

INTERESTING
STORIES ;

CONTAINING,

The Military Mendicant.

Female Heroism.

The Patriotic Clergyman.



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THE
MILITARY MENDICANT;

OR

BENEVOLENCE REPAID.

BY MR C. J. PITT.

—“ I wish thee success,” said a clergyman, putting something into an old soldier’s hand—
“ Adieu!—Heaven return it thee!” exclaimed the soldier, with a look that spoke more to the heart than all the expressions of gratitude that ever were uttered. His wife curtsied. “ God bless you both!” said the good divine, and rode on. The veteran fixed his eyes on him in silence, till he turned out of sight. “ What is it?” inquired the soldier’s wife. “ A guinea!” replied the soldier, wrapping it up carefully in a paper, and putting it into a greasy vellum pocket-book, the repository of his humble treasures. It had been his companion in all adventures, from childhood—and a faithful one. He esteemed it as a friend; and, unlike modern friends, it kept every secret with which it was entrusted inviolate.—It contained—the pride of his heart—a memorial, in his own hand-writing, of all the battles he had fought, the wounds he had received; up to that day on which the ruthless ball tore away the very arm, which had so often wielded the instrument of vengeance against the enemies of his country, from his scarred body. Here the heroic narrative was deficient; but the remaining stump vouched for him—how much more impressively! Through this misfortune he obtained his discharge; that, too, was preserved

companion to his memorial, to which it was added, signed by all his officers, a testimony of his *praiseworthy* conduct. It was the consciousness of having merited this, that transfused a gleam of brightness over all his despondencies; over these painful memorials he frequently shed a tear, which quickened the hour of distress, and bestowed a consolation only to be imbibed by minds attuned to the delicate harmony of Sensibility, at the red touch of Virtue.

Grant, Almighty Disposer of events! that *my* heart may ever be awake to the still voice of honour; that the season of calamity may not be rendered more irksome by the inquietudes of conscience!

"A guinea!" said the soldier. "A guinea! God bless him for it!" uttered his wife. "Amen!" rejoined the soldier. Would to Heaven that so hearty an *Amen* closed the prayers of the whole world! "There are *some* good people left in the world," observed the wife. "Heaven forbid there should be more!" answered the husband—and on they jogged, till a humble house of entertainment presented to them a welcome sight. They approached it joyfully; and turned in, to satisfy their moderate wants, and rest their wearied limbs.

The weather was cold: but they placed themselves, modestly, at a distance from the fire, though it was not quite taken up. A piper lad kindly offered his seat; the veteran thankfully declined it; but as he was drawing nearer, when the landlord entered, he muttered something about *vagrants* and *passes*! The soldier heard, but noticed it not: he knew the power of money, and accompanied his inquiry for refreshment with a wish to have change for a

guinea. The word *guinea* operated as a magic charm; a clean cloth was instantly spread; a stool put on the fire; and the landlord insisted that the chimney corner should be resigned for his military guest, who begged no one might be disturbed for him. The landlord was positive; forced both him and his wife on the bench; swore every one ought to have a proper respect for the *King's cloth*; drank both *that* and his *Majesty*; out of a brimmer which was just brought for the soldier; and assured the company, that he had once carried arms himself; but, having an opportunity to settle, he thought it best to sleep in a whole skin, and so *bought* his discharge.

This was all just—for any thing the company knew to the contrary; certain it was, that he had been a private in a marching regiment; but respecting the manner in which he left it, he had made a small mistake—perhaps his memory was bad—perhaps he wished to keep his own secret—or perhaps he had told his story so often, that himself began to be persuaded of its verity. Reader, he was *drummed out*! “For what?” asks thou. Peace, untoward spirit of curiosity! seek not to bring to light the misdeeds of thy brother which time has kindly left in oblivion:—Alas! I am guiltier than thyself. I set thee an example. How frail is man! how vain his reasoning!

The two travellers began their little repast. The landlord joined them. The soldier smiled him a cheerful welcome. The mug was twice filled; and the table soon cleared. They all gathered close round the fire; and the soldier related the adventure of the clergyman and the *guinea*.

