfortunes? Why should we, guided by a gloomy imagination, seek for them in futurity? Shall we ungratefully turn our eyes from the repeated instances of loving-kindness and tender mercy of our God, at the hazard of plunging ourselves in misery by our blindness? It is His wisdom, and His goodness, that regulate and appoint what shall befall us. Let us, with humble confidence, proceed under His direction and devoutly acquiesce in His appointments, without seeking to know what He hath not condescended to reveal.’

“We now advanced to the eminence. Its gentle ascent was almost covered with bushes and fertile shrubs. On the

summit, in the midst of fruit-trees, grew a lofty cedar whose thick branches formed an extensive shade, which was rendered more cool and delightful by a limpid brook that ran in various windings among the flowers. This spot afforded a prospect so immense that the sight was only bounded by the dusky air: the sky forming a concave around us that appeared wherever we turned, to touch the distant mountains. 'Here,' said I, 'my dearest love, we will fix our abode. This spot is a faint shadow of Paradise, whose blissful bowers we must never more behold. Receive us, majestic cedar, under thy shade! Ye trees of various taste and hue, refresh and sustain us with your delicious fruits! Never shall we gather the sweet produce without gratitude: it shall be the reward of our attentive care and laborious cultivation. O God Omnipotent, who reignest in Heaven, look with a propitious eye on this our dwelling! Lend an ear of compassion to the supplications, receive with favour the praises, and thanksgivings, which we, Thy frail offending creatures, shall never cease to send up towards Thy celestial throne through the spreading branches of these trees! Here, my dearest wife, we shall obtain, by the sweat of our brows our support. Under these shades thou shalt bring forth with pain. From hence will our offspring spread themselves over the wide earth. Here too death shall one day visit us, and we shall be confounded with our original dust. O Lord God, our Maker, shower down Thy blessings on the profane abode of us sinners!' While I thus uttered the devout breathings of my soul, Eve was prostrate on the earth by my side; her hands were elevated: her eyes swam in tears, and were raised towards Heaven in holy ecstasy.

"I now began to construct our habitation under the shade of the spreading cedar. I fixed in the earth a circle of strong stakes, and interwove them with flexible twigs. While I was thus employed, Eve was conveying the stream among the flowers; gathering ripe fruit; supporting, with small sticks, the bending stalks of the variegated shrubs, and pruning their

luxuriant branches. Then it was that we began to eat our bread by the sweat of our brows.

“I went to the river to fetch reeds to cover our cottage: there I saw five ewes, white as the southern clouds, and with them a young ram, feeding by the side of the water. I approached them without noise, fearing they would fly me like the tiger and the lion who, before our fatal transgression, used to play with the kid or the lamb at our feet. But instead of endeavouring to escape me, they suffered me to stroke their fleeces and I drove them before me with a reed to our hill where I intended they should for the future feed. Eve was busy erecting a bower and did not immediately on my return observe my little flock; but they soon discovered themselves by their bleating. She startled at the sound, and dropped the boughs from her hand through fear; but soon recovering, she cried, with joy in her countenance, ‘O, Adam! they are gentle and fond as in Paradise. Welcome, pretty animals! ye shall live with us. All ye want is here. Ye need not stray; for here are flowery pastures, fragrant herbage, and a clear spring. Your innocent sporting will give us delight while we attend to our trees and flowers. Yes, harmless creatures!’ she continued, patting their woolly backs, ‘ye shall be my flock, and I will be your indulgent mistress.’

“Our little dwelling was now completed and we were enjoying the cool breezes at its entrance and silently surveying the distant country when Eve said, ‘My dearest love, how beautifully is the prospect before us variegated! How fertile, how full of blessings is this earth which we thought so barren! Let us, to the fruits and flowers which the hill already yields, add those that grow on its borders, and our abode will have a faint resemblance of Eden’s delightful shades. Ah!’ she added with a sigh, ‘it will then bear but the same proportion of likeness to Paradise, as that does to the blissful seats of the angels, which the heavenly messen-

gers, who in our happy days of innocence condescended to visit us, described in such glowing colours. O! thou garden of the Lord, how delightful were thy sweet retreats! how did thy gay tints charm the eye! how did thy luscious fruits, thy aromatic fragrance, feast the senses! Whatever necessity required: all the useful, all the agreeable, were there in rich profusion. O my spouse! compared with that luxuriant spot, what is all about us but dry sterility? This earth, under the Divine malediction, seems unable to produce in the same lands that sweet variety, that happy diversity, that charmed us in Eden's bowers. We must now seek the different productions in distant places. I have seen too, that not only animals are the prey of death: he stretches his wide domain; he tyrannizes over the whole earth, and makes rude havoc in the world of vegetation. O Adam! what fruits have I beheld drop from their branches, spoilt, and full of black rottenness! what flowers wither on their stalks! The trees are disrobed of their verdure by the spoiler Death. I have observed too that young leaves supply the place of those that are fallen, and that the seeds of dead flowers, cast into the earth, produce new ones. We, Adam, must thus one day wither and die, and our children shall successively grow up and flourish.'

“She ceased speaking, and I, deeply affected by her words, made answer, ‘Dear Eve! were our loss only the gay verdure fruits and flowers of Paradise, it would scarce deserve a sigh: but, alas! we are expelled from the sacred spot which our Maker blessed by His immediate presence. There, veiling His insupportable radiance, He walked among the groves, while all Nature celebrated the approach of the Deity in reverential silence. Though formed of the dust, my prostrations were accepted. The Almighty condescended to hear His creature, and vouchsafed to answer, with benignity, a frail worm. Alas! we have, by our disobedience, lost this privilege: guilty as we are, we can no more hope to converse with Infinite Purity. This, this calls for our lamentations and our

tears. Will the God of Heaven visit a land under His curse? Will the Most High dwell among sinners? He looks down from the seat of bliss; He regards, with an eye of compassion our penitence and tears, and His bounties exceed every hope our wretchedness could form. Even the bright spirits of Heaven are His messengers; they execute His orders on this dark globe; but, alas! our polluted eyes are now unworthy to behold them! They perform the task assigned, without deigning to become visible to sinful man, and then soar, with hasty wing, from this seat of corruption, now fit only to be the residence of beings under the curse of their Sovereign.'

"Thus were we holding converse and casting our melancholy eyes on the country before us when a resplendent cloud descending, glided towards us, and rested on our hill. From it stepped a radiant form, wearing on his face a majestic smile. We hastily arose; we bowed our heads, and the celestial messenger thus spoke: 'He, whose throne is in the highest Heaven, has heard your complaints.' 'Go,' said He, 'and inform those children of affliction, that My presence is not circumscribed by the circuit of Heaven! it extends to all the work of My hands. Whence has the sun its invigorating heat? Who teaches the stars to run their courses? Why does the earth bring forth its fruit, and day and night regularly succeed each other? Who preserves the various animals? In Me they live, move, and have their being. What keeps thee, Adam, from sinking into corruption? I am near thee: I sustain thee by My power: I guard thee by my providence; and I know the secret breathings of thy soul, and all the purposes of thine heart.'

"The luminous sphere that encompassed the angel, reached even to me. Filled with devout ecstasy, I lifted up to him my dazzled eyes. 'How great, beyond conception,' said I, 'are the favours of the Lord! He beholds our wretchedness with compassion: He sends His angels to give us comfort. O

effulgent spirit! I stand confounded and abashed before thee. How shall I, sinful man that I am, dare to speak to thee, the unoffending messenger of Heaven, arrayed in light and purity? Yet, O benevolent angel! permit me to mention the sad apprehensions and fears that oppress my heart. That God is everywhere present, I readily believe. I see Him in His works; I feel Him in His goodness and tender mercies. That the Most High, a Being perfect in purity, should more intimately communicate Himself to a worm defiled with sin, I do not presume to expect. What I dread is, that when man shall be multiplied on the earth, he will be estranged from God his Maker. I have fallen: my children may also fall—fall into more horrid depths; and thus, being more and more debased, their wretchedness will increase. The time will come, when I shall be no longer with them, and give, in my own person, evident proofs of the loving kindness and compassion of the Lord. 'Tis true, the smallest insect will declare His beneficence: but if God continues to hide His face from man, will not the voice of Nature be too weak to strike his mind? Will not the idea of Deity be totally lost, or, at least, confounded in darkness and obscurity?—This thought gives my foreboding heart exquisite anguish. I tremble with horror, when my gloomy imagination represents to my view millions of creatures sunk in distress and guilt, who may execrate me as the cause of their blindness and misery.'

“ ‘Father of men,’ replied the angel with aspect benign, ‘He in whom, and by whom, all things exist, will not forsake thine offspring. Often will they, by their transgressions, presumptuously affront the Majesty of Heaven. Often will their sins cry aloud for vengeance. The Almighty will grasp His thunder, and display the terrors of His judgments. The guilty shall tremble in the dust: the sinner shall cry out in agony, Dreadful is the wrath of God! who can stand before it? But more often will He make Himself known in kindness: He will delight to show favour to the repenting children of

men. Mercy and compassion dwell always with him; judgment is His strange work. He will raise from among thy posterity men whose minds He will enlighten. They, assisted by the Spirit of God, shall call their brethren to repentance. Sinners shall hearken, and forsaking the ways of sensuality and profaneness, shall worship a Being of spotless purity, in spirit and in truth. He will send among them prophets and holy persons, whose mission he will evidence by miracles: these chosen of the Lord shall cure the diseased, raise the dead, and do many wonderful works. These shall make known the judgments of the Most High: they shall declare His condescension and grace: they shall foretell what will happen in distant periods of time, and the accomplishment of their prophecies will teach men that the Eternal over-rules and directs, according to His good pleasure and the merciful designs of His providence, events that appear, to short-sighted mortals, the work of a blind chance. Often will He speak to the sons of men by His angels; frequently in prodigies: and there will be some righteous persons to whom He will, with infinite goodness, more intimately manifest Himself: to them He will speak face to face; till at length shall be ushered in the great mystery of the salvation of mankind, when the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.'

“The angel was silent, and I, encouraged by the condescension and sweetness of his look, replied, ‘O celestial friend! If thou wilt yet allow me, frail as I am, to call thee so; and why should I doubt it! since thou canst not hate him whom the Eternal does not hate—him for whom the divine clemency manifests itself with such splendour as strikes the heavenly host with admiration, and surpasses the power of words to express, when the adoring soul, humbled in the dust, attempts to pour forth its gratitude—Tell me, lucid spirit, if it be permitted thee to draw from the obscurity with which they are surrounded, those august mysteries—tell me, what is the import of the promise, the seed of the woman

shall bruise the serpent's head: and what is meant by the curse denounced against man, Thou shalt die?"

"Nothing that the Most High permits me to reveal," answered the angel, 'will I hide from thee. Know then, O Adam! on thy transgressing the Divine command, God said to the happy spirits who worship before Him, Man hath disobeyed me, he shall die!' A dense cloud suddenly encompassed the eternal throne, and a deep silence reigned through the whole expanse of Heaven; the celestial host were filled with consternation; but soon the darkness dispersed, and the praise of the Highest again resounded from the harps of the angels. Never did God manifest Himself with such lustre and magnificence, but in that memorable instant when His creative voice called the stars from nonexistence, and His almighty Word went on creating through the immensity of space. The adoring angels were in eager expectation of what was to follow this unusual pomp, when the majestic Voice of God sounded through the arch of Heaven, uttering these words of benignity and grace: 'I will not withdraw My favour from the sinner. To My infinite Mercy shall the earth bear witness. Of the woman shall be born an Avenger, who shall bruise the head of the serpent. Hell shall not rejoice in this victory. Death shall lose its prey. Ye Heavens, show forth your gladness!—' Thus spake the Eternal. The blaze of His glory would have been too strong for even the eyes of archangels, had not a thin cloud tempered its insupportable radiance. The blest inhabitants of Heaven celebrated with joy this great mystery, and attuned their golden harps to the praises of the Father of Spirits, whose tender mercies are over all His works. How God will pardon the sinner without offending His justice, surpasses comprehension; but it is enough, Eternal Truth hath said it. We know, and thou mayest also rest assured, that Death, having lost his power, can only disengage the soul from its bonds. The body, that vesture of earth, shall return to the dust of which it was formed, while

the immortal spirit, refined from all defilement, shall be raised to heaven to partake there, with angels, archangels, and all the celestial hosts, never-ending felicity.

“ ‘Hear Adam, the order of thy God! I will be gracious to thee, and to thy seed. There shall be a sign between Me and thee, as the seal of this great promise: thou shalt build an altar on this hill, and offer on it a young lamb: I will, on My part, send down fire to consume the victim. This sacrifice thou shalt renew every year, and the flame shall annually descend to burn thine offering.’

“ ‘I have now told thee, first of men,’ continued the angel, ‘all that the Most High thinks proper to reveal of His inscrutable decrees. I am also allowed to show thee that ye are not so solitary on this globe as ye imagine. Curst as this earth is, ye are still surrounded by pure spirits, who are commissioned to be your guard and defence, and ordered to preside, with watchful care, over the works of Nature.’ The angel then touching our eyelids, we beheld beauties that I shall not attempt to describe. No words could give ideas that would do justice to the bright magnificence of the scene. All the country around was peopled with the children of Heaven, more beautiful than Eve when she first came from the hands of her Creator, and with soft reluctance, and modest grace received her welcome in my arms.

“Some were employed in collecting the light mists that issued from the moist earth; they bore them upwards on their expanded wings, and converted them into mild dews and fertilizing showers. Others lay reclined near purling brooks, watching lest their sources should fail, and the plants they watered be deprived of their humid aliment. Many were dispersed through the open country, who presided over the the growth of fruits, and spread on the opening flowers, azure, green, and red, with every livid hue, and, by breathing

on them, impregnated them with fragrance. Some peopled the groves, employed in various offices: from the glittering wings of these were wafted gentle breezes, which, passing through the foliage of the trees, hovered over the flowers and skimmed along the surface of the brooks and lakes. Some among these celestial labourers, having performed the task assigned them, were sitting in the shade, joining in harmonious concert: the melody of their voices accompanied the sounding strings of their golden harps, and they sang to the praise of the Most High, hymns not to be heard by mortal ears. Not a few were walking on our hill, and among our bowers: in their gentle looks I beheld commiseration of our distress. But now our eyes again became unable to behold the heavenly effulgence, and the rapturous scene disappeared.

“ ‘These, which you have just beheld,’ said the angel, ‘are spirits commissioned to watch over the productions of the earth: they are appointed assistants of Nature, and help to promote and complete her various works, according to the invariable and immutable laws of the great First Cause. The Creator has given existence to innumerable orders of beings. Even this earth, though under the curse of the Most High, is full of beauty, and the admiring angels behold, on this globe objects too sublime for mortal sight. The delightful employment of some of these children of Heaven is to watch over thy safety, O Adam! to avert from thee unforeseen misfortunes. They accompany thee in all thy ways: they assist thee in thy labours, and often turn even thy disappointments to thy advantage, bringing from an apparent evil a real good. They, with pleasure, behold thy domestic happiness. They are witnesses of thy most secret actions. A smile of benevolence shows their joy when man, their charge, acts right: the frown of disdain and sorrow sits on their brow when he forgets himself and his happiness. These, in future ages, the Lord will employ to distribute plenty through the countries He will delight to bless, or to carry

famine and desolation among rebellious nations, when it shall please Him to recall them by His chastisements.'

"The angel ceased speaking. He cast on us a look of mild condescension, and was lost to our eyes in a shining cloud. We prostrated ourselves on the earth with devout ecstasy and humbly offered up our thanksgivings to our Beneficent and all-merciful Creator.

"I immediately set up the altar, as the Lord had commanded, on the summit of the hill. Eve employed herself in constructing around it a little paradise. She brought from the neighboring plain the most beautiful and odoriferous flowers : these she planted on all sides of the altar, and, with cheerful labour, watered them each morning and evening from the clear stream that flowed near our dwelling. 'O tutelar angels!' said she, in the midst of her labour, 'complete the work of my hands; for without your aid, in vain shall I plant, in vain shall I water! May your kind cares, bright spirits, give these flowers more life, more beauty, more fragrance, than they had in their native soil; for to the Lord of All this enclosure is consecrated!' I planted a spacious circle of trees around the holy altar, and their thick branches spread an awful shade that disposed the mind to devout contemplation.

"In these occupations we passed the summer, exposed each day to the scorching sun. Autumn arrived, and repaid our labour with its various fruits. It drew near its close: the loud blasts of the north began to be heard and the tops of the mountains began to be covered with a hoar frost. Not then knowing that the weak earth, which was exhausted by the profuse liberality of summer and autumn, wanted to recover her strength by the rest of winter, we saw, with grief, the saddened face of Nature. In Eden we knew no change of seasons; mild spring, gay summer, and plenteous autumn, charmed there together. As winter advanced, the face of

Nature wore increasing gloom; the flowers withered on the stalks, and, if any yet survived around the altar, they seemed, with drooping heads, to mourn their approaching fall. The latest fruits fell from the trees and the sapless branches cast their leaves. The clouds poured down torrents of rain and the highest peaks of the mountains were covered with snow. We beheld this scene of desolation with fear and anxiety. 'Should this, my dearest Eve,' said I, 'be only the first effects of the curse pronounced against this earth, and God continues to punish, she will be stripped of the small remains of utility and beauty which her degradation has left her : small were they in comparison of the delights of Paradise; yet they were sufficient to soften our toil, and afford us many of the conveniences and blessings of life : but if the Divine malediction continues to spread destruction on this earth, how gloomy will be our days! What will become of our promised offspring?' Thus we mourned our melancholy situation : but, encouraged by the promises of our God, we placed in Him a humble confidence. We endeavoured to console each other, and to drive from our minds every thought of murmuring or discontent, and thankfully adored the Lord in the midst of the dreary horrors by which we were surrounded.

"We laid up for our winter support those fruits that had escaped corruption and rotteness, and, that they might be still preserved, we dried them by fire. I covered our cottage anew and made a closer fence around to keep out the cold and the rain. In the mean time, our little flock languidly wandered on the eminence, gaining a scanty support by nipping the short grass that still remained, or here and there sprung afresh; and I, for their farther relief, ranged the country to seek them fodder, which I carefully preserved, lest they should perish if the rigours of winter increased.

