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John Hawkesworth**

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ALMORAN

AND

HAMET:

AN

ORIENTAL TALE.

In TWO VOLUMES.

by

John Hawkesworth

MDCCLXI.

VOLUME FIRST.

**TO THE
KING.**

Amidst the congratulations and praises of a free, a joyful, and now united people, people, who are ambitious to express their duty and their wishes in their various classes; I think myself happy to have YOUR MAJESTY'S most gracious permission to approach You, and, after the manner of the people whose character I have assumed, to bring an humble offering in my hand.

As some part of my subject led me to consider the advantages of our excellent constitution in comparison of others; my thoughts were naturally turned to YOUR MAJESTY, as its warmest friend and most powerful protector: and as the whole is intended, to recommend the practice of virtue, as the means of happiness; to whom could I address it with so much propriety, as to a PRINCE, who illustrates and enforces the precepts of the moralist by his life.

I am,

May it please Your MAJESTY,
Your MAJESTY'S
Most faithful, most obliged,
And most obedient
Subject and Servant,

John Hawkesworth.

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ALMORAN

AND

HAMET

CHAP. I.

Who is he among the children of the earth, that repines at the power of the wicked? and who is he, that would change the lot of the righteous? He, who has appointed to each his portion, is God; the Omniscient and the Almighty, who fills eternity, and whose existence is from Himself! but he who murmurs, is man; who yesterday was not, and who to-morrow shall be forgotten: let him listen in silence to the voice of knowledge, and hide the blushes of confusion in the dust.

Solyman, the mighty and the wife, who, in the one hundred and second year of the Hegyra, sat upon the throne of Persia, had two sons, ALMORAN and HAMET, and they were twins. ALMORAN was the first born, but Solyman divided his affection equally between them: they were both lodged in the same part of the seraglio, both were attended by the same servants, and both received instructions from the same teacher.

One of the first things that ALMORAN learnt, was the prerogative of his birth; and he was taught very early to set a high value upon it, by the terms in which those about him expressed their sense of the power, the splendor, and the delights of royalty. As his mind gradually opened, he naturally considered these as the objects of universal desire, and the means of supreme felicity: he was often reminded, that the time was coming, when the sole possession of sovereign power would enable him to fulfil all his wishes, to determine the fate of dependent nations with a nod, and dispense life and death, and happiness and misery, at his will: he was flattered by those who hoped to draw wealth and dignity from his favour; and interest prompted all who approached him, to administer to his pleasures with a zeal and assiduity, which had the appearance of

reverence to his merit, and affection to his person.

HAMET, on the contrary, soon became sensible of a subordinate station: he was not, indeed, neglected; but he was not much caressed. When the gratification of HAMET came in competition with that of ALMORAN, he was always obliged to give it up, except when Solyman interposed: his mind was, therefore, naturally led to seek for happiness in objects very different from those which had fixed the attention of ALMORAN. As he knew not to how narrow a sphere caprice or jealousy might confine him, he considered what pleasures were least dependent upon external advantages; and as the first popular commotion which would happen after his brother's accession to the throne, might probably cost him his life, he was very inquisitive about the state into which his spirit would be dismissed by the Angel of Death, and very diligent to do whatever might secure him a share of the permanent and unchangeable felicity of Paradise.

This difference in the situation of ALMORAN and HAMET, produced great dissimilarity in their dispositions, habits, and characters; to which, perhaps, nature might also in some degree contribute. ALMORAN was haughty, vain, and voluptuous; HAMET was gentle, courteous, and temperate: ALMORAN was volatile, impetuous, and irascible; HAMET was thoughtful, patient, and forbearing. Upon the heart of HAMET also were written the instructions of the Prophet; to his mind futurity was present by habitual anticipation; his pleasure, his pain, his hopes, and his fears, were perpetually referred to the Invisible and Almighty Father of Life, by sentiments of gratitude or resignation, complacency or confidence; so that his devotion was not periodical but constant.

But the views of ALMORAN were terminated by nearer objects: his mind was perpetually busied in the anticipation of pleasures and honours, which he supposed to be neither uncertain nor remote; these excited his hopes, with a power sufficient to fix his attention; he did not look beyond them for other objects, nor enquire how enjoyments more distant were to be acquired; and as he supposed these to be already secured to him by his birth, there was nothing he was solicitous to obtain as the reward of merit, nor any thing that he considered himself to possess as the bounty of Heaven. If the sublime and disinterested rectitude that produces and rewards itself, dwells indeed with man, it dwelt not with ALMORAN: with respect to God, therefore, he was not impressed with a sense either of duty or dependence; he felt neither reverence nor love, gratitude nor resignation: in abstaining from evil, he was not intentionally good; he practised the externals of morality without virtue, and performed the rituals of devotion without piety.

Such were ALMORAN and HAMET, when Solyman their father, full of days and full of honour, slept in peace the sleep of death. With this event they were immediately acquainted. The emotions of ALMORAN were such as it was impossible to conceal: the joy that he felt in secret was so great, that the mere dread of disappointment for a moment suspended his belief of what he heard: when his fears and his doubts gave way, his cheeks were suffused with sudden blushes, and his eyes sparkled with exultation and impatience: he looked eagerly about him, as if in haste to act; yet his looks were embarrassed, and his gestures irresolute, because he knew not what to do: he uttered some incoherent sentences, which discovered at once the joy that he felt, and his sense of its impropriety; and his whole deportment expressed the utmost tumult and perturbation of mind.

Upon HAMET, the death of his father produced a very different effect: as soon as he heard it, his lips trembled and his countenance grew pale; he stood motionless a moment, like a pilgrim transfixed by lightning in the desert; he then smote his breast, and looking upward, his eyes by degrees overflowed with tears, and they fell, like dew distilling from the mountain, in a calm and silent shower. As his grief was thus mingled with devotion, his mind in a short time recovered its tranquillity, though not its cheerfulness, and he desired to be conducted to his brother.

He found him surrounded by the lords of his court, his eye still restless and ardent, and his deportment elate and assuming. HAMET pressed hastily through the circle, and prostrated himself before him: ALMORAN received the homage with a tumultuous pleasure; but at length raised him from the ground, and assured him of his protection, though without any expressions either of kindness or of sorrow: 'HAMET,' says he, 'if I have no cause to complain of you as a subject, you shall have no cause to complain of me as a king.' HAMET, whose heart was again pierced by the cold and distant behaviour of his brother, suppressed the sigh that struggled in his bosom, and secretly wiped away the tear that started to his eye: he retired, with his looks fixed upon the ground, to a remote corner of the apartment; and though his heart yearned to embrace his brother, his modest diffidence restrained him from intruding upon the king.

In this situation were ALMORAN and HAMET, when OMAR entered the apartment. OMAR, upon whose head the hand of time became heavy, had from his youth acquainted himself with wisdom: to him nature had revealed herself in the silence of the night, when his lamp was burning alone, and his eyes only were open: to him was known the power of the Seal of Solomon; and to him the knowledge of things invisible had been revealed. Nor was the virtue of OMAR inferior to his knowledge; his heart was a fountain of good, which though it flowed through innumerable streams was never dry: yet was the virtue of OMAR clothed with humility; and he was still pressing nearer to perfection, by a devotion which though elevated was rational, and though regular was warm. From the council of OMAR, Solyman had derived glory and strength; and to him he had committed the education of his children.

When he entered the apartment, the croud, touched at once with reverence and love, drew back; every eye was cast downward, and every tongue was silent. The full of days approached the king, and kneeling before him he put into his hand a sealed paper: the king received it with impatience, seeing it superscribed with the hand of his father; and OMAR looking round, and perceiving HAMET, beckoned him to come forward. HAMET, whose obedience to OMAR had been so

long habitual that it was now almost spontaneous, instantly drew near, though with a flow and irresolute pace; and ALMORAN, having broken the seal of the paper, began to read it to himself, with a look that expressed the utmost anxiety and impatience. OMAR kept his eye fixed upon him, and soon perceived that his countenance was disfigured by confusion and trouble, and that he seemed preparing to put up the paper in his bosom: he then produced another paper from under his robe, and gave it to HAMET: 'This,' says he, 'is a copy of the will of Solyman, your father; the original is in the hand of ALMORAN: read it, and you will find that he has bequeathed his kingdom between you.'

The eyes of all present were now turned upon HAMET, who stood silent and motionless with amazement, but was soon roused to attention by the homage that was paid him. In the mean time, ALMORAN'S confusion increased every moment: his disappointment was aggravated by the sudden attention of those who were present to his brother; and his jealousy made him think himself neglected, while those acts of duty were performed to HAMET, which were now known to be his right, and which he had himself received before him.

HAMET, however, regarded but little what so much excited the envy of ALMORAN; his mind was employed upon superior objects, and agitated by nobler passions: the coldness of his brother's behaviour, though it had grieved had not quenched his affection; and as he was now no longer restrained by the deference due from a subject to his king, he ran to him, and catching him to his breast attempted to speak; but his heart was too full, and he could express his affection and joy only by his tears. ALMORAN rather suffered than received the embrace; and after a few ceremonies, to which neither of them could much attend, they retired to separate apartments.

CHAP. II.

When ALMORAN was alone, he immediately locked the door; and throwing himself upon a sofa in an agony of vexation and disappointment, of which he was unwilling there should be any witness, he revolved in his mind all the pleasures and honours of supreme dominion which had now suddenly been snatched from him, with a degree of anguish and regret, not proportioned to their real, but their imaginary value. Of future good, that which we obtain is found to be less than our expectations; but that of which we are disappointed, we suppose would have been more: thus do the children of hope extract evil, both from what they gain, and from what they lose. But ALMORAN, after the first tumult of his mind had subsided, began to consider as well what was left him, as what had been taken away. He was still without a superior, though he had an equal; he was still a king, though he did not govern alone: and with respect to every individual in his dominions, except one, his will would now be a law; though with respect to the public, the concurrence of his brother would be necessary to give it force. 'Let me then,' says he, 'make the most of the power that is now put into my hand, and wait till some favourable opportunity shall offer to increase it. Let me dissemble my jealousy and disappointment, that I may not alarm suspicion, or put the virtues of HAMET upon their guard against me; and let me contrive to give our joint administration such a form, as may best favour my design.'

Such were the reflections, with which ALMORAN soothed the anguish of his mind; while HAMET was busied in speculations of a very different kind. If he was pleased at reflecting, that he was raised from a subject to a prince; he was pleased still more, when he considered his elevation as a test of his father's affection to his person, and approbation of his conduct: he was also delighted with the thought, that his brother was associated with him in the arduous task which he was now called to perform. 'If I had been appointed to govern alone,' said he, 'I should have had no equal; and he who has no equal, though he may have faithful servants, can have no friend: there cannot be that union of interests, that equal participation of good, that unrestrained intercourse of mind, and that mutual dependence, which constitutes the pure and exalted happiness of friendship. With ALMORAN, I shall share the supreme delight of wresting the innocent and the helpless from the iron hand of oppression; of animating merit by reward, and restraining the unworthy by fear: I shall share, with ALMORAN, the pleasures of governing a numerous, a powerful, and a happy people; pleasures which, however great, are, like all others, increased by participation.'

While HAMET was thus enjoying the happiness, which his virtue derived from the same source, from which the vices of ALMORAN had filled his breast with anguish and discontent; OMAR was contriving in what manner their joint government could best be carried into execution.

He knew that Solyman, having considered the dispositions of his sons, was of opinion, that if they had been blended in one person, they would have produced a character more fit to govern in his stead, than either of them alone: ALMORAN, he thought, was too volatile and warm; but he suspected, that HAMET would sink into inactivity for want of spirit: he feared alike ALMORAN'S love of enterprize, and HAMET'S fondness for retirement: he observed, in HAMET, a placid easiness of temper, which might suffer the reins of government to lie too loose; and, in ALMORAN, a quickness of resentment, and jealousy of command, which might hold them too tight: he hoped, therefore, that by leaving them a joint dominion, he should blend their dispositions, at least in their effects, in every act of government that should take place; or that, however they should agree to administer their government, the public would derive benefit from the virtues of both, without danger of suffering from their imperfections, as their imperfections would only operate against each other, while, in whatever was right, their minds would naturally concur, as the coincidence

of rectitude with rectitude is necessary and eternal. But he did not consider, that different dispositions operating separately upon two different wills, would appear in effects very unlike those, which they would concur to produce in one: that two wills, under the direction of dispositions so different, would seldom be brought to coincide; and that more mischiefs would probably arise from the contest, than from the imperfections of either alone.

But Solyman had so long applauded himself for his project before he revealed it to OMAR, that OMAR found him too much displeas'd with any objection, to consider its weight: and knowing that peculiar notions are more rarely given up, than opinions received from others, and made our own only by adoption, he at length acquiesc'd, lest he should by farther opposition lose his influence, which on other occasions he might still employ to the advantage of the public; and took a solemn oath, that he would, as far as was in his power, see the will carried into execution.

To this, indeed, he consented without much reluctance, as he had little less reason to fear the sole government of ALMORAN, than a joint administration; and if a struggle for superiority should happen, he hop'd the virtues HAMET would obtain the suffrages of the people in his favour, and establish him upon the throne alone. But as change is itself an evil, and as changes in government are seldom produced without great confusion and calamity, he apply'd himself to consider in what manner the government of ALMORAN and HAMET could be administered, so as most effectually to blend their characters in their administration, and prevent the conduct of one from exciting jealousy in the other.

After much thought, he determin'd that a system of laws should be prepar'd, which the sons of Solyman should examine and alter till they perfectly approv'd, and to which they should then give the sanction of their joint authority: that when any addition or alteration should be thought necessary, it should be made in the same manner; and that when any insuperable difference of sentiment happen'd, either in this or in any act of prerogative independent of the laws for regulating the manners of the people, the kings should refer it to some person of approv'd integrity and wisdom, and abide by his determination. OMAR easily foresaw, that when the opinion of ALMORAN and HAMET should differ, the opinion of ALMORAN would be established; for there were many causes that would render ALMORAN inflexible, and HAMET yielding: ALMORAN was naturally confident and assuming, HAMET diffident and modest; ALMORAN was impatient of contradiction, HAMET was attentive to argument, and felicitous only for the discovery of truth. ALMORAN also conceiv'd, that by the will of his father, he had suffer'd wrong; HAMET, that he had receiv'd a favour: ALMORAN, therefore, was dispos'd to resent the first appearance of opposition; and HAMET, on the contrary, to acquiesce, as in his share of government, whatever it might be, he had more than was his right by birth, and his brother had less. Thus, therefore, the will of ALMORAN would probably predominate in the state: but as the same cause which confer'd this superiority, would often prevent contention, OMAR consider'd it, upon the whole, rather as good than evil.

When he had prepar'd his plan, therefore, he sent a copy of it, by different messengers at the same time, both to ALMORAN and HAMET, inclos'd in a letter, in which he express'd his sense of obligation to their father, and his zeal and affection for them: he mention'd the promise he had made, to devote himself to their service; and the oath he had taken, to propose whatever he thought might facilitate the accomplishment of their father's design, with honour to them and happiness to their people: these motives, which he could not resist without impiety, he hop'd would absolve him from presumption; and trusting in the rectitude of his intentions, he left the issue to God.

CHAP. III.

The receipt of this letter threw ALMORAN into another agony of indignation: he felt again the loss of his prerogative; the offer of advice he disdain'd as an insult, to which he had been injuriously subject'd by the will of his father; and he was dispos'd to reject whatever was suggest'd by OMAR, even before his proposal was known. With this temper of mind he began to read, and at every paragraph took new offence; he determin'd, however, not to admit OMAR to the honour of a conference upon the subject, but to settle a plan of government with his brother, without the least regard to his advice.

A supercilious attention to minute formalities, is a certain indication of a little mind, conscious to the want of innate dignity, and felicitous to derive from others what it cannot supply to itself: as the scrupulous exaction of every trifling tribute discovers the weakness of the tyrant, who fears his claim should be disput'd; while the prince, who is conscious of superior and indisputable power, and knows that the states he has subjugated do not dare to revolt, scarce enquires whether such testimonies of allegiance are given or not.

Thus, the jealousy of ALMORAN already enslav'd him to the punctilios of state; and the most trifling circumstances involv'd him in perplexity, or fir'd him with resentment: the friendship and fidelity of OMAR stung him with rage, as insolent and intrusive; and though it determin'd him to an immediate interview with his brother, yet he was embarrass'd how to procure it. At first he rose, and was about to go to him; but he stopp'd short with disdain, upon reflecting, that it was an act of condescension which might be deem'd an acknowledgement of superiority: he then thought of sending for HAMET to come to him; but this he fear'd might provoke him, as implying a denial of his equality: at length he determin'd to propose a meeting in the chamber of council,

and was just dispatching an officer with the message, when HAMET entered the apartment.

The countenance of HAMET was flushed with joy, and his heart was warmed with the pleasing sensations of affection and confidence, by the same letter, from which ALMORAN had extracted the bitterness of jealousy and resentment, and as he had no idea that an act of courtesy to his brother could derogate from his own dignity or importance, he indulged the honest impatience of his heart to communicate the pleasure with which it overflowed: he was, indeed, somewhat disappointed, to find no traces of satisfaction in the countenance of ALMORAN, when he saw the same paper in his hand, which had impressed so much upon his own.

He waited some time after the first salutations, without mentioning the scheme of government he was come to concert; because having observed that ALMORAN was embarrassed and displeased, he expected that he would communicate the cause, and pleased himself with the hope that he might remove it: finding, however, that this expectation was disappointed, he addressed him to this effect:

'How happy are we, my dear brother, in the wisdom and fidelity, of OMAR! how excellent is the system of government that he has proposed! how easy and honourable will it be to us that govern, and how advantageous to the people that obey!'

'The advantages,' said ALMORAN, 'which you seem to have discovered, are not evident to me: tell me, then, what you imagine they are, and I will afterwards give you my opinion.'