The landlord *dare said*, beside that *guinea*, the

erson had not above "other in th' world
 Gemmen," for they were all strangers, "it is
 e-curate of our parish, and a more *worthier* soul
 ver lived! He has a wife and four children;
 d has but fifty pounds a year to maintain them,
 ough the rectorship is worth five times as much.
 ut the old rector died yesterday: and so the cu-
 te came here to hire one of my horses—I keeps
 o, gemmen—to go to the Squire's to beg for
 e living; and he has all the parish's good words
 nd prayers with him."—"Heaven grant, he may
 succeed!" emphatically interrupted the soldier.
 So says I!" rejoined mine host; accompany-
 ng the hearty affirmation with as hearty a tug at
 he soldier's ale—"But, nevetheless, gemmen, I
 ears as how he went: for his honour the Squire,
 ough they says something as how the estate isn't
 ightfully his—but I wouldn't have it, known I
 ooke of it—I seems to meddle with other folk's
 airs—besides, he might take away my license;
 nd times are hard—but Mr Martin, a gentleman
 n the neighbourhood, knows all about it. And
 o, as I was a saying, gemmen, the Squire has of-
 n's the time been heard to say, that he would sell
 he *parsonatation*; and I am sure Dr Kind can't buy
 t; for, as I said, he is but poor—and that was
 he reason I wouldn't take any thing of him for
 he lent of my horse—and he had the best too—
 hough he doesn't buy two noggins of ale of me in a
 month. But then, to be sure, he is parson of the
 parish, and doesn't get drunk. Here's his health,
 gemmen!" seizing a pot that stood next him, and
 calling his wife to replenish the soldier's, which
 was empty.

When the ale was drawn, the soldier produced

his guinea for change. Boniface and his rib having both rummaged their pockets for the amount found they were seven shillings deficient. "What the devil hast thou done with all thy silver?" cried Boniface. "Why, my dear," replied she meekly, "didn't I give it to Dr Kind out of the half-guinea for the hire of the horse?" This rather confused our *disinterested* host: but not being easily put out of countenance, and thinking silence best, he took no other notice of the circumstance, than to bid her go and get change; winking to her very significantly, at the same time, to withdraw. The company had sat for some time, enjoying themselves in silence, here and there interrupted by a trite observation, when the piper offered to play them a tune. A dance was accordingly proposed; but objected to, at first, by Boniface, who observed as how it spoiled good company. However, finding it necessary to conform to the humour of his customers, he determined to lose nothing from the temporary suspension of drinking; and, having emptied the only mug that had liquor in it, ordered his wife—who now returned with "She couldn't get change, though she had been at a dozen places!"—to fill all again, and stood up with the rest. The piper began; and at it they went, if not with skill, at least with glee.

How fragile is the tenure of joy! the piper had scarcely thrice repeated his strain, when in came the landlady, and informed her sponse, that Mr Martin was come for his horse, which they had lent the Doctor in the morning. She was followed by the gentleman. *Scorum* was again confused; and stammered out, that as how it had wanted shoeing, and so he had sent it to town. But Mr

Martin, who had overheard all the wife had said, axed the delinquent with his guilt. He now begged ten thousand pardons; and while the owner assured him, that had he lent it to any one else, he would never have excused him, the divine entered. The landlord swore for joy, and ran out to receive the horse; and the Doctor and Mr Martin shook hands, and were retiring into the parlour, when the former espied the object of his benevolence; and, apologizing to his friend, requested their company also. Thinking it their duty not to refuse, they modestly obeyed; and a cheerful bowl being instantly filled, they all sat down to enjoy it.

The soldier was agitated concerning the success of his benefactor: it was not busy solicitude, but the anxiety of gratitude. The Doctor was silent on the subject; and the soldier, persuaded of his success by the uniform cheerfulness of his manners, let his own heart at rest.

Distress generally excites curiosity—seldom any thing farther. The appearance of the veteran excited that of Martin: but he was a humane man; and it was a laudable motive that induced him to hint, in a delicate manner, a desire of being acquainted with his history. The soldier readily satisfied him.

His name, he said, was Roach; his father bore arms. He was born at Carrickfergus, in Ireland; and, when but two years old, his father being ordered abroad, his mother took him with her to follow the fortunes of her husband. At fourteen, he lost his mother, and, at sixteen, his father. He fought by his side; saw him fall; and had the pleasure of revenging him on the man who slew him.