"Sad and slow passed our days while the clouded sky

poured forth rain and the bleak winds chilled us with cold. But at length the genial sun reanimated the earth, and the brightened heavens, while gentle winds chased the moist fogs from the summits of the mountains. Reviving Nature smiled at the return of youth : the fields were again clothed in cheerful green : innumerable flowers decked the pastures and seemed to vie with the sun in lustre : the trees again began to shoot out their buds, and all Nature was full of new-born joy. Thus, crowned with leaves and flowers, came amiable spring, that delightful morning of the year.

“The trees with which I had surrounded the altar were pre-eminent in beauty. Eve saw, with inexpressible rapture, the flowers she had planted on the holy spot recover their bloom. In vain, my children, should I attempt to give you an idea of our joyful ecstasy. We ran to the consecrated circle, filled with devout gratitude. The sun illumined the sacred spot with his purest radiance. Every creature seemed to join in our praises of the Creator. The flowers exhaled their sweetest odours : the trees extended the shade of their blossoming branches over the holy altar : the winged insects that inhabited the tender grass chirped forth their joy; while the birds on the spreading boughs of the trees enlivened our devotion by their mellifluous harmony. We cast ourselves on our knees; tears of gratitude and joy burst from our eyes, fell on the grassy turf, and mingled with the dew of the morning. Our fervid prayer ascended towards the Lord of Nature, towards the God of Grace and Goodness, who had mercifully turned even the effects of His just displeasure to our advantage.

“I now began to cultivate a little field upon the hill. I cast into the fertile earth some grains which I had preserved from the produce of autumn. I even enriched the land with seeds I had gathered in the distant country. Nature, chance, or reflection, often discovered to me means to facilitate my

labour. Often, too, ignorance of the seasons, and of the proper soils for the different productions, led me into errors. Frequently my imagination deceived me, and I was disappointed when I had high hopes that I had found the art of contracting my labours. I should sometimes have been without resource, had not the gentle spirits, who watched over my happiness, condescended to enlighten me.

“One morning, as I cast my eyes towards the altar, I beheld with awe the flame of the Lord burning over it. The rising sun gilded with his beams the ascending smoke. Enraptured, I called to my beloved : ‘See, dearest Eve!’ I cried; ‘see the accomplishment of the promise! Behold the sacred flame is come down on our altar! Let us go to it immediately. Every labour must now cease. I will, as the Almighty hath commanded, kill a young lamb. Haste, my love, and choose the finest flowers to strew the sacrifice.’ I took the best of my flock : but children, it is impossible to give you a description of what I felt when I went to deprive the innocent animal of life. A trembling seized my hand; I was scarce able to hold the struggling victim; and never could I have brought myself to give it death, had not my resolution been animated by the express command of the Author of Life. The very remembrance of its endeavours to escape gives me pain. When I beheld its quivering limbs in the last moments of its existence, an universal tremor shook my own; and when it lay before me without sense or motion, dreadful forebodings invaded my troubled soul. In obedience to the divine command I laid the bleeding lamb on the altar, and Eve scattered on it odoriferous flowers. We then prostrated ourselves on the earth before it, with reverence and fear, and offered up our humble praises to the God of Truth who had thus solemnly verified His promises. An awful silence reigned around us, as if Nature celebrated the presence of her God. In this perfect calm, our ravished ears were charmed with the minstrelsy of Heaven. The angels that hovered

over us, joined in our devout praises. The flames soon consumed the sacrifice, and on its extinction, which was sudden, an aromatic odour diffused itself through the far extended country.

“A little after this solemn day of reconciliation, I was going at sun-set to rest myself, after the fatigue of the day, near my beloved. I ascended the hill : I sought for her in vain in our cottage : I looked for her, with anxiety, in the shady bower. At length I found her, pale and without strength, at the side of the spring, and thee, Cain, my first-born, lying on her bosom. The pains of childbirth had seized her while she was employed in her ordinary labours near the brook. She was bedewing thine infant face with tears of joy. At sight of me, she cried with a smile, ‘I salute thee, father of men! The Lord hath assisted me in the hour of distress : I have brought forth this son, to whom I have given the name of Cain. O thou dear first-born!’ said she, ‘the Lord hath favourably regarded the hour of thy birth : may all thy days be consecrated to His praise! How weak, how helpless is he that is born of a woman! Mayest thou, dear infant, rise as a young flower in the spring! May thy life be a sweet perfume offered up to Heaven!’ I then took thee, my first-born, in my arms.

“‘I salute thee,’ said I to Eve, ‘I salute thee, mother of men! The Lord be praised, who hath assisted thee in thy distress! I salute thee, Cain, First of human beings who gave pain to thy mother; first of the human race who entered into life to leave it by death. O God!’ continued I, ‘look down from Thy throne, and regard with compassion this Thy feeble creature! Shed Thy gracious benediction on the morning of his life! It shall be my delightful task to instruct his young mind: I will show him the miracles of Thy grace : I will teach him the wonders of Thy love. Morning and evening his infant lips shall be taught to sound forth Thy praise. O !

dearest Eve, mother of men,' I cried, in the transport of my heart, 'a race without number shall flourish around thee. This myrtle was, like thee, solitary till the tender suckers sprang from the maternal root. When mild spring shall clothe it with new verdure, the first shoots will produce others, and, in time, this single myrtle shall form a little aromatic grove. In the same manner, (let this prospect console thee in thy present weakness) in the same manner shall our offspring multiply around this eminence. We shall, from its summit, see their peaceful dwellings adorn the plain: we shall see them, if death delays its approach long enough to permit us---we shall see them lend each other mutual assistance to gain the provisions, the conveniences and the sweets of life. Often will we descend from this hill to visit our children's children, and under their fertile shades will we recount the wonders of the Lord, and exhort them to piety and gratitude. When they taste of joy, we will share it with them: we will sympathize in their griefs, and give them consolation and advice. From the top of this ascent we shall see---with gratitude and joy we shall see a thousand altars smoke around. Their burnt-offerings shall envelope us in sacred clouds, through which our fervent prayers shall ascend to the great Creator in behalf of the human race. And when the solemn day shall come, when the flame of Heaven shall descend upon the first and most holy altar, they shall assemble on this hill. We will lead them to sacrifice, and, in holy transport, we shall behold the fruit of our loins form around us a vast circle of prostrate worshippers.'

"Thus, O Cain! did I utter the Sweet effusions of my heart. I kissed thine infant lips with the most tender joy. Thy mother then took thee in her enfeebled arms, when, having assisted her to rise, I led her to our dwelling.

"Strength and vigour soon began to animate thy little members. Laughter and gaiety sparkled in thine eyes, and

mirth played on thy cheeks. Already wert thou able to run with thy tender feet on the soft grass, and among the flowers; already thy little lips began to lisp forth thine infant thoughts, when Eve brought into the world Mahala, thy spouse. Full of joy, you skipped about the newborn, kissed her, and covered her with flowers. Eve at length brought forth thee, O Abel! and afterwards Thirza, thy companion. With inexpressible joy we beheld your innocent pleasures. Our delight increased as we saw your young minds unfold themselves and arrive by little and little at maturity. We employed our most attentive care to cultivate your mental powers, to direct your thoughts to worthy objects, that your lives might diffuse the agreeable odour of virtue. Thus a variety of flowers, combined by art, form the fragrant nosegay. While you, my children, yet prattled on my knee, or chased each other through the grove in wanton play, I discovered that man, born in sin, needs cultivation, like the stubborn earth, curst for our transgression; and that vigilance and watchful care were necessary in the arduous task of forming the mind. "To teach the young idea how to shoot," to guide the pliant heart from the turbulence of the passions, to make the powers and noble inclinations of the soul bring forth their genuine fruits, virtue and piety, require all the teacher's art—all the parent's love.

"I have now, my beloved children, the happiness to see you arrived at your full growth, as the tender plants are by the hand of Time transformed into lofty and wide-spreading trees. Praised be the God of Heaven for His innumerable mercies! adored for ever be His name, for His unmerited goodness! May you, my dear offspring, by your filial love, humble gratitude, and devout reverence, continue faithful to Him! and may the grace and benediction of the Most High always rest on your dwellings!"

Adam here finished his recital. A nymph, united by the

soft bands of Hymen to her favourite swain, wanders with him in the early dawn. They hear the sweet notes of the nightingale, while all is silence around. Her voice seems the echo of their own fond thoughts, and through their soul is diffused a tender transport. The bird ceases her melody; but they still listen, with the ear of expectation turned towards the branches from whence she chanted her nocturnal song. Thus, though our general father ceased to speak, his children remained fixed in mute attention. The different scenes he had represented gave them various emotions: sometimes the gushing tear dropped from their eyes, at others a lively joy spread itself over their features. They all returned their thanks to the father of men: Cain rendered his as well as the others; but he alone had neither smiled nor wept.

BOOK THREE

Adam having finished his relation, Abel again tenderly embraced his brother and they all left the bower, each pair taking their way to their separate dwellings while the moon's mild rays enlightened their steps. "O my Thirza!" cried Abel to his beloved, pressing her hand, "what exquisite joy diffuses itself through my soul! My brother is no longer estranged from me : he loves me : his moistened cheek spoke his tenderness, while he gave me the fraternal embrace. How did my heart rejoice in the sweet effusion of his returned affection! Less delightful, less refreshing, is the evening dew that falls on the parched earth after it has been scorched by the sun's burning rays. The furious tempest of his soul is calmed : peace and love are returned : they will again take up their abode in our humble cottages and give new sweets to every enjoyment. O Thou Beneficent Being! who hast with infinite goodness watched over our parents when they were the sole inhabitants of this spacious earth, keep far from the heart of my beloved brother every baleful and tormenting passion! May the storm never return : but may tranquility, gratitude, and joy, render every day delightful, like in the past!"

Thirza, with delight in her countenance, said, "Our parents, my love, felt not more joy at the return of spring, after the rigours of the first winter, than they experienced when they saw the tears of reconciliation drop from the softened eyes of our brother. Our affectionate father, our fond mother, seemed in their transport to have recovered all the gaiety of youth, and everything around us smiled with new joy." Thus did this amiable and virtuous pair express the sweet sensations that filled their hearts.

Mahala, Cain's spouse, observing that his brow still wore the gloom of discontent, pressed his hand to her lips, and in a soft and tender accent, said, "Why, my love, dost thou seem so cold, so insensible, in the midst of such happiness? Is the calm that is restored to thy soul incapable of enlivening thine eye with tender joy? Cannot thy heartfelt satisfaction render thy countenance serene? I should fear the cloud of grief, that has so long darkened thy days, had rendered thee unable to taste of joy, had I not beheld—beheld with ecstatic delight, content and transport animate thine eyes, when thou gavest our brother the fraternal embrace. O my beloved! the Eternal from his throne on high, and the benevolent angels who surround us, saw with approbation the soft sensations that then filled thine heart. Suffer me, my dearest spouse! to press thee to my bosom : let my fondness again light up joy in thy countenance. Mayest thou lose all thy cares in this sweet embrace!"

Cain resisted not the tender caresses of his spouse, but replied, "Your joy, your excessive joy, gives me offence. Yes, I am displeased. Does not your transport say, 'Cain is corrected? he was, before, a man vicious and wicked—he hated his brother?'—I was not wicked.—Whence arouse so strange an idea? Must I hate my brother because I was not always weeping over him, or persecuting him with my embraces?—I never hated my brother—no, never. I saw, indeed, with pain, that he, by his softness and effeminacy, stole from me the affection of Adam and Eve.—Could I be insensible of this? But, Mahala, it is not without cause that sorrow hangs on my brow. What imprudence in our father to recount to us the history of his shameful fall, and all the disasters of which he and Eve are the cause! What need was there for us to know, and be so often told, that it was their fault that lost us all the delights of Paradise and rendered us unhappy? Were we ignorant of this, our miseries would be more supportable and we should not deplore the want of

enjoyments of which we could then have no idea.”

Mahala stifled in her heart remonstrances and complaints, and carefully read her husband's eyes to see if she might venture a reply. Then mildly answered, “Suffer me, I conjure thee, my beloved, to weep! for I cannot restrain my tears. Suffer me to implore thee for myself! I beseech thee to drive far from thee this gloomy melancholy that is again beginning to overcloud thy soul! Thou canst, I know, my love, thou canst disperse it, and restore to thy heart peace and serenity. Let not thy troubled imagination always present to thy view subjects of misery and grief, where thou oughtest to behold, Divine benignity and grace, O Cain! why should we blame our affectionate parents for relating to us the wonders God has done for fallen man! They would excite in our souls a lively gratitude and firm confidence. They are keenly sensible of everything that can be a subject of pain and grief to us, and it is barbarity to reproach them with our misery. Rise, my love, I entreat thee; rise superior to the vexations that would again intrude themselves into thine heart and obscure our days with gloomy sadness!” She said no more, but gave her husband a tender glance while her eyes swam in tears.

The smile of affection now tempered the austerity of Cain's countenance and he replied as he embraced Mahala, “I will, my dear, surmount the vexations that would gain an empire over me. I will not obscure thy days, or mine, with unavailing sorrow.”

Anamelech, one of the inferior spirits of Hell, had observed the behaviour and discourse of Cain. He had seen with malicious joy the signs of envy and wrath in his ruffled features. This malignant demon, though of the lowest order among the rebel angels, did not yield, in pride and ambition, to Satan, the arch-apostate. Often, while in Hell, he retired

from his companions, whom he despised: often he remained in solitude among the infected rivers of sulphur that flowed through the burning land, or strayed alone on the enormous rocks whose summits were hid in stormy clouds. There, in secret, he repined at his ignoble indolence while the blue flames, reflected from the tops of the mountains, cast an obscure and horrid light on the path made by his wandering feet. But when Hell, with tumultuous roar celebrated the praises and triumphs of her king, who on his return from the terrestrial globe, elate with pride, recounted how he had seduced our general ancestors, and boasted his having forced the Eternal to pronounce against them the decree of death and wretchedness, then the black venom of Envy swelled the rancorous breast of Anamelech. "Must Satan," he cried to himself, "though accursed, enjoy in Hell triumphs and praise, while I, unnoticed, rove in obscurity through the dark corners of these gloomy regions, or am confounded among the vile crowd, who, with servile shouts, aggrandize, and hail him victor? No: I feel myself equally capable of noble daring; I will astonish my compeers: I will force Hell's fierce monarch to pronounce my name with respect." Actuated by the prospect of rising to distinguished greatness among the infernals, he meditated baleful projects and nourished in solitude inveterate hatred to the human race. His black mind formed various schemes for their destruction, and his horrid designs succeeded but too well. The miseries of Adam's offspring rendered the name of this vile demon great among the diabolical powers of the fiery deep. He it was who, after a succession of ages, incited a cruel king to massacre the infants of Bethlehem. He saw, with a malignant smile, men, barbarous as the outcasts of Heaven, display a savage rage against those innocents. He received a horrid pleasure while he beheld their little limbs dashed against the stones, which their spouting veins stained with blood. He was delighted to see them stabbed and dismembered in the arms of their distracted mothers. He hovered, with cruel satisfaction, over

that unfortunate city. The cries of these tender victims were to him agreeable melody. He fed, with eager joy, on the heart-rending complaints of their inconsolable mothers. The mangled limbs of infants, trampled under the feet of their savage murderers, was to him a pleasing sight; and he felt a hellish transport when he beheld their fond parents prostrate on the earth, in all the bitterness of anguish, tearing their hair, and beating their breasts, distained with the blood of their guiltless offspring.

This relentless fiend, revolving in his gloomy breast the actions of Hell's fell monarch, disdained ignoble sloth. "I will ascend," said he -- "I will ascend to earth. I'll know the import of the sentence, Man shall die! I shall accelerate his doom--I will kill." He then, with hasty stride, passed through the gate of Hell. He marked and trod the footsteps the arch-fiend had traced through ancient Night, and the tumultuous empire of Chaos. Thus a brigantine, equipped for theft, steers with full sail through the immense sea, and stopping on the coast of Hesperia, surprises the tranquil inhabitants of some peaceful village: seizes the active youth, while fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and inconsolable wives, lament on the shore, pursuing with weeping eyes, the ravishers, who, with outspread sails, soon escape from sight.

This detestable Anamelech long flew, with rapidity, through the gloomy empire of Night, till at length he perceived a faint light on the frontiers of the created universe. As a malefactor, meditating some horrid murder in the shade and silence of the night proceeds to execute his bloody purpose through a gloom towards the city and finds it on all sides illuminated, is struck with fear and would gladly hide himself from every eye; thus the impure spirit was agitated with terror while he traversed the immense sphere which surrounded the earth. On his arrival on this globe, his piercing eye soon discovered the abode of man,

and he alighted in the shady grove.

“Here then,” said he, “dwells man, Heaven’s new favourite. This earth is cursed, and far unlike the smiling garden where he first was placed. Delightful spot! now guarded by the flaming sword; for I beheld it while I hovered over the earth. This they have lost; but what is left them is not Hell. Perhaps, by plaintive supplications, they have softened the anger of their God : for did not Hell still follow me from place to place; did I not bear within myself a Hell, I might, for aught I see, be happy here; but possibly their grosser bodies may be subject to pains, to griefs unknown to ethereal substances. Ah! I see some of the heavenly host placed as guardians over man, though under malediction. I must elude their care, escape their attention, or all my designs will be rendered abortive, and I shall become the sport, rather than the admiration of Satan and the sycophants who surround his throne. Yonder is the family of sinners; but I see no signs of misery : their evils, perhaps, commence not till death. I’ll know. If their hearts are open to seduction, I will, by my wiles, engage them in new crimes that may accelerate their punishment. Satan succeeded, by an easy artifice, with the chiefs of this family, while they were yet perfect. Now they are degraded by sin and the curse of their God, can it be harder to subvert them? No : I shall induce them to commit actions so black that their heavenly guardians shall quit the earth with horror, and He who created them shall, by his thunder, exterminate the ungrateful race, or precipitate them into the burning lake: then, on our scorching banks, we shall taste of joy—shall triumph, while we behold these worthy inhabitants of this new world rolling in flames of sulphur, cursing their existence, and their Almighty Maker. Ah!—I see one of them bears on his brow the marks of sullen discontent. He has a ferocity in his looks that gives me hopes. My first effort shall be on him. His companion weeps—I will learn the cause of her tears.”