'By establishing a system of laws as the rule of government,' said HAMET, 'many evils will be avoided, and many benefits procured. If the law is the will only of the sovereign, it can never certainly be known to the people: many, therefore, may violate that rule of right, which the hand of the Almighty has written upon the living tablets of the heart, in the presumptuous hope, that it will not subject them to punishment; and those, by whom that rule is fulfilled, will not enjoy that consciousness of security, which they would derive from the protection of a prescribed law, which they have never broken. Neither will those who are inclined to do evil, be equally restrained by the fear of punishment; if neither the offence is ascertained, nor the punishment prescribed. One motive to probity, therefore, will be wanting; which ought to be supplied, as well for the sake of those who may be tempted to offend, as of those who may suffer by the offence. Besides, he who governs not by a written and a public law, must either administer that government in person, or by others: if in person, he will sink under a labour which no man is able to sustain; and if by others, the inferiority of their rank must subject them to temptations which it cannot be hoped they will always resist, and to prejudices which it will perhaps be impossible for them to surmount. But to administer government by a law which ascertains the offence, and directs the punishment, integrity alone will be sufficient; and as the perversion of justice will in this case be notorious, and depend not upon opinion but fact, it will seldom be practised, because it will be easily punished.'

ALMORAN, who had heard the opinions of HAMET with impatience and scorn, now started from his seat with a proud and contemptuous aspect: he first glanced his eyes upon his brother; and then looking disdainfully downward, he threw back his robe, and stretching out his hand from him, 'Shall the son of Solyman,' said he, 'upon whose will the fate of nations was suspended, whose smiles and frowns were alone the criterions of right and wrong, before whom the voice of wisdom itself was silent, and the pride even of virtue humbled in the dust; shall the son of Solyman be harnessed, like a mule, in the trammels of law? shall he become a mere instrument to execute what others have devised? shall he only declare the determinations of a statute, and shall his ear be affronted by claims of right? It is the glory of a prince, to punish for what and whom he will; to be the sovereign, not only of property, but of life; and to govern alike without prescription or appeal.'

HAMET, who was struck with astonishment at this declaration, and the vehemence with which it was uttered, after a short recollection made this reply: 'It is the glory of a prince, to govern others, as he is governed by Him, who is alone most merciful and almighty! It is his glory to prevent crimes, rather than to display his power in punishment; to diffuse happiness, rather than enforce subjection; and rather to animate with love, than depress by fear. Has not He that shall judge us, given us a rule of life by which we shall be judged? is not our reward and punishment already set before us? are not His promises and threatenings, motives to obedience? and have we not confidence and joy, when we have obeyed? To God, His own divine perfections are a law; and these He has transcribed as a law to us. Let us, then, govern, as we are governed; let us seek our happiness in the happiness that we bestow, and our honour in emulating the benevolence of Heaven.'

As ALMORAN feared, that to proceed farther in this argument would too far disclose his sentiments, and put HAMET too much upon his guard; he determined for the present to dissemble: and as he perceived, that HAMET'S opinion, and an administration founded upon it, would render him extremely popular, and at length possibly establish him alone; he was now felicitous only to withdraw him from public notice, and persuade him to leave the government, whatever form it should receive, to be administered by others: returning, therefore, to his seat, and assuming an appearance of complacence and tranquillity, with which he could not form his language perfectly to agree; 'Let us then,' said he, 'if a law must be set up in our stead, leave the law to be executed by our slaves: and as nothing will be left for us to do, that is worthy of us, let us devote ourselves to the pleasures of ease; and if there are any enjoyments peculiar to royalty, let us secure them as our only distinction from the multitude.'

'Not so,' says HAMET; 'for there is yet much for a prince to do, after the best system of laws has been established: the government of a nation as a whole, the regulation and extent of its trade, the establishment of manufactories, the encouragement of genius, the application of the revenues, and whatever can improve the arts of peace, and secure superiority in war, is the proper object of a king's attention.

'But in these,' said ALMORAN, 'it will be difficult for two minds to concur; let us, then, agree to leave these also to the care of some other, whom we can continue as long as we approve, and displace when we approve no longer: we shall, by this expedient, be able to avert the odium of any unpopular measure; and by the sacrifice of a slave, we can always satisfy the people, and silence public discontent.'

'To trust implicitly to another,' says HAMET, 'is to give up a prerogative, which is at once our highest duty and interest to keep; it is to betray our trust, and to sacrifice our honour to another. The prince, who leaves the government of his people implicitly to a subject, leaves it to one, who has many more temptations to betray their interest than himself: a vicegerent is in a subordinate station; he has, therefore, much to rear, and much to hope: he may also acquire the power of obtaining what he hopes, and averting what he rears, at the public expence; he may stand in need of dependents, and may be able no otherwise to procure them, than by conniving at the fraud or the violence which they commit: he may receive, in bribes, an equivalent for his share, as an individual, in the public prosperity; for his interest is not essentially connected with that of the state; he has a separate interest; but the interest of the state, and of the king, are one: he may even be corrupted to betray the councils, and give up the interests of the nation, to a foreign power; but this is impossible to the king; for nothing equivalent to what he would give up, could be offered him. But as a king has not equal temptations to do wrong, neither is he equally exposed to opposition, when he does right: the measures of a substitute are frequently opposed, merely from interest; because the leader of a faction against him, hopes, that if he can remove him by popular clamour, he shall succeed to his power; but it can be no man's interest to oppose the measures of a king, if his measures are good, because no man can hope to supplant him. Are not these the precepts of the Prophet, whose wisdom was from above?'—"Let not the eye of expectation be raised to another, for that which thyself only should bestow: suffer not thy own shadow to obscure thee; nor be content to derive that glory, which it is thy prerogative to impart."

'But is the prince,' said ALMORAN, always the wisest man in his dominions? Can we not find, in another, abilities and experience, which we do not possess? and is it not the duty of him who presides in the ship, to, place the helm in that hand which can best steer it?'

'A prince,' said HAMET, 'who sincerely intends the good of his people, can scarce fail to effect it; all the wisdom of the nation will be at once turned to that object: whatever is his principal aim, will be that of all who are admitted to his council; for to concur with his principal aim, must be the surest recommendation to his favour. Let us, then, hear others; but let us act ourselves.'

As ALMORAN now perceived, that the longer this conversation continued, the more he should be embarrassed; he put an end to it, by appearing to acquiesce in what HAMET had proposed. HAMET withdrew, charmed with the candour and flexibility which he imagined he had discovered in his brother; and not without some exultation in his own rhetoric, which, he supposed had gained no inconsiderable victory. ALMORAN, in the mean time, applauded himself for having thus far practised the arts of dissimulation with success; fortified himself in the resolutions he had before taken; and conceived new malevolence and jealousy against HAMET.

CHAP. IV.

While HAMET was exulting in his conquest, and his heart was overflowing at once with self-complacency, and affection to his brother; he was told, that OMAR was waiting without, and desired admittance. HAMET ordered that he should be immediately introduced; and when OMAR entered, and would have prostrated himself before him, he caught him in his arms in a transport of affection and esteem; and having ordered that none should interrupt them, compelled him to sit down on a sofa.

He then related, with all the joy of a youthful and an ardent mind, the conversation he had had with ALMORAN, intermixed with expressions of the highest praise and the most cordial esteem. OMAR was not without suspicion, that the sentiments which ALMORAN had first expressed with such vehemence of passion, were still predominant in his mind: but of these suspicions he did not give the least hint to HAMET; not only because to communicate suspicions is to accuse without proof, but because he did not think himself at liberty to make an ill report of another, though he knew it to be true. He approved the sentiments of HAMET, as they had indeed been infused by his own instructions; and some precepts and cautions were now added, which the accession of HAMET to a share of the imperial power made particularly necessary.

'Remember,' said OMAR, 'that the most effectual way of promoting virtue, is to prevent occasions of vice. There are, perhaps, particular situations, in which human virtue has always failed: at least, temptation often repeated, and long continued, has seldom been finally resisted. In a government so constituted as to leave the people exposed to perpetual seduction, by

opportunities of dissolute pleasure or iniquitous gain, the multiplication of penal laws will only tend to depopulate the kingdom, and disgrace the state; to devote to the scymitar and the bow-string, those who might have been useful to society, and to leave the rest dissolute turbulent and factious. If the streets not only abound with women, who inflame the passenger by their appearance, their gesture, and their solicitations; but with houses, in which every desire which they kindle may be gratified with secrecy and convenience; it is in vain that "the feet of the prostitute go down to death, and that her steps take hold on hell:" what then can be hoped from any punishment, which the laws of man can superadd to disease and want, to rottenness and perdition? If you permit opium to be publicly sold at a low rate; it will be folly to hope, that the dread of punishment will render idleness and drunkenness strangers to the poor. If a tax is so collected, as to leave opportunities to procure the commodity, without paying it; the hope of gain will always surmount the fear of punishment. If, when the veteran has served you at the risque of life, you withhold his hire; it will be in vain to threaten usury and extortion with imprisonment and fines. If, in your armies, you suffer it to be any man's interest, rather to preserve the life of a horse than a man; be assured, that your own sword is drawn for your enemy: for there will always be some, in whom interest is stronger than humanity and honour. Put no man's interest, therefore, in the ballance against his duty; nor hope that good can often be produced, but by preventing opportunities of evil.'

To these precepts of OMAR, HAMET listened as to the instructions of a father; and having promised to keep them as the treasure of life, he dismissed him from his presence. The heart of HAMET was now expanded with the most pleasing expectations; but ALMORAN was pining with solicitude, jealousy, and distrust: he took every opportunity to avoid both OMAR and HAMET; but HAMET still retained his confidence, and OMAR his suspicions.

CHAP. V.

In the mean time, the system of government was established which had been proposed by OMAR, and in which HAMET concurred from principle, and ALMORAN from policy. The views of ALMORAN terminated in the gratification of his own appetites and passions; those of HAMET, in the discharge of his duty: HAMET, therefore, was indefatigable in the business of the state; and as his sense of honour, and his love of the public, made this the employment of his choice, it was to him the perpetual source of a generous and sublime felicity. ALMORAN also was equally diligent, but from another motive: he was actuated, not by love of the public, but by jealousy of his brother; he performed his task as the drudge of necessity, with reluctance and ill will; so that to him it produced pain and anxiety, weariness and impatience.

To atone for this waste of time, he determined to crowd all that remained with delight: his gardens were an epitome of all nature, and on his palace were exhausted all the treasures of art; his seraglio was filled with beauties of every nation, and his table supplied with dainties from the remotest corners of his dominions. In the songs that were repeated in his presence, he listened at once to the voice of adulation and music; he breathed the perfumes of Arabia, and he tasted the forbidden pleasure of wine. But as every appetite is soon satiated by excess, his eagerness to accumulate pleasure deprived him of enjoyment. Among the variety of beauty that surrounded him, the passion, which, to be luxurious, must be delicate and refined, was degraded to a mere instinct, and exhausted in endless dissipation; the caress was unendeared by a consciousness of reciprocal delight, and was immediately succeeded by indifference or disgust. By the dainties that perpetually urged him to intemperance, that appetite, which alone could make even dainties tasteful, was destroyed. The splendor of his palace and the beauty of his gardens, became at length so familiar to his eye, that they were frequently before him, without being seen. Even flattery and music lost their power, by too frequent a repetition: and the broken slumbers of the night, and the languor of the morning, were more than equivalent to the transient hilarity that was inspired by wine. Thus passed the time of ALMORAN, divided between painful labours which he did not dare to shun, and the search of pleasure which he could never find.

HAMET, on the contrary, did not seek pleasure, but pleasure seemed to seek him: he had a perpetual complacence and serenity of mind, which rendered him constantly susceptible of pleasing impressions; every thing that was prepared to refresh or entertain him in his seasons of retirement and relaxation, added something to the delight which was continually springing in his breast, when he reviewed the past, or looked forward to the future. Thus, the pleasures of sense were heightened by those of his mind, and the pleasures of the mind by those of sense: he had, indeed, as yet no wise; for as yet no woman had fixed his attention, or determined his choice.

Among the ambassadors whom the monarchs of Asia sent to congratulate the sons of Solyman upon their accession to the throne, there was a native of Circassia, whose name was Abdallah. Abdallah had only one child, a daughter, in whom all his happiness and affection centered; he was unwilling to leave her behind, and therefore brought her to the court of Persia. Her mother died while she was yet an infant; she was now in the sixteenth year of her age, and her name was ALMEIDA. She was beautiful as the daughters of Paradise, and gentle as the breezes of the spring; her mind was without stain, and her manners were without art.

She was lodged with her father in a palace that joined to the gardens of the seraglio; and it happened that a lamp which had one night been left burning in a lower apartment, by some

accident set fire to the net-work of cotton that surrounded a sofa, and the whole room was soon after in a flame. ALMORAN, who had been passing the afternoon in riot and debauchery, had been removed from his banquetting room asleep; but HAMET was still in his closet, where he had been regulating some papers that were to be used the next day. The windows of this room opened towards the inner apartments of the house in which Abdallah resided; and HAMET, having by accident looked that way, was alarmed by the appearance of an unusual light, and starting up to see whence it proceeded, he discovered what had happened.

Having hastily ordered the guard of the night to assist in quenching the flame, and removing the furniture, he ran himself into the garden. As soon as he was come up to the house, he was alarmed by the shrieks of a female voice; and the next moment, ALMEIDA appeared at the window of an apartment directly over that which was on fire. ALMEIDA he had till now never seen, nor did he so much as know that Abdallah had a daughter: but though her person was unknown, he was strongly interested in her danger, and called out to her to throw herself into his arms. At the sound of his voice she ran back into the room, such is the force of inviolate modesty, though the smoke was then rising in curling spires from the windows: she was, however, soon driven back; and part of the floor at the same instant giving way, she wrapt her veil round her, and leaped into the garden. HAMET caught her in his arms; but though he broke her fall, he sunk down with her weight: he did not, however, quit his charge, but perceiving she had fainted, he made haste with her into his apartment, to afford her such assistance as he could procure.

She was covered only with the light and loose robe in which she slept, and her veil had dropped off by the way. The moment he entered his closet, the light discovered to him such beauty as before he had never seen: she now began to revive; and before her senses returned, she pressed the prince with an involuntary embrace, which he returned by straining her closer to his breast, in a tumult of delight, confusion, and anxiety, which he could scarce sustain. As he still held her in his arms, and gazed silently upon her, she opened her eyes, and instantly relinquishing her hold, shrieked out, and threw herself from him. As there were no women nearer than that wing of the palace in which his brother resided, and as he had many reasons not to leave her in their charge; he was in the utmost perplexity what to do. He assured her, in some hasty and incoherent words, of her security; he told her, that she was in the royal palace, and that he who had conveyed her thither was HAMET. The habitual reverence of sovereign power, now surmounted all other passions in the bosom of ALMEIDA: she was instantly covered with new confusion; and hiding her face with her hands, threw herself at his feet: he raised her with a trepidation almost equal to her own, and endeavoured to sooth her into confidence and tranquillity.

Hitherto her memory had been wholly suspended by violent passions, which had crowded upon her in a rapid and uninterrupted succession, and the first gleam of recollection threw her into a new agony; and having been silent a few moments, she suddenly smote her hands together, and bursting into tears, cried out, 'Abdallah! my father! my father!'—HAMET not only knew but felt all the meaning of the exclamation, and immediately ran again into the garden: he had advanced but a few paces, before he discerned an old man sitting upon the ground, and looking upward in silent anguish, as if he had exhausted the power of complaint. HAMET, upon a nearer approach, perceived by the light of the flame that it was Abdallah; and instantly calling him by his name, told him, that his daughter was safe. At the name of his daughter, Abdallah suddenly started up, as if he had been roused by the voice of an angel from the sleep of death: HAMET again repeated, that his daughter was in safety; and Abdallah looking wistfully at him, knew him to be the king. He was then struck with an awe that restrained him from enquiry: but HAMET directing him where he might find her, went forward, that he might not lessen the pleasure of their interview, nor restrain the first transports of duty and affection by his presence. He soon met with other fugitives from the fire, which had opened a communication between the gardens and the street; and among them some women belonging to ALMEIDA, whom, he conducted himself to their mistress. He immediately allotted to her and to her father, an apartment in his division of the palace; and the fire being now nearly extinguished, he retired to rest.

CHAP. VI.

Though the night was far advanced, yet the eyes of HAMET were strangers to sleep: his fancy incessantly repeated the events that had just happened; the image of ALMEIDA was ever before him; and his breast throbbed with a disquietude, which, though it prevented rest, he did not wish to lose.

ALMORAN, in the mean time, was slumbering away the effects of his intemperance; and in the morning, when he was told what had happened, he expressed no passion but curiosity: he went hastily into the garden; but when he had gazed upon the ruins, and enquired how the fire began, and what it had consumed, he thought of it no more.

But HAMET suffered nothing that regarded himself, to exclude others from his attention: he went again to the ruins, not to gratify his curiosity, but to see what might yet be done to alleviate the misery of the sufferers, and secure for their use what had been preserved from the flames. He found that no life had been lost, but that many persons had been hurt; to these he sent the physicians of his own household: and having rewarded those who had assisted them in their

distress, not forgetting even the soldiers who had only fulfilled his own orders, he returned, and applied himself to dispatch the public business in the chamber of council, with the same patient and diligent attention as if nothing had happened. He had, indeed, ordered enquiry to be made after ALMEIDA; and when he returned to his apartment, he found Abdallah waiting to express his gratitude for the obligations he had received.

HAMET accepted his acknowledgements with a peculiar pleasure, for they had some connexion with ALMEIDA; after whom he again enquired, with an ardour uncommon even to the benevolence of HAMET. When all his questions had been asked and answered, he appeared still unwilling to dismiss Abdallah, though he seemed at a loss how to detain him; he wanted to know, whether his daughter had yet received an offer of marriage, though he was unwilling to discover his desire by a direct enquiry: but he soon found, that nothing could be known, which was not directly asked, from a man whom reverence and humility kept silent before him, except when something was said which amounted to a command to speak. At length, however, he said, not without some hesitation, 'Is there no one, Abdallah, who will thank me for the preservation of thy daughter, with a zeal equal to thy own?' 'Yes,' replied Abdallah, 'that daughter whom thou hast preserved.' This reply, though it was unexpected was pleasing: for HAMET was not only gratified to hear, that ALMEIDA had expressed herself warmly in his behalf, at least as a benefactor; but he judged, that if any man had been interested in her life as a lover, the answer which Abdallah had given him would not so readily have occurred to his mind.

As this reflection kept HAMET a few moments silent, Abdallah withdrew; and HAMET, as he observed some marks of haste and confusion in his countenance, was unwilling longer to continue him in a situation, which he had now reason to think gave him pain. But Abdallah, who had conceived a sudden thought that HAMET'S question was an indirect reproach of ALMEIDA, for not having herself solicited admission to his presence; went in haste to her apartment, and ordered her immediately to make ready to attend him to the king.