His life had been literally a continual warfare—but he had been raised only to a halberd.

Mr Martin expressed surprize—merit is ever modest. “I deserved no more,” was the reply. He proceeded—He had been thrice imprisoned in France, once in Spain, and once in Holland. “But I trust in God!” said the hero. “And he delivered thee,” returned the divine.—During an interval between the two last imprisonments he had suffered, for the second time since he was two years of age, he saw England. He then married; and his wife had been his constant companion in all his succeeding troubles. At fifty, he lost his arm in the lamentable war that separated England and America; at Bunker’s Hill he received the fatal shot; and, with the united testimony of all his officers concerning his fidelity and bravery, was sent to finish his days in the mother country. He applied for the pension. Merit is not always successful: he was modest; and had not a friend at court. He applied in vain!

His wife had a relation in Wales, a creditable, though not a rich farmer: to him they went, and lived with him, labouring for their maintenance, four years. He then died; and, being ignorant of any other relations, left them his all. They were industrious, they were frugal: but prosperity is not always the reward of industry, and the frugal are sometimes sparing in vain; The hand of Providence seemed against them; but the ways of Heaven are inscrutable! Their cattle died; their crops failed! Their all was nearly gone, when the honest pair called their creditors together, and surrendered to them the little that remained; and, taking an affectionate farewell of their neighbours,

who all pitied them, but were too poor materially to assist them, set off for London, to sue once more for the pension; fearing at the same time that they had deferred the application too long.

They had travelled four days cheerfully; when they lost the purse which held the pittance they had to support them on their journey! But they were resigned: they had begged through the fifth; and on the sixth, they were met by the charitable curate. Here the narrator repeated his thanks; and the clergyman insisted they were not due, having done nothing more than his duty.

Mr Martin, apologizing, inquired of the soldier where his father fell! "At Dettingen!" Had he no relation living? None that he knew of. He once had a brother, christened Leonard, after his father; who, when he went abroad, was left with an aunt at Carrickfergus, and was then five years old. He addressed to him an account of his father's fate, but did not himself see Ireland for six years afterwards. He then heard that his aunt was dead; but, from all the inquiries he could make, had never been able to learn what became of his brother, or whether he received the letter concerning his father. "He did!" interrupted Martin. The clergyman, the soldier and his wife, all fixed their eyes on him. "Heavens! is he alive?" eagerly exclaimed the serjeant. "No!" deeply sighed Mr Martin—"He was my intimate friend. About six months after the receipt of your letter, he quitted Ireland; and in the service of a foreign merchant, thrice travelled over the continent of Europe—His fidelity and zeal so attached him to his employer, who now settled in England, that he entertained him no longer as a servant,

but made him his companion and confidant; and dying about eight years ago, bequeathed him estate in this county, amounting to eight hundred pounds per annum, together with the presentation of the parish living."

Here the clergyman seemed rather discomposed. The soldier observed it. Mr Martin went on—

"About this time, I became acquainted with your brother. He imparted to me every circumstance of his life. I assisted him in perpetual inquiries after you, but in vain; and accidentally discovering a cousin of your aunt, out of gratitude to her; at his death about four years ago, excepted a legacy of two hundred pounds a year to me, made him his sole heir; with a proviso, that if ever you could be found, the whole estate was to be your own, on condition of your allowing him two hundred pounds per annum. Nothing then remains, Sir, but to make the requisite proofs before the proper persons, which we will do without delay. Indeed, the strong resemblance you bear to your brother, is testimony enough for me; but there are others to be satisfied."

"Praised be Heaven!" exclaimed the good doctor. The soldier's wife was transported—she wept for joy.

The soldier bore his good fortune with admirable serenity. "I should have received more pleasure from this news," said he, "had not my cousin forestalled me in the wish of my heart, and prevented me from expressing my gratitude to that generous gentleman, in a proper manner, by giving him the living." "Give you the living, Dr Kind!" exclaimed Mr Martin. "He has bargained for it with Dr Double." "He has not

broken the contract, I can assure you," replied Dr Kind. "Is it not your's, then?" hastily replied the soldier. "But it shall—it shall be!" And he took several turns, or rather quick marches, across the room. His heart was full—a tear relieved him.