The malevolent spirit, invisible to human sight, followed Cain and his spouse, meditating seduction and murder. When they were retired to their dwelling, the impure demon repeated after them, in malicious mockery, "Rise superior to the vexations that intrude themselves into thine heart! Drive far from thee these clouds of melancholy that would obscure thy days!" Then, quitting irony to give utterance to the infernal malice by which he was agitated, "No," said he, "what is good shall never take root in thine ungrateful heart: I will destroy it. These clouds of melancholy thou would'st disperse shall be re-assembled over thy head, thick and black as those which surround with eternal darkness the summits of the infernal mountains. My task will be no hard one. Thou thyself labourest to assemble them. I have only to assist thee: it will be to me a pleasing task to second thine own efforts. Yes, I will accumulate them on thy brow : desolation and misery, yet unknown to the human race, shall find entrance among mortals : thy days shall be filled with horror and darkness, and these darlings of Heaven shall taste the cup of wrath, poured forth for angels."

Cheerful dawn again began to gild the horizon, inspiring songs and gaiety, when Cain, with his instruments of husbandry, was going to the field. Abel had already given him the salute of the morning and was conducting his flocks to pastures, still moist with the dew of the night. Mahala and Thirza were advancing, hand in hand, towards the garden which surrounded the altar. They stopt to salute their brothers when Eve came to them from her cabin with gestures of desperation—both were seized with inquietude and concern, and approaching her, cried out with emotion, "O my Mother! You weep.—Why weep you?"

Eve, at this question, redoubled her tears; then

endeavouring to stifle her grief, she, giving them a look of affection, said, while her words were interrupted by sighs, "Alas! my children, have you not heard dreadful groans come from our dwelling? The sharpest pains this night have seized your father, and he now struggles with some disease that seems to penetrate even to his bones. He endeavours to conceal his anguish. He would prevent the sighs that escape from my heart. He suppresses his complaints, and strives to console me. But, O my children! the most poignant grief has taken possession of my soul, and my tortured heart refuses all consolation. When he reposes in most tranquillity, he seems lost in reflection : an instant after he groans with agony; a cold sweat covers his face, and the tears he had restrained burst in a torrent from his eyes. O My dear children! dreadful apprehensions oppress my heart. Support me, my daughters; support your unhappy mother sinking under the weight of affliction. Let us go to your father." Eve, followed by her lamenting children, returned to her spouse, weeping, and leaning on the shoulder of Mahala.

Filled with sorrow, they surrounded the bed of the sick. Adam then lay tranquil. His countenance and gestures discovered that in spite of suffering and pain, his soul was master of itself. He cast on his afflicted children a look of parental tenderness. He even gave them a smile of affection and said, "The hand of the Almighty, my beloved offspring, is upon me. My entrails are torn with anguish: but, praised be the Lord who regulates all my unerring wisdom! Perhaps he has ordained these pains to unloose the bands that unite my soul to this frail body. If it is now to return to the dust of which it is formed, I submit. I adore the dispensations of my Maker, and wait, with resignation and love, the fatal hour. I will praise Thee, the Sovereign of Life and Death, till this union is dissolved; my soul shall then, delivered from its vesture of earth, offer Thee more elevated praise. O God of Consolation ! Deign to be my support. Teach me to

endure with patience my present pain, in firm hope of future happiness. But, above all, forsake me not, O my Maker! forsake not an expiring sinner in the distressful hour of death! Abandon me not when my soul is dismayed by the last tremblings of nature."

He then cast his languid eyes on our general mother who was weeping at his side. "And thou, Eve," said he, "whom I love as myself, and you, my dear children, add not to my griefs by your sorrow and tears. How cruelly does your affliction distress me! Cease, my beloved, cease these sighs and lamentations. Perhaps the Lord may remove the terrors of his hand, and death may yet be at a distance. Perhaps I may again, even on earth, taste joy and gladness. I wait the good pleasures of my God, and resign myself to His will. Do you, also, my dear children, and you, my tender spouse, acquiesce, with submission and devout gratitude, in the Divine appointments? Accustom yourselves, beforehand, to reflect with holy resignation on the instant when it shall please the Almighty to strip off this garment of earth and to take me from you." The father of mankind ceased to speak. Sharp pangs again seized him, and he could only utter sighs and groans.

When his agonies were abated, he regarded all about him with silent attention : but his looks were more particularly fixed on Eve who seemed overwhelmed by her deep distress: her sorrows augmented those of her husband, and, to console her, he again resumed his discourse : "Alas!" said he, "the death experienced by the first sinner will doubtless have something frightful in it to those who shall behold it; but it will be more terrible still to him who shall be the victim. May that merciful God, who has never abandoned us in our distress, succour me in that dreadful hour!—He will do it—His past mercies are pledges that He will. As for you, my children," added he, "go—leave me—resign me to the will

of the Lord. Pray for me with fervour. This dreadful crisis may perhaps end in a sweet sleep that may restore vigour to my enfeebled members."

Adam was silent. His children stooped to kiss his trembling hand. "Yes, my father," they cried, we will prostrate ourselves before the Lord, we will supplicate that sweet repose may repair thy strength, exhausted by suffering. O may our prayer be accepted! may the Lord remove from thee these pains by which thou art tormented!"

With hearts pierced with grief, they left the cottage : Eve only remained. "I would sleep," said Adam, addressing himself to his wife who sat near his bed, suffused in tears. "Why, my beloved, dost thou give way to thy grief? Thy tenderness, by increasing my pain, may chase repose far from me." At length he wrapt his face in the skins which covered him, to conceal from his companion the distress and inquietude of his mind. "Is this," said he to himself, "is this that hour so full of horror? I fear it is. Great God, how terrible!—Abandon me not, O my Maker! forsake not, in the last agony, an expiring sinner! How sweet would be my consolations, even in death, if these sufferings, these fears, would exempt my unhappy offspring from the consequences of the curse pronounced on them for my sin!—But no — the same horrors will terrify, the same veil of darkness will extend over all born of woman. From a trunk empoisoned by sin, what can be produced but sinners—sinners subject to death?—I have killed all my posterity. All, like me, must be torn from those they love—from those whose tenderness softened and endeared life, and gave it all its delights. O Eve! O spouse tender and dear! what anguish will rend thine heart! what tears wilt thou shed over my senseless dust! Frightful prospect! will not my inanimate clay tremble when the orphan, left without support, shall lament the loss of its father, snatched away by death in the midst of his course : or

when decrepit parents shall be deprived of their sons, who were the comfort and support of their declining age : when sisters shall water with their tears the dead bodies of their brothers, the wife that of the husband, the lover that of the object beloved? Spare then, my memory, O my children! Curse not my peaceful dust. It is just that the weight of the curse should fall on the last hour—the hour that tears us from this life of sin. Death, when he divides the soul from its covering of clay, will also draw it from a state of malediction. If, notwithstanding the little power its degradation has left it, it has struggled against vice, and endeavoured to raise itself to virtue, it shall enjoy never-ending happiness in the regions of immortality. Ye ought not then, O my offspring! to execrate my ashes. Our abode on earth is not properly life: 'tis but the dawn of life; a troublesome dream. Oppress me not then, ye mountains of grief! 'Tis by dying I shall revive. I wait for that instant, firmly relying on the mercies of my God!" Such were the thoughts of Adam, when a profound sleep overpowered his senses.

Eve sat drowned in sorrow by the bed of her husband and, in a low voice, fearing to disturb his repose, vented the anguish of her heart. "What evils do I experience!" said she. "O curse, the consequence of sin, let thy burthen rest on me! I was the first sinner. Let a double weight of woe fall on my wretched head. It is just: I was the first offender. Ah! 'Tis already on me. All the griefs, all the distresses of my husband, of my unhappy offspring, flow from me. Their pains, their sorrows, are so many gnawing worms that prey on me. Oh my spouse! If thou diest—how I tremble at the idea! A general shivering seizes me: the cold sweat trickles down my face. Can the horrors of death be more dreadful! if thou art going to die for my fault. O Adam! —if these agonies are to unloose the bands of life, hate me not! Add not to my insupportable miseries thine anger! And ye, my children, curse not your unhappy mother! Guilty as I am, I

deserve your pity. Ye upbraid me not, 'tis true; but, alas! every sigh, every tear, awakens my keen remorse, and is to me a cutting reproach. O God Almighty! lend an ear to my plaintive supplications and remove his sufferings : or, if they are the forerunners of death—if his body must now return to the dust, terrifying thought!—separate us not; let me die with him! Suffer my soul to retire first, that I may not behold his last pangs! I was the first sinner.” Eve ceased to speak, and remained inconsolable, weeping by the side of her husband.

Cain, in spite of the roughness of his temper, had shed tears at the groans and discourse of his father. He went into the fields when he left the cottage, and thus expressed his concern : “I could not help weeping when I was near the bed of my father; I hope he will not die. God grant that this good parent, whom I love, may not die! Yes, I could not help weeping; but yet I am not drowned in sorrow like my brother. Before I shed tears on all occasions, I must lose my natural firmness and become, like him, soft and effeminate. Will they still say I am of a savage disposition? At least they will imagine that Abel loves Adam better than I, because I cannot weep like him. I love my father : he is as dear to me as to my brother; but I cannot command my eyes to flow.”

Abel, penetrated with sorrow, went into his pastures. He prostrated himself on the earth; he bent his head on the grass, which he moistened with his tears, and addressed this prayer to the Almighty: “With the most profound humility, I would praise Thee, O my God! Thou conductest the affairs of mortals with unerring wisdom and infinite goodness. Though depressed by grief, I dare presume to offer up to Thee my supplications; for Thou hast permitted the sinner to implore Thy mercy. Thine unmerited goodness has allowed us this sweet consolation, in the midst of the evils which surround us. I ought not, I do not hope, that Thou

wilt change the purposes of Thy wisdom, in compliance with the desires of a plaintive worm. Thy ways, O Gracious God! are wise and good. To Thy will I resign myself, supplicating only for strength to suffer, and for consolation in our pain. Thou knowest the desires, the ardent wishes of my soul. If these desires, if these wishes are not contrary to the designs of Thine infinite wisdom, restore us our common parent!—Restore to our afflicted mother the husband for whom she supplicates Thee—Restore her him in whom her life is bound up, and whose loss would render her wretched!—Restore to us, his sorrowing children, a father tenderly beloved! Defer, O God, Merciful and Gracious! defer, if it be Thy will, his death to a more distant period. Speak, O God! and it is done: command, and it is accomplished. At Thy nod our evils will disappear, and joy and gladness, thanksgivings and praise, will resound from the humble habitations of sinners. Permit him, who gave us life, to remain yet longer with us. Spare him, that he may declare to us Thine infinite bounties, and teach our infant children to lisp forth Thy praise. But, if Thine unerring wisdom has appointed this the time of his dissolution, be not offended, O my Maker! with this excess of our grief. If he must now die, lend him, O God of Compassion!—lend him Thine assistance in the terrible hour of death, and mercifully forgive our cries and groans. Moderate, by Thy Divine consolations, our afflictions, that we may not offend Thee by our despair.”

Such was the prayer of Abel. He was still prostrate on the earth, from which he was roused by a distant sound. Sweet odors were wafted around, and before him stood a guardian angel, resplendent in beauty. On his serene brow he wore a cornet of roses, and his smile was gracious as the opening day. He said, with a voice mild as the breath of the zephyrs, “The Lord hath lent a gracious ear, O Abel! to the voice of thy supplications. He hath granted thee the desires of thine heart. He hath commanded me to assume a body, and to

bring thee consolation and succour. The Eternal, who incessantly watches over His creatures, who regards with an eye of beneficence the crawling insect as well as the archangel arrayed in glory, hath ordered this earth to produce in its bosom salutary remedies for the diseases of its inhabitants whose bodies by the fall are exposed to pain and sickness, which shall, by degrees, lead them to death and to corruption, the sad consequences of having disobeyed their Maker. Friend, take these plants and these flowers. They are specifics to restore health to thy father: boil them in the clear water of the fountain : let him drink, and be whole."

The angel, having given him the salutary herbs, disappeared. Struck with inexpressible astonishment, Abel remained some time immoveable; then breathed the devout gratitude of his soul, in this short ejaculation: "What am I, O God! what am I, that Thou shouldst thus graciously regard my prayer? I am but sinful dust and ashes. I would praise Thee, O God! but Thy bounties exceed all praise. The triumphant archangel cannot sufficiently exalt Thy name, yet Thou hast deigned to accept the supplications of a worm."

His lively joy lent him wings. He ran to his cottage and with eager impatience prepared the odoriferous dilution. This performed, he flew to his father. Eve was still bathed in tears, and her daughters sat pensive by her side. They saw with surprise his eagerness, the joy which sat on his lips. "Dry up your tears, my beloved!" said he, as he entered. "Weep no more, O my mother! The Lord hath heard our prayers; He hath sent us succour. An angel hath appeared to me in the pastures. He hath given me aromatic herbs and flowers, gathered by his celestial hand. 'Boil these,' said he, 'in clear water, and restore health to thy father.' "

They heard his words with astonishment, and rendered thanks to the Lord with gratitude and humble confidence.

The sick drank the healing draught and soon experienced its salutary effects. Adam now raised himself on his bed, and with ardent piety offered up his adorations; then taking the hand of Abel, he pressed it to his cheek and wetted it with tears of joy, saying, "O my son! blessed be thou—thou by whom God hath sent me succour; thou, whose virtue pleaseth the Lord : thou, whose prayer he accepts, and hath vouchsafed to answer. I again bless thee, my son—my beloved son!" Eve and her daughters then embraced him, by whom the Lord had sent them succour.

Cain at this instant entered the dwelling of his father. While in the field he had been tormented with care and anxiety. "I will return," said he to himself—"I will return to my father; perhaps he is already dead and I have not received a last blessing from his lips. I will hasten to him.—I love my father."

On his entering, he saw with amazement their joy. He heard Adam bless his brother. Mahala, his wife, ran to him and, embracing him, said, "The Lord, my beloved, hath sent us succour by the hand of Abel."

Cain approached the bed of Adam and, kissing his hand, said, "I salute thee, O my father! Praised be God who restores thee to our tears! but, O my father! have you no blessing for me? You have blessed my brother, by whom the Lord sent you help; bless me also —me, your first-born."

Adam, giving him a look of affection and pressing his hand between both of his, said, "I give thee my blessing, O Cain! Be blessed of God, O my first-born! May the favour of the Lord rest always on thee! May thine heart enjoy tranquillity and peace, and thy soul uninterrupted repose!"

Cain then embraced his brother. How could he avoid it?

all had embraced him.

Cain left his father's dwelling; but it was to retire into the gloomy recesses of a thick grove where, oppressed with melancholy, he repeated after Adam, "Peace and tranquillity!—an uninterrupted repose!—How can I enjoy this tranquillity?—Where shall I find this repose? Was I not forced to petition for a blessing while his affection made him, unasked, pour forth his soul in blessings on my happy brother? He has allowed me my rank of first-born: What advantage to me is this superiority? Misery is my inheritance; disdain my portion. It is by the hand of Abel the Lord hath restored health to our father. I am rejected. The bright messengers of Heaven appear not to me: they pass me with contempt: they honour me not with their regards. While I spend my strength in the labours of the field; while the sweat drops from my face, embrowned by the scorching sun, the angels hold converse with him, whose delicate hands are unsoiled by labour; who lies idle near his flock, or with unmanly softness is shedding tears because the shining dew glitters on the grass and herbage, or the setting sun tinges the clouds with purple. Happy favourite! all nature smiles on thee! I only feel the curse! I only eat my bread by the sweat of my brow. The whole weight of the Divine malediction falls on my wretched head. I am, in everything, unhappy." Thus revolving in his melancholy brain gloomy ideas, the offspring of hatred and envy, he wandered in the thick shade.

The sun was retiring behind the azure mountains and reflected on the clouds a glowing red when Adam said to his wife, "I will, my beloved, before the day is closed, render thanks to God who hath restored my health." He left his bed, full of strength and vigour, and repaired, accompanied by his daughters, to the entrance of his cottage. The departing sun diffused a mild light over the fields; Adam cast himself on his knees and viewed, with transport, the country

thus enlightened. "Here am I," said he with fervent effusion of heart, "here am I, my Sovereign Master, prostrate before Thy face, penetrated with a lively sense of Thine infinite goodness. Ye agonizing pangs! what are become of you? Ye pierced my bones, ye scorched my vitals; yet, in the midst of anguish, my soul lost not her hope: she placed her confidence in God and was not disappointed. The Almighty lent a gracious ear to the groans and cries of a sinner: He regarded the voice of a worm. Health returned: pain and sorrow were no more. Death shall not yet triumph over my dust: I shall still praise my Maker, in this habitation of clay, this house of corruption. I will praise Thee, O my God! I will praise Thee from the early dawn to the rising of the evening star. While my soul is confined in this body of earth, it shall stammer forth its gratitude: but it will praise Thee in more exalted strains when, disengaged from this obstructing dust, it shall rise triumphant and refined: it shall then behold Thee face to face, arrayed in the lustre of Thy magnificence. O ye angels, resplendent in light, cast your eyes on this dwelling of sinners, this abode of death! The earth shook from its foundations when it became defiled by sin, and its Almighty Maker turned from it His regards: yet on this earth He now displays the wonders of His love. Attune your golden harps to His praise, Exalt his name in seraphic strains, while man, weak man, can only lisp his rapture. I salute thee, O sun! I salute thy retiring beams. When thy morning rays enlightened these fields, I groaned, oppressed by pain; when they illuminated my dwelling, I saluted them with my sighs: ere they have given place to the gray twilight, I am returning thanks to the Lord of Life, who hath removed my griefs. I salute you, ye lofty mountains, ye hills scattered over the plain! Mine eyes shall still behold, reflected from your summits, the flowing brightness of the rising and the setting sun. I salute you, O ye birds, who chant the praises of the Eternal! Your songs shall still recreate mine ear. Ye limpid streams, I shall again repose my weary limbs on your flowery

banks—again be lulled to rest by your soft murmurs : and ye groves, ye bowers, ye woods, I shall still walk under your refreshing shades : ye shall again shield me from the sun's too ardent ray, when, wrapt in profound meditation, I shall wander in your fragrant retreats. I salute thee, O nature entire! but I worship and adore only nature's God, who supported my vile clay when it was ready to crumble into dust."