ALMEIDA, from whose mind the image of HAMET had not been absent a moment since she first saw him, received this order with a mixture of pain and pleasure; of wishes, hopes, and apprehensions, that filled her bosom with emotion, and covered her face with blushes. She had not courage to ask the reason of the command, which she instantly prepared to obey; but the tenderness of Abdallah, who perceived and pitied her distress, anticipated her wish. In a short time, therefore, he returned to the chamber of presence, and having received permission, he entered with ALMEIDA in his hand. HAMET rose in haste to receive her, with a glow of pleasure and impatience in his countenance; and having raised her from the ground, supported her in his arms, waiting to hear her voice; but though she made many attempts, she could not speak. HAMET, who knew not to what he owed this sudden and unexpected interview, which, though he wished, he could contrive no means to obtain; imagined that ALMEIDA had some request, and therefore urged her tenderly to make it: but as she still remained silent, he looked at Abdallah, as expecting to hear it from him. 'We have no wish,' said Abdallah, 'but to atone for our offence; nor any request, but that my lord would now accept the thanks of ALMEIDA for the life which he has preserved, and impute the delay, not to ingratitude, but inadvertence: let me now take her back, as thy gift; and let the light of thy favour be upon us.' 'Take her then,' said HAMET; 'for I would give her only to thee.'

These words of HAMET did not escape the notice either of Abdallah or ALMEIDA; but neither of them mentioned their conjectures to the other. ALMEIDA, who was inclined to judge of HAMET'S situation by her own, and who recollected many little incidents, known only to herself, which favoured her wishes; indulged the hope, that she should again hear of HAMET, with more confidence than her father; nor were her expectations disappointed. HAMET reflected with pleasure, that he had prepared the way for a more explicit declaration; and as his impatience increased with his passion every hour, he sent for Abdallah the next morning, and told him, that he wished to be more acquainted with his daughter, with a view to make her his wife: 'As neither you nor your daughter are my subjects,' says HAMET, 'I cannot command you; and if you were, upon this occasion I would not. I do not want a slave, but a friend; not merely a woman, but a wife. If I find ALMEIDA such as my fancy has feigned her; if her mind corresponds with her form; and if I have reason to think, that she can give her heart to HAMET, and not merely her hand to the king; I shall be happy.' To this declaration, Abdallah replied with expressions of the profoundest submission and gratitude; and HAMET dismissed him, to prepare ALMEIDA to receive him in the afternoon of the same day.

CHAP. VII.

As eight moons only had passed since the death of Solyman, and as the reverence of HAMET for the memory of his father would not suffer him to marry till the year should be completed; he determined not to mention ALMEIDA to his brother, till the time when he could marry her was near. The fierce and haughty department of ALMORAN had now left HAMET no room to doubt of his character: and though he had no apprehension that he would make any attempts upon ALMEIDA, after she should be his wife; yet he did not know how much might justly be feared from his passion, if he should see her and become enamoured of her, while she was yet a virgin in the house of her father.

ALMEIDA had not only unsullied purity of mind, but principles of refined and exalted virtue; and as the life of HAMET was an example of all that was either great or good, Abdallah felt no anxiety upon leaving them together, except what arose from his fears, that his daughter would not be able to secure the conquest she had made.

As it was impossible for HAMET to have such an acquaintance with ALMEIDA as he desired, till he could enter into conversation with her upon terms of equality; it was his first care to sooth her into confidence and familiarity, and by degrees he succeeded: he soon found, in the free intercourse of mind with mind, which he established instead of the implicit submission which only echoed his own voice, how little of the pleasure that women were formed to give can be enjoyed, when they are considered merely as slaves to a tyrant's will, the passive subjects of transient dalliance and casual enjoyment. The pleasure which he took in the youthful beauty of ALMEIDA, was now endeared, exalted, and refined, by the tender sensibility of her heart, and by the reflexion of his own felicity from her eyes: when he admired the gracefulness of her motion, the elegance of her figure, the symmetry of her features, and the bloom of her complexion, he considered them as the decorations only of a mind, capable of mixing with his own in the most exquisite delight, of reciprocating all his ideas, and catching new pleasure from his pleasure. Desire was no longer appetite; it was imagination, it was reason; it included remembrance of the past, and anticipation of the future; and its object was not the sex, but ALMEIDA.

As HAMET never withheld any pleasure that it was in his power to impart, he soon acquainted Abdallah, that he waited only for a proper time to place ALMEIDA upon the throne; but that he had some reasons for keeping a resolution, which he thought himself obliged to communicate to him, concealed from others.

It happened, however, that some of the women who attended upon ALMEIDA, met with some female slaves belonging to the seraglio of ALMORAN, at the public baths, and related to them all the particulars of ALMEIDA'S preservation by HAMET; that he had first conveyed her to his own apartments, and had since been frequently with her in that which he had assigned her in his palace: they were also lavish in the praise of her beauty, and free in their conjectures what might be the issue of her intercourse with HAMET.

Thus the situation of HAMET and ALMEIDA became the subject of conversation in the seraglio of ALMORAN, who learnt it himself in a short time from one of his women.

He had hitherto professed great affection for HAMET, and HAMET was deceived by his professions: for notwithstanding the irregularities of his life, he did not think him capable of concealed malice; or of offering injury to another, except when he was urged by impetuous passions to immediate pleasure. As there was, therefore, an appearance of mutual affection between them, ALMORAN, though the report of ALMEIDA'S beauty had fired his imagination and fixed him in a resolution to see her, did not think proper to attempt it without asking HAMET'S consent, and being introduced by his order; as he made no doubt of there being a connexion between them which would make him resent a contrary conduct.

He took an opportunity, therefore, when they were alone in a summer pavilion that was built on a lake behind the palace, to reproach him, with an air of mirth, for having concealed a beauty near his apartments, though he pretended to have no seraglio. HAMET instantly discovered his surprize and emotion by a blush, which the next moment left his countenance paler than the light clouds that pass by night over the moon. ALMORAN took no notice of his confusion; but that he might more effectually conceal his sentiments and prevent suspicion, he suddenly adverted to another subject, while HAMET was hesitating what to reply. By this artifice HAMET was deceived; and concluded, that whatever ALMORAN had heard of ALMEIDA, had passed slightly over his mind, and was remembered but by chance; he, therefore, quickly recovered that ease and cheerfulness, which always distinguished his conversation.

ALMORAN observing the success of his artifice, soon after, as if by a sudden and casual recollection, again mentioned the lady; and told him, he would congratulate Abdallah upon having resigned her to his bed. As HAMET could not bear to think of ALMORAN'S mentioning ALMEIDA to her father as his mistress, he replied, that he had no such intimacy with ALMEIDA as he supposed; and that he had so high an opinion of her virtue, as to believe, that if he should propose it she would not consent. The imagination of ALMORAN caught new fire from beauties which he found were yet unenjoyed, and virtue which stamped them with superior value by rendering them more difficult of access; and as HAMET had renounced a connection with her as a mistress, he wanted only to know whether he intended her for a wife.

This secret he was contriving to discover, when HAMET, having reflected, that if he concealed this particular, ALMORAN might think himself at liberty to make what attempts he should think fit upon ALMEIDA, without being accountable to him, or giving him just cause of offence, put an end to his doubts, by telling him, he had such a design; but that it would be some time before he should carry it into execution. This declaration increased ALMORAN'S impatience: still, however, he concealed his interest in the conversation, which he now suffered to drop.

He parted from his brother, without any farther mention of ALMEIDA but while he was yet near him, turned hastily back, and, as if merely to gratify his curiosity, told him with a smile, that he must indulge him with a fight of his Circassian; and desired he might accompany him in his next visit, or at some more convenient time: with this request, HAMET, as he knew, not how to refuse it, complied; but it filled his mind with anxiety and trouble.

He went immediately to ALMEIDA, and told her all that had happened; and as she saw that he was not without apprehensions of mischief from his brother's visit, she gently reproached him for doubting the fidelity of her affection, as she supposed no power could be exerted by ALMORAN to injure him, who in power was his equal. HAMET, in a transport of tenderness, assured her that he doubted neither her constancy nor her love: but as to interrupt the comfort of her mind, would only double his own distress, he did not tell her whence his apprehensions proceeded; nor indeed had they any determinate object, but arose in general from the character of his brother, and the probability of his becoming a competitor, for what was essential to the happiness of his life.

But if the happiness of HAMET was lessened, the infelicity of ALMORAN was increased. All the enjoyments that were in his power he neglected, his attention being wholly fixed upon that which was beyond his reach; he was impatient to see the beauty, who had taken entire possession of his mind; and the probability that he would be obliged to resign her to HAMET, tormented him with jealousy, envy, and indignation.

HAMET, however, did not long delay to fulfil his promise to his brother; but having prepared ALMEIDA to receive him, he conducted him to her apartment. The idea which ALMORAN had formed in his imagination, was exceeded by the reality, and his passion was proportionably increased; yet he found means not only to conceal it from HAMET, but from ALMEIDA, by affecting an air of levity and merriment, which is not less incompatible with the pleasures than the pains of love. After they had been regaled with coffee and sherbet, they parted; and HAMET congratulated himself, that his apprehensions of finding in ALMORAN a rival for ALMEIDA'S love, were now at an end.

But ALMORAN, whose passions were become more violent by restraint, was in a state of mind little better than distraction: one moment he determined to seize upon the person of ALMEIDA in the night, and secrete her in some place accessible only to himself; and the next to assassinate his brother, that he might at once destroy a rival both in empire and in love. But these designs were no sooner formed by his wishes, than they were rejected by his fears: he was not ignorant, that in any contest between him and HAMET, the voice of the public would be against him; especially in a contest, in which it would appear, that HAMET had suffered wrong.

Many other projects, equally rash, violent, and injurious, were by turns conceived and rejected: and he came at last to no other determination, than still carefully to conceal his passion, till he should think of some expedient to gratify it; lest HAMET should have a just reason for refusing to let him see the lady again, and remove her to some place which he might never be able to discover.

CHAP. VIII.

In the mean time, OMAR, to whom HAMET had from time to time disclosed the minutest particulars of his situation and design, kept his eye almost continually upon ALMORAN; and observed him with an attention and sagacity, which it was difficult either to elude or deceive. He perceived, that he was more than usual restless and turbulent; that in the presence of HAMET he frequently changed countenance; that his behaviour was artificial and inconsistent, frequently shifting from gloomy discontent and furious agitation, to forced laughter and noisy merriment. He had also remarked, that he seemed most discomposed after he had been with HAMET to ALMEIDA, which happened generally once in a week; that he was become fond of solitude, and was absent several days together from the apartment of his women.

OMAR, who from this conduct of ALMORAN had begun to suspect his principles, determined to introduce such topics of discourse, as might lead him to discover the state of his mind; and enable him to enforce and confirm the principles he had taught him, by new proofs and illustrations.

ALMORAN, who, since the death of his father, had nothing to apprehend from the discovery of sentiments which before he had been careful to conceal; now urged his objections against religion, when OMAR gave him opportunity, without reserve. 'You tell me,' says he, 'of beings that are immortal, because they are immaterial; beings which do not consist of parts, and which, therefore, can admit no solution, the only natural cause of corruption and decay: but that which is not material, can have no extension; and what has no extension, possesses no space; and of such beings, the mind itself, which you pretend to be such a being, has no conception.'

'If the mind,' says OMAR, 'can perceive that there is in itself any single, property of such a being, it has irrefragable evidence that it is such a being; though its mode of existence, as distinct from matter, cannot now be comprehended.' 'And what property of such a being,' said ALMORAN, 'does the mind of man perceive in itself?' 'That of *acting*,' said OMAR, 'without *motion*. You have no idea, that a material substance can act, but in proportion as it moves: yet to *think*, is to *act*; and with the idea of thinking, the idea of motion is never connected: on the contrary, we always conceive the mind to be fixed, in proportion to the degree of ardour and intenseness with which the power of thinking is exerted. Now, if that which is material cannot act without motion; and if man is conscious, that to think, is to act and not to move; it follows, that there is, in man, somewhat that is not matter; somewhat that has no extension, and that possesses no space; somewhat which, having no contexture or parts that can be dissolved or separated, is exempted from all the

natural causes of decay.'

OMAR paused; and ALMORAN having stood some moments without reply, he seized this opportunity to impress him with an awful sense of the power and presence of the Supreme and Eternal Being, from whom his own existence was derived: 'Let us remember,' said he, 'that to every act of this immaterial and immortal part, the Father of spirits, from whom it proceeds, is present: when I behold the busy multitudes that crowd the metropolis of Persia, in the pursuit of business and projects infinitely complicated and various; and consider that every idea which passes over their minds, every conclusion, and every purpose, with all that they remember of the past, and all that they imagine of the future, is at once known to the Almighty, who without labour or confusion weighs every thought of every mind in His balance, and reserves it to the day of retribution; my follies cover me with confusion, and my soul is humbled in the dust.'

ALMORAN, though he appeared to listen with attention, and offered nothing against the reasoning of OMAR, yet secretly despised it as sophistry; which cunning only had rendered specious; and which he was unable to confute, merely because it was subtil, and not because it was true: he had been led, by his passions, first to love, and then to adopt different opinions; and as every man is inclined to judge of others by himself, he doubted, whether the principles which OMAR had thus laboured to establish; were believed even by OMAR himself.

Thus was the mind of ALMORAN to the instructions of OMAR, as a rock slightly covered with earth, is to the waters of heaven: the craggs are left bare by the rain that washes them; and the same showers that fertilize the field can only discover the sterility of the rock.

OMAR, however, did not yet disclose his suspicions to HAMET, because he did not yet see that it could answer any purpose. To remove ALMEIDA from her apartment, would be to shew a distrust, for which there would not appear to be any cause; and to refuse ALMORAN access to her when he desired it, might precipitate such measures as he might meditate, and engage him in some desperate attempt: he, therefore, contented himself with advising HAMET, to conceal the time of his marriage till the evening before he intended it should take place, without assigning the reason on which his advice was founded.

To the council of OMAR, HAMET was implicitly obedient, as to the revelations of the Prophet; but, like his instructions, it was neglected by ALMORAN, who became every moment more wretched. He had a graceful person, and a vigorous mind; he was in the bloom of youth, and had a constitution that promised him length of days; he had power which princes were emulous to obey, and wealth by which whatever could administer to luxury might be bought, for every passion, and every appetite, it was easy for him to procure a perpetual succession of new objects: yet was ALMORAN, not only without enjoyment, but without peace; he was by turns pining with discontent, and raving with indignation; his vices had extracted bitter from every sweet; and having exhausted nature for delight in vain, he was repining at the bounds in which he was confined, and regretting the want of other powers as the cause of his misery.

Thus the year of mourning for Solyman was completed, without any act of violence on the part of ALMORAN, or of caution on the part of HAMET: but on the evening of the last day, HAMET, having secretly prepared every thing for performing the solemnity in a private manner, acquainted ALMORAN by a letter, which OMAR, undertook to deliver, that he should celebrate his marriage on the morrow. ALMORAN, who never doubted but he should have notice of this event much longer before it was to happen, read the letter with a perturbation that it was impossible to conceal: he was alone in his private apartment, and taking his eye hastily from the paper, he crushed it together in his hand, and thrusting it into his bosom, turned from OMAR without speaking; and OMAR, thinking himself dismissed, withdrew.

The passions which ALMORAN could no longer suppress, now burst out, in a torrent of exclamation: 'Am I then, said he, 'blasted for ever with a double curse, divided empire and disappointed love! What is dominion, if it is not possessed alone? and what is power, which the dread of rival power perpetually controuls? Is it for me to listen in silence to the wrangling of slaves, that I may at last apportion to them what, with a clamorous insolence, they demand as their due! as well may the sun linger in his course, and the world mourn in darkness for the day, that the glow-worm may still be seen to glimmer upon, the earth, and the owls and bats that haunt the sepulchres of the dead enjoy a longer night. Yet this have I done, because this has been done by HAMET: and my heart sickens in vain with the desire of beauty, because my power extends not to ALMEIDA. With dominion undivided and ALMEIDA, I should be ALMORAN; but without them, I am less than nothing.'

OMAR, who, before he has passed the pavilion, heard a sound which he knew to be the voice of ALMORAN, returned hastily to the chamber in which he left him, believing he had withdrawn too soon, and that the king, as he knew no other was present, was speaking to him: he soon drew near enough to hear what was said; and while he was standing torpid in suspense, dreading to be discovered, and not knowing how to retire, ALMORAN turned about.

At first, both stood motionless with confusion and amazement; but ALMORAN'S pride soon surmounted his other passions, and his disdain of OMAR gave his guilt the firmness of virtue.

'It is true,' said he, 'that thou hast stolen the secret of my heart; but do not think, that I fear it should be known: though my poignard could take it back with thy life; I leave it with thee. To reproach, or curse thee, would do thee honour, and lift thee into an importance which otherwise thou canst never reach.' ALMORAN then turned from him with a contemptuous frown: but OMAR caught him by the robe; and prostrating himself upon the ground, intreated to be heard. His

importunity at length prevailed; and he attempted to exculpate himself, from the charge of having insiduously intruded upon the privacy of his prince, but ALMORAN sternly interrupted him: 'And what art thou,' said he, 'that I should care, whether thou art innocent or guilty?' 'If not for my sake,' said OMAR, 'listen for thy own; and though my duty is despised, let my affection be heard. That thou art not happy, I know; and I now know the cause. Let my lord pardon the presumption of his slave: he that seeks to satisfy all his wishes, must be wretched; he only can be happy, by whom some are suppressed.' At these words ALMORAN snatched his robe from the hand of OMAR, and spurned him in a transport of rage and indignation: 'The suppression of desire,' said he, 'is such happiness, as that of the deaf who do not remember to have heard. If it is virtue, know, that, as virtue, I despise it; for though it may secure the obedience of the slave, it can only degrade the prerogative of a prince. I cast off all restraint, as I do thee: begone, therefore, to HAMET, and see me no more.'