In a few weeks his register from Ireland, and every necessary voucher for his identity, were procured. He asserted his claim; every one was satisfied with his equity, except his cousin; he took possession; solicited Mr Martin, in vain, to accept a reward for his exertions; and, in presenting the rectory to the benevolent doctor, experienced the sublimest gratification of a noble heart, from the consciousness of having, by promoting the independence of virtue, discharged the obligations of gratitude.

FEMALE HEROISM.

A real Fact, related by MEISSNER.

BARON R—— used to spend the summer at a charming seat, situated in a most romantic country at a considerable distance from the main road. His castle, standing upon the top of an eminence, corresponded with his large fortune: it was spacious and elegant, and some hundred yards distant from the village which belonged to it.

Business obliged him, one time, to quit it for a few days, and to leave his lady, a young and charming woman, under the protection of his most faithful servants. He had not been absent above two days, when, as the Baroness was just going to bed, a sudden and terrible noise was heard in

an adjoining apartment. She called for her servant, but no answer was returned, while the disturbance grew louder every moment. Not being able to conceive what could be the cause of this unusual uproar, she slipped on a night-gown, and went to the door to see what could occasion the increasing disturbance. Any woman, less intrepid than herself, would have fainted away at the dreadful sight which she beheld on opening the door. Two of her men-servants lay half naked on the floor, with their brains dashed out, the whole apartment was filled with strange men, of a most horrid aspect; her woman was kneeling before one of them, and in that very moment was pierced through the heart by one of the midnight ruffians. When the door was opened, two of the barbarians rushed towards it with drawn sword. What man, however great his courage, would not have been appalled by terror, and either attempted to save himself by flight, or throwing himself prostrate at the feet of the robbers, have conjured them to spare his life: But the Baroness acted differently.

“Are you here at last?” exclaimed she, with apparent rapture, flying towards her aggressor with an eagerness that surprised them, and made them pause, just as they were ready to strike the fatal blow—“Are you here at last?” exclaimed she once more. “I have wished this long while to see visitors like you”—“Wished!” roared one of the murderers; “What do you mean by that—teach you—”

He brandished his cutlass; but his comrade arrested his arm. “Stop a moment, brother; let us hear what she wants of us.”

“ Nothing else, my brave lads, but what is agreeable to yourselves. I see you have made quick work here. You are men after my own mind, and you will not repent of it, if you will listen quietly to me only for a few moments.”

“ Speak !” exclaimed the whole crew : “ Speak !”

“ But be brief !” vociferated the most terrible of them ; for we shall soon send you after your people.”

“ I much doubt whether you will, after you have heard what I am going to say. I am married, indeed, to the wealthiest nobleman in the country : but the wife of the meanest beggar cannot be more miserable than myself, as my tyrant is the meanest and most jealous wretch on earth. I hate him more bitterly than words can express, and have long been anxious to find an opportunity of breaking my fetters, and paying my tyrant in his own coin. I should have eloped long ago, had I been able to effect my escape. All my servants are his spies, and that fellow yonder, whose skull you have so bravely handled, was the worst of all. My tormentor even compels me to sleep alone — I am but twenty-two years old, and may at least flatter myself of not being totally destitute of personal charms : should any one of you be willing to take me with him, I should not hesitate a moment to follow him, no matter whether his residence be in a cavern or in a village alehouse. Nor will you repent of having spared my life. You are in a castle amply stored with treasures ; but it is impossible you can be acquainted with every secret recess in it. I will discover them to you, and you may treat me as you have treated my woman, if this discovery don't make you six thousand dollars richer.”

Robbers of this description are indeed villain of the blackest die, but, nevertheless, they cease not to be men. The unexpected tenor of the prisoner's address, the apparent unconcern with which she spoke, the more than common charm of a young female only slightly dressed—all this produced most singular effects in the hearts of men whose hands were yet stained with blood. They formed a ring, and consulted apart for a few minutes. The Baroness stood at some distance, but made not the least attempt to escape. She heard several of them say, "Down with her and the farce will be at end," but scarcely changed her colour, as she also remarked on the other hand, that this proposal was objected to by the rest.