The father of men thus praised the Lord, while the whole creation appeared attentive to his prayer and seemed to felicitate his return to life. The glorious orb of day darted on him its last rays. The young zephyrs wafted on their ambrosial wings the aromatic perfumes of the groves and gardens, as if charged by the flowers to exhale their sweets to him. The feathered inhabitants of the woods saluted him with their softest notes, as actuated by a lively joy.

Cain and Abel came under the shade while Adam was yet on his knees. They saw, with delight, their father restored to health. The prayer ended, Adam rose from the earth; he embraced, and received the embraces of his transported children: he kissed, with fond affection, the moistened cheek of our general mother; after which, he, Eve, and their daughters, returned to their dwelling. Abel then addressing himself to Cain, said, "Let us also, my dear brother, render thanks to God Most High, who has restored to our tears our affectionate father. I will, by the light of the moon, which is now rising, offer on mine altar a young lamb. Whilt thou not also, on thine altar, make an offering?"

Cain, giving him a gloomy and angry look, said, "Yes, I will present an offering to the Lord of what my barren fields afford."

Abel, with graceful sweetness replied, "O my brother, the

Lord our God counts as nothing the lamb which burns before Him, neither doth He regard the fruits of the field which the fire consumes. 'Tis the ardent piety that flames in the heart of the worshipper that gives the offering all its value."

Cain returned, "The fire of Heaven will perhaps consume thy victim; for by thee the Lord sent health to our father. —I am disdained; however, I will make my offering. I am, as well as thee, penetrated with gratitude. Our father, who is restored to our wishes, is equally dear to me as to thee. Let the Lord do with me, miserable worm! according to His good pleasure."

Abel threw himself on the neck of Cain, saying, "Ah, my brother, my dear brother! dost thou make the Lord's having sent, by my hand, relief to our father, a new subject of discontent? I was charged with this commission for us all. All prayed to the Lord: the prayers of all were answered. Banish from thy bosom, my dear brother—let me entreat thee to banish for ever these gloomy ideas. The Lord, who sees into these utmost recesses of our souls, can discover there unjust thoughts, and secret murmurs. Love me, as I love thee. Offer thine offering; but suffer it not to be defiled by any impure dispositions. May the Lord, O my brother! favourably accept thy praises, and graciously shed His blessings on thee!"

Cain answered not, but walked toward his field; and Abel, looking after him with a pitying eye, repaired to his pastures. Each advanced to his altar: Abel slew a young lamb, laid it on his altar, scattered on it odoriferous herbs and flowers, and put fire to the offering; then, warmed with fervent piety, prostrated himself before it, and with humble gratitude praised the Lord. The flame arose on high through the gloom of the night, and enlightened the fields and pastures. The Lord forbade the winds to blow, because the sacrifice was

acceptable.

Cain laid on his altar the fruits of the field, put fire to the offering, and also prostrated himself before it. Instantly a terrific sound was heard among the bushes. A furious whirlwind advanced towards the altar, dispersed the offering of Cain, and covered him with flame and smoke. He retired, trembling, when a majestic voice proceeding from the darkness, uttered these awful words : "Why tremblest thou? Why is pale fear seen on thy visage? There is yet time; correct thyself! Repent and I will pardon thy sin! If thou dost not, thy crime and its chastisement shall pursue thee forever. Why hatest thou thy brother? He loveth thee; he honours thee with true affection."

Cain, seized with horror, quitted the place of sacrifice, a tempestuous wind driving after him the infected smoke of the offering. Appalled with terror, he wandered through the darkness : his heart trembled within him and a cold sweat ran down his face. Casting his eyes around, he beheld the bright flame of his brother's sacrifice rising in the air in spiry waves. At this view, he turned aside his head and, gnashing his teeth, cried, "Ah! there's the sacrifice of the favourite! Fly, mine eyes, this hateful sight! Another look would fill my soul with all the rage of the infernals. I cannot help cursing in my heart, this darling of Heaven, and of all Nature---I cannot help cursing him with trembling lips. -- But turn, unhappy wretch! turn thy fury on thyself! Come, O death! O destruction come, and put a period to my miseries and to my life! Why, O my father, didst thou suffer thyself to be seduced! Why, O my mother, didst thou entail miseries on thy wretched offspring! Shall I present myself before you in the horrors of my despair? Shall my agonies, my terrors, my insupportable wretchedness, show you the distresses your fatal lapse prepared for your descendants? Ah! no. Revenge not, unhappy man---revenge not thyself on a father, by

bringing before his eyes a spectacle of such horror! Seized with terror, he would expire in my sight, and I should, if possible, be still more wretched. The wrath of the Lord lies heavy on me. He has cursed me. He disdains mine offering. I am the most desolate creature on the face of the earth. The animals of the field, the reptiles of the ground, compared with me, are worthy of envy. O Merciful God! if it be possible, extend Thine indulgence to me. Turn from me, O God, Thy fierce anger! or again reduce me to nothing!—But what do I say? Oh, hard, obdurate heart! ‘Correct thyself,’ he hath said, ‘and I will pardon thy past offences.’ Choose pardon or misery—misery eternal! misery inexpressible! Yes, I have sinned: mine iniquities rise above my head: they cry for vengeance. Thou art just, O God! Thy vengeance is also just. The farther we stray from the path of perfection and wisdom, the farther we stray from happiness. I must then be guilty, since I am unhappy. I will forsake the ways of perverseness. Turn thine eyes, O God! from my past offences! Preserve me from committing new ones! Take pity on me, O my God! or—reduce me to nothing!”



BOOK FOUR

The air was yet moist with the dew of night; the birds still slept in silence; the sun had not begun to gild the tops of the hills, or the hovering fogs of the morning; yet Cain, distressed and melancholy, left his cottage. Mahala, unknowing she was overheard, had wept and prayed for him during the tedious night. The black traces of despair were too visible in his countenance to escape the observation of this affectionate wife. She raised to Heaven her supplicating hands. She begged for him mercy and forgiveness. She entreated that the Divine consolations and grace might soothe and soften the heart of her wretched husband. Her lively grief, her intense devotion, as she feared disturbing the partner of her bed, were only uttered in sighs and tears: yet the inarticulate expressions of her sorrow had reached the ears of Cain, who, unable to bear her grief, had wandered in the early dawn. His murmuring voice resounded through the profound calm of the fields like distant thunder. "Night odious! night horrible!" said he. "What black clouds surround me! what fears! what terrors! When my imagination began to be calmed, when gentle sleep had hushed my griefs, the voice of lamentation awoke me. Alas! I only wake to be replunged in wretchedness. Shall I never more enjoy repose? Why did she pray and weep for me? She yet knows not that my offering was rejected.—Her tears increase my distress. I cannot bear her groans—they add to my griefs—they chase peace from my heart. This day, like the last, must be passed in sorrow and bitterness. While a smile of approbation rewards every action of my brother, while he enjoys every soothing delight, terror and sadness pursue me. I love thee, Mahala. I love thee tenderly. Thou art dearer to me than myself. Why, then, shouldst thou by thy lamentations fill with anguish

the few hours of rest my miseries have left me?"

He stopt under a bush that grew on the side of a rock: "O soft sleep!" said he, "restore me here thy balmy blessings. Unhappy that I am, weakened by fatigue and terror, I invoked thee in my cottage. Scarce hadst thou spread over me thy downy pinions when the voice of sorrow chased thee from mine eyes. Here is none to trouble my repose! except beings inanimate, influenced by the wrath of Heaven, can drive quiet from me, even in this distant retreat. O Earth! which, by a curse too severe, requires such painful labour—alas! I only labour to prolong a life of wretchedness—now, at least, let me on thy bosom find some moments of rest, to repair my exhausted strength. I expect no other happiness: I know no greater." He was silent. He laid himself on the fragrant grass, and the power he had invoked wrapt him in his sable wing.

Anamelech secretly followed the steps of Cain. He was now at his side. "A profound sleep", said the malicious spirit, "has closed his eyes. I will continue near him, to accomplish my purpose, and accelerate his destruction. Come, assist me, ye hovering dreams! disturb his soul with fantastic visions: assemble each image that can inspire him with fury and distraction. Come, Envy, with corrosive tooth, hot rage, and every tumultuous passion!" Thus spake the spirit impure, and with intent malign laid him near Cain. A furious wind arose: it howled in the caverns of the rocks; it shook with dreadful roar the bushes, and rudely agitated the hair of Cain. But in vain it howled in the caverns of the rocks; in vain it shook with dreadful roar the bushes; in vain it rudely agitated the hair of Cain; sleep sat heavy on his wearied eyelids, and he still kept them closed.

He beheld in a dream a vast field on which were scattered a number of mean cottages. He saw his sons and his grandsons

dispersed over the plain where they resolutely exposed themselves to the mid-day sun which darted his scorching rays on their heads. Assiduous at their painful labours, sometimes they gathered fruit for their subsistence; as others prepared the earth to receive fresh seeds, or stooping, wounded their hands with pulling up the thorny brambles, lest they should choke the rising grain and lessen the utility of their former industry. He saw also their wives preparing a frugal refreshment against the return of their husbands. Eliel, his eldest son, then appeared before him. He saw him lift with difficulty a heavy burden from the earth : he bore it on his shoulders, tottering under the load : the sweat streamed from his embrowned face, and sorrow and discontent appeared in his eyes. "What a life of misery!" said Eliel. "How well is the prediction fulfilled which said, 'Man shall eat his bread by the sweat of his brow!' Did the Creator banish from His presence all the offspring of Adam? or did the curse affect only the children of the firstborn? Too severely is it felt by us, the sons of Cain : our portion is labour and indigence; while in yonder fields, inhabited by the children of Abel, from which our unnatural kinsmen have banished us to these barren deserts, is concentrated all that can give delight to man. There the earth spontaneously pours forth her bounties. Those sons of luxury recline in fragrant bowers. Nature herself seems subservient to their ease and sloth. Every comfort, every pleasure, if pleasure is to be found on earth, is the portion of those voluptuous idlers." Thus murmuring, Eliel slowly staggered towards the cottages.

Cain was now carried on imagination's sportive wing to a plain enamelled with a variety of flowers, watered by limpid brooks, which meandering ran with soft murmurs near aromatic bowers under the shade of tufted groves. The banks were decorated with lofty trees, and the clear water reflecting the vivid colours of their several fruits formed a new land-

scape. The streams, after thus roving through the flowery turf, finished their wandering course in an ample lake whose glassy surface was smooth and unruffled. He saw at a distance a citron grove where played the wanton zephyrs, fanning with their ambrosial wings the sweets around. The prospect was terminated by a range of lofty fig-trees which spread their extensive shade over the tender flowers. In this delightful spot were accumulated all the beauties with which imaginative fable has decorated the charming vale of Tempe, or Cnidus's luxuriant land, where rose, consecrated to Venus, a magnificent temple on lucid columns.

Cain saw in his dream flocks white as the falling snow, sporting in the meadows, or cropping the plenteous herbage, while the indolent shepherd, whose head was encircled with a wreath of flowers, lay reclined under the spreading palm, chanting to the sympathizing object of his passion an amorous lay. There boys blooming as the loves, and girls sweet as the graces, assembled under arches of interwoven honey-suckles and myrtles, where with agile feet they formed the festive dance. The bright juice of the grape sparkled in the golden goblets, and delicious fruits were spread on tables covered with flowers, while the ambient air resounded with vocal and instrumental harmony. Cain, with regret, beheld these children of dissipation. He saw a young man rise in the midst of the sportive assembly, and heard him thus address his brethren : "I rejoice in our present felicity. Nature smiles on us: she has united in this delightful spot all that can charm the eye, or ravish the heart; but to conserve her bounties, we must again return to labour, and labour is troublesome and fatiguing. Shall our hands, formed to touch the soft lute and sounding lyre, be rendered callous by the durdger of the field? Shall our heads, which so well become these encircling roses, be again exposed to the sun's fierce rays? No: we will recline on beds of violet under the myrtle, while the hearty sons of the earth, the brawny inhabitants of yonder plain,

shall for us endure the toil of labour. The men shall till our grounds; their wives and daughters shall be the servants of ours. What say ye, my gay companions, is the prospect pleasing? You smile approbation. Lend me your assistance, my dear brethren, and ere tomorrow's dawn we will make it a joyful reality. When the sun has withdrawn his rays from the earth, and the night has spread over it her mantle of darkness, we will march in silence to the cottages of these rustics. We shall doubtless find them, after the rugged toil of the day, buried in the arms of sleep, and shall easily take them captive. 'Tis true, our number is superior to theirs, and you may wonder that I recommend silence, and choose night for our expedition: but, my friends, the men are strong; hardship and fatigue have braced their nerves, and despair may render them desperate. Let us then avoid a battle, in which, if victors, we must suffer some loss, and choose the least dangerous method of effecting our purpose." The young man was silent. The whole assembly were unanimous in his praises and showed their readiness to join in the infernal scheme by loud shouts of applause.

A new scene now struck the eyes of Cain. It was night, and the inhuman artifice was in execution. He heard cries of desolation and terror intermingled with shouts of insult and triumph. He beheld the fields and rocks illuminated by the flames of the burning cottages : by this dreadful light he saw his sons and grandsons bound, and, with their wives and infants, tamely marching before the children of Abel, like a flock of bleating sheep.

Such was the dream of Cain. He was distressed, though asleep. When Abel, having perceived him under the bushes at the foot of the rock, approached, and with looks of affection and in a voice of tenderness, said, "Ah, my brother, soon mayest thou awake! I long to embrace thee, and to express

the sweet sensations by which my heart is engrossed. I love thee, my brother: I see with pain thy uneasiness, and gladly would remove from thy soul the fatal jealousy that embitters thy days. Awake, O Cain! awake, that my heart may again know the pleasures of reconciliation. But soft, ye impatient wishes!—Breathe gently, ye winds! Ye birds, cease your untimely melody, lest ye disturb the precious repose of my brother. Perhaps his fatigued limbs require yet longer the restorative influences of sleep. But how he lies!—how pale!—how wan!—His features seem distorted by fury. Why do you distress him, ye visions of terror! leave his soul to enjoy tranquillity, ye imaginary horrors! Take possession of it, ye pleasing images! present to his mind the sweet occupations of domestic life; the tender delights of the husband and the father. May everything most lovely in the creation fill his imagination and soothe his soul! May he awake calm and smiling as the vernal morn! May joy expand his countenance and his delighted heart utter its gratitude to the Great Giver of every good, in devout praise!” He spoke no more but stood steadfastly looking at Cain while astonishment, inquietude, and tender love were visible in his eyes.

The fierce lion crouching at the foot of a rock (who, though asleep, freezes with terror the trembling traveller and obliges him to take a wide circuit to avoid the dreadful beast), if the murderous arrow in its rapid flight pierces his side, suddenly starts, and with dreadful roar seeks his enemy. He foams. He rages. His blazing eyes menace destruction. The first object he meets is the victim of his fury: perhaps an innocent child, playing on the grass with the variegated flowers. Not less terrible rose Cain. His eyes were inflamed and rancour sat on his pallid cheek. A storm of wrath was gathering. The cloud burst. He stamped his foot on the ground. “Open, O earth,” he cried; “Open, O earth; and hide me—hide me from my miseries, in thy lowest abyss. My life is one continued round of distress and torture; and, as if this was not enough, I see—insupportable

prospect!—I see that my children shall one day inherit my miseries. But I implore in vain! thou wilt not open: the almighty Avenger restrains thee. I must—such is His will— I must be wretched: and, that future evils may disturb my scanty enjoyment of present good, He Himself draws aside the veil. Curst be the hour when my mother by my birth gave the first proof of her sad fertility! Curst be the place where she first felt the pangs of child-birth! May he that shall sow it lose his grain and his labour! May sudden terror strike, even to the bones, all who shall pass over it!”

These were the imprecations of Cain, when Abel, pale as the sculptured marble, ventured to approach him with slow and unsteady step. “My brother!” said he in a trembling voice. “—No—O my God! Horror freezes my blood! One of the seditious spirits, whom the Eternal precipitated from Heaven, has surely taken his form, under which he utters his blasphemies! Where art thou, my brother?—I fly to seek thee.—Where art thou, my brother?”

“Here I am!” cried Cain in a voice of thunder: “Here am I, thou soft favourite!—thou dear minion of the vengeful Eternal and of all nature!—thou, whose viperous race are one day solely to engross all the felicity of this world! Yes, so it must be. It is fit that there should be a tribe of slaves, as beasts of burden to the favourite lineage. Their delicate limbs must not endure the hardships of labour. Formed only for voluptuous idleness, these sons of sloth must recline in shady bowers, while—The rage of Hell is in my heart— Cannot I —”

“Cain! my brother!” said Abel, interrupting him with a voice and look that at once expressed his horror, affection, and astonishment. “What terrifying dream has troubled thy soul? I sought thee in the early dawn: I came to embrace thee at the springing day. But how do I find thee agitated!

How dost thou return my tender love! When, O when, my dearest brother! shall peace, shall amity bless our dwellings? When will come the happy day—a day after which our indulgent parents so ardently long,—when fraternal affection and social joy shall be firmly re-established? O Cain! Cain! canst thou so soon forget the pleasures of reconciliation, of which thou seem’dst so sensible, when in a rapture of joy and friendship I flew into thine arms? Have I offended thee, my brother,—unknowingly have I offended thee? Then—But why dost thou cast on me such furious looks? By all that is sacred, I conjure thee to forget my involuntary fault and receive my embraces!”