OMAR obeyed without reply; and ALMORAN being again alone, the conflict in his mind was renewed with greater violence than before. He felt all that he had disguised to OMAR, with the keenest sensibility; and anticipated the effects of his detection, with unutterable anguish and regret. He walked backward and forward with a hasty but interrupted pace; sometimes stopping short, and pressing his hand hard upon his brow; and sometimes by violent gestures showing the agitation of his mind: he sometimes stood silent with his eyes, fixed upon, the ground, and his arms folded together; and sometimes a sudden agony of thought forced him into loud and tumultuous exclamations: he cursed the impotence of mind that had suffered his thoughts to escape from him unawares; without reflecting that he was even then repeating the folly; and while he felt himself the victim of vice, he could not suppress his contempt of virtue: 'If I must perish,' said he, 'I will at least perish unsubdued: I will quench no wish that nature kindles in my bosom; nor shall my lips utter any prayer, but for new powers to feed the flame.'

As he uttered this expression, he felt the palace shake; he heard a rushing, like a blast in the desert; and a being of more than human appearance stood before him. ALMORAN, though he was terrified, was not humbled; and he stood expecting the event, whether evil or good, rather with obduracy than courage.

'Thou seest,' says the Appearance, 'a Genius, whom the daring purpose of thy mind has convoked from the middle region, where he was appointed to wait the signal; and who is now permitted to act in concert with thy will. Is not this the language of thy heart?—"Whatever pleasure I can snatch from the hand of time, as he passes by me, I will secure for myself: my passions shall be strong, that my enjoyments may be great; for what is the portion allotted to man, but the joyful madness that prolongs the hours of festivity, the fierce delight that is extorted from injury by revenge, and the sweet succession of varied pleasures which the wish that is ever changing prepares for love?"'

'Whatever thou art,' said ALMORAN, 'whose voice has thus disclosed the secret of my soul, accept my homage; for I will worship thee: and be thou henceforth my wisdom and my strength.'

'Arise,' said the Genius, 'for therefore am I sent. To thy own powers, mine shall be superadded: and if, as weak only, thou hast been wretched; henceforth thou shalt be happy. Take no thought for to-morrow; to-morrow, my power shall be employed in thy behalf. Be not affrighted at any prodigy; but put thy confidence in me.' While he was yet speaking and the eyes of ALMORAN were fixed upon him, a cloud gathered round him; and the next moment dissolving again into air, he disappeared.

CHAP. IX

ALMORAN, when he recovered from his astonishment, and had reflected upon the prodigy, determined to wait the issue, and refer all his hopes to the interposition of the Genius, without attempting any thing to retard the marriage; at which he resolved to be present, that he might improve any supernatural event which might be produced in his favour.

HAMET, in the mean time, was anticipating the morrow with a mixture of anxiety and pleasure; and though he had no reason to think any thing could prevent his marriage, yet he wished it was over, with an impatience that was considerably increased by fear.

Though the anticipation of the great event that was now so near, kept him waking the greatest part of the night, yet he rose early in the morning; and while he waited till ALMEIDA should be ready to see him, he was told that OMAR was without, and desired admittance. When he came in, HAMET, who always watched his countenance as a mariner the stars of heaven, perceived that it was obscured with perplexity and grief. 'Tell me,' said HAMET, 'whence is the sorrow that I discover in thy face?' 'I am sorrowful,' said OMAR, 'not for myself, but for thee.' At these words HAMET stept backward, and fixed his eyes upon OMAR, without power to speak. 'Consider,' said OMAR, 'that thou art not a man only, but a prince: consider also, that immortality is before thee; and that thy felicity, during the endless ages of immortality, depends upon thyself: fear not, therefore, what thou canst suffer from others; the evil and the good of life are transient as the morning dew, and over these only the hand of others can prevail.'

HAMET, whose attachment to life was strong, and whose expectations of immediate enjoyment

were high, did not feel the force of what OMAR had said, though he assented to its truth. 'Tell me,' said he, 'at once, what thou fearest for me; deliver me from the torments of suspense, and trust my own fortitude to save me from despair.' 'Know then,' said OMAR, 'that thou art hated by ALMORAN, and that he loves ALMEIDA.' At this declaration, the astonishment of HAMET was equal to his concern; and he was in doubt whether to believe or disbelieve what he heard: but the moment he recollected the wisdom and integrity of OMAR, his doubts were at an end; and having recovered from his surprize, he was about to make such enquiries as might gratify the anxious and tumultuous curiosity which was excited in his breast, when OMAR, lifting up his hand, and beginning again to speak, HAMET remained silent.

'Thou knowest,' said OMAR, 'that when my cheeks were yet ruddy with youth, and my limbs were braced by vigour, that mine eye was guided to knowledge by the lamp that is kindled at midnight, and much of what is hidden in the innermost recesses of nature, was discovered to me: my prayer ascended in secret to Him, with whom there is wisdom from everlasting to everlasting, and He illuminated my darkness with His light. I know, by such sensations as the world either feels not at all, or feels unnoticed without knowledge of their use, when the powers that are invisible are permitted to mingle in the walks of men; and well I know, that some being, who is more than mortal, has joined with ALMORAN against thee, since the veil of night was last spread upon the earth.'

HAMET, whose blood was chilled with horror, and whose nerves were no longer obedient to his will, after several ineffectual attempts to speak, looked up at OMAR; and striking his hand upon his breast, cried out, in an earnest, but faltering voice, 'What shall I do?' 'Thou must do,' said OMAR, 'that which is RIGHT. Let not thy foot be drawn by any allurements, or driven by any terror, from the path of virtue. While thou art there, thou art in safety: and though the world should unite against thee, by the united world thou canst not be hurt.'

'But what friendly power,' said HAMET, 'shall guard even the path of virtue from grief and pain; from the silent shaft of disappointed love, or the sounding scourge of outrageous jealousy? These, surely, have overtaken the foot of perseverance; and by these, though I should persevere, may my feet be overtaken.' 'What thou sayest,' replied OMAR, 'is true; and it is true also, that the tempest which roots up the forest, is driven over the mountain with unabated rage: but from the mountain, what can it take more than the vegetable dust, which the hand of nature has scattered upon the moss that covers it? As the dust is to the mountain, so is all that the storms of life can take from virtue, to the sum of good which the Omnipotent has appointed for its reward.' HAMET, whose eye now expressed a kind of doubtful confidence, a hope that was repressed by fear, remained still silent; and OMAR, perceiving the state of his mind, proceeded to fortify it by new precepts: 'If heaven,' said he, 'should vanish like a vapour, and this firm orb of earth should crumble into dust, the virtuous mind would stand unmoved amidst the ruins of nature: for He, who has appointed the heavens and the earth to fail, has said to virtue, "Fear not; for thou canst neither perish, nor be wretched." Call up thy strength, therefore, to the fight in which thou art sure of conquest: do thou only that which is RIGHT, and leave the event to Heaven.'

HAMET, in this conference with OMAR, having gradually recovered his fortitude; and the time being now near, when he was to conduct ALMEIDA to the court of the palace, where the marriage ceremony was to be performed; they parted with mutual benedictions, each recommending the other to the protection of the Most High.

At the appointed hour, the princes of the court being assembled, the mufti and the imans being ready, and ALMORAN seated upon his throne; HAMET and ALMEIDA came forward, and were placed one on the right hand, and the other on the left. The mufti was then advancing, to hear and to record the mutual promise which was to unite them; ALMORAN was execrating the appearance of the Genius, as a delusive dream, in all the tumults of anguish and despair; and HAMET began to hope, that the suspicions of OMAR had been ill founded; when a stroke of thunder shook the palace to its foundations, and a cloud rose from the ground, like a thick smoke, between HAMET and ALMEIDA.

ALMORAN, who was inspired with new confidence and hope, by that which had struck the rest of the assembly with terror, started from his seat with an ardent and furious look; and at the same moment, a voice, that issued from the cloud, pronounced with a loud but hollow tone,

'Fate has decreed, to ALMORAN, ALMEIDA.'

At these words, ALMORAN rushed forward, and placing himself by the side of ALMEIDA, the cloud disappeared; and he cried out, 'Let me now proclaim to the world the secret, which to this moment I have hidden in my bosom: I love ALMEIDA. The being who alone knew my love, has now by miracle approved it. Let his decree be accomplished.' He then commanded that the ceremony should proceed; and seizing the hand of the lady, began to repeat that part of it which was to have been repeated by HAMET. But ALMEIDA instantly drew her hand from him in an agony of distress; and HAMET, who till then had stood motionless with amazement and horror, started from his trance, and springing forward rushed between them. ALMORAN turned fiercely upon him; but HAMET, who having been warned by OMAR, knew the prodigy to be effected by some evil being whom it was virtue to resist, laid his hand upon his scymitar, and, with a frown of indignation and defiance, commanded him to stand off: 'I now know thee,' said he, 'as a man; and, therefore, as a brother I know thee not.'

ALMORAN reflecting, that the foundation of this reproach was unknown to all who were present, and that to them he would therefore appear to be injured; looked round with an affected smile of

wonder and compassion, as appealing to them from a charge that was thus fiercely and injuriously brought against him, and imputing it to the violence of sudden passions by which truth and reason were overborne. The eye of HAMET at once detected the artifice, which he disdained to expose; he, therefore, commanded the guard that attended to carry off ALMEIDA to her apartment. The guard was preparing to obey, when ALMORAN, who thought he had now such an opportunity to get her into his own power as would never return, ordered them to see her safely lodged in his own seraglio.

The men, who thus received opposite commands from persons to whom they owed equal obedience, stood still in suspense, not knowing which to prefer: ALMORAN then reproached them with want of obedience, not to him, but to God, appealing to the prodigy for the justification of his claim. HAMET, on the contrary, repeated his order, with a look and emphasis scarce less commanding than the thunder and the voice. But the priests interposing in favour of ALMORAN, upon presumption that his right had been decided by a superior power; the guard rushed between HAMET and ALMEIDA, and with looks that expressed the utmost reluctance and regret, attempted to separate their hands, which were clasped in each other. She was affrighted at the violence, but yet more at the apprehension of what was to follow; she, therefore, turned her eyes upon HAMET, conjuring him not to leave her, in a tone of tenderness and distress which it is impossible to describe: he replied with a vehemence that was worthy of his passion, 'I will not leave thee,' and immediately drew his sabre. At the same moment they forced her from him; and a party having interposed to cover those that were carrying her off, HAMET lifted up his weapon to force his passage through them; but was prevented by OMAR, who, having pressed through the crowd, presented himself before him. 'Stop me not,' said HAMET, 'it is for ALMEIDA.' 'If thou wouldst save ALMEIDA,' said OMAR, 'and thyself, do that only which is RIGHT. What have these done who oppose thee, more than they ought? and what end can their destruction answer, but to stain thy hands with unavailing murder? Thou canst only take the life of a few faithful slaves, who will not lift up their hands against thee: thou canst not rescue ALMEIDA from thy brother; but thou canst preserve thyself from guilt.'

These words of OMAR suspended the rage of HAMET, like a charm; and returning his scymitar into its sheath, 'Let me then,' said he, 'suffer, and be guiltless. It is true, that against these ranks my single arm must be ineffectual; but if my wrongs can rouse a nation to repress the tyranny, that will shortly extend over it the injuries that now reach only to me, justice shall be done to HAMET.' Then turning to ALMORAN, 'Henceforth,' said he, 'the kingdom shall be mine or thine. To govern in concert with thee, is to associate with the powers of hell. The beings that are superior to evil, are the friends of HAMET; and if these are thy enemies, what shall be thy defence?' ALMORAN replied only by a contemptuous smile; and the assembly being dismissed he retired to his apartment: and HAMET and OMAR went out to the people, who had gathered in an incredible multitude about the palace.

CHAP. X.

A rumour of what had happened within had reached them, which some believed, and some doubted: but when they saw OMAR and HAMET return together, and observed that their looks were full of resentment and trouble, they became silent with attention in a moment; which OMAR observing, addressed them with an eloquence of which they had often acknowledged the force, and of which they never repented the effect.

He told them the tender connexion between HAMET and ALMEIDA, and disclosed the subtil hypocrisy of ALMORAN: he expatiated upon the folly of supposing, that the power that was supreme in goodness and truth, should command a violation of vows that had been mutually interchanged, and often repeated; and devote to ALMORAN the beauties, which could only be voluntarily surrendered to HAMET. They heard him with a vacant countenance of surprize and wonder; and while he waited for their reply, they agreed among themselves, that no man could avoid the destiny that was written upon his head; and that if ALMEIDA had thus been taken from HAMET, and given to ALMORAN, it was an event that by an unchangeable decree was appointed to happen; and that, therefore, it was their duty to acquiesce. OMAR then beckoned with his hand for audience a second time, and told them, that ALMORAN had not only practised the arts of sorcery to deprive HAMET of ALMEIDA, but that he meditated a design to usurp the sole dominion, and deprive him of the share of the government to which he had a right by the will of Solymán his father. This also they heard with the same sentiments of wonder and acquiescence: If it is decreed, said they, that ALMORAN shall be king alone, who can prevent it? and if it is not, who can bring it to pass? 'But know ye not,' said OMAR, 'that when the end is appointed, the means are appointed also. If it is decreed that one of you shall this night die by poison, is it not decreed also that he shall drink it?'

The crowd now gazed upon each other, without reply, for some minutes: and at last they only said, that no effort of theirs could change the universal appointment of all things; that if ALMORAN was to be king alone, he would be so notwithstanding all opposition; and that if he was not to be king alone, no attempt of his own, however supported, could make him so. 'I will not,' said OMAR, 'contradict your opinion; I will only tell you what I have heard, and leave you to, suffer the calamities which threaten you, with a fortitude and resignation that are suitable to your principles; having no consolation to offer you, but that HAMET, whose destiny it was not to make you happy, will suffer with you the evils, that neither he nor you could prevent: the mournful

comfort of this fellowship, he will not be denied; for he loves you too well, to wish even to be happy alone.' The crowd fixed their eyes upon HAMET, for whom their affection was now strongly moved, with looks of much greater intelligence and sensibility; a confused murmur, like the fall of the pebbles upon the beach when the surge retires from the shore, expressed their gratitude to HAMET, and their apprehensions for themselves.

OMAR waited till they were again silent, and then improved the advantage he had gained. 'ALMORAN,' said he, 'considers you as the slaves of his power; HAMET as the objects of his benevolence: your lives and your properties, in the opinion of ALMORAN, are below his notice; but HAMET considers his own interest as connected with yours. When ALMORAN, therefore, shall be unchecked by the influence of HAMET; he will leave you to the mercy of some delegated tyrant, whose whole power will be exerted to oppress you, that he may enrich himself.'

A new fire was now kindled in their eyes, and their cheeks glowed with indignation at the wrongs that threatened them; they were no longer disposed to act upon the principles of fatality, as they had perversely understood them; and they argued at once like reasonable and free beings, whose actions were in their choice, and who had no doubt but that their actions would produce adequate effects. They recollected that OMAR had, in the reign of Solyman, often rescued them from such oppression, as now threatened them; and that the power of HAMET had since interposed in their behalf, when ALMORAN would have stretched his prerogative to their hurt, or have left them a prey to the farmer of a tax. 'Shall HAMET,' said they, 'be deprived of the power, that he employs only for our benefit; and shall it center in ALMORAN, who will abuse it to our ruin? Shall we rather support ALMORAN in the wrong he has done to HAMET, than HAMET to obtain justice of ALMORAN? HAMET is our king; let him command us, and we will obey.' This was uttered with a shout that echoed from the mountains beyond the city, and continued near a full hour. In the mean time, the multitude was increasing every moment; and the troops that lay in and near the city, having taken arms, fell in with the stream: they were secretly attached to HAMET, under whose eye they had been formed, and of whose bounty they had often partaken; and their fear being removed by the general cry, which left them no room to apprehend an opposition in favour of ALMORAN, they were now at full liberty to follow their inclinations.

In the mean time, ALMORAN, who had retired to the innermost court of the palace, had heard the tumult, and was alarmed for his safety: he ran from room to room, confused and terrified, without attempting or directing any thing either for his defence or escape, yet he sent every moment to know the state of the insurrection, and to what end its force would be directed.

Among those whom accident rather than choice had attached to the interest of ALMORAN, were Osmyn and Caled: they were both distinguished by his favour; and each had conceived hopes that, if he should possess the throne alone, he would delegate his authority to him. ALMORAN now ordered them to take the command of the troops, that were appointed to attend his person as their peculiar duty, with as many others as had not declared for HAMET, and to secure all the avenues that led to his seraglio.

OMAR and HAMET were now on horseback, and had begun to form the troops that had joined them, and as many others as were armed, which were before mingled together in a confused multitude. An account of this was brought to ALMORAN by Osmyn; and threw him into a perturbation and perplexity, that disgraced his character, and confounded his attendants. He urged Osmyn, in whom he most confided, to dispatch, without giving him any orders to execute; then turning from him, he uttered, in a low and inarticulate voice, the most passionate exclamations of distress and terror, being struck with the thought that his guard might betray him: when he recollected himself, and perceived that Osmyn was still present, he burst into a rage, and snatching out his poignard, he swore by the soul of the Prophet, that if he did not instantly attempt something, he would stab him to the heart. Osmyn drew back trembling and confused; but having yet received no orders, he would have spoken, but ALMORAN drove him from his presence with menaces and execrations.

The moment that Osmyn left him, his rage subsided in his fears, and his fears were mingled with remorse: 'Which way soever I turn,' said he, 'I see myself surrounded by destruction. I have incensed Osmyn by unreasonable displeasure, and causeless menaces. He must regard me at once with abhorrence and contempt: and it is impossible, but he should revolt to HAMET.'

In this agony, the terrors of futurity rushed upon his mind with all their force; and he darted as if at the bite of a scorpion: 'To me,' said he, 'death, that now approaches, will be but the beginning of sorrow. I shall be cut off at once from enjoyment, and from hope; and the dreadful moment is now at hand.' While he was speaking, the palace again shook, and he stood again in the presence of the Genius.

'ALMORAN,' said the inhabitant of the unapparent world, 'the evil which thou fearest, shall not be upon thee. Make haste, and shew thyself from the gallery to the people, and the tumult of faction shall be still before thee: tell them, that their rebellion is not against thee only, but against Him by whom thou reignest: appeal boldly to that power for a confirmation of thy words, and rely for the attesting sign upon me.' ALMORAN, who had stooped with his face to the ground, now looked upward, and found himself alone: he hasted, therefore, to follow the directions he had received; and hope was again kindled in his bosom.

Osmyn, in the mean time, made a proper disposition of the troops now under his command; and had directed a select company to remain near the person of the king, that they might at least make good his retreat. While he was waiting at his post, and revolving in his mind the total

disappointment of his hopes, and considering what he should do if HAMET should establish himself alone, he was joined by Caled.