One of the band, who seemed to be the captain of the banditti, now went up to her, asking her repeatedly, whether her words might be relied upon? whether she was really desirous of eloping from her lord and accompanying them? whether she was willing to surrender her person to any one of them for enjoyment? She replied to all these questions in the affirmative, and not only endured, but even *returned* the kiss of the robber—for what could not extreme necessity excuse—and having by these means gained the confidence of the robbers, their leader said to her, "Come then, and shew us the secret recesses of the castle. I know it is rather dangerous to rely upon the sincerity of women of your rank; but we will venture it for once; but you may rest assured that I will cleave your head to your shoulders, though it were ten times more charming, if you make the least attempt to escape, or to impose upon us."

"Then my head will be perfectly safe!" re-

plied the Baroness, smiling, as if she really burned with an eagerness for plunder and a long-wished escape; snatched up a lighted candle, conducting the band to every apartment, opening every door, closet, and chest, unasked; assisting in emptying their contents; diverting the robbers with the most jovial sallies of humour; jumping with apparent indifference over the dead bodies of her mangled servants; conversed with every one of these plunderers as if they were old acquaintances; and manifested a degree of satisfaction that could not but remove every suspicion.

Plate, money, jewels, and every thing valuable that could be found, were now collected, and the captain ordered his gang to prepare instantly for quitting the castle, when his intended mistress suddenly laid hold of his arm: "Did I not tell you," exclaimed she, "that you would not repent of having saved my life, and that I should prove myself your real friend? you are dexterous enough in emptying the chests you find open; but your lynx eyes would never discover the *secret* treasures of this castle."

"Secret! what? where?" most eagerly exclaimed the whole band.

"Do you imagine," rejoined the Baroness, "that drawers which are full of the most valuable articles, contain no secret recesses?—Look here, and you will soon see how blind you were."

So saying, the Baroness pointed at a secret spring in the Baron's writing desk. The robbers opened it, and shouted with joy and astonishment on discovering six rouleaus, each containing two hundred ducats.

"Bravo!" exclaimed the captain, "I see now

that thou art an excellent woman. (Thou shalt lead the life of a duchess."

"You will be still better pleased with me," interrupted she, laughing, "when I shew you the last but principal hoard of my tyrant. I can easily perceive that your spies have informed you of his absence; but tell me, have they also told you that he received, the day before yesterday, four thousand dollars?"

"Not a syllable! where are they?"

"Under lock and key. You would never have found the iron chest in which they are, were I not leagued with you — Follow me comrades! we have made clear work *above* ground; let us see now what we can do *under* ground. Follow me to the cellar."

The robbers followed her; but took the precaution to guard against any sudden surprise, posting a sentinel at the entrance of the cellar, which was secured by a strong iron trap door. The Baroness pretended to take no notice of it, leading the hand onwards to one of the most remote recesses of spacious cellar. Having unlocked the door, a large iron chest was discovered in a corner. "Here!" said she, giving a bunch of keys to the captain, "try whether you can open it, and take its contents in lieu of a dowry, if you can obtain the consent of your companions."

The robber tried one key after another; but none fitted the key hole. He grew impatient, and the Baroness affected to be still more so.

"Let me try," said she, "I hope I shall be more successful. I am fearful lest the dawn of morning — Hah! hah! I now conceive why neither you nor myself can open it. Excuse me!

mistake! Welcome as your visit is to me, the joy of your unexpected arrival has, nevertheless, disconcerted me a little. I have taken the wrong bunch of keys. Have patience only two minutes; I shall be back in a trice."

With these words she flew up the stairs, and before two minutes were elapsed, the sound of her footsteps was already heard from the court-yard. On coming near the cellar door, she exclaimed with pretended joy, though out of breath, "I have found it! I have found it!" and in the same moment bounded suddenly against the sentinel at the entrance, throwing him headlong down the cellar stairs. The trap door was bolted with the quickness of lightning, and the whole band engaged in the cellar.

All this was the work of one moment. In the next, she flew over the court-yard, setting fire to a solitary stable, full of straw and hay, and the flames blazed instantaneously aloft. The watchman in the adjacent village observed the blaze, and rung the alarm bell. In a few moments the village yard was crowded with peasants. The baroness ordered some of them to extinguish the flames, while she conducted the rest to the Baron's room, and having distributed swords and fire arms amongst them, desired them to surround the cellar. Her orders were obeyed, and not one of the band escaped his well-merited fate.