As Abel pronounced the last words, he stooped to clasp the knees of his brother, but Cain started back, crying, “Ah, thou serpent! would’st thou twine thyself about me?” At the same instant, with an arm strengthened by rage, he swung a massy club and smote the head of his brother. The innocent victim of his fury fell at his feet. The bones of his head were crushed. He raised his dying eyes to his unnatural brother, and giving him a look of pardon and pity, expired. His blood disdained the waving curls of his fair hair and ran in a stream to the feet of his murderer.

Cain stood motionless, stiffened with horror. The cold sweat ran from his trembling members, while he beheld with agony the last convulsions of his expiring brother. The smoke of the blood he had shed ascended even to him. “Cursed blow!” he cried. “My brother! —Awake—awake! O my brother! How pale!—His eyes are fixed!—The blood streams from his head!—Miserable that I was—Ah! what am I now?—Infernal horrors!—”

Thus he cried aloud, and furiously threw from him the bloody club: then with violence struck his temples. He stooped to the dead body and endeavoured to raise it from

the earth, crying, “—Abel!—my brother!—awake! Ah! what tortures do I feel!—How his head hangs! —how it bleeds! how helpless!—Dead! O anguish insupportable! he is dead! My crime is without remedy! I fly—whither fly? My tottering knees will scarce bear me!” Having thus spoke, trembling, he hid himself among the bushes.

The seducer, with triumph in his look, remained near the dead. Elate with pride, he stretched his gigantic form to its full height, and his countenance was not less dreadful than the black pillar of smoke arising from the half-consumed lumber of a lonely cottage is to the inhabitants, who, returning from their peaceful labours, find all their conveniences, all their riches, the prey of the devouring flames. Anamelech followed the criminal with his eyes while a ruthless smile spoke exultation. He then cast on the bleeding body a look of complacency. “Pleasing sight!” said he. “I see, for the first time, this earth wet with human blood. The flow of the sacred springs of Heaven, before the fatal hour when the Master of the universe precipitated us from those seats of bliss, never gave me half this pleasure. Never did the harmonious harps of the archangels give me such delight as the last sighs of a brother murdered by his brother. And thou, the noblest of thy Maker’s works—thou best effort of His creating and life-giving hand, what a despicable figure dost thou now make! Rise, beautiful youth! Rise, thou friend of angels! This indolence in thine orisons ill becomes the worship of thy God! But he stirs not. His own brother has left him weltering in his blood. No, that honour is mine! I guided the arm of the fratricide. It is by action, such as Satan himself would boast, I shall rise above the vile populace of Hell. I hasten to the foot of the infernal throne. The vast concave of the fiery gulf will reverberate my praises. I shall move in triumph through crowds of ignoble spirits, whom no hardy achievement has dignified, and look down with scorn on those who till now were accounted my

equals." Inflated with arrogance, he turned once more to glut his eyes with a last view of the victim: but the hideous traces of despair instantaneously dissipated his ironic smile, and effaced the triumphant pride which sat on his expanded brow. The Lord commanded, and he was seized by infernal horrors; he was overwhelmed by a deluge of torture. He now cursed his existence: he cursed eternity, replete with torments, and yelling, fled.

The last sighs of the dying ascended to the throne of God and demanded of Eternal Justice vengeance on the murderer. Thunder was heard from the holy sanctuary. The golden harps ceased to sound. The eternal hallelujahs were interrupted. Three times the thunder echoed through the lofty arch of Heaven. This awful sound was succeeded by the majestic voice of God, issuing from the silver cloud that encompassed His throne. It summoned an archangel. The lucid spirit advanced towards the seat of the Most High, veiling his face with his effulgent wings; and God said, "Death has made his first prey on man. Henceforth be it thy function to assemble the souls of the just. I myself spoke to that of Abel when he fell. When the righteous man is languishing in the cold sweat of death, be thou at his side. By assuring him of eternal felicity, support him in those moments of anxiety when his soul, trembling at the view of his past life, dreads a separation from its dust. Thou shalt then calm his fears and inspire him with confidence. Thou shalt turn his eyes from my rigorous justice, and fix them on my long-suffering and tender mercies. Hasten now towards the earth to meet the soul of Abel. Thou, Michael, go with him, and declare to the murderer the sentence pronounced against him." Thus spoke the Eternal, and again the thunder thrice echoed through the lofty arch of Heaven. The archangels, with rapid wing, passed through the celestial ranks. The gates of the Divine abode opened spontaneously to the heavenly messengers, and they traversed the boundless ex-

panse, on all sides resplendent, amidst suns without number, and alighted on the earth.

The angel of death called forth the soul of Abel from the ensanguined dust. It advanced with a smile of joy. The more pure and spirituous parts of the body flew off, and mixing with the balsamic exhalations, wafted by the zephyrs from the flowers which sprung up within the compass irradiated by the angel, environed the soul, forming for it an ethereal body. It saw, with a transport till then unknown, the bright messenger coming towards it.

“I salute thee,” said the celestial spirit, while benignity and joy beamed in his eyes: “I salute thee, O happy soul! now disengaged from thy encumbering dust. Receive my embraces! It is to me an increase of felicity that I am chosen by the Most High to introduce thee into the realms of light and bliss where myriads of angels wait to hail thee. Conceive, if thou canst, beloved soul! conceive what it is to behold God face to face—to have communion with Him for ever. Thou art going to experience the riches of His grace, the wonders of His love. Thou wilt soon know the immense rewards with which He recompenses virtue. O thou who hast first laid down thy covering of dust to be clothed in light, I once more embrace thee!”

“Permit me also to embrace thee, celestial friend!” replied the soul; and overpowered by the ecstatic sense of its beatitude, it reclined on the angel. “Delight extreme!—bliss inexpressible! While my soul was imprisoned in the perishing clay, from which it is now released, I meditated in solitude, by the mild and soft light of the unclouded moon, on the charms of virtue, on the glories of my God. These sublime objects, even then, elevated me above myself, and I experienced without knowing it, a faint dawn of the felicity I at present taste. But how much more attractive now are the

charms of virtue! How are my ideas of the Divine attributes exalted and enlarged! What new thoughts!—what are now the beauties of spring! O sun! where is now thy dazzling lustre?" The enraptured soul again embraced the angel and continued to utter transports. "Eternity now is mine! All sublunary cares are at an end. I shall be forever employed in praising my God, who, with unbounded beneficence, bestows never-ending felicity on the soul that pants after virtue and delights in the beauty of goodness. Forever shall I exalt His name: forever shall I enjoy ineffable bliss for I shall see Him as He is."

Thus did these two happy spirits interchange reciprocal endearments and the sweet embrace. "Follow me, my friend," said the archangel—"follow my flight. Let us quit the earth : nothing here can now be dear to thee, but the virtuous. Regret not to leave them behind; for after a few more rising and setting suns, they too will partake of thy felicity. At present the celestial choir waits with ardent expectation thy coming. Haste to embrace your new friends, and join with them in incessant hallelujahs to the Eternal."

"I follow thee," replied the righteous soul. "Into what a torrent of delight and felicity art thou conveying me, dear and respectable friend, whose nature is so far superior to mine! O my beloved kindred! whom I leave still embodied in dust, who must still remain in this vale of tears; when the days of your lives are fulfilled, when the hour of your dissolution is at hand, and the celestial introducer of souls shall descend to meet you, I will accompany him, for at the foot of the Almighty's throne will I beg this grace. With what joy shall I see your pure and holy souls rise from this seat of corruption, from this region of death! And thou too, Thirza, my dear and tender companion! when thou hast yet a little longer wept over my mouldering dust, and hast reared to virtue the infant that now but begins to prattle forth its thoughts, thou must be the prey of death. What rapture!

when thy soul, quitting the cold clay, shall fly into mine arms."

Thus spake Abel, and rising in the air, began to lose sight of the earth. As his eyes were taking a last look on the dwellings, whose inhabitants were still dear to him, he beheld his brother; remorse was printed on his countenance; his clenched hands were held over his head; he suddenly lifted up his eyes to Heaven; then, frantic with despair, struck with repeated blows his throbbing breast; he cast himself in agony on the earth, and rolled in the dust. Tears of compassion dropped from the eyes of the happy, and he turned aside from the frightful scene. His heavenly conductor was now joined by multitudes of angels: the tutelary spirits of the earth surrounded the celestial travellers; they congratulated the soul of Abel on its deliverance from sin and death; they embraced him in holy rapture; and having escorted him to the confines of the terrestrial atmosphere, they reclined on a crimson cloud, and, to the soft lute and silver harp, joined the melody of their celestial voices, chanting in chorus.

"He rises! The new inhabitant of Heaven rises to his native land. Render him homage, ye brilliant constellations, which roll in the immensity of space! render homage, with gladness, to the earth, your companion. What glory to that opaque sphere, to have nourished in its dust a being prepared for the joys of immortality! Glow ye fields, with brighter verdure! Reflect, ye hills, a purer light!

"He rises! the new inhabitant of Heaven rises to his native land. Legions of angels wait his arrival at the celestial portals. With what rapture will they welcome their new companion to the seat of bliss! They will crown him with unfading roses. What will be his transport when he traverses the flowery fields of heaven! when, under aromatic bowers of eternal

verdure, he joins the angelic choir in their song of praise, ascribing glory, honour, power, and dominion, to the Source of happiness, the sole Principle of all good.

“Already have we celebrated the day when his soul descended from the hands of its Creator, and entered into its body of earth. Already, O festive day! thou hast been celebrated, and we will still celebrate thee. We saw his young mind improve every virtue: it hastened to maturity and strength, like the lily in the spring. We have seen, with joy, his aspirations after perfection. Invisible, we have beheld the uniformity of his life, the consistency of his actions. We have joined in his devout praises; we have sympathized in his tender sorrow. His virtuous tears have given joy to the angels. Virtue was his motive and guide. Forever shall he enjoy the rewards of virtue.

“He rises! the new inhabitant of Heaven rises to his native land. Receive him, ye sons of light; crown him; with celestial roses! Honour him whom the Most High delighteth to honour! Yonder, like a faded flower lies the dust he has abandoned. Parent Earth, receive it in thy bosom: again receive the precious dust! Each spring it shall produce odiferous flowers. Each year we will solemnize the day in which his righteous soul quitted the earth, until that time when God calls forth from the grave the bodies of His saints to be clothed forever with immortality.”

Thus they sang; then, borne on their lucid cloud, ascended to the Heavens.

Cain wandered in despair among the bushes. He roved from place to place, but change of situation decreased not the horror that had lodged itself in his convulsed heart. Thus the traveller in vain quickens his pace, in vain exerts his skill and strength to avoid an irritated serpent; the reptile pursues

him with his poisonous breath; it encircles his limbs; it fixes its sting. Where shall he fly from torture? Already convulsions seize his wounded breast, the mortal poison flows to this heart. So Cain vainly strove to fly his pain. "Oh that I could no longer see the streaming blood!" he cried. "I fly, but the blood follows me still—still it runs to my feet. Where shall I fly?—Where?—Miserable that I am!—His last look!—What have I done? The dreadful deed is the work of Hell—I already feel its tortures! I have, with him, murdered his unborn offspring.—Ah! what noise is that among the bushes? Why sighs the dead?—Away, haste, feet, far away from the pursuing blood—far away from the dreadful sight of death!—Drag me away, ye trembling knees, sprinkled with a brother's blood, to Hell!" At these words he walked with fast and unequal steps.

A black cloud alighted at his feet, from the midst of which issued an awful voice, saying, "Cain, where is thy brother?"

"I know not—me, miserable!—Am I my brother's keeper?" answered he, stammering and retreating back, pale as the lifeless corpse of Abel.

Loud thunders now burst from the cloud; the grass and bushes blazed around him, and Michael the archangel stood before him, arrayed in terror. On his majestic brow were imprinted the menaces of the Lord. In his right hand he held the forked lightning, and extended his left over the appalled sinner. He spoke, and it again thundered. "Stop, trembler; hear thy sentence. Thus saith the Lord, 'What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me. Thou art curst on the earth which hath drunk the blood of thy brother, shed by thy hand. To thee it shall be forever barren, and thou shalt be a vagabond on its surface.'"

The terrified sinner was mute and immovable; his eyes

fixed on the ground, while his heart was torn with anguish like that of the impious atheist, when God, terrible in judgment, shakes the earth, and he sees the profaned temples and the sumptuous palaces of sinners shake to their foundations and fall into ruins, while his ears are terrified with the groans of the dying, the sobs of grief, and the shrieks of despair. In this convulsion of nature, thick smoke and flames burst from the cleft earth. At length he cried, in a voice which spoke his anguish, "My crime is too great—ah! much too great, ever to be forgiven! Now, O inexorable God! Thou hast cursed me on the earth, and—Where can I hide myself from Thy presence!—Banished from society—a vagabond—the first who meets me will slay me and rid the earth of an infamous murderer."

"A vengeance, seven-fold more dreadful than thine shall fall on him who sheds thy blood," said the angel, speaking again in thunder. "Dark disquietude and gnawing remorse are strongly imprinted on thy brow. By these marks shall thou be known; and all, on seeing thee, shalt quit the path made by thy wandering feet, crying, 'There goes Cain the murderer!'" The angel, having thus announced the Divine anathema, disappeared. Thunder again issued from the rising cloud: a dreadful whirlwind tore up by the roots the trees and bushes with a noise that resembled the howlings of a malefactor suffering under the agonies of penal torture.

Cain stood motionless. Despair glared in his eyes; yet fierceness was still seen in his bushy brows. The furious winds shook his erect hair. Wild fear, at length, forced from his livid and quivering lips these horrid accents: "Why has He not annihilated me?—Wherefore not annihilated me, that no traces of me might remain in the creation? Why was I not blasted by His lightning? Why did not His thunders strike me to the depths of the earth?—But His ire reserves me for perpetual sufferings—torments without end.

Detested by my fellow-creatures—all nature abhors me—I abhor myself—Already the attendants on guilt haunt me; shame, remorse, despair.—Shut out from human society, banished from God, I shall, while on earth, feel the torments of Hell—I feel them now. Cursed be thou, O arm which so hastily excuted the impulses of passion! mayest thou wither on my body, like the blighted limb of a tree! Cursed be the hour when a dream from Hell deceived me—and thou, infernal fiend who suggested it! Where art thou now, that I may curse thee? Art thou returned to Hell? Mayest thou there suffer incessantly what I now feel! Nothing worse can I wish thee. This is your triumph, ye spirits of darkness! Gaze on, ye devils, and wonder at my misery!—” Spent with agony, he sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree, and remained, without strength or voice, motionless as the dead. Then starting, he cried, “Ha! what noise is that? It is the voice of murdered Abel!—He groans!—I see his streaming blood! O my brother! my brother! in pity to my inexpressible anguish, cease to haunt me!” He now continued sitting in speechless agony, sighs only bursting from his tortured heart.

In the meantime the father of mankind, with his amiable spouse, having left their cottage, came forth to enjoy the fragrance and beauty of the early day. “With what majesty does the sun dart his first rays!” cried Eve. “How they gild the flimsy mist that hovers over yonder field! How charming the appearance of the country! Let us walk on, Adam, amid the dew, till the hour of labour calls thee to the field, and me to our dwelling. O my beloved! the earth is still lovely. See, Adam, how all the creatures rejoice: each bush, each eminence pours forth its melody! The beasts too, how they frisk and bound, and chase each other! with what gaiety and life they welcome the morning rays!”

Adam answered, “Yes, my love, the earth is still beautiful; it still bears visible marks of the presence of God, and of His

infinite goodness which our folly and ingratitude have not yet been able to exhaust. Yes, His mercy, His munificence, exceed the power of words to express, are too great for the rejoiced heart to conceive. Let us hasten, Eve, through those flowery fields to the smiling pastures where Abel feeds his flock. Perhaps we may find that amiable, that dutiful son, chanting his morning hymn and in devout melody praising his Creator."

"Dear Adam," returned Eve, "Let us first go to the field of Cain. I have in this basket brought a little present for our first-born. I have culled out some of the best of my figs and a few bunches of my finest dried grapes. They will be an agreeable refreshment for him when at mid-day he retires to the shade, faint and languid with labour. Let us go to him first, my spouse; for fain would I erase from his mind the idea that he is not beloved by us with the same affection that we love his brother."

"How attentive, my dearest, is thy tenderness!" replied Adam; "I will accompany thee with joy to the field of Cain. Let us carry him thy present that he may not say all our concern and love are lavished on Abel. May the serenity of this delightful morning dispose his heart to the impressions of tenderness!" They now redoubled their pace and walked towards the open country.

"How happy," said Eve, as she was going on—"how happy should I think myself, if, when nature thus smiles and awakens every sentiment of tenderness and joy, our first-born receives us with affection! if his heart is open to the soft sensations of filial love!"

They now came from behind some bushes, Eve walking a little before, when suddenly stepping back, she cried with a tremulous voice, "Who lies there?—Adam, who's that lies

there?—He lieth not like one asleep—His face is on the ground—Those golden locks are Abel's—Adam, why do I tremble?—Abel! Abel! awake—awake, my son! Turn to me thy face—turn to me thy face! Awake, ah! awake, dear son, from a sleep that freezes me with terror!”

They approach nearer. “What do I see!” cried Adam, trembling, and retiring back. “Blood! blood trickling from his temples! His head is covered with blood!—”

“O Abel! O my son!—my son!—my dear son!” cried Eve, lifting up his arm stiffened by death; then sunk, pale as the object she lamented, on Adam's throbbing breast.

Horror and grief deprived them both of voice, when Cain, frantic with despair, came without design to the place where lay the dead body of his brother, and seeing near the corpse his father motionless and his mother pale and lifeless in his arms, he cried out, trembling, “He is dead!—I killed him!—cursed be the hour, O father of men! when thou begattest me! And thou, woman! cursed be the instant when thou broughtest me forth!—He is dead!—I killed him!” repeated he, and fled.