Caled had a secret enmity against Osmyn, as his rival in the favour of ALMORAN; but as he had concealed his own pretensions from Osmyn, Osmyn had no ill will against Caled. As they were now likely to be involved in one common calamity, by the ruin of the prince whose party they had espoused; Caled's enmity subsided, and the indifference of Osmyn was warmed into kindness: mutual distress produced mutual confidence; and Caled, after condoling with Osmyn on their present hopeless situation, proposed that they should draw off their forces, and revolt to HAMET. This proposition Osmyn rejected, not only from principle, but from interest: 'Now we have accepted of a trust,' said he, 'we ought not to betray it. If we had gone over to HAMET, when he first declared against his brother, he would have received us with joy, and probably have rewarded our service; but I know, that his virtue will abhor us for treachery, though practised in his favour: treachery, under the dominion of HAMET, will not only cover us with dishonour, but will probably devote us to death.'

In this reasoning, Caled could not but acquiesce; he felt himself secretly but forcibly reproved, by the superior virtue of Osmyn: and while he regretted his having made a proposal, which had been rejected not only as imprudent but infamous; he concluded, that Osmyn would ever after suspect and despise him; and he, therefore, from a new cause, conceived new enmity against him. They parted, however, without any appearance of suspicion or disgust; and, in a short time, they were in circumstances very different from their expectations.

END OF VOL. I.

VOLUME SECOND.

CHAP. XI.

ALMORAN had now reached the gallery; and when the multitude saw him, they shouted as in triumph, and demanded that he should surrender. HAMET, who also perceived him at a distance, and was unwilling that any violence should be offered to his person, pressed forward, and when he was come near, commanded silence. At this moment ALMORAN, with a loud voice, reproached them with impiety and folly; and appealing to the power, whom in his person they had offended, the air suddenly grew dark, a flood of lightning descended from the sky, and a peal of thunder was articulated into these words:

Divided sway, the God who reigns alone
Abhors; and gives to ALMORAN the throne.

The multitude stood aghast at the prodigy; and hiding their faces with their hands, every one departed in silence and confusion, and HAMET and OMAR were left alone. OMAR was taken by some of the soldiers who had adhered to ALMORAN, but HAMET made his escape.

ALMORAN, whose wishes were thus far accomplished by the intervention of a power superior to his own, exulted in the anticipation of that happiness which he now supposed to be secured; and was fortified in his opinion, that he had been wretched only because he had been weak, and that to multiply and not to suppress his wishes was the way to acquire felicity.

As he was returning from the gallery, he was met by Osmyn and Caled, who had heard the supernatural declaration in his behalf, and learned its effects. ALMORAN, in that hasty flow of unbounded but capricious favour, which, in contracted minds, is the effect only of unexpected good fortune, raised Osmyn from his feet to his bosom: 'As in the trial,' said he, 'thou hast been faithful, I now invest thee with a superior trust. The toils of state shall from this moment devolve upon thee; and from this moment, the delights of empire unallayed shall be mine: I will recline at ease, remote from every eye but those that reflect my own felicity; the felicity that I shall taste in secret, surrounded by the smiles of beauty, and the gaities of youth. Like heaven, I will reign unseen; and like heaven, though unseen, I will be adored.' Osmyn received this delegation of power with a tumultuous pleasure, that was expressed only by silence and confusion. ALMORAN remarked it; and exulting in the pride of power, he suddenly changed his aspect, and regarding Osmyn, who was yet blushing, and whose eyes were swimming in tears of gratitude, with a stern and ardent countenance; 'Let me, however,' said he, 'warn thee to be watchful in thy trust: beware, that no rude commotion violate my peace by thy fault; lest my anger sweep thee in a

moment to destruction.' He then directed his eye to Caled: 'And thou too,' said he, 'hast been faithful; be thou next in honour and in power to Osmyn. Guard both of you my paradise from dread and care; fulfill the duty that I have assigned you, and live.'

He was then informed by a messenger, that HAMET had escaped, and that OMAR was taken. As he now despised the power both of HAMET and OMAR, he expressed neither concern nor anger that HAMET had fled; but he ordered OMAR to be brought before him.

When OMAR appeared bound and disarmed, he regarded him with a smile of insult and derision; and asked him, what he had now to hope. 'I have, indeed,' said OMAR, 'much less to hope, than thou hast to fear.' 'Thy insolence,' said ALMORAN, 'is equal to thy folly: what power on earth is there, that I should fear?' 'Thy own,' said OMAR. 'I have not leisure now,' replied ALMORAN, 'to hear the paradoxes of thy philosophy explained: but to shew thee, that I fear not thy power, thou shalt live. I will leave thee to hopeless regret; to wiles that have been scorned and defeated; to the unheeded petulance of dotage; to the fondness that is repayed with neglect; to restless wishes, to credulous hopes, and to derided command: to the slow and complicated torture of despised old age; and that, when thou shalt long have abhorred thy being, shall destroy it.' 'The misery,' said OMAR, 'which thou hast menaced, it is not in thy power to inflict. As thou hast taken from me all that I possessed by the bounty of thy father, it is true that I am poor; it is true also, that my knees are now feeble, and bend with the weight of years that is upon me. I am, as thou art, a man; and therefore I have erred: but I have still kept the narrow path in view with a faithful vigilance, and to that I have soon returned: the past, therefore, I do not regret; and the future I have no cause to fear. In Him who is most merciful, I have hope; and in that hope even how I rejoice before thee. My portion in the present hour, is adversity: but I receive it, not only with humility, but thankfulness; for I know, that whatever is ordained is best.'

ALMORAN, in whose heart there were no traces of OMAR'S virtue, and therefore no foundation for his confidence; sustained himself against their force, by treating them as hypocrisy and affectation: 'I know,' says he, 'that thou hast long learned to eccho the specious and pompous sounds, by which hypocrites conceal their wretchedness, and excite the admiration of folly and the contempt of wisdom: yet thy walk, in this place, shall be still unrestrained. Here the splendor of my felicity shall fill thy heart with envy, and cover thy face with confusion; and from thee shall the world be instructed, that the enemies of ALMORAN can move no passion in his breast but contempt, and that most to punish them is to permit them to live.'

OMAR, whose eye had till now been fixed upon the ground, regarded ALMORAN with a calm but steady countenance: 'Here then,' said he, 'will I follow thee, constant as thy shadow; tho', as thy shadow, unnoticed or neglected: here shall mine eye watch those evils, that were appointed from everlasting to attend upon guilt: and here shall my voice warn thee of their approach. From thy breast may they be averted by righteousness! for without this, though all the worlds that roll above thee should, to aid thee, unite all their power, that power can aid thee only to be wretched.'

ALMORAN, in all the pride of gratified ambition, invested with dominion that had no limits, and allied with powers that were more than mortal; was overawed by this address, and his countenance grew pale. But the next moment, disdaining to be thus controuled by the voice of a slave, his cheeks were suffused with the blushes of indignation: he turned from OMAR, in scorn, anger, and confusion, without reply; and OMAR departed with the calm dignity of a benevolent and superior being, to whom the smiles and frowns of terrestrial tyranny were alike indifferent, and in whom abhorrence of the turpitude of vice was mingled with compassion for its folly.

CHAP. XII.

In the mean time, ALMEIDA, who had been conveyed to an apartment in ALMORAN'S seraglio, and delivered to the care of those who attended upon his women, suffered all that grief and terror could inflict upon a generous, a tender, and a delicate mind; yet in this complicated distress, her attention was principally fixed upon HAMET. The disappointment of his hope, and the violation of his right, were the chief objects of her regret and her fears, in all that had already happened, and in all that was still to come; every insult that might be offered to herself, she considered as an injury to him. Yet the thoughts of all that he might suffer in her person, gave way to her apprehensions of what might befall him in his own: in his situation, every calamity that her imagination could conceive, was possible; her thoughts were, therefore, bewildered amidst an endless variety of dreadful images, which started up before them which way soever they were turned; and it was impossible that she could gain any certain intelligence of his fate, as the splendid prison in which she was now confined, was surrounded by mutes and eunuchs, of whom nothing could be learned, or in whole report no confidence could be placed.

While her mind was in this state of agitation and distress, she perceived the door open, and the next moment ALMORAN entered the apartment. When she saw him, she turned from him with a look of unutterable anguish; and hiding her face in her veil, she burst into tears. The tyrant was moved with her distress; for unfeeling obduracy is the vice only of the old, whose sensibility has been worn away by the habitual perpetration of reiterated wrongs.

He approached her with looks of kindness, and his voice was involuntarily modulated to pity; she

was, however, too much absorbed in her own sorrows, to reply. He gazed upon her with tenderness and admiration; and taking her hand into his own, he pressed it ardently to his bosom: his compassion soon kindled into desire, and from soothing her distress, he began to solicit her love. This instantly roused her attention, and resentment now suspended her grief: she turned from him with a firm and haughty step, and instead of answering his professions, reproached him with her wrongs. ALMORAN, that he might at once address her virtue and her passions, observed, that though he had loved her from the first moment he had seen her, yet he had concealed his passion even from her, till it had received the sanction of an invisible and superior power; that he came, therefore, the messenger of heaven; and that he offered her unrivalled empire and everlasting love. To this she answered only by an impatient and fond enquiry after HAMET. 'Think not of HAMET,' said ALMORAN; 'for why should he who is rejected of Heaven, be still the favorite of ALMEIDA?' 'If thy hand,' said ALMEIDA, 'could quench in everlasting darkness, that vital spark of intellectual fire, which the word of the Almighty has kindled in my breast to burn for ever, then might ALMEIDA cease to think of HAMET; but while that shall live, whatever form it shall inhabit, or in whatever world it shall reside, his image shall be for ever present, and to him shall my love be for ever true.' This glowing declaration of her love for HAMET, was immediately succeeded by a tender anxiety for his safety; and a sudden reflection upon the probability of his death, and the danger of his situation if alive, threw her again into tears.

ALMORAN, whom the ardour and impetuosity of her passions kept sometimes silent, and sometimes threw into confusion, again attempted to sooth and comfort her: she often urged him to tell her what was become of his brother, and he as often evaded the question. As she was about to renew her enquiry, and reflected that it had already been often made, and had not yet been answered, she thought that ALMORAN had already put him to death: this threw her into a new agony, of which he did not immediately discover the cause; but as he soon learned it from her reproaches and exclamations, he perceived that he could not hope to be heard, while she was in doubt about the safety of HAMET. In order, therefore, to sooth her mind, and prevent its being longer possessed with an image that excluded every other; he assumed a look of concern and astonishment at the imputation of a crime, which was at once so horrid and so unnecessary. After a solemn deprecation of such enormous guilt, he observed, that as it was now impossible for HAMET to succeed as his rival, either in empire or in love, without the breach of a command, which he knew his virtue would implicitly obey; he had no motive either to desire his death, or to restrain his liberty: 'His walk' says he, 'is still uncircumscribed in Persia, and except this chamber, there is no part of the palace to which he is not admitted.'

To this declaration ALMEIDA listened, as to the music of paradise; and it suspended for a-while every passion, but her love: the sudden ease of her mind made her regardless of all about her, and she had in this interval suffered ALMORAN to remove her veil, without reflecting upon what he was doing. The moment she recollected herself, she made a gentle effort to recover it, with some confusion, but without anger. The pleasure that was expressed in her eyes, the blush that glowed upon her cheek, and the contest about the veil, which to an amorous imagination had an air of dalliance, concurred to heighten the passion of ALMORAN almost to phrensy: she perceived her danger in his looks, and her spirits instantly took the alarm. He seized her hand, and gazing ardently upon her, he conjured her, with a tone and emphasis that strongly expressed the tumultuous vehemence of his wishes, that she would renounce the rites which had been forbidden above, and that she would receive him to whom by miracle she had been allotted.

ALMEIDA, whom the manner and voice of ALMORAN had terrified into silence, answered him at first only with a look that expressed aversion and disdain, overawed by fear. 'Wilt thou not,' said ALMORAN, 'fulfill the decrees of Heaven? I conjure thee, 'by Heaven, to answer.' From this solemn reference to Heaven, ALMEIDA derived new fortitude: she instantly recollected, that she stood in the presence of Him, by whose permission only every other power, whether visible or invisible, can dispense evil or good: 'Urge no more,' said she, 'as the decree of Heaven, that which is inconsistent with Divine perfection. Can He in whose hand my heart is, command me to wed the man whom he has not enabled me to love? Can the Pure, the Just, the Merciful, have ordained that I should suffer embraces which I loath, and violate vows which His laws permitted me to make? Can He have ordained a perfidious, a loveless, and a joyless prostitution? What if a thousand prodigies should concur to enforce it a thousand times, the deed itself would be a stronger proof that those prodigies were the works of darkness, than those prodigies that the deed was commanded by the Father of light.'

ALMORAN, whose hopes were now blasted to the root, who perceived that the virtue of ALMEIDA could neither be deceived nor overborne; that she at once contemned his power, and abhorred his love; gave way to all the furies of his mind, which now slumbered no more: his countenance expressed at once anger, indignation, and despair; his gesture became furious, and his voice was lost in menaces and execrations. ALMEIDA beheld him with an earnest yet steady countenance, till he vowed to revenge the indignity he had suffered, upon HAMET. At the name of HAMET, her fortitude forsook her; the pride of virtue gave way to the softness of love; her cheeks became pale, her lips trembled, and taking hold of the robe of ALMORAN, she threw herself at his feet. His fury was it first suspended by hope and expectation; but when from her words, which grief and terror had rendered scarce articulate, he could learn only that she was pleading for HAMET, he burst from her in an extasy of rage, and forcing his robe from her hand, with a violence that dragged her after it, he rushed out of the chamber, and left her prostrate upon the ground.

As he passed through the gallery with a hasty and disordered pace, he was seen by OMAR; who knowing that he was returned from an interview with ALMEIDA, and conjecturing from his

appearance what had happened, judged that he ought not to neglect this opportunity to warn him once more of the delusive phantoms, which, under the appearance of pleasure, were leading him to destruction: he, therefore, followed him unperceived, till he had reached the apartment in which he had been used to retire alone, and heard again the loud and tumultuous exclamations, which were wrung, from his heart by the anguish of disappointment: 'What have I gained,' said he, 'by absolute dominion! The slave who, secluded from the gales of life and from the light of heaven toils without hope in the darkness of the mine, riots in the delights of paradise compared with me. By the caprice of one woman, I am robbed not only of enjoyment but of peace, and condemned for ever to the torment of unsatisfied desire.'

OMAR, who was impatient to apprise him that he was not alone, and to prevent his disclosing sentiments which he wished to conceal, now threw himself upon the ground at his feet. 'Presumptuous slave!' said ALMORAN, 'from whence, and wherefore art thou come?' 'I am come,' said OMAR, 'to tell thee that not the caprice of a woman, but the wishes of ALMORAN, have made ALMORAN wretched.' The king, slung with the reproach, drew back, and with a furious look laid his hand upon his poignard; but was immediately restrained from drawing it, by his pride. 'I am come,' said OMAR, 'to repeat that truth, upon which, great as thou art, thy fate is suspended. Thy power extends not to the mind of another; exert it, therefore, upon thy own: suppress the wishes, which thou canst not fulfill, and secure the happiness that is within thy reach.'

ALMORAN, who could bear no longer to hear the precepts which he disdained to practice, sternly commanded OMAR to depart: 'Be gone,' said he, 'lest I crush thee like a noisome reptile, which men cannot but abhor, though it is too contemptible to be feared.' 'I go,' said OMAR, 'that my warning voice may yet again recall thee to the path of wisdom and of peace, if yet again I shall behold thee while it is to be found.'

CHAP. XIII.

ALMORAN was now left alone; and throwing himself upon a sofa, he sat some time motionless and silent, as if all his faculties had been suspended in the stupefaction of despair. He revolved in his mind the wishes that had been gratified, and the happiness of which he had been disappointed: 'I desired,' said he, 'the pomp and power of undivided dominion; and HAMET was driven from the throne which he shared with me, by a voice from heaven: I desired to break off his marriage with ALMEIDA; and it was broken off by a prodigy, when no human power could have accomplished my desire. It was my wish also to have the person of ALMEIDA in my power, and this wish also has been gratified; yet I am still wretched. But I am wretched, only because the means have not been adequate to the end: what I have hitherto obtained, I have not desired for itself; and of that, for which I desired it, I am not possessed: I am, therefore, still wretched, because I am weak. With the soul of ALMORAN, I should have the form of HAMET: then my wishes would indeed be filled; then would ALMEIDA bless me with consenting beauty, and the splendor of my power should distinguish only the intervals of my love; my enjoyments would then be certain and permanent, neither blasted by disappointment, nor withered by satiety.' When he had uttered these reflections with the utmost vehemence and agitation, his face was again obscured by gloom and despair; his posture was again fixed; and he was falling back into his former state of silent abstraction, when he was suddenly roused by the appearance of the Genius, the sincerity of whose friendship he began to distrust.

'ALMORAN,' said the Genius, 'if thou art not yet happy, know that my powers are not yet exhausted: fear me not, but let thine ear be attentive to my voice.' The Genius then stretched out his hand towards him, in which there was an emerald of great lustre, cut into a figure that had four and twenty sides, on each of which was engraven a different letter. 'Thou seest,' said he, 'this talisman: on each side of it is engraven one of those mysterious characters, of which are formed all the words of all the languages that are spoken by angels, genii, and men. This shall enable thee to change thy figure: and what, under the form of ALMORAN, thou canst not accomplish; thou shalt still be able to effect, if it can be effected by thee, in the form of any other. Point only to the letters that compose the name of him whose appearance thou wouldst assume, and it is done. Remember only, that upon him, whose appearance thou shalt assume, thine shall be imprest, till thou restorest his own. Hide the charm in thy bosom, and avail thyself of its power.' ALMORAN received the talisman in a transport of gratitude and joy, and the Genius immediately disappeared.

The use of this talisman was so obvious, that it was impossible to overlook it. ALMORAN instantly conceived the design with which it was given, and determined instantly to put it in execution: 'I will now,' said he, 'assume the figure of HAMET; and my love, in all its ardour, shall be returned by ALMEIDA.' As his fancy kindled at the anticipation of his happiness, he stood musing in a pleasing suspense, and indulged himself in the contemplation of the several gradations, by which he would ascend to the summit of his wishes.