PATRIOTIC CLERGYMAN.

ATTRIBUTED TO

Mrs BARBAULD.

ON the abolition of titles in France, the clerical distinctions of their established church were likewise destroyed. Happy would it have been for that kingdom, and the best interests of the community, had the innovating hand of a revolutionary government stopt when they had liberated the church from its connexion with the state. But the blind fury of democracy overleaped the bounds of reason and of truth; for no sooner had they unshakled the church of France from her former unwieldy establishment, than they despised and ridiculed that religion which had been formerly the rule of their conduct. From fanatics they became athiests; and but for the magnanimous exertions of the few, who were virtuous as well as patriotic, the religion of France would have been totally annihilated. Among those brave and disinterested men, the following character will bear a distinguished rank, and his conduct deserves to be commemorated to distant ages.

A few days after the Archbishop of Paris and his Vicars had set the example of renouncing their clerical character, a Rector, from a village on the banks of the Rhone, followed by some of his parishioners, with an offering of gold and silver

ints, chalices, rich vestments, &c. presented himself at the bar of the Convention. The sight of the gold put that assembly in a very good humour, and the Rector, a thin venerable looking man, with gray hairs, was ordered to speak.

“I come,” said he, “from the village of —, where the only good building standing (for the manteau has been pulled down) is a very fine church. My parishioners beg you will take it, to make an hospital for the sick and wounded of both parties, they being both equally our countrymen. The gold and silver, part of which we have brought you, they intreat you will devote to the service of the state; and that you will cast the shells into cannon, to drive away its foreign invaders.—For myself, I am come with great pleasure, to resign my letters of ordination, of inducture, and every deed and title, by which I have been constituted a member of your ecclesiastical society.—Here are the papers; you may burn them, if you please, in the same fire with the genealogical trees and patents of the nobility. I desire, likewise, that you will discontinue my salary. I am not able to support myself by the labour of my hands; and I beg you to believe, that I never felt greater joy than I do now do in making this resignation. I have longed to see this day; and see I am glad.”

When the old man had done speaking, the applause were immoderate. “You are an honest man,” said they, all at once; “a brave fellow, you do not believe in God; and the president advanced to give him the fraternal embrace.

The Rector did not seem greatly elated with the tokens of approbation; and he retired back a few steps, and thus resumed his discourse.

“Before you applaud my sentiments, it is fit you should understand them; perhaps they may not entirely coincide with your own. I rejoice in this day, not because I wish to see religion degraded, but because I wish to see it exalted and purified. By dissolving its alliance with the state, you have given it dignity and independence. You have done it a piece of service which its well-wishers would perhaps never have had courage to render it, but which is the only thing wanted to make it appear in its genuine beauty and lustre. Nobody will now say of me, when I am performing the offices of my religion, “It is his trade, he is paid for telling the people such and such things, he is hired to keep up a useful piece of mumery. — They cannot now say this; and therefore I see myself raised in my own esteem, and shall speak to them with a confidence and frankness which before this, I never durst venture to assume. — We resign, without reluctance, our gold and silver images and embroidered vestments; because we have never found that looking upon gold and silver made the heart more pure, or the affections more heavenly; we can also spare our churches, for the heart that wishes to lift itself up to God will never be at a loss for room to do it in; but we cannot spare our religion; because, to tell you the truth we never had so much occasion for it. I understand that you accuse us priests of having told the people a great many falsehoods. I suspect this may have been the case; but, till this day, we have never been allowed to inquire whether the things which we taught them were true or not. You require us formerly to receive them all without proof, and you now would have us reject them all without discrimination; neither of these modes of con-