Two lovers, united by a sense of their mutual affections enjoying sweet converse, sit near each other. A tempest suddenly arises; the subtle lightnings dart—the blue flame quivers over their heads. Each strives to succour each—alas! in vain—embracing still, they living seem, though void of life. Thus our first parents sat, pale and silent, without sign of life except a universal trembling. Adam first recovered from his lethargy of stupid grief. “Where am I?” he cried in broken accents. “How I tremble!—My God! my God!—Ah, there he lies!—wretched father! What horrors shake my soul!—How can I support the dreadful thought!—his brother killed him!—he has cursed us! O Abel! O my son! My veins are chilled; my blood runs cold. Ah, miserable

parent! One son has cursed thee; the other lies before thee, imbrued in his own blood. What evils, what torments, have I brought on myself and my wretched offspring!—Ah, fatal sin!—And, thou, too, Eve, thou wakest not!—How my terrors increase!—Yet, O God, in the midst of desolation, I adore Thy decrees, I revere Thy justice—I am a sinner.—An icy coldness insinuates itself into my beating heart. My eyes fail. O Death! why delayest thou? O Abel! O my dear son!” He then cast a look on the body; the tears flowed down his venerable face, and with them ran the cold sweat. “Thou at last awakest, dear Eve,” he continued, “but, alas! to what inexpressible tortures dost thou awake! Ah! what distress is seen in thy weeping eyes, dear companion of my misery!”

“Adam,” replied Eve, in a fearful accent, “is the murderer gone? The voice of cursing thunders no more—I no longer hear the voice of his cursing. Curse me—me alone, barbarous fratricide! I was the first sinner. O my child!—my child!—O Abel, my dearest son!—” She now sunk from the arms of Adam on the dead. “My son—my son!” she cried, speaking to the insensible clay: “thine eyes are fixed: no more they turn on me.—Awake, awake!—Alas! I call in vain: he is dead!—That is death—the death with which we were threatened when cursed by God after the fall. O insufferable torment!—I was the first sinner!—O my husband! spouse beloved and dear! thy tears rend my heart. It was I that seduced thee. Of me—of me, O weeping father, demand thy son’s blood!—of me your brother, my wretched children!—Me—me, curse, murderer of brothers! but spare your father—I was the first sinner! O my son! my son! thy blood rises up against me!—it accuses me, unhappy parent!” Thus lamented the mother of the human race, while her tears streamed on the congealing blood.

Adam cast on his wife looks full of tenderness and grief.

“Dear Eve,” said he, “what exquisite pangs thou givest my bursting heart! Cease, I entreat thee, cease thus to torment me! I conjure thee to cease thus reproaching thyself! We both have sinned, we both are guilty. The bitter consequences of our crimes are but too sad remembrances of our ingratitude and folly. But the Almighty whom we have offended, the God who chastises us, still regards us with a pitying eye.—Yes, my God! we are yet allowed to supplicate Thee in our distress. Thou hast not utterly destroyed the sinner. We yet live, Eve, and our souls are out of reach of death. It can only strip us of this body, subject to pain and grief. Our immortal soul will, if we are virtuous, triumph over death and enjoy permanent felicity in the realms of happiness and glory where we shall behold the light of God’s countenance and incessantly praise Him to all eternity. This, my beloved, ought to be our consolation—our great consolation; but—his murderer is his brother! Ah! my first-born killed his brother!”

“Yes, dear son!” cried Eve, her tears still flowing: “Death has delivered thee from solicitude, pain, and grief. Thou art no more exposed to suffer. We should wish to follow thee. Alas! we must still endure tribulations and inquietudes from which thou art now exempt. But can I cease to weep while I remember thy virtue, thy piety, thy filial love? O Adam! what a sight of horror is now that precious body! Where are those smiles, the sweet emanations of filial tenderness that used to be seen on his countenance? How faded, how livid are his bloody cheeks! We shall no more hear from those lips seraphic harmony! no more have our souls raised to God by his angelic converse! no more will they express the endearing sensations of his heart!—those eyes, now fixed in death, with what delight and transport have I seen them shed tears of joy when I have given him signs of the love—the inexpressible love—that warmed my heart, charmed with his spotless virtue! Ah, my son! thy weeping mother must for-

ever deplore thy death. O sin, sin, dreadful are thy inroads! what hideous forms dost thou assume! Abel—dear—I, thy mother, thine unhappy mother—exquisite woe!—am also the mother of thy murderer!”

Here her speech again failing, she remained motionless on the cold corpse void of sensation, when Adam, with a deep sigh, cried, “How am I abandoned! All around me is a gloomy desert. Nature seems to have changed her face. No longer she smiles on me. Alas! he is dead!—he who filled my life with soft consolation, sweet pleasure, and gladdening hope, is no more! Dear Abel! it is true that thou art dead! Is it—can it be true, that it was Cain, that horror of nature! who—O God! thou beholdest our extreme desolation. Oh! pardon, pardon our lamentations, Forgive us, that we lie mourning in the dust like a worm! And what are we more in thy sight? Pardon us, though we mourn in the dust like a trampled worm, half crushed by the heedless foot of the passenger.”

Adam now stood pale and silent as the statue of Grief on a mossy tomb surrounded with funeral cypress. At length he turned to the body of his murdered son, and, stooping to Eve, gently withdrew her feeble hand from the corpse and pressed it with ardour to his breast. “Eve, my dear companion, awake!” said he, hanging over her; “awake, dear spouse, awake! Turn thy looks on me! Cease to wash with thy tears the insensible dust! Sink not thus under the weight of thy grief! Has thy sorrow for thy son stifled all tenderness, all concern for me, thine husband? Turn, dear spouse, turn thy looks on me! It is just that we should feel, keenly feel, our loss: that the horrors of death should terrify, that we should mourn the fatal consequences of our sin, but to be thus overcome by grief, thus overpowered by dejection, is criminal. It is as if we reproached Eternal Justice, as punishing with too much severity. O, Eve! give not way to

this culpable despair, lest Divine Mercy, irritated by our obstinacy, should deem us unworthy of consolation."

Eve immediately turned her face from the body towards Adam and, raising her humid eyes to Heaven, said, "Forgive, O God! forgive my grief! pardon my tears! Do you, my dearest spouse, my love, my life, forgive my sorrow! My distress is beyond all words! yet thou still lovest me—me who seduced thee to commit the crime we now deplore. Thou hatest me not, though this frightful murder of one of thy sons by the other is the result of my transgression. Ah, Adam! let me weep in thine arms; let me once more weep on my child's body, and mingle my tears with his blood!" She then pressed her face, bedewed with tears, on Adam's hand.

Thus grieved and lamented the parents of the human race over the first dead, when Adam, casting his dejected eyes around, beheld at a distance one of the celestial messengers; the fragrant flowers which sprung up at each step indicated the light vestiges of his feet. His serene brow announced peace; consolation, amity, and affection smiled on his lips and cheeks; and the sweetness of his eyes spoke sympathizing complacency. A white vesture, brighter than the clouds which surrounded the nocturnal planet, fluttered in waving folds on his beauteous form. The angel advanced towards them, while his presence seemed to enliven with fresher verdure the smiling country. "Eve," said the father of men, "raise thine eyes, dry thy tears, suppress thy sighs! behold, one of the children of Heaven is coming to comfort us. See with what graceful benignity he approaches! Already a ray of Divine consolation has darted into my benighted soul; already my heart has lost part of the oppressive load under which it groaned. I acquiesce, O my God! in thine appointments; I adore Thy judgments; with gratitude and love I acknowledge thy mercies. Weep no more, Eve! Rise! let us meet the friendly angel."

Eve, supported by her spouse, arose, and the bright spirit stood before them. He regarded with attention the first prey of death; but soon turned his eyes on Adam and Eve whose faces now reflected the luminous brightness of the angel, and, in a sweet and harmonious voice, said, "Be blest, O ye who are weeping over the spoils of death in your son! May ye be blest! The Most High hath permitted me to visit you in your affliction. Among the angels who are commissioned to watch over and guard the inhabitants of this earth, none loved Abel more than I. I was constantly near him, when the orders of the Eternal did not oblige me to be absent. When his exalted soul, inflamed with the love of virtue, vented its rapturous sensations in tears of holy joy, or in devout hymns which the tutelar spirits disdained not to repeat in their concerts, I inspired him with such ideas of his future felicity as it was possible he could be susceptible of, while united to his dust. Weep not for him: mourn not for him, like the children of despair. He is happy : his immortal soul survives. Let this soften your grief. Death has only detached it from a weak and frail body. Without interruption or incumbrance, he now enjoys whatever can delight a wise and good being. His happiness far exceeds all you can imagine, while you only see through the dark medium of the senses. He is with the angels and archangels before the throne of God. Yet weep, my friends! He well deserved your love. Lament your loss; but let his unspeakable gain soon dry your tears. You are not separated forever. Soon shall the angel of death visit you also—soon will you be united to your beloved son, to part no more. The pale King of Terrors will assume to each of you a different form, but you will receive him as becomes the candidate for future happiness, and welcome him as a friend long expected. Listen, O Adam! to the order of thy God. Restore this corruptible body to its origin, the dust; dig a pit, cover it with earth." Thus spake the angel, while benevolence and pity appeared in every look, every gesture. Desolation fled.

Despair was no more. Thus the pure water of a limpid spring refreshes the spent traveller who, having long trod the scorching sands of the desert, pants with thirst, and fainting under the sun's too ardent rays, is sinking to the earth; but, no sooner has he drunk the crystalline draught than he rests his fatigued limbs in peace on the brink and feels a fresh recruit of strength. He rises with new vigour, and following the stream's murmuring course through a fertile country, at length arrives at some hospitable mansion whose friendly proprietor entertains him with generous munificence under embowering shades.

Adam, whose soul was calmed and revived by noble and elevated sentiments, viewing the dazzling lustre of the angel as he withdrew, said, "Accept of our grateful thanks, celestial friend! Praised, praised forever be Thy name, O God Most High! Thy loving kindness, Thy tender mercies are not withdrawn from the sinner. Thou with compassion dost behold our distress; Thou commandest Thine angels to enlighten our souls and bring us comfort. No longer will we mourn in the dust—no longer will we despair like the spirits of darkness who are banished from Thine all-enlivening presence. We are still surrounded by Thy bounties: still permitted to praise Thee, to supplicate Thy favour, to adore Thy wisdom, to celebrate Thy goodness. Thus ennobled, shall we repine and murmur at Thy dispensations, if the thorns and briers of affliction are scattered in the way of our pilgrimage to the bosom of our Father, the dwelling of our God? We cannot, indeed, entirely restrain our tears for the happy deceased: we must regret for his being thus suddenly snatched from our embraces; but alas! the unhappy criminal ought rather to be the object of our grief, the subject of our most earnest prayers. O God! what an alleviation would it be to our sorrows if we dared to hope that Thy mercy had not cast him off forever! O my Maker! he unhappy—he miserable, is the first-fruit of my loins—the first whom Eve brought

forth with pain. Let us not cease, my dearest spouse, to implore the tender mercies of God for him. We will not doubt his loving kindness : we ourselves were sinners; we were unworthy of His infinite grace; yet He has encouraged us to confide in His promises. When, all trembling, we expected eternal chastisements, little did we hope for mercy. But let us not defer to execute the command of the Lord. I will carry his dear body to our dwelling and there commit the precious dust to the earth."

"O Adam! O my love!" returned Eve; "my soul emerges from overwhelming sorrow. Conscious of my own weakness, I support myself by thy strength, as the flexible ivy clings to the firm oak."

Adam now, by the assistance of his weeping spouse, lifted the corpse on his shoulders and, sighing under the sad burden, slowly moved towards his dwelling while Eve walked weeping beside him.

BOOK FIVE

Now Thirza, whose sleep had been disturbed by terrifying visions, opened her eyes to the bright luminary of day, and precipitately quitted her bed. So leaps up the affrighted traveller, who, when spent with fatigue, had laid himself down under the shelter of a rock, when a terrifying dream, suggested by his guardian angel, represents to him the rock falling over his head: trembling, he hastens from the dangerous spot; an instant after, the huge mass falls with hideous noise. He seeks the companion of his toilsome journey, but, alas! he is crushed under the ruins. Not less agitated was the wife of Abel. "What frightful images," said she, "have passed before me while I slept! They resembled nothing in nature. Welcome, cheerful light! thou hast scattered them. Hail, ye glowing flowers, sweet objects of my attentive care! your various odors, which the morning sun draws forth, will refresh my fatigued brain; and, ye joyous inhabitants of the air, your soft melody will re-establish serenity in my soul. I will join your morning song. I will join with reanimated nature in praises to the Most High. Creator Almighty! Saviour Propitious! my soul, overpowered by Thy goodness, can but imperfectly express the immensity of Thy benefits, and the extent of its gratitude. Thy ever-waking Providence guards thy creatures, when, covered by the veil of night, sleep weighs down their eye-lids. May my grateful thanks arise to Thee, O God! Accept from a feeble worm the tribute of praise."

She now left her dwelling and walked among the opening flowers whose first sweets were diffused by the morning breeze. "My heart still throbs," said she; "still anxiety is lodged in my breast. What mean these unusual fears! An interior trembling seems to shake my very soul. My mind is darkened like the heavens when black clouds spread through the expanse. Where art thou, Abel? Where art thou, my beloved? Dearest half of myself, I haste, pursued by gloomy terrors, to lose them in thine arms. I fly to thee with the speed thou wouldst fly if, benighted in a dark forest, thy feet were winged with fear."

Having thus spoke, she redoubled her pace when Mahala, seeing her, ran from her cottage to meet her. "I salute thee, my dear sister," she cried. "Whither art thou going in such haste, with thine hair disordered, without ornament, not so much as one flower?"

"I go," replied Thirza, "to throw myself in the arms of my beloved. Unusual terrors have this night disturbed my sleep, and my labouring heart is still oppressed by sad apprehensions, which the serenity of this delightful morning is not able to disperse. But, though the blooming day, though the smiles of Nature cannot dispel my fears, I shall lose them in the gladdening presence of my husband! I therefore run to cast myself in his arms."

The spouse of Cain replied with a sigh, "Happy, happy sister! Alas! I have no such sweet resource: I should be lost to all consolation, were it not for a father who loves me, and a tender mother to whom I am dear; were it not for thee, my kind sister, and thine amiable husband. Yes, with you I lose part of the load of woe that Cain's discontent heaps on

my wretched head. To him, unhappy! all the beauties of nature are only the sources of melancholy, and he continually regrets the labour which his fertile fields so abundantly repay. But, my dearest Thirza, above all, I lament his unkind and causeless dislike to our gentle brother."

Mahala now melted into tears; Thirza wept also, and tenderly embracing her, replied: "Penetrated by the same idea, Abel and I spend many anxious hours in bewailing his inveterate hatred. Our resource is in the hand of Heaven. Often, in sleepless nights, we send our most fervent petitions to God, that a beam of His grace may disperse the dark clouds from his breast; that every baneful weed may be rooted out from his heart, lest they choke all principles of humanity and virtue. Ah, my sister! was thy husband kind and gentle, again would peace smile, again would pleasure bless our dwellings, and we should no longer with pain behold the brow of our venerable father wrinkled by care, nor the eyes of our fond mother swelled with weeping."

Mahala, still in tears, answered, "This, this also is the subject of my incessant prayer. When the earth is covered with darkness, while all nature is hushed, I bewail in silence the harsh obduracy of my spouse, and pray to the Lord to soften his heart. Sometimes the agony of my soul bursts forth, in spite of myself, in sobs and groans. Then he awakes and, in a terrifying voice, accuses me of depriving him of sleep, and the only good he enjoys on this wretched earth, so severely accursed by the Almighty Avenger of sin. My dearest sister! this too is the employment of my mind while my hands are busied in domestic labour. My innocent children, playing round me, observe my tears, and demand with infantine caresses, why I weep? Ah, Thirza! Thirza! I

am faded by grief, like a young flower when the thick branches of some neighboring tree intercept from it the sun's all-cheering rays. My unhappy husband, this very day, left our dwelling before the dawn. His looks were terrible. Never did I see so dark a gloom on his countenance. Anger flashed from his eyes; his brows were knit by rage. Frozen with horror, I heard him, as he went forth, curse the hour of his birth. This, my sister, was his salute to so fine a morning. 'Tis true, I have not lost all hope: for sometimes (and thou thyself hast observed it) his virtue breaks through the gloom and his mind is open to the soft sensations of social love. Then he acknowledges that he has injured us, asks forgiveness, and seeks reconciliation. But, alas! too soon the light withdraws: as, in the tempestuous days of winter, the sun darts a cheering ray, and is instantly hid from our eyes by the closing clouds. Let us hope, Thirza that as mild spring restores light and joy to all nature, so the heart of my unhappy husband may be restored to light and peace. For this we will incessantly petition Heaven. I have always nourished this hope from the bottom of my heart."

Thus spake Mahala when Thirza, pale and trembling, cried, "What mournful sound is that?—it is not the cry of pain—from yonder trees—O my sister!—Mahala!—alas! it comes nearer.—O my God!—" Thirza was now sinking to the ground, but her alarmed sister supported her in her arms.

Adam, with tottering steps, was coming from behind the trees, bending under the sad load of his son's lifeless body. Eve walked by his side: sometimes she turned her face, faded by grief, towards the bloody corpse, then hid it under her hair, dropping with her tears.

Thirza continued pale and motionless in the trembling

arms of Mahala, who was herself ready to sink under the weight of her she endeavoured to sustain. Thus three amiable virgins (but none ever felt such fond affection) in summer's eve walk hand in hand over the variegated fields. Sudden the thunder roars: the rapid lightning tears the earth under their feet: terrified, they fall; but soon recovering from their surprise, two of them rise, the third a cinder. The survivors are struck with new horror, more dreadful than that caused by thunder.