Just at this moment, Osmyn, whom he had commanded to attend him at this hour, approached his apartment: ALMORAN was roused by the sound of his foot, and supposed it to be OMAR, who had again intruded upon his privacy; he was enraged at the interruption which had broken a series of imaginations so flattering and luxurious; he snatched out his poignard, and lifting up his arm for the stroke, hastily turned round to have stabbed him; but seeing Osmyn, he discovered his

mistake just in time to prevent the blow.

Osmyn, who was not conscious of any crime, nor indeed of any act that could have given occasion of offence; started back terrified and amazed, and stood trembling in suspense whether to remain or to withdraw. ALMORAN, in the mean time, sheathed the instrument of death, and bid him fear nothing, for he should not be hurt. He then turned about; and putting, his hand to his forehead, stood again, silent in a musing posture: he recollected, that if he assumed the figure of HAMET, it was necessary he should give orders for HAMET to be admitted to ALMEIDA, as he would otherwise be excluded by the delegates of his own authority; turning, therefore, to Osmyn, 'Remember,' said he, 'that whenever HAMET shall return, it is my command, that he be admitted to ALMEIDA.'

Osmyn; who was pleased with an opportunity of recommending himself to ALMORAN, by praising an act of generous virtue which he supposed him now to exert in favour of his brother, received the command with a look, that expressed not only approbation but joy: 'Let the sword of destruction,' said he, 'be the guard of the tyrant; the strength of my lord shall be the bonds of love: those, who honour thee as ALMORAN, shall rejoice in thee as the friend of HAMET.' To ALMORAN, who was conscious to no kindness for his brother, the praise of Osmyn was a reproach: he was offended at the joy which he saw kindled in his countenance, by a command to shew favour to HAMET; and was fired with sudden rage at that condemnation of his real conduct, which was implied by an encomium on the generosity of which he assumed the appearance for a malevolent and perfidious purpose: his brow was contracted, his lip quivered, and the hilt of his dagger was again grasped in his hand. Osmyn was again overwhelmed with terror and confusion; he had again offended, but knew not his offence. In the mean time, ALMORAN recollecting that to express displeasure against Osmyn was to betray his own secret, endeavoured to suppress his anger; but his anger was succeeded by remorse, regret, and disappointment. The anguish of his mind broke out in imperfect murmurs: 'What I am, said, he, 'is, to this wretch, the object not only of hatred but of scorn; and he commends only what I am not, in what to him I would seem to be.

These sounds, which, tho' not articulate, were yet uttered with great emotion, were still mistaken by Osmyn for the overflowings of capricious and causeless anger: 'My life,' says he to himself, 'is even now suspended in a doubtful balance. Whenever I approach this tyrant, I tread the borders of destruction: like a hood-winked wretch, who is left to wander near the brink of a precipice, I know my danger; but which way soever I turn, I know not whether I shall incur or avoid it.'

In these reflections, did the reign and the slave pass those moments in which the sovereign intended to render the slave subservient to his pleasure or his security, and the slave intended to express a zeal which he really felt, and a homage which his heart had already paid. Osmyn was at length, however, dismissed with an assurance, that all was well; and ALMORAN was again left to reflect with anguish upon the past, to regret the present, and to anticipate the future with solicitude, anxiety, and perturbation.

He was, however, determined to assume the figure of his brother, by the talisman which had been put into his power by the Genius: but just as he was about to form the spell, he recollected, that by the same act he would impress his own likeness upon HAMET who would consequently be invested with his power, and might use it to his destruction. This held him some time in suspense: but reflecting that HAMET might not, perhaps, be apprized of his advantage, till it was too late to improve it; that he was now a fugitive, and probably alone, leaving Persia behind him with all the speed he could make; and that, at the worst, if he should be still near, if he should know the transformation as soon as it should be made, and should instantly take the most effectual measures to improve it; yet as he could dissolve the charm in a moment, whenever it should be necessary for his safety, no formidable danger could be incurred by the experiment, to which he, therefore, proceeded without delay.

CHAP. XIV.

In the mean time, HAMET, to whom his own safety was of no importance but for the sake of ALMEIDA, resolved, if possible, to conceal himself near the city. Having, therefore, reached the confines of the desert, by which it was bounded on the east, he quitted his horse, and determined to remain there till the multitude was dispersed; and the darkness of the evening might conceal his return, when in less than an hour he could reach the palace.

He sat down at the foot of the mountain Kabessed, without considering, that in this place he was most likely to be found, as those who travel the desert seldom fail to enter the cave that winds its way under the mountain, to drink of the water that issues there from a clear and copious spring.

He reviewed the scenes of the day that was now nearly passed, with a mixture of astonishment and distress, to which no description can be equal. The sudden and amazing change that a few hours had made in his situation, appeared like a wild and distressful dream, from which he almost doubted whether he should not wake to the power and the felicity that he had lost. He sat some time bewildered in the hurry and multiplicity of his thoughts, and at length burst out into passionate exclamations: 'What,' says he, 'and where am I? Am I, indeed, HAMET; that son of Solyman who divided the dominion of Persia with his brother, and who possessed the love of ALMEIDA alone? Dreadful vicissitude! I am now an outcast, friendless and forlorn; without an associate, and without a dwelling: for me the cup of adversity overflows, and the last dregs of

sorrow have been wrung out for my portion: the powers not only of the earth, but of the air, have combined against me; and how can I stand alone before them? But is there no power that will interpose in my behalf? If He, who is supreme, is good, I shall not perish. But wherefore am I thus? Why should the desires of vice be accomplished by superior powers; and why should superior powers be permitted to disappoint the expectations of virtue? Yet let me not rashly question the ways of Him, in whose balance the world is weighed: by Him, every evil is rendered subservient to good; and by His wisdom, the happiness of the whole is secured. Yet I am but a part only, and for a part only I can feel. To me, what is that goodness of which I do not partake? In my cup the gall is unmixed; and have I not, therefore, a right to complain? But what have I said? Let not the gloom that surrounds me, hide from me the prospect of immortality. Shall not eternity atone for time? Eternity, to which the duration of ages is but as an atom to a world! Shall I not, when this momentary separation is past, again meet ALMEIDA to part no more? and shall not a purer flame than burns upon the earth, unite us? Even at this moment, her mind, which not the frauds of sorcery can taint or alienate, is mine: that pleasure which she reserved for me, cannot be taken by force; it is in the consent alone that it subsists; and from the joy that she feels, and from that only, proceeds the joy she can bestow.'

With these reflections he soothed the anguish of his mind, till the dreadful moment arrived, in which the power of the talisman took place, and the figure of ALMORAN was changed into that of HAMET, and the figure of HAMET into that of ALMORAN.

At the moment of transformation, HAMET was seized with a sudden languor, and his faculties were suspended as by the stroke of death. When he recovered, his limbs still trembled, and his lips were parched with thirst: he rose, therefore, and entering the cavern, at the mouth of which he had been sitting, he stooped over the well to drink; but glancing his eyes upon the water, he saw, with astonishment and horror, that it reflected, not his own countenance, but that of his brother. He started back from the prodigy; and supporting himself against the side of the rock, he stood some time like a statue, without the power of recollection: but at length the thought suddenly rushed into his mind, that the same sorcery which had suspended his marriage, and driven him from the throne was still practised against him; and that the change of his figure to that of ALMORAN, was the effect of ALMORAN'S having assumed his likeness, to obtain, in this disguise, whatever ALMEIDA could bestow. This thought, like a whirlwind of the desert, totally subverted his mind; his fortitude was borne down, and his hopes were rooted up; no principles remained to regulate his conduct, but all was phrensy, confusion, and despair. He rushed out of the cave with a furious and distracted look; and went in haste towards the city, without having formed any design, or considered any consequence that might follow.

The shadows of the mountains were now lengthened by the declining sun; and the approach of evening had invited OMAR to meditate in a grove, that was adjacent to the gardens of the palace. From this place he was seen at some distance by HAMET, who came up to him with a hasty and disordered pace; and OMAR drew back with a cold and distant reverence, which the power and the character of ALMORAN concurred to excite. HAMET, not reflecting upon the cause of this behaviour, was offended, and reproached him with the want of that friendship he had so often professed: the vehemence, of his expression and demeanor, suited well with the appearance of ALMORAN; and OMAR, as the best proof of that friendship which had been impeached, took this opportunity to repeat his admonitions in the behalf of HAMET: 'What ever evil,' said he, 'thou canst bring upon HAMET, will be doubled to thyself: to his virtues, the Power that fills infinitude is a friend, and he can be afflicted only till they are perfect; but thy sufferings will be the punishment of vice, and as long as thou are vicious they must increase.'

HAMET, who instantly recollected for whom he was mistaken, and the anguish of whose mind was for a moment suspended by this testimony of esteem and kindness, which could not possibly be feigned, and which was paid him at the risque of life, when it could not be known that he received it; ran forward to embrace the hoary sage, who had been the guide of his youth, and cried out, in a voice that was broken by contending passions, 'The face is the face of ALMORAN, but the heart is the heart of HAMET.'

OMAR was struck dumb with astonishment; and HAMET, who was impatient to be longer mistaken, related all the circumstances of his transformation, and reminded him of some particulars which could be known only to themselves: 'Canst thou not yet believe,' said he, 'that I am HAMET? when thou hast this day seen me banished from my kingdom; when thou hast now met me a fugitive returning from the desert; and when I learnt from thee, since the sun was risen which is not yet set, that more than mortal powers were combined against me.' 'I now believe,' said OMAR, 'that thou, indeed, art HAMET.' 'Stay me not then,' said HAMET; 'but come with me to revenge.' 'Beware,' said OMAR, 'lest thou endanger the loss of more than empire and ALMEIDA.' 'If not to revenge,' said HAMET, 'I may at least be permitted to punish.' 'Thy mind,' says OMAR, 'is now in such a state, that to punish the crimes by which thou hast been wronged, will dip thee in the guilt of blood. Why else are we forbidden to take vengeance for ourselves? and why is it reserved as the prerogative of the Most High? In Him, and in Him alone, it is goodness guided by wisdom: He approves the means, only as necessary to the end; He wounds only to heal, and destroys only to save; He has complacence, not in the evil, but in the good only which it is appointed to produce. Remember, therefore, that he, to whom the punishment of another is sweet; though his act may be just with respect to others, with respect to himself it is a deed of darkness, and abhorred by the Almighty.' HAMET, who had stood abstracted in the contemplation of the new injury he had suffered, while OMAR was persuading him not to revenge it, started from his posture in all the wildness of distraction; and bursting away from OMAR, with an ardent and furious look hastened toward the

CHAP. XV.

In the mean time, ALMORAN, after having effected the transformation, was met, as he was going to the apartment of ALMEIDA, by Osmyn. Osmyn had already experienced the misery of dependent greatness, that kept him continually under the eye of a capricious tyrant, whose temper was various as the gales of summer, and whose anger was sudden as the bolt of heaven; whose purpose and passions were dark and impetuous as the midnight storm, and at whose command death was inevitable as the approach of time. When he saw ALMORAN, therefore, in the likeness of HAMET, he felt a secret desire to apprize him of his situation, and offer him his friendship.

ALMORAN, who with the form assumed the manners of HAMET, addressed Osmyn with a mild though mournful countenance: 'At length,' said he, 'the will of ALMORAN alone is law; does it permit me to hold a private rank in this place, without molestation?' 'It permits,' said Osmyn, 'yet more; he has commanded, that you should have admittance to ALMEIDA.' ALMORAN, whose vanity betrayed him to flatter his own power in the person of HAMET, replied with a smile: 'I know, that ALMORAN, who presides like a God in silent and distant state, reveals the secrets of his will to thee; I know that thou art'—'I am,' said Osmyn, 'of all thou seest, most wretched.' At this declaration, ALMORAN turned short, and fixed his eyes upon Osmyn with a look of surprize and anger: 'Does not the favour of ALMORAN,' said he, 'whose smile is power, and wealth, and honour, shine upon thee?' 'My lord,' said Osmyn, 'I know so well the severity of thy virtue, that if I should, even for thy sake, become perfidious to thy brother'—ALMORAN, who was unable to preserve the character of HAMET with propriety, interrupted him with a fierce and haughty tone: 'How!' said he, 'perfidious to my brother! to ALMORAN perfidious!'

Osmyn, who had now gone too far to recede, and who still saw before him the figure of HAMET, proceeded in his purpose: 'I knew,' said he, 'that in thy judgment I should be condemned; and yet, the preservation of life is the strongest principle of nature, and the love of virtue is her proudest boast.' 'Explain thyself,' said ALMORAN, 'for I cannot comprehend thee.' 'I mean,' said Osmyn, 'that he, whose life depends upon the caprice of a tyrant, is like the wretch whose sentence is already pronounced; and who, if the wind does but rush by his dungeon, imagines that it is the bow-string and the mute.' 'Fear not,' said ALMORAN, who now affected to be again calm; 'be still faithful, and thou shalt still be safe.' 'Alas!' said Osmyn, there is no diligence, no toil, no faith, that can secure the slave from the sudden phrensy of passion, from, the causeless rage either of drunkenness or lust. I am that slave; the slave of a tyrant whom I hate.' The confusion of ALMORAN was now too great to be concealed, and he stood silent with rage, fear, and indignation. Osmyn, supposing that his wonder suspended his belief of what he had heard, confirmed his declaration by an oath.

Whoever thou art, to whose mind ALMORAN, the mighty and the proud, is present; before whom, the lord of absolute dominion stands trembling and rebuked; who seest the possessor of power by which nature is controuled, pale and silent with anguish and disappointment: if, in the fury of thy wrath, thou hast aggravated weakness into guilt; if thou hast chilled the glow of affection, when it flushed the cheek in thy presence, with the frown of displeasure, or repressed the ardour of friendship with indifference or neglect; now, let thy heart smite thee: for, in thy folly, thou hast cast away that gem, which is the light of life; which power can never seize, and which gold can never buy!

The tyrant fell at once from his pride, like a star from Heaven; and Osmyn, still addressing him as HAMET, at once increased his misery and his fears: 'O,' said he, 'that the throne of Persia was thine! then should innocence enjoy her birth-right of peace, and hope should bid honest industry look upward. There is not one to whom ALMORAN has delegated power, nor one on whom his transient favour has bestowed any gift, who does not already feel his heart throb with the pangs of boding terror. Nor is there one who, if he did not fear the displeasure of the invisible power by whom the throne has been given to thy brother, would not immediately revolt to thee.'

ALMORAN, who had hitherto remained silent, now burst into a passionate exclamation of self pity: 'What can I do?' said he; 'and whither can I turn?' Osmyn, who mistook the cause of his distress, and supposed that he deplored only his want of power to avail himself of the general disposition in his favour, endeavoured to fortify his mind against despair: 'Your state,' said he, 'indeed is distressful, but not hopeless.' The king who, though addressed as, HAMET, was still betrayed by his confusion to answer as ALMORAN, smote his breast, and replied in an agony, 'It is hopeless!' Osmyn remarked his emotion and despair, with, a concern and astonishment that ALMORAN observed, and at once recollected his situation. He endeavoured to retract such expressions of trouble and despondency, as did not suit the character he hid assumed; and telling Osmyn that he thanked him for his friendship; and would improve the advantages it offered him, he directed him to acquaint the eunuchs that they were to admit him to ALMEIDA. When he was left alone; his doubts and perplexity held him long in suspense; a thousand expedients occurred to his mind by turns, and by turns were rejected.

His first thought was to put Osmyn to death: but he considered; that by this he would gain no advantage, as he would be in equal danger from whoever should succeed him: he considered also, that against Osmyn he was upon his guard; and that he might at any time learn, from him, whatever design might be formed in favour of HAMET, by assuming HAMET's appearance: that he

would thus be the confident of every secret, in which his own safety was concerned; and might disconcert the best contrived project at the very moment of its execution, when it would be too late for other measures to be taken: he determined, therefore, to let Osmyn live; at least, till it became more necessary to cut him off. Having in some degree soothed and fortified his mind by these reflections, he entered the apartment of ALMEIDA.

His hope was not founded upon a design to marry her under the appearance of HAMET; for that would be impossible, as the ceremony must have been performed by the priests who supposed the marriage with HAMET to have been forbidden by a divine command; and who, therefore, would not have consented, even supposing they would otherwise have ventured, at the request of HAMET, to perform a ceremony which they knew would be displeasing to ALMORAN: but he hoped to take advantage of her tenderness for his brother, and the particular circumstances of her situation, which made the solemnities of marriage impossible, to seduce her to gratify his desires, without the sanction which alone rendered the gratification of them lawful: if he succeeded in this design, he had reason to expect, either that his love would be extinguished by enjoyment; or that, if he should still desire to marry ALMEIDA, he might, by disclosing to her the artifice by which he had effected his purpose, prevail upon her to consent, as her connexion with HAMET, the chief obstacle to her marriage with him, would then be broken for ever; and as she might, perhaps, wish to sanctify the pleasure which she might be not unwilling to repeat, or at least to make that lawful which it would not be in her power to prevent.

In this disposition, and with this design, he was admitted to ALMEIDA; who, without suspicion of her danger, was exposed to the severest trial, in which every passion concurred to oppose her virtue: she was solicited by all the powers of subtilty and desire, under the appearance of a lover whose tenderness and fidelity had been long tried, and whose passion she returned with equal constancy and ardour; and she was thus solicited, when the rites which alone could consecrate their union, were impossible, and were rendered impossible by the guilty designs of a rival, in whose power she was, and from whom no other expedient offered her a deliverance. Thus deceived and betrayed, she received him with an excess of tenderness and joy, which flattered all his hopes, and for a moment suspended his misery. She enquired, with a fond and gentle solicitude, by what means he had gained admittance, and how he had provided for his retreat. He received and returned her caresses with a vehemence, in which, to less partial eyes, desire would have been more apparent than love; and in the tumult of his passion, he almost neglected her enquiries: finding, however, that she would be answered, he told her, that being by the permission of ALMORAN admitted to every part of the palace, except that of the women, he had found means to bribe the eunuch who kept the door; who was not in danger of detection, because ALMORAN, wearied with the tumult and fatigue of the day, had retired to sleep, and given order to be called at a certain hour. She then complained of the felicitations to which she was exposed, expressed her dread of the consequences she had reason to expect from some sudden sally of the tyrant's rage, and related with tears the brutal outrage she had suffered when he last left her. 'Though I abhorred him,' said she, 'I yet kneeled before him for thee. Let me bend in reverence to that Power, at whose look the whirlwinds are silent, and the seas are calm, that his fury has hitherto been restrained from hurting thee!'