uct become philosophers, such as you would be thought to be. I am going to employ myself diligently, along with my parishioners, to sift the wheat from the bran, the true from the false; if we are not successful we shall be at least sincere. Do not fear, indeed, that while I wore these vestments which we have brought you, and spoke in that large gloomy building which we have given up to you, I told my poor flock a great many idle stories. I cannot but hope, however, that the errors we have fallen into have not been very material, since the village has, in general, been sober and good; the peasants are honest, docile, and laborious; the husbands love their wives, and the wives their husbands; they are fortunately not too much to be compassionate, and they have constantly relieved the sick and fugitives of all parties whenever it has lain in their way. I think, therefore, that I have taught them cannot be so very much to miss. You want to extirpate priests, but will you hinder the ignorant from applying for instruction, the unhappy for comfort and hope, the unlearned from looking up to the learned? If you do not, you will have priests, by whatever name you may order them to be called; but it is certainly not necessary they should wear a particular dress, or be appointed by state letters of ordination. My letters of ordination are my zeal, my charity, my ardent love for my dear children of the village; if I were more learned, I would add, my knowledge; but, alas! we all know very little; to man every error is pardonable but want of humility. We have a public walk, with a spreading elm-tree at the end of it, and a circle of green round it, with a convenient bench. Here I shall draw together

the children, as they are playing around me. I shall point to the vines laden with fruit, to the orchards, to the herds of cattle lowing around us, to the distant hills, stretching one behind another, and they will ask me, "How came all these things?" I shall tell them all I know, or have heard from wise men who have lived before me; they will be penetrated with love and veneration; they will kneel, I shall kneel with them; they will not be at my feet, but all of us at the feet of that Good Being, whom we shall worship together;—and thus they will receive within their tender minds a religion. The old men will come sometimes, from having deposited under the green sod one of their companions, and place themselves by my side; they will look wishfully at the turf, and anxiously inquire—"Is he gone for ever? Shall we soon be like him? Will no morning break over the tomb? When the wicked cease from troubling, will the good cease from doing good?"—We will talk of these things: I will comfort them. I will tell them of the goodness of God; I will speak to them of a life to come; I will bid them hope for a state of retribution. In a clear night, when the stars slide over our heads, they will ask what those bright bodies are, and by what rules they rise and set? And we will converse about different forms of being, and distant worlds in the immensity of space, governed by the same laws; till we feel our minds raised from what is grovelling, and refined from what is sordid. You talk of nature,—this is nature; and if you could at this moment extinguish religion in the minds of all the world, thus would it be kindled again, and thus again excite the curiosity, and interest

the feelings of mankind. You have changed our holidays; you have an undoubted right, as our civil governors, so to do; it is very immaterial whether they are kept once in seven days or once in ten; but, however, you will leave us; and, when they return, I shall tell those who choose to hear me, of the beauty and utility of virtue, of the dignity of right conduct. We shall talk of good men who have lived in the world, and of the doctrines they taught; and if any of them have been persecuted and put to death for their virtue, we shall reverence their memories the more. I hope in all this there will be no harm.

“There is a book, out of which I have sometimes taught my people; it says we are to love those who do us hurt, and to pour oil and wine upon the wounds of the stranger. It has enabled my children to bear patiently the spoiling of their lands, and to give up their own interest for the general welfare. I think it cannot be a very bad book. I wish more of it had been read in your country: perhaps you would not have had quite so many assassinations and massacres. In this book I hear of a person called Jesus; some worship him as a God; others, as I am told, say it is wrong to do so; some teach that he existed before the beginning of ages; others, that he was born of Joseph and Mary. I cannot tell whether these controversies will ever be decided; but, in the mean time, I think we cannot do otherwise than imitate him; for I learn that he loved the poor, and went about doing good.”

Fellow-citizens, as I travelled hither from my village, I saw peasants sitting among the smoking ruins of their cottages; rich men and

women reduced to deplorable poverty; fathers lamenting their children in the bloom and pride of youth; and I said to myself, These people cannot afford to part with their religion. But, indeed, you cannot take it away: If, contrary to your first declaration, you choose to try the experiment of persecuting it, you will only make us prize it more, and love it better. Religion, true or false, is so necessary to the mind of man, that even you have already begun to make yourselves a new one. You are sowing the seeds of superstition, at the moment you fancy you are destroying superstition; and, in two or three generations, your posterity will be worshipping some clumsy idol, with the rites, perhaps, of a bloody Moloch, or a lascivious Thamuser. It was not worth while to have been philosophers, and to have destroyed the images of our saints for this; but let every one choose the religion that pleases him; I and my parishioners are content with our's; it teaches us to bear the evils, your childish or sanguinary decrees have helped to bring upon the country."

The Rector turned his footsteps homeward, and the Convention looked for some minutes on one another, before *they resumed their work of blood.*

FINIS.