This was the situation of the two daughters of Adam, when, a little recovering, they beheld the corpse of him they loved. The afflicted father had laid it on the grass, and was supporting in his arms his fainting wife, who, weakened by grief, was near falling to the earth. "Where am I?", cried Thirza. "O my God! where am I?—How he lies?—Abel!—Why did I awake? Hateful light! Ah! unhappy that I am—Mahala! Ah me miserable!—See, see, my sister, he lies dead!—sight horrible!—Light hateful!—Why did I awake?"

"Thirza," cried Mahala in a tremulous voice, "let us not give way to vain terrors!—To me—to me also, the idea is dreadful as the forked lightning.—Ah, she again faints! Awake, Thirza—awake!—Let us go to him: he is not dead! Thy voice, thine embraces will rouse him from sleep."

After these words, the two sisters, leaning on each other, dragged their enfeebled limbs towards the body. "Oh! my father! O my mother! how they weep!—what dreadful terrors seize me!" cried Thirza, as she approached near the corpse. "Abel!—Abel!—my beloved!—my joy!—my life!—my husband!—awake! Ah! unutterable woe, he

wakes not!—Abel!—hear my plaintive cries, the groans of thy distressed wife!—” She then cast herself on the body, to embrace it with extended arms; but at the sight of the blood and fatal wound, she, giving a terrifying shriek, fell on the earth, without voice, motion, or sign of life, pale and cold as him she mourned. Despair was seen in her open and fixed eyes. Near her sat on the earth Mahala, dissolved in tears; wringing her hands, she sometimes raised her weeping eyes to Heaven, sometimes she fixed them with eager attention on the bloody corpse.

Adam, whose deep grief was augmented by the sorrow of his daughters, essayed to console them: “O my dear children!! O Thirza! O Mahala!” said he; “would to God that my anguish could keep from pain the hearts of those I love! But, my beloved, hear me—listen to the soft sounds of consolation! While Eve and I were weeping over this dear body, an angel replete in beauty, came to us. He was commissioned from the Most High to soothe our sorrows. ‘Weep not!’ said he; ‘be comforted! He whom you lament still exists. He has only left this frail covering of dust. Disengaged from a mortal body, his soul is more happy than ye can conceive, while your souls are enveloped in their earthly covering. Ye are not separated forever: in a little time ye shall be re-united; ye shall enjoy with him torrents of delight, of which your gross senses can give you no idea. Let us not, my Thirza—let us not, Mahala, profane the funeral of the happy by our inconsolable lamentations!—Let us not offend the Almighty by our despair!”

Thirza still remained without sense or motion while the wife of Cain, elevating her joined hands above her head, thus expressed her grief: “O my father! why do you blame our tears? Can we forbear to lament, while he lies before our eyes, extended, cold, and dead! O thou our consolation!

our joy! O Abel! thou art lost to us, and our sweetest employment will be to weep for thee till the hour of death. Yes, thou art in the possession of never-ending happiness and glory! thou enjoyest that beatitude after which thy holy soul so ardently panted: thou wilt forever join with the angels in their song of praise to the Most High. We too hope to partake of thy felicity when our All-merciful God shall call us from our sad exile, this house of sorrow, rendered more desolate by thy loss. Ah, Abel! ah my brother! thou art lost to us and our sweetest employment will be to weep for thee till the wished for hour of death. Where wert thou, Cain, my spouse, where wert thou when thy brother died? Hadst thou even then given him the fraternal embrace, and sought his forgiveness, with what affection would he have cast his weak arms around thee! Though expiring, he would have blest thee, and implored for thee the Divine consolations with his dying lips. What a sweet relief would this remembrance have been to thy sorrows! How would it have softened the griefs of thy future days! But---O my mother! what new woe makes thine eyes stream?---O my father! speak---speak, I conjure thee!---Why this horror on thy countenance?---No answer!---O my tortured heart!---Where---say where, O my father!---say, O my mother! where is Cain, my husband?"

Eve replied, "O my child! who knows where, pursued by Divine vengeance!---Ah my God!---the unhappy---but what do I say?---I tremble to speak it!---He---he---Ah me! unhappy mother!---Horrid---detestable ideas, tear not thus my wretched bosom! Ah, miserable parent that I am! why---he---"

"Ah, my mother!" interrupted Mahala, "spare me not---

spare me not, I conjure thee, O my mother! On me—on me, let the tempest fall—I am already crushed; already torn by frightful apprehensions.”

“Cain—O Heavens! Cain has—killed him!” cried Eve. “Ah, Mahala, ah, Thirza! Cain killed him!” Her excessive grief then took from her the power of speech.

Mahala was struck mute with terror. Her immoveable eyes shed no tears. The cold sweat trickled down her pale face, and her trembling lips were discoloured. At length she cried out in agony, “He killed Abel?—Cain, my husband, killed his brother?—Where art thou, fratricide? where, oh! where has thy guilt pursued thee? Has the thunder of God avenged thy brother?—Dost thou cease to exist?—Where art thou, most miserable? To what country of despair art thou fled, followed by the curse of God?” Thus raved Mahala, tearing her hair.

“Barbarous fratricide! vile murderer!” exclaimed Thirza. “How couldst thou kill so kind a brother? who doubtless, when expiring under the mortal blow, given by thy cruel hand, regarded thee with eyes full of love?—Ah, Cain! curst—curst be—”

“O my sister! O Thirza!” cried Mahala, interrupting her, “curse him not! He is thy brother!—he is my husband! Rather let us implore for him the mercies of God. I am sure, when falling in his blood, the holy victim of his fury cast on him an eye of compassion! and I doubt not but he now intercedes for him before the eternal throne. Let our prayers ascend from the dust and join those of the happy. O curse him not, Thirza—curse not thy brother!”

“Whither doth the excess of my grief transport me!” answered Thirza. “I did not curse him, my sister: I have not cursed the unhappy.” Then reclining on the corpse, she kissed the blood-besprinkled cheeks, the cold and livid lips. She remained long silent, indulging fruitless sorrow. At length she cried, with a faint and interrupted voice: “Would to God, my beloved, I had, at thy death, kissed thy quivering lips; heard the last expressions of thy love; seen thy last tender look, and received thy last tender embrace!—O that I had then expired within thine arms!—but, alas! I am left a prey to unutterable sorrow. Every object that used to inspire delight will now increase my woes. Ye shady bowers, ye now are desolate: ye can now only inspire me with terror: I shall think you ask for him, who, in your sweet retreats, was wont to embrace me in tender rapture. The murmuring fountains will inquire what is become of my beloved. Left forlorn, I can taste no more joy. The shades, the streams, the hills, the plains, alike to me are hateful. Alas! no more I see, with fond delight, him that made all lovely. I shall, indeed, still behold him! but, oh distressing object! I shall behold these wan cheeks, these fixed and sightless eyes, this clotted blood, this dreadful wound. Flow, flow, my tears! forever flow on this pale face. What dignity once appeared on this faded countenance! The charms of soft persuasion dwelt on these cold and stiffened lips. Every beauty, every grace, shone in his lovely form: but his soul, too pure, too holy to converse with mortals, to converse with me, is fled forever! Stream, my eyes, stream without ceasing, on this withered corpse, till my longing soul leaves its dust with his.”

Thus lamented Thirza, while her tears ran on the senseless body. Eve's grief was increased by the sorrows of her daughters. “My dearest children,” she cried, “cease, I entreat

you, cease thus to tear my heart! Your tears, your sighs and groans augment my miseries; they are to me the most cutting of reproaches.—'Tis I—'tis I that have filled the souls of those I love with anguish! My folly, my guilt has undone us all! I, alas, introduced sin and death! Forgive me, O my children! forgive your afflicted mother! I conjure you, by the pangs I suffered to bring you into the world, to forgive me! Cease to tear my heart by your immoderate sorrow!"

Mahala and Thirza ran to her; they embraced her knees, and with looks of duteous affection, said, "O our mother! our dearest mother! who brought us forth with pain! whose kind cares guarded us in helpless infancy! aggravate not our distress by thy despair! We meant not by our complaints to reproach thee, our dear, our tender mother. We love, we reverence, we honour thee, but we cannot command our grief: it will burst from our bosoms and eyes in sighs and tears. How can we restrain these expressions of a love the most tender! they are the voice of Nature."

They still clasped their mother's knees while their weeping eyes were tenderly fixed on hers when Adam said, "O my beloved! let us no longer defer restoring this precious dust to the earth, as the Lord our God hath commanded. The lenient hand of Time will abate our grief, and dry our tears. Victorious Reason will teach us to conquer this unavailing sorrow. We shall long, ardently long, to partake of his happiness, as the bride wishes for the day that is to unite her to her beloved."

"Yes, commit this dear body to its parent earth," replied Thirza, turning her pale and faded face to Adam, "but suffer

me, O my father! to weep a little longer ere it is hid forever in the dear, the precious dust! Suffer me once more to press the cold clay to my breast!" At these words she threw herself with extended arms on the corpse.

Adam now began to dig a pit in the earth while Eve and Mahala stood weeping near him. Then the golden-haired Eliel and little Josiah, Cain's two infant sons, approached, hand in hand, to the spot where lay the body. "Brother Josiah—" said Eliel, "who's that sobs so loud? Let's go nearer, brother. Ah! that's Abel!—'tis Abel our uncle!—How pale he is!—His hair is all bloody!—He lies like a lamb going to be burnt on the altar!"

"—My dear Eliel!" replied Josiah, "see how Thirza weeps for him!—He don't mind her tears!—He don't look at her!—I tremble—I am frighted—let us run to our mother.---See, see, she, she weeps too!" They now hastened to Mahala, on the other side of the grave, and clinging about her, said, "O mother! why do you weep? Why does Abel lie there? Why is he all bloody, like a lamb for the sacrifice?"

Mahala tenderly embraced the infants while the tears ran on their little heads, and said, "My dear children! death has taken his soul from the body. It is carried up to Heaven, to dwell there with God and his angels, where it will be forever happy."

"Then he will wake no more," replied Eliel, bursting into tears: "He will never awake!—never! He that loved us so dearly and used to sit us on his knee, and tell Josiah and me such fine stories about God, the angels, and the wonders of nature. Ah! brother;—ah, Josiah! we shall never more hear

Abel sing hymns! He will talk to us no more!—He will never, never awake! How our father will weep for him when he comes from the field!—How pale! how frightful!” The terrified children now hid their faces in the folds of their mother’s vestment.

Adam, having finished digging the grave, “Wake thou!” said he to Thirza; “Wake, my beloved! Let us obey the Divine command and return the dust to its mother Earth. Wake, my Thirza!” he continued, and tenderly took her hand to raise her from the corpse. She had been in a kind of trance on the body of her husband, and now waked from the holy vision.

“Yes, I have seen him!—I have seen Him!—” she cried as she arose. “He came to me shining in celestial lustre. ‘Weep not!’ he said. ‘Weep not, my dearest Thirza! I am happy. Soon shalt thou partake my bliss in the abodes of felicity and glory, where there is no more death to separate us.’ At these words he disappeared, having cast on me a Divine smile; and an heavenly light marked the traces of his feet.” Thus she spoke, and consolation sublime illuminated her visage. “Enter, O my father! enter,” said she, “this covering of dust,” and immediately went to her mother and sister.

They all three hid their faces under their dishevelled tresses, while Adam wrapt in skins the body of his son. He laid it in the pit and covered it with earth and then said, “Let us, my dear wife! let us, my beloved children! adore the Most High before this grave of the first dead.” They now all prostrated themselves before the grave, little Eliel and his brother kneeling on each side of their mother, and the father of men pronounced in a loud voice this prayer, with his arms devoutly folded on his breast:

“O Thou, who dwellest in the highest Heaven, God! Creator! Justice Eternal! Goodness infinite! behold us prostrate before the grave of our beloved son. We sinners kneel before Thee in the dust. O may our prayer ascend to Thy celestial throne! Look with an eye of compassion on us, O God! in this valley of death, this abode of sin. Our iniquities are great, but Thine infinite goodness is still greater. We are polluted in Thy sight: Thou beholdest our impurities, yet Thou hast not turned Thy face from us: Thou still vouchsafest to look on us in our misery with a propitious eye. Thou permittest us to implore Thee. Thou hast not abandoned the sinner. Eternal praises rise to Thee! Thy works, O God, render Thee praise! The beauties of the spring, the serenity of the heavens, show forth Thy beneficence: the loud voice of Thy thunder, the rattling hail, the howling storm proclaim Thy power. Smiling joy glorifies Thee; Thy justice is also glorified by the tears of sorrow. We have beheld the son of Sin, frightful Death. He is come to our dwelling in a form most hideous. Guilt led him by the hand; the earth groaned, and black tempests gathered round the direful pair. The first-fruit of my loins—ah! I tremble—my first-born has imbrued his hands in his brother’s blood! O God! merciful and gracious! though I presume to supplicate Thee for him, turn not Thy face from me. O God of Clemency, cast him not off forever! When he mourns in the dust for his offences; when he trembles at his crime; when, overwhelmed by torturing remorse, he weeps, he groans, and prostrates himself with deep contrition before Thee, O my God! look with a pitying eye on his misery: commiserate his despair, and assuage his anguish by Thy Divine consolations. O my Maker! cast him not off forever! Reject not, O God! reject not the presumptuous petition! May our prayers, our cries, ascend to Thy sublime Throne, from this grave of the

first dead! We have, according to Thy command, restored the perishing dust to the earth. Hear us, Lord!—Lord, hear us! while we cry unto Thee in behalf of our first-born. Let him not perish in Thy wrath! For this grace, O God! we will supplicate Thee at the rising and setting sun: in the silent hours of Night, when all Nature is hushed to rest, we will implore Thee for him. O God of Consolation, cast him not off forever! Eternal praises be rendered to Thee, who hast received the soul of the happy deceased into the regions of never-ending felicity! Death has seized his first victim. We shall follow one after another to the dark and silent grave; but, adored be Thy loving-kindness, adored be Thy tender mercies, we shall likewise follow him to the realms of immortality and bliss. O Thou, who createst the heavens! at whose word this world arose from nothing! they shall perish: the heavens and the earth shall pass away; but Thou art eternal. We dwell in bodies of dust. This dust shall be dissolved; but Thou art unchangeable, and wilt raise to glory the sinner who deploras his crimes, and the righteous man who mourns that his virtues are mixed with imperfections, and his highest attainments sullied by human frailty. Thou wilt gather them together out of the dust, to bestow on them eternal joys, angelic purity; for—O promise ineffable! the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Leap for joy, O earth! chant forth the praises of the most High, all nature. We will glorify His name in the midst of calamity. Man is fallen: he is degraded from his original dignity: but, glory be to God, He hath not cast him off—He hath not rejected him forever: His mercy beholds the work of His hands from His seat of judgment. He fell, whom God created upright; yet when, after his fatal transgression, the sinner, full of anguish, stood trembling in fearful expectation of an eternal curse (and what less could he expect?) then—let men and angels celebrate

the glorious mystery—then the Almighty pronounced that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Mystery sublime! mystery profound! wrapt in an holy obscurity which no finite being can penetrate: but full of Divine consolations. The sinner is reconciled to God! the offender is restored to peace and hope. Shall man then lament in the dust? shall he groan in despair if the dream of life be alternately filled with joy and sorrow? Death approaches; it shall break the shackles of the soul, and free it from the consequences of a just malediction. Then those who, while clothed in dust, forgot not their original purity, who loved virtue, who loved God, who kindled in their hearts the seraphic flame, shall be assembled together in the mansions on high to enjoy their incessant, eternal felicity.—I see them! the holy assembly are present to my view, numerous beyond computing, pure as the flame which descends on the sacred altar. They stand, surrounded by angels, before the throne. They behold the face of God. They delight in His goodness. Beatific vision! transporting prospect! How is my soul raised! how is my heart expanded! Raptures before unknown! O Goodness infinite! Grace inexpressible! Lost in thine immensity, the first archangel can but imperfectly express his sensations; man—can only feel them. . .”

Adam ceased to speak but continued in silent ecstasy, prostrate on the earth, his wife and daughters still kneeling at his side. Nature herself observed the same silence— all was serene! not a cloud passed over them through the lucid sky.

Now came on “mild evening clad in sober gray,” while every breeze was hushed. During this perfect calm, Cain, pursued by guilt, was agitated with fear, horror, remorse, and sad dismay. He roved from place to place: he wandered in the deserts till, spent with fatigue, he sat down facing the

rising moon, and thus the voice of his despair disturbed the peaceful silence that reigned over all Nature. "There, beyond the dark hill the moon begins her course, spreading around a faint light. All under the starry expanse imbibe new life from invigorating sleep: man only wakes. My accursed hand has driven from his dwelling peace and rest. The voice of grief and lamentation ascends from the cottages. 'Tis I—'tis I, miserable! that have brought affliction to their abodes. The cries, the groans of my bewailing parents rise to Heaven as so many accusations against me. This accursed day!—Hear it, O Moon! turn pale and hide thy beams! Hear it, ye Stars, and set in darkness!—This day the earth has drunk the blood of the first slain, shed by my unnatural hand. Henceforth withhold from me your precious influences, bright luminaries! Cursed on the ground I tread, banished from the cheerful face of man, hide me—hide me in gloomy darkness! I have shed my brother's blood! I have torn the heart of him that begat me! I have filled with despair the breast of her who brought me forth, and nourished my infancy! Hide me from the eyes of Nature! I have trampled on her dictates. I will fly—fly with my misery, sad companion! to some desert region where no human foot has marked the faded grass. I will dwell among rocks and precipices where putrid water trickles in tears from the steep into the swampy abodes of loathsome reptiles: where birds of prey build their nests: where savage beasts devour their bloody carnage. Alas! even these will abhor me: they kill no brothers! Shade me, darkness, from the cheering sky! shade me from horrid gloom, from the sight of every creature! there let me lament my cruelty; there howl out my despair. When sleep overcomes me, terrors will present themselves to my imagination: I shall behold my murdered brother; I shall see his wounded head! ---his clotted blood!"

Thus Cain bewailed his wretchedness. He ceased and sat abandoned to mute grief. No bird of night disturbed the awful stillness: frightened by sounds of human woe, they had fled in silence: a gentle murmur only floated through the air.