At these words, the face of ALMORAN was again covered with the blushes of confusion: to be still beloved only as HAMET, and as ALMORAN to be still hated; to be thus reproached without anger, and wounded by those who knew not that they struck him; was a species of misery peculiar to himself, and had been incurred only by the acquisition of new powers, which he had requested and received as necessary to obtain that felicity, which the parsimony of nature had placed beyond his reach. His emotions, however, as by ALMEIDA they were supposed to be the emotions of HAMET, she imputed to a different cause: 'As Heaven,' says she, 'has preserved thee from death; so has it, for thy sake, preserved me from violation.' ALMORAN, whose passion had in this interval again surmounted his remorse, gazed eagerly upon her, and catching her to his bosom; 'Let us at least,' says he, 'secure the happiness that is now offered; let not these inestimable moments pass by us unimproved; but to shew that we deserve them, let them be devoted to love.' 'Let us then,' said ALMEIDA, 'escape together.' 'To escape with thee,' said ALMORAN, 'is impossible. I shall retire, and, like the shaft of Arabia, leave no mark behind, me; but the flight of ALMEIDA will at once be traced to him by whom I was admitted, and I shall thus retaliate his friendship with destruction.' 'Let him then,' said ALMEIDA, 'be the partner of our flight.' 'Urge it not now,' said ALMORAN; 'but trust to my prudence and my love, to select some hour that will be more favourable to our purpose. And yet,' said he, 'even then, we shall, as now, sigh in vain for the completion of our wishes: by whom shall our hands be joined, when in the opinion of the priests it has been forbidden from above?' 'Save thyself then,' said ALMEIDA, 'and leave me to my fate.' 'Not so,' said ALMORAN. 'What else,' replied ALMEIDA, 'is in our power?' 'It is in our power,' said ALMORAN, 'to seize that joy, to which a public form can give us no new claim; for the public form can only declare that right by which I claim it now.'

As they were now reclining upon a sofa, he threw his arm round her; but she suddenly sprung up, and burst from him: the tear started to her eye, and she gazed upon him with an earnest but yet tender look: 'Is it?' says she—'No sure, it is not the voice of HAMET!' 'O! yes,' said ALMORAN, 'what other voice should call thee to cancel at once the wrongs of HAMET and ALMEIDA; to secure the treasures of thy love from the hand of the robber; to hide, the joys, which if now we lose we may lose for ever, in the sacred and inviolable stores of the past, and place them beyond the power not of ALMORAN only but of fate?' With this wild effusion of desire, he caught her again to his breast, and finding no resistance his heart exulted in his success; but the next moment, to the total disappointment of his hopes, he perceived that she had fainted in his arms. When she

recovered, she once more disengaged herself from him, and turning away her face, she burst into tears. When her voice could be heard, she covered herself with her veil, and turning again towards him, 'All but this,' said she, 'I had learnt to bear; and how has this been deserved by ALMEIDA of HAMET? You was my only solace in distress; and when the tears have stolen from my eyes in silence and in solitude, I thought on thee; I thought upon the chaste ardour of thy sacred friendship, which was softened, refined, and exalted into love. This was my hoarded treasure; and the thoughts of possessing this; soothed all my anguish with a miser's happiness, who, blest in the consciousness of hidden wealth, despises cold and hunger, and rejoices in the midst of all the miseries that make poverty dreadful: this was my last retreat; but I am now desolate and forlorn, and my soul looks round, with terror, for that refuge which it can never find.' 'Find that refuge,' said ALMORAN, 'in me.' 'Alas!' said ALMEIDA, 'can he afford me refuge from my sorrows, who, for the guilty pleasures of a transient moment, would forever sully the purity of my mind, and aggravate misfortune by the consciousness of guilt?'

As ALMORAN now perceived, that it was impossible, by any importunity, to induce her to violate her principles; he had nothing more to attempt, but to subvert them. 'When,' said he, 'shall ALMEIDA awake, and these dreams of folly and superstition vanish? That only is virtue, by which happiness is produced; and whatever produces happiness, is therefore virtue; and the forms, and words and rites, which priests have pretended to be required by Heaven, are the fraudulent arts only by which they govern mankind.'

ALMEIDA, by this impious insult, was roused from grief to indignation: 'As thou hast now dared,' said she, 'to deride the laws, which thou wouldst first have broken; so hast thou broken for ever the tender bonds, by which my soul was united to thine. Such as I fondly believed thee, thou art not; and what thou art, I have never loved. I have loved a delusive phantom only, which, while I strove to grasp it, has vanished from me.' ALMORAN attempted to reply; but on such a subject, neither her virtue nor her wisdom would permit debate. 'That prodigy,' said she, 'which I thought was the sleight of cunning, or the work of sorcery, I now revere as the voice of Heaven; which, as it knew thy heart, has in mercy saved me from thy arms. To the will of Heaven shall my will be obedient; and my voice also shall pronounce, to ALMORAN ALMEIDA.'

ALMORAN, whose whole soul was now suspended in attention, conceived new hopes of success; and foresaw the certain accomplishment of his purpose, though by an effect directly contrary to that which he had laboured to produce. Thus to have incurred the hatred of ALMEIDA in the form of HAMET, was more fortunate than to have taken advantage of her love; the path that led to his wishes was now clear and open; and his marriage with ALMEIDA in his own person, waited only till he could resume it. He, therefore, instead of soothing, provoked her resentment: 'If thou hast loved a phantom,' said he, 'which existed only in imagination; on such a phantom my love also has been fixed: thou hast, indeed, only the form of what I called ALMEIDA; my love thou hast rejected, because thou hast never loved; the object of thy passion was not HAMET, but a throne; and thou hast made the observance of rituals, in which folly only can suppose there is good or ill, a pretence to violate thy faith, that thou mayst still gratify thy ambition.'

To this injurious reproach, ALMEIDA made no reply; and ALMORAN immediately quitted her apartment, that he might reassume his own figure, take advantage of the disposition which, under the appearance of HAMET, he had produced in favour of himself: But Osmyn, who supposing him to be HAMET, had intercepted and detained him as he was going to ALMEIDA, now intercepted him a second time at his return, having placed himself near the door of the apartment for that purpose.

Osmyn was by no means satisfied with the issue of their last interview: he had perceived a perturbation in the mind of ALMORAN, for which, imagining him to be HAMET, he could not account; and which seemed more extraordinary upon a review, than when it happened; he, therefore, again entered into conversation with him, in which he farther disclosed his sentiments and designs. ALMORAN, notwithstanding the impatience natural to his temper and situation, was thus long detained listening to Osmyn, by the united influence of his curiosity and his fears; his enquiries still alarmed him with new terrors, by discovering new objects of distrust, and new instances of disaffection: still, however, he resolved, not yet to remove Osmyn from his post, that he might give no alarm by any appearance of suspicion, and consequently learn with more ease; and detect with more certainty, any project that might be formed against him.

CHAP. XVI.

ALMEIDA, as soon as she was left alone, began to review the scene that had just past; and was every moment affected with new wonder, grief, and resentment. She now deplored her own misfortune; and now conceived a design to punish the author of it, from whose face she supposed the hand of adversity had torn the mask under which he had deceived her: it appeared to her very easy, to take a severe revenge upon HAMET for the indignity which she supposed he had offered her, by complaining of it to ALMORAN; and telling him, that he had gained admittance to her by bribing the eunuch who kept the door. The thought of thus giving him up, was one moment rejected, as arising from a vindictive spirit; and the next indulged, as an act of justice to ALMORAN, and a punishment due to the hypocrisy of HAMET: to the first she inclined, when her grief, which was still mingled with a tender remembrance of the man she loved, was

predominant; and to the last, when her grief gave way to indignation.

Thus are we inclined to consider the same action, either as a virtue, or a vice, by the influence of different passions, which prompt us either to perform or to avoid it. ALMEIDA, from deliberating whether she should accuse HAMET to ALMORAN, or conceal his fault, was led to consider what punishment he would either incur or escape in consequence of her determination; and the images that rushed into her mind, the moment this became the object of her thoughts, at once determined her to be silent: 'Could I bear to see,' said she, 'that hand, which has so often trembled with delight when it enfolded mine, convulsed and black! those eyes, that as often as they gazed upon me were dissolved in tears of tenderness and love, start from the sockets! and those lips that breathed the softest sighs of elegant desire, distorted and gasping in the convulsions of death!'

From this image, her mind recoiled in an agony of terror and pity; her heart sunk within her; her limbs trembled she sunk down upon the sofa, and burst into tears.

By this time, HAMET, on whose form the likeness of ALMORAN was still impressed, had reached the palace. He went instantly towards the apartment of the women. Instead of that cheerful alacrity, that mixture of zeal and reverence and affection, which his eye had been used to find where-ever it was turned, he now observed confusion, anxiety and terror; whoever he met, made haste to prostrate themselves before him, and feared to look up till he was past. He went on, however, with a hasty pace; and coming up to the eunuch's guard, he said with an impatient tone; 'To ALMEIDA.' The slave immediately made way before him, and conducted him to the door of the apartment, which he would not otherwise have been able to find, and for which he could not directly enquire.

When he entered, his countenance expressed all the passions that his situation had roused in his mind. He first looked sternly round him, to see whether ALMORAN was not present; and then fetching a deep sigh he turned his eyes, with a look of mournful tenderness, upon ALMEIDA. His first view was to discover, whether ALMORAN had already supplanted him; and for this purpose he collected the whole strength of his mind: he considered that he appeared now, not as HAMET, but as ALMORAN; and that he was to question ALMEIDA concerning ALMORAN, while she had mistaken him for HAMET; he was therefore to maintain the character, at whatever expence, till his doubts were resolved, and his fears either removed or confirmed: he was so firmly persuaded, that ALMORAN had been there before him, that he did not ask the question, but supposed the fact; he restrained alike both his tenderness and his fears; and looking earnestly upon ALMEIDA, who had risen up in his presence with blushes and confusion, 'To me,' says he, 'is ALMEIDA still cold? and has she lavished all her love upon HAMET?'

At the name of HAMET, the blushes and confusion of ALMEIDA increased: her mind was still full of the images, which had risen from the thought of what HAMET might suffer, if ALMORAN should know that he had been with her; and though she feared that their interview was discovered, yet she hoped it might be only suspected, and in that case the removal or confirmation of the suspicions, on which the fate of HAMET depended, would devolve upon her.

In this situation, she, who a few moments before doubted, whether she should not voluntarily give him up, when nothing more was necessary for his safety than to be silent; now determined, with whatever reluctance, to secure him, though it could not be done without dissimulation, and though it was probable that in this dissimulation she would be detected. Instead, therefore, of answering the question, she repeated it: 'On whom said my lord, on HAMET?' HAMET, whose suspicions were increased by the evasion, replied with great emotion, 'Aye, on HAMET; did he not this moment leave you?' 'Leave me this moment?' said ALMEIDA, with yet greater confusion, and deeper blushes. HAMET, in the impatience of his jealousy, concluded, that the passions which he saw expressed in her countenance, and which arose from the struggle between her regard to truth and her tenderness for HAMET, proceeded from the consciousness of what he had most reason to dread, and she to conceal, a breach of virtue, to which she had been betrayed by his own appearance united with the vices of his brother: he, therefore, drew back from her with a look of inexpressible anguish, and stood some time silent. She observed, that in his countenance there was more expression of trouble, than rage; she, therefore, hoped to divert him from pursuing his enquiries, by at once removing his jealousy; which she supposed would be at an end, as soon as she should disclose the resolution she had taken in his favour. Addressing him, therefore, as ALMORAN, with a voice which though it was gentle and soothing, was yet mournful and tremulous; 'Do not turn from me,' said she, with those unfriendly and frowning looks; give me now that love which so lately you offered, and with all the future I will atone the past.'

Upon HAMET, whose heart involuntarily answered to the voice of ALMEIDA, these words had irresistible and instantaneous force; but recollecting, in a moment, whose form he bore, and to whom they were addressed, they struck him with new astonishment, and increased the torments of his mind. Supposing what he at first feared had happened, and that ALMORAN had seduced her as HAMET; he could not account for her now addressing him, as ALMORAN, with words of favour and compliance: he, therefore, renewed his enquiries concerning himself, with apprehensions of a different kind. She, who was still solicitous to put an end to the enquiry, as well for the sake of HAMET, as to prevent her own embarrassment, replied with a sigh, 'Let not thy peace be interrupted by one thought of HAMET; for of HAMET ALMEIDA shall think no more.' HAMET, who, though he had fortified himself against whatever might have happened to her person, could not bear the alienation of her mind, cried out, with looks of distraction and a voice scarcely human, 'Not think of HAMET!' ALMEIDA, whose astonishment was every moment increasing, replied, with a

tender and interesting enquiry, 'Is ALMORAN then offended, that ALMEIDA would think of HAMET no more?' HAMET, being thus addressed by the name of his brother, again recollected his situation; and now first conceived the idea, that the alteration of ALMEIDA'S sentiments with respect to himself, might be the effect of some violence offered her by ALMORAN in his likeness; he, therefore, recurred to his first purpose, and determined, by a direct enquiry, to discover whether she had seen him under that appearance. This enquiry he urged with the utmost solemnity and ardour, in terms suitable to his present appearance and situation: 'Tell me,' said he, 'have these doors been open to HAMET? Has he obtained possession of that treasure, which, by the voice of Heaven, has been allotted to me?'

To this double question, ALMEIDA answered by a single negative; and her answer, therefore, was both false and true: it was true that her person was still inviolate, and it was true also that HAMET had not been admitted to her; yet her denial of it was false, for she believed the contrary; ALMORAN only had been admitted, but she had received him as his brother. HAMET, however, was satisfied with the answer, and did not discover its fallacy. He looked up to Heaven, with an expression of gratitude and joy; and then turning to ALMEIDA, 'Swear then,' said he, 'that thou hast granted to HAMET, no pledge of thy love which should be reserved for me.' ALMEIDA, who now thought nothing more than the asseveration necessary to quiet his mind, immediately complied: 'I swear,' said she, 'that to HAMET I have given nothing, which thou wouldst wish me to withhold: the power that has devoted my person to thee, has disunited my heart from HAMET, whom I renounce in thy presence for ever.'

HAMET, whose fortitude and recollection were again overborne, was thrown into an agitation of mind, which discovered itself by looks and gestures very different from those which ALMEIDA had expected, and overwhelmed her with new confusion and disappointment: that he, who had so lately solicited her love with all the vehemence of a desire impatient to be gratified, should now receive a declaration that she was ready to comply with marks of distress and anger, was a mystery which she could not solve. In the mean time, the struggle in his breast became every moment more violent: 'Where then,' said he, 'is the constancy which you vowed to HAMET; and for what instance of his love is he now forsaken?'

ALMEIDA was now more embarrassed than before; she felt all the force of the reproof, supposing it to have been given by ALMORAN; and she could be justified only by relating the particular, which at the expence of her sincerity she had determined to conceal. ALMORAN was now exalted in her opinion, while his form was animated by the spirit of HAMET; as much as HAMET had been degraded, while his form was animated by the spirit of ALMORAN. In his resentment of her perfidy to his rival, though it favoured his fondest and most ardent wishes, there was an abhorrence of vice, and a generosity of mind, which she supposed to have been incompatible with his character. To his reproach, she could reply only by complaint; and could no otherwise evade his character, than by observing the inconsistency of his own behaviour: 'Your words,' said she, 'are daggers to my heart. You condemn me for a compliance with your own wishes; and for obedience to that voice, which you supposed to have revealed the will of Heaven. Has the caprice of desire already wandered to a new object? and do you now seek a pretence to refuse, when it is freely offered, what so lately you would have taken by force?'

HAMET, who was now fired with resentment against ALMEIDA, whom yet he could not behold without desire; and who, at the same moment, was impatient to revenge his wrongs upon ALMORAN; was suddenly prompted to satisfy all his passions, by taking advantage of the wiles of ALMORAN, and the perfidy of ALMEIDA, to defeat the one and to punish the other. It was now in his power instantly to consummate his marriage, as a priest might be procured without a moment's delay, and as ALMEIDA'S consent was already given; he would then obtain the possession of her person, by the very act in which she perfidiously resigned it to his rival; to whom he would then leave the beauties he had already possessed, and cast from him in disdain, as united with a mind that he could never love. As his imagination was fired with the first conception of this design, he caught her to his breast with a fury, in which all the passions in all their rage were at once concentrated: 'Let the priest,' said he, 'instantly unite us. Let us comprize, in one moment, in this instant, NOW, our whole of being, and exclude alike the future and the past!' Then grasping her still in his arms, he looked up to heaven: 'Ye powers,' said he, 'invisible but yet present, who mould my changing and unresisting form; prolong, but for one hour, that mysterious charm, that is now upon me, and I will be ever after subservient to your will!'

ALMEIDA, who was terrified at the furious ardor of this unintelligible address, shrunk from his embrace, pale and trembling, without power to reply. HAMET gazed tenderly upon her; and recollecting the purity and tenderness with which he had loved her, his virtues suddenly recovered their force; he dismissed her from his embrace; and turning from her, he dropped in silence the tear that started to his eye, and expressed, in a low and faltering voice, the thoughts that rushed upon his mind: 'No,' said he; HAMET shall still disdain the joy, which is at once sordid and transient: in the breast of HAMET, lust shall not be the pander of revenge. Shall I, who have languished for the pure delight which can arise only from the interchange of soul with soul, and is endeared by mutual confidence and complacency; shall I snatch under this disguise, which belies my features and degrades my virtue, a casual possession of faithless beauty, which I despise and hate? Let this be the portion of those, that hate me without a cause; but let this be far from me!' At this thought, he felt a sudden elation of mind; and the conscious dignity of virtue, that in such a conflict was victorious, rendered him, in this glorious moment, superior to misfortune: his gesture became calm, and his countenance sedate; he considered the wrongs he suffered, not as a sufferer, but as a judge; and he determined at once to discover himself to

ALMEIDA, and to reproach her with her crime. He remarked her confusion without pity, as the effect not of grief but of guilt; and fixing his eyes upon her, with the calm severity of a superior and offended being, 'Such,' said he, 'is the benevolence of the Almighty to the children of the dust, that our misfortunes are, like poisons, antidotes to each other.'