Again he vents his sorrows, and casting his melancholy eyes around, he cries, "Pity me, ye woods! Weep for me, ye fields! No words can describe my misery, and pity is due to misery. O Nature arrayed in beauty! grieve for me—for me, lost to beauty and to happiness. Mourn for me, each creature! ye taste, ye feel the efficacious presence of a gracious God, to me no longer gracious! I feel His wrath: I tremble at His power. He is to me only God the Avenger, the the Just Avenger of my brother's blood. Forever will it cry against me: my punishment is endless."

He was now silent for some moments; then, with a deep sigh he said, "I weep. Can such a wretch as I shed tears! Welcome, precious drops! ye attest to me that my miseries are softened. The despair which had seized my soul is changed to plaintive grief—to weeping sorrow. Ah! flow, my tears! Receive them, O earth! I am cursed on thy surface! Thou hast drunk my brother's blood; yet, oh receive these tears, that show my unspeakable distress!—What new emotions!—How is my heart softened!—My tears flow faster.—Yes, I will—yes, while darkness hides me from every eye, I will away to the dwellings of my afflicted parents, to poor Thirza. I will go to all, and once more see them—once more bless them—Bless them! the angry winds would disperse the salutations as they came from my polluted lips! Ah, fratricide! canst thou pronounce a blessing, thyself accursed? I will, however, go and strive to bless them in their grief. I will weep before them, and in the

dust deplore my guilt, and then—yes, then I will fly forever from their reproaching eyes. Fly from thee, Mahala! I fly forever from my children!” Here his agony stifled his words and he moved towards the cottages, watering with his tears the solitary way.

He was now passing a little grove planted by the hand of Abel near the spring. Cain then remembered that his brother, when he had completed this work, had said with fond affection, “Flourish, ye trees! spread your branches! May ye forever bloom, that under your refreshing shade our descendants may, in affectionate converse, relate to their offspring what they will learn from us, saying, ‘Here Eve brought forth her first-born! Here she soothed with caresses his infant cries, him the first solace in her sad exile: here she viewed him with inexpressible rapture. She called him Cain, saying, From the hand of the Lord have I received thee.’ The murderer passed by this monument of his brother’s tenderness with quickened step: a remorseful sweat covered his averted face; his trembling knees could scarce sustain his weight. Thus at the sight of his father’s grave trembles the parricide, who, with murderous dissimulation, had invited the good old man, returning from the field, to refresh himself with impoisoned viands. When he passes the tomb, the rustling of the trees which surround it, the odours of the garlands, with which his duteous sisters have crowned the urn, raise a storm in his guilty heart.

Now Cain had passed the terrifying grove and drew near the cottages. The pale moon shed on them a feeble light through the trees and melancholy silence reigned around. He cast on the dwelling his weeping eyes: he raised his hands to Heaven; he wrung them in speechless agony. Conscious guilt tore his now softened heart. Trembling, he stood

amidst the dreary stillness. At length he uttered, in a low voice, this impassioned soliloquy: "How quiet deep affliction rests here—Ah that murmur!—Are they not sighs?—They come from the cottages—from the dwellings come those piercing ejaculations of sleepless grief!—Here—here, ye once cheerful mansions, here, trembling in darkness, stands the wretch who has made you the abodes of sorrow—Here, pursued by infernal horrors, shudders in obscurity he who has chased from the habitations of those who gave him life, peace, joy, and every domestic sweet. Dare I breathe the air through which ascends the sighs of my mourning parents, my terrified wife, my widowed sister! Dare I appear in a spot consecrated to a just grief!—grief for my crime—Be gone! pollute not the residence of virtue. --Yes, I go—I go far from you.--But let my eyes, haggard with despair, yet a little longer behold your dwelling. In pity to my unspeakable anguish, allow me to weep here yet a little longer. Suffer me to raise to Heaven my bloody hands for your happiness. Then I go—Hail, hail ye—Ah wretch! wilt thou profane their sacred names? Wilt thou pollute, with thy infected breath, titles that express the softest ties, the most exalted sensations of the human heart? Oh that, with the gloom of night, your distress, your terrors, might leave you to dwell in my wretched bosom, fit companions in my wanderings on an earth whose curse I have increased! O that I alone could endure the punishment due my crime! May your memories never be disturbed by my horrid image! Oh that I myself could lose all remembrance of myself! Dreadful wish of extreme desolation!"

Cain having thus spoke, remained near the cottages. He groaned, he raised his eyes to Heaven when he heard the footsteps of one advancing slowly through the gloom. A cold shivering, like the agonies of death, seized his limbs. He

strove to fly, but in vain he strove; he sunk down, trembling, without strength, among the bushes.

Thirza, this first night of her sad widowhood, unable to sleep, had quitted her lonely bed. She left her cottage and went to the grave of her husband where, seating herself on the damp grass, she wept among the clods. She viewed with fixed eyes the starry firmament, then turning to the grave, said, "Here lies all that made life desirable: all my repose, all my joy lies under this earth which now imbibes my tears. Sleep has forsaken my wearied eyelids: no rest remains for me. Flow on, flow on, my tears; ye are my consolation: my melancholy hours shall be spent in bewailing thy loss, my dearest husband!—shall be spent near thy precious remains in gloomy sadness! 'Tis true, I have seen thee—I have seen my beloved arrayed in heavenly glory, but ah! I am deprived of his sweet society, of his tenderness, of his endearing care, through the remainder of a life of calamity and wretchedness. In vain I tried to rest on the conjugal couch; my spirits forsook me; I almost fainted, while the sweet pledge of our love lay by me, locked in the arms of sleep. The little innocent smiled in his guiltless slumbers. Alas! he knows not yet the woes of mortals—he knows not his own irreparable loss! Ah, my infant! I deplore thy misfortune; forever deprived of a tender father, an instructor of thy childhood, a guide to thy youth, and the friend of thy riper years. Thy wretched mother, a prey to keen distress, torn by heart-piercing anguish, will want the strength—will want the wisdom to supply thy loss. O my child, how are we bereaved! How is every comfort ravished from us!—Horrid reflection!—ravished from us by the hand of a brother! Where is he?—Where is the miserable?—Where has his remorse—where has his despair driven him? O Thou Infinite Clemency! God Propitious! despise not my supplication,

turn not from my prayer, while with unwearied fervour I entreat Thee from the dust---when, in deep penitence and sincere contrition of heart, he bewails his crime and implores Thy mercy."

Her agony of soul now stopt her voice: but soon she cried as she raised her weeping eyes to Heaven; "Bright star of night, often hast thou been witness of our chaste endearments, when thy soft light illumined our path. Often hast thou been witness to his sublime converse when he described the charms of virtue, the delights of an approving conscience. Thou now canst only shed thy beams on his silent grave. Buried in this dust lies every human excellence: the consolation, the hope, the joy of his weeping parents! Here sleeps to wake no more, my love, my life, my husband!" She now continued long silent, abandoned to speechless grief. At length surveying the objects around her, she fixed her melancholy eyes on the fragrant enclosure where she and her dear companion used to pass their most delightful hours. "Ah! lovely bower!" she cried; "thou now art solitary. In vain the pale moon pierces thy aromatic shades. There, dear departed Abel! the ruddy evening saw thee pour forth thy soul in holy rapture. The remembrance of thine intense devotion, thy fervent piety, thy humble love, has lighted up in my heart a sacred fervour. I will rise above this grief. The darkness of my soul is dispelled by the dear remembrance, as the rising moon chases from the horizon the gloom of night. O my beloved! in yonder sweet retreat, how has devotion animated thine eyes! How wert thou raised above mortality when thou, in the joyful exultation of thine heart saidst, 'What an happiness it is, my dearest Thirza, to be virtuous! What a privilege to be permitted to supplicate, to love Him from whom all these beauties are but

emanations! What unspeakable felicity to be conscious that the angels who surround us approve our actions! What, my beloved wife,' he added, taking my hand, 'What delight is there in this beautiful creation that can be compared to the constant assurance of the Divine presence!—to the consciousness of virtue! To him who departeth not from his integrity, who panteth after perfection, death itself has lost many of its terrors. We know—let the sinner exult in the inexpressible mercy!—we know that it will only separate the body from the immortal soul which, when escaped from its prison of earth, will wing its way to mansions of eternal joy. O my Thirza!' continued the departed saint, 'If I quit my dust before thee—before thee remove to bliss—short and moderate by thy grief: weep not long over my perishing clay. What are the days of this short life compared with eternity? We shall meet again in the realms of purity and joy to part no more.'

“ ‘Dearest Abel,’ I replied, while my tears flowed, ‘if I first leave my dust, do not thou give way to fruitless sorrow: shed not many tears over my senseless corpse. We shall, my love, be re-united; we shall together enjoy everlasting happiness: we shall meet—O ecstasy! never, never to part more!’ O my soul! sink not under thy grief! Sublime are the consolations offered thee. Remember thy dignity—reflect on thine immortality—look beyond the present calamity—rejoice in the salvation that awaits thee! Didst thou perish with the frail body, where would be my hope?—What could assuage my sorrow? Well might I lament over this grave—well might I pray that an end were put to my wretched being—but—I shall live forever! I will rise above the dispiriting grief. Yes, my dearest husband! if thy ennobled soul—if thy angelic mind still retains any love, any concern for my happiness, thou wilt be pleased to know that thy precepts,

thine example, has inspired me with fortitude—has taught me to bear up under the unavoidable afflictions of mortality. Dear angel! if thou still hoverest over me, thou wilt be witness to my endeavours to repel this fruitless grief: but my tears still flow—I cannot yet command my sorrow. I must a little longer weep on this precious dust. I will erect around the grave an arbour of cypress: under the melancholy shade I will mourn my loss; but under it too will I contemplate, in holy transport, on the happy moment when I shall meet my beloved; when, like him, I shall be free from all impurity, all sorrow, all sin, and eternally out of the reach of death. This ravishing prospect will—it does—abate my anguish.” She now rose from the grave, but instantly cried, sinking again on her knees, “O horrid reflection, our brother murdered him! O God of Goodness! hear my supplications; show favour to the unhappy sinner: hear him when he cries to Thee: destroy him not, O God! in Thy wrath. Save him, O gracious God! save him from eternal perdition. My petition for his final happiness shall ascend to Thee in the early dawn. I will pray for him without ceasing. He is still my brother.”

Cain, the prey of wild despair, lay trembling among the bushes. “Fly!” he cried to himself, “fly these holy dwellings, odious monster!—Ah! I cannot fly: I am surrounded by infernal horrors.—Leave me, furies, leave me!—Carry me, trembling feet, from this seat of virtue! I profane the sacred place. Alas! I cannot fly: my strength fails: a cold shivering has seized my limbs.—Oh, that these were the last tremblings of nature! Unhappy that I am, I survive to feel increasing anguish. How her lamentations pierce my soul! O virtue, how sublime are thy consolations!—all lost—forever lost to me. No hope remains—I have sinned beyond forgiveness!—Ah! she prays! she prays for

me—for me, who have filled her heart with sorrow!—Unexampled goodness! Ought she not rather to call down curses on my guilty head?—O torture! her virtue, her piety, heightens my despair! My miseries are insupportable. My crime appears in all its magnitude. Not the apostate spirits in the lowest abyss of Hell feel more horror.—Thou pray for me, Thirza!—Thy rash vows are superfluous—No, God will not hear thy prayers—He is just.—Now she retires from the grave of her husband, murdered by my hand. Dare I tread the same path?—Dare I weep on the traces made by her feet?—No—Retire, barbarous fratricide!—Retire, bloody murderer! from this sanctified spot!—Fly, wretch! fly!”

Having thus spoke, he walked with hasty step; but suddenly stopping, he cried, “O Mahala! how can I leave thee?—How can I leave thee forever?—O my children! I will in the dust deplore my crime before you—before thee, Mahala. Perhaps thou now shed’st tears of compassion for my misery—perhaps thou wilt bless me still.—But what do I say? Cursed of God, who will dare to bless me?—No, hate me, curse me! I deserve it—then I fly, abhorred of all, loaded with the curse of God, and of all nature. Misery extreme! anguish insupportable! I have no power to fly!—I come, I come, to my dearest wife! to mourn before thee my guilt and wretchedness. I will weep at thy feet—I will implore thee to forgive my having chased peace from thine heart, and filled thy days with sorrow. Then—yes, then—I fly from thee, Mahala—I fly from you, my children.”

Cain now passed at a distance from the grave and advanced towards his cottage. He frequently stopped as irresolute. At length he came to his dwelling but stood long

without, pale and trembling. Then, with tottering and hesitating step, he passed the threshold.

Mahala was sitting on her solitary bed, gazing with weeping eyes at the pale moon, more pale herself than that star when enveloped in clouds. Her infants were crying round her. At the sight of her husband she gave a heart-piercing shriek and fell on the bed, senseless. The terrified infants grasped the knees of Cain, crying, "O my father! help our dear mother! She is faint—she is sick with weeping for Abel. He is dead—Adam has put him in the ground and covered him with dust. Why were you so long coming home? You have worked a long while. Dear father, comfort our mother!" Overcome by the conflict of his various passions, Cain could give no answer to the little innocents. He embraced them. He hugged them in his arms while his tears ran on their faces. Then, unable to support his anguish, he fell on the earth at the feet of his wife. The children now redoubled their cries, which awakened Mahala from her swoon. She saw her weeping husband on the earth. "O Cain! Cain!" she cried in a voice of despair, tearing her dishevelled locks.

"Mahala!" interrupted Cain, "my dear Mahala! forgive me—pardon the murder of thy brother! This once allow me to weep before thee—this once let me cast myself in the dust at thy feet! Ah! I conjure thee to grant me this feeble consolation—this last hope of a misery that has no equal—only abstain from cursing me! Curse me not, O Mahala! I come to deplore before thee my misery and guilt: then I fly far from thee forever. I will hide me in the deserts. Cursed of God, followed by His wrath, I fly. O curse me not! curse not thy wretched husband!"

"Ah, Cain!" she replied, penetrated with the tenderest

compassion, "though thou hast killed the best of brothers—though thou hast heaped inexpressible miseries on my wretched head, yet I forget not that thou art still my husband. I pity—I weep for thee."

Cain answered, casting on her a look of tenderness, a look that expressed the bitter anguish of his heart, "Fatal when a dream from Hell deceived me! These little ones appeared before me as slaves to the sons of Abel. To save them from misery and bondage, I killed him—cursed moment! I murdered the best of brothers, and the bloody deed will forever haunt my mind and fill it with infernal horrors. My punishment is eternal. Yet, O Mahala! I would escape thy curses. Curse me not, my dearest wife!—Curse me not in my misery! This hour I fly—I quit thee—I quit you forever, my beloved children! I fly from you, cursed by God and man."

The children lamented around him. They raised their innocent hands in agony. Mahala sunk on the earth and reclined on her husband. "Receive these tears—receive these expressions of my sincere forgiveness and compassion!" she said while she wept over him. "Dost thou fly, Dost thou fly to the desert regions? How can I dwell here while thou art solitary and abandoned—while thou art miserable far from me?—No, Cain, I fly with thee. How can I suffer thee to be destitute of all relief in the deserts?—What cruel inquietudes would torment me! Every breeze I heard would fill me with terror. 'Perhaps he is now,' I should say to myself, 'perhaps he is at this instant in the agonies of death, without succour in some barren wild!'"

She was silent, and Cain, with a look of astonishment, cried, "What do I hear? Is it thou, Mahala?—Is it thou thy-

self, or does a dream again deceive me? It is—it is my dear, my virtuous wife! Thy words, Mahala—thy consoling words have softened my despair. Thou dost not hate me! Thou dost not curse me! It is enough. No, thou courageous, thou affectionate wife! thou shalt never share in the punishment due to my horrid crime—thou shalt not suffer for me the chastisements of Heaven. Remain in this abode sanctified by virtue, where dwelleth Divine Benediction. I will not render thee miserable. Forget me, Mahala—forget thy wretched husband. Abandoned by God, I shall wander without place of rest! but mayest thou be happy! mayest thou be blest.”

“No, Cain, if thou art miserable, I cannot here be happy,” replied Mahala. “I fly with thee—with thee I wander—I will be desolate with thee—I go with thee to the desert regions. Our children shall go with us. I will there share thy misery—I will try to assuage it—I will mix my tears of compassion with thy tears of penitence—I will kneel by thy side—my prayers shall ascend to Heaven with thine—our children, prostrate around us, shall join their voices with ours. God will not disdain the penitent sinner. I fly with thee, Cain. Without ceasing we will pray—without ceasing we will mourn before God, till a ray of His grace illumines thy benighted soul and justifies our confidence in His mercy. Hope in God, Cain! He will hear the prayer of the penitent sinner.”

“O thou!” cried Cain, “by what name shall I call thee? Thou art to me as a gracious angel! A beam of divine consolation has darted into the obscurity of my soul! O Mahala! O my wife! now I dare embrace thee. O that I could make thee sensible of what I feel! but words cannot express my gratitude, cannot express the tender emotions of my heart.”

At these words he pressed her to his breast; then suddenly quitting her, he embraced his children; but soon he returned to his wife and again clasped her to his heart.

Now this tender mother, this heroic wife, soothed her infants and wiped away their tears. She took her youngest child to her breast, another little one held by the hand of his father, while Eliel and Josiah walked before them. They left the cottage. Mahala, with weeping eyes, beheld the dwellings of her parents and of Thirza. "Be blest, be blest," said she, "O desolate family whom I abandon! Soon will I return from the place of our habitation to supplicate your blessings for me—for my dear, my penitent husband. I will solicit for him a pardon."

She now wept as irresolute, when instantly exhalations, more balsamic than are breathed from all the flowers of spring, surrounded the fugitives, and the voice of an invisible angel from over their heads, said, "Go, generous wife! I will in a dream inform thy tender mother of thine heroic courage! I will tell her thou art gone with thy penitent husband to implore mercy for him from the Sovereign Judge."

They now walked by the light of the nocturnal star. They lost sight of the dwellings and advanced into the desert regions, where had never been imprinted the foot of man.