ALMEIDA, whose faculties were now suspended by wonder and expectation, looked earnestly at him, but continued silent. 'Thy looks,' said HAMET, are full of wonder; but as yet thy wonder has no cause, in comparison of that which shall be revealed. Thou knowest the prodigy, which so lately parted HAMET and ALMEIDA: I am that HAMET, thou art that ALMEIDA.' ALMEIDA would now have interrupted him; but HAMET raised his voice, and demanded to be heard: 'At that moment,' said he, 'wretched as I am, the child of error and disobedience, my heart repined in secret at the destiny which had been written upon my head; for I then thought thee faithful and constant: but if our hands had been then united, I should have been more wretched than I am; for I now know that thou art fickle and false. To know thee, though it has pierced my soul with sorrow, has yet healed the wound which was inflicted when I lost thee: and though I am now compelled to wear the form of ALMORAN, whose vices are this moment disgracing mine, yet in the balance I shall be weighed as HAMET, and I shall suffer only as I am found wanting.'

ALMEIDA, whose mind was now in a tumult that bordered upon distraction, bewildered in a labyrinth of doubt and wonder, and alike dreading the consequence of what she heard, whether it was false or true, was yet impatient to confute or confirm it; and as soon as she had recovered her speech, urged him for some token of the prodigy he asserted, which he might easily have given, by relating any of the incidents which themselves only could know. But just at this moment, ALMORAN, having at last disengaged himself from Osmyn, by whom he had been long detained, resumed his own figure: and while the eyes of ALMEIDA were fixed upon HAMET, his powers were suddenly taken from him, and restored in an instant; and she beheld the features of ALMORAN vanish, and gazed with astonishment upon his own: 'Thy features change!' said she, 'and thou indeed art HAMET.' 'The sudden trance,' said he, 'has restored me to myself; and from my wrongs where shalt thou be hidden?' This reproach was more than she could sustain, but he caught her as she was falling, and supported her in his arms. This incident renewed in a moment all the tenderness of his love: while he beheld her distress, and pressed her by the embrace that sustained her to his bosom, he forgot every injury which he supposed she had done him; and perceived her recover with a pleasure, that for a moment suspended the sense of his misfortunes.

Her first reflection was upon the snare, in which she had been taken; and her first sensation was joy that she had escaped: she saw at once the whole complication of events that had deceived and distressed her; and nothing more was now necessary, than to explain them to HAMET; which, however, she could not do, without discovering the insincerity of her answers to the enquiries which he had made, while she mistook him for his brother: 'If in my heart,' says she, 'thou hast found any virtue, let it incline thee to pity the vice that is mingled with it: by the vice I have been ensnared, but I have been delivered by the virtue. ALMORAN, for now I know that it was not thee, ALMORAN, when he possessed thy form, was with me: he prophaned thy love, by attempts to supplant my virtue; I resisted his importunity, and escaped perdition; but the guilt of ALMORAN drew my resentment upon HAMET. I thought the vices which, under thy form, I discovered in his bosom, were thine; and in the anguish of grief, indignation, and disappointment, my heart renounced thee: yet, as I could not give thee up to death, I could not discover to ALMORAN the attempt which I imputed to thee; when you questioned me, therefore, as ALMORAN, I was betrayed to dissimulation, by the tenderness which still melted my heart for HAMET.' 'I believe thee,' said HAMET, catching her in a transport to his breast: 'I love thee for thy virtue; and may the pure and exalted beings, who are superior to the passions that now throb in my heart, forgive me, if I love thee also for thy fault. Yet, let the danger to which it betrayed thee, teach us still to walk in the strait path, and commit the keeping of our peace to the Almighty; for he that wanders in the maze of falsehood, shall pass by the good that he would meet, and shall meet the evil that he would shun. I also was tempted; but I was strengthened to resist: if I had used the power, which I derived from the arts that have been practised against me, to return evil for evil; if I had not disdained a secret and unavowed revenge, and the unhallowed pleasures of a brutal appetite; I might have possessed thee in the form of ALMORAN, and have wronged irreparably myself and thee: for how could I have been admitted, as HAMET, to the beauties which I had enjoyed as ALMORAN? and how couldst thou have given, to ALMORAN, what in reality had been appropriated by HAMET?'

CHAP. XVII.

But while ALMEIDA and HAMET were thus congratulating each other upon the evils which they had escaped, they were threatened by others, which, however obvious, they had overlooked.

ALMORAN, who was now exulting in the prospect of success that had exceeded his hopes, and who supposed the possession of ALMEIDA before the end of the next hour, was as certain as that the next hour would arrive, suddenly entered the apartment; but upon discovering HAMET, he started back astonished and disappointed. HAMET stood unmoved; and regarded him with a fixed and steady look, that at once reproached and confounded him. 'What treachery,' said ALMORAN, 'has been practised against me? What has brought thee to this place; and how hast thou gained admittance?' 'Against thy peace,' said HAMET, 'no treachery has been practised, but by thyself. By

those arts in which thy vices have employed the powers of darkness, I have been brought hither; and by those arts I have gained admittance: thy form which they have imposed upon me, was my passport; and by the restoration of my own, I have detected and disappointed the fraud, which the double change was produced to execute. ALMEIDA, whom, as HAMET, thou couldst teach to hate thee, it is now impossible that, as ALMORAN, thou shouldst teach to love.'

ALMEIDA, who perceived the storm to be gathering which the next moment would burst upon the head of HAMET, interposed between them, and addressed each of them by turns; urging HAMET to be silent, and conjuring ALMORAN to be merciful. ALMORAN, however, without regarding ALMEIDA, or making any reply to HAMET, struck the ground with his foot, and the messengers of death, to whom the signal was familiar, appeared at the door. ALMORAN then commanded them to seize his brother, with a countenance pale and livid, and a voice that was broken by rage. HAMET was still unmoved; but ALMEIDA threw herself at the feet of ALMORAN, and embracing his knees was about to speak, but he broke from her with sudden fury: 'If the world should sue,' said he, 'I would spurn it off. There is no pang that cunning can invent, which he shall not suffer: and when death at length shall disappoint my vengeance, his mangled limbs shall be cast out unburied, to feed the beasts of the desert and the fowls of heaven.' During this menace, ALMEIDA sunk down without signs of life; and HAMET struggling in vain for liberty to raise her from the ground, she was carried off by some women who were called to her assistance.

In this awful crisis, HAMET, who felt his own fortitude give way, looked up, and though he conceived no words, a prayer ascended from his heart to heaven, and was accepted by Him, to whom our thoughts are known while they are yet afar off. For HAMET, the fountain of strength was opened from above; his eye sparkled with confidence, and his breast was dilated by hope. He commanded the guard that were leading him away to stop, and they implicitly obeyed; he then stretched out his hand towards ALMORAN, whose spirit was rebuked before him: 'Hear me,' said he, 'thou tyrant! for it is thy genius that speaks by my voice. What has been the fruit of all thy guilt, but accumulated misery? What joy hast thou derived from undivided empire? what joy from the prohibition of my marriage with ALMEIDA? what good from that power, which some evil daemon has added to thy own? what, at this moment, is thy portion, but rage and anguish, disappointment, and despair? Even I, whom thou seest the captive of thy power, whom thou hast wronged of empire, and yet more of love; even I am happy, in comparison of thee. I know that my sufferings, however multiplied, are short, for they shall end with life, and no life is long: then shall the everlasting ages commence; and through everlasting ages thy sufferings shall increase. The moment is now near, when thou shalt tread that line which alone is the path to heaven, the narrow path that is stretched over the pit, which smokes for ever, and for ever! When thine aking eye shall look forward to the end that is far distant, and when behind thou shalt find no retreat; when thy steps shall falter, and thou shalt tremble at the depth beneath, which thought itself is not able to fathom; then shall the angel of distribution lift his inexorable hand against thee: from the irremeable way shall thy feet be smitten; thou shalt plunge in the burning flood; and though thou shalt live for ever, thou shalt rise no more.'

As the words of HAMET struck ALMORAN with terror, and over-awed him by an influence which he could not surmount; HAMET was forced from his presence, before any other orders had been given about him, than were implied in the menace that was addressed to ALMEIDA: no violence, therefore, was yet offered him; but he was secured, till the king's pleasure should be known, in a dungeon not far from the palace, to which he was conducted by a subterraneous passage; and the door being closed upon him, he was left in silence, darkness, and solitude, such as may be imagined before the voice of the Almighty produced light and life.

When ALMORAN was sufficiently recollected to consider his situation, he despaired of prevailing upon ALMEIDA to gratify his wishes, till her attachment to HAMET was irreparably broken; and he, therefore, resolved to put him to death. With this view, he repeated the signal, which convened the ministers of death to his presence; but the sound was lost in a peal of thunder that instantly followed it, and the Genius, from whom he received the talisman, again stood before him.

'ALMORAN,' said the Genius, 'I am now compelled into thy presence by the command of a superior power; whom, if I should dare to disobey, the energy of his will might drive me, in a moment, beyond the limits of nature and the reach of thought, to spend eternity alone, without comfort, and without hope.' 'And what,' said ALMORAN, 'is the will of this mighty and tremendous being?' 'His will,' said the Genius, 'I will reveal to thee. Hitherto, thou hast been enabled to lift the rod of adversity against thy brother, by powers which nature has not entrusted to man: as these powers, and these only, have put him into thy hand, thou art forbidden to lift it against his life; if thou hadst prevailed against him by thy own power, thy own power would not have been restrained: to afflict him thou art still free; but thou art not permitted to destroy. At the moment, in which thou shalt conceive a thought to cut him off by violence, the punishment of thy disobedience shall commence, and the pangs of death shall be upon thee.' 'If then,' said ALMORAN, 'this awful power is the friend of HAMET; what yet remains, in the stores of thy wisdom, for me? 'Till he dies, I am at once precluded from peace, and safety, and enjoyment.' 'Look up,' said the Genius, 'for the iron hand of despair is not yet upon thee. Thou canst be happy, only by his death; and his life thou art forbidden to take away: yet mayst thou still arm him against himself; and if he dies by his own hand, thy wishes will be full.' 'O name,' said ALMORAN, 'but the means, and it shall this moment be accomplished!' 'Select,' said the Genius, 'some friend—'

At the name of friend, ALMORAN started and looked round in despair. He recollected the perfidy of Osmyn; and he suspected that, from the same cause, all were perfidious: 'While HAMET has yet life,' said he, 'I fear the face of man, as of a savage that is prowling for his prey.' 'Relinquish not

yet thy hopes,' said the Genius; 'for one, in whom thou wilt joyfully confide, may be found. Let him secretly obtain admittance to HAMET, as if by stealth; let him profess an abhorrence of thy reign, and compassion for his misfortunes; let him pretend that the rack is even now preparing for him; that death is inevitable, but that torment may be avoided: let him then give him a poignard, as the instrument of deliverance; and, perhaps, his own hand may strike the blow, that shall give thee peace.' 'But who,' said ALMORAN, 'shall go upon this important errand?' 'Who,' replied the Genius, 'but thyself? Hast thou not the power to assume the form of whomsoever thou wouldst have sent?' 'I would have sent Osmyn,' said ALMORAN, 'but that I know him to be a traitor.' 'Let the form of Osmyn then,' said the Genius, 'be thine. The shadows of the evening have now stretched themselves upon the earth: command Osmyn to attend thee alone in the grove, where Solyman, thy father, was used to meditate by night; and when thy form shall be impressed upon him, I will there seal his eyes in sleep, till the charm shall be broken; so shall no evil be attempted against thee, and the transformation shall be known only to thyself.'

ALMORAN, whose breast was again illuminated by hope, was about to express his gratitude and joy; but the Genius suddenly disappeared. He began, therefore, immediately to follow the instructions that he had received: he commanded Osmyn to attend him in the grove, and forbid every other to approach; by the power of the talisman he assumed his appearance, and saw him sink down in the supernatural slumber before him: he then quitted the place, and prepared to visit HAMET in the prison.

CHAP. XVIII.

The officer who commanded the guard that kept the gate of the prison, was Caled. He was now next in trust and power to Osmyn: but as he had proposed a revolt to HAMET, in which Osmyn had refused to concur, he knew that his life was now in his power; he dreaded lest, for some slight offence, or in some fit of causeless displeasure, he should disclose the secret to ALMORAN, who would then certainly condemn him to death. To secure this fatal secret, and put an end to his inquietude, he resolved, from the moment that ALMORAN was established upon the throne, to find some opportunity secretly to destroy Osmyn: in this resolution, he was confirmed by the enmity, which inferior minds never fail to conceive against that merit, which they cannot but envy without spirit to emulate, and by which they feel themselves disgraced without an effort to acquire equal honour; it was confirmed also by the hope which Caled had conceived, that, upon the death of Osmyn, he should succeed to his post: his apprehensions likewise were increased, by the gloom which he remarked in the countenance of Osmyn; and which not knowing that it arose from fear, he imputed to jealousy and malevolence.

When ALMORAN, who had now assumed the appearance of Osmyn, had passed the subterranean avenue to the dungeon in which HAMET was confined, he was met by Caled; of whom he demanded admittance to the prince, and produced his own signet, as a testimony that he came with the authority of the king. As it was Caled's interest to secure the favour of Osmyn till an opportunity should offer to cut him off, he received him with every possible mark of respect and reverence; and when he was gone into the dungeon, he commanded a beverage to be prepared for him against he should return, in which such spices were infused, as might expel the malignity which, in that place, might be received with the breath of life; and taking himself the key of the prison, he waited at the door.

When ALMORAN entered the dungeon, with a lamp which he had received from Caled, he found HAMET sitting upon the ground: his countenance was impressed with the characters of grief; but it retained no marks either of anger or fear. When he looked up, and saw the features of Osmyn, he judged that the mutes were behind him; and, therefore, rose up, to prepare himself for death. ALMORAN beheld his calmness and fortitude with the involuntary praise of admiration; yet persisted in his purpose without remorse. 'I am come,' said he, 'by the command of ALMORAN, to denounce that fate, the bitterness of which I will enable thee to avoid.' 'And what is there,' said HAMET, 'in my fortunes, that has prompted thee to the danger of this attempt?' 'The utmost that I can give thee,' said ALMORAN, 'I can give thee without danger to myself: but though I have been placed, by the hand of fortune, near the person of the tyrant, yet has my heart in secret been thy friend. If I am the messenger of evil, impute it to him only by whom it is devised. The rack is now preparing to receive thee; and every art of ingenious cruelty will be exhausted to protract and to increase the agonies of death.' 'And what,' said HAMET, 'can thy friendship offer me?' 'I can offer thee,' said ALMORAN, 'that which will at once dismiss thee to those regions, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary rest for ever.' He then produced the poignard from his bosom; and presenting it to HAMET, 'Take this,' said he, 'and sleep in peace.'

HAMET, whose heart was touched with sudden joy at the sight of so unexpected a remedy for every evil, did not immediately reflect, that he was not at liberty to apply it: he snatched it in a transport from the hand of ALMORAN, and expressed his sense of the obligation by clasping him in his arms, and shedding the tears of gratitude in his breast. 'Be quick,' said ALMORAN: 'this moment I must leave thee; and in the next, perhaps, the messengers of destruction may bind thee to the rack.' 'I will be quick,' said HAMET; 'and the sigh that shall last linger upon my lips, shall bless thee.' They then bid each other farewell: ALMORAN retired from the dungeon, and the door was again closed upon HAMET.

Caled, who waited at the door till the supposed Osmyn should return, presented him with the beverage which he had prepared, of which he recounted the virtues; and ALMORAN received it with pleasure, and having eagerly drank it off, returned to the palace. As soon as he was alone, he resumed his own figure, and fate, with a confident and impatient expectation, that in a short time a messenger would be dispatched to acquaint him with the death of HAMET. HAMET, in the mean time, having grasped the dagger in his hand, and raised his arm for the blow, 'This,' said he, 'is my passport to the realms of peace, the immediate and only object of my hope!' But at these words, his mind instantly took the alarm: 'Let me reflect,' said he, 'a moment: from what can I derive hope in death?—from that patient and persevering virtue, and from that alone, by which we fulfill the task that is assigned us upon the earth. Is it not our duty, to suffer, as well as to act? If my own hand consigns me to the grave, what can it do but perpetuate that misery, which, by disobedience, I would shun? what can it do, but cut off my life and hope together?' With this reflection he threw the dagger from him; and stretching himself again upon the ground, resigned himself to the disposal of the Father of man, most Merciful and Almighty.

ALMORAN, who had now resolved to send for the intelligence which he longed to hear, was dispatching a messenger to the prison, when he was told that Caled desired admittance to his presence. At the name of Caled, he started up in an extasy of joy; and not doubting but that HAMET was dead, he ordered him to be instantly admitted. When he came in, ALMORAN made no enquiry about HAMET, because he would not appear to expect the event, which yet he supposed he had brought about; he, therefore, asked him only upon what business he came. 'I come, my lord,' said he, 'to apprise thee of the treachery of Osmyn.' 'I know,' said ALMORAN, 'that Osmyn is a traitor; but of what dost thou accuse him?' 'As I was but now,' said he, 'changing the guard which is set upon HAMET, Osmyn came up to the door of the prison, and producing the royal signet demanded admittance. As the command which I received, when he was delivered to my custody, was absolute, that no foot should enter, I doubted whether the token had not been obtained, by fraud, for some other purpose; yet, as he required admittance only, I complied: but that if any treachery had been contrived, I might detect it; and that no artifice might be practised to favour an escape; I waited myself at the door, and listening to their discourse I overheard the treason that I suspected.' 'What then,' said ALMORAN, 'didst thou hear?' 'A part of what was said,' replied Caled, 'escaped me: but I heard Osmyn, like a perfidious and presumptuous slave, call ALMORAN a tyrant; I heard him profess an inviolable friendship for HAMET, and assure him of deliverance. What were the means, I know not; but he talked of speed, and supposed that the effect was certain.'

ALMORAN, though he was still impatient to hear of HAMET; and discovered, that if he was dead, his death was unknown to Caled; was yet notwithstanding rejoiced at what he heard: and as he knew what Caled told him to be true, as the conversation he related had passed between himself and HAMET, he exulted in the pleasing confidence that he had yet a friend; the glooms of suspicion, which had involved his mind, were dissipated, and his countenance brightened with complacency and joy. He had delayed to put Osmyn to death, only because he could appoint no man to succeed him, of whom his fears did not render him equally suspicious: but having now found, in Caled, a friend, whose fidelity had been approved when there had been no intention to try it; and being impatient to reward his zeal, and to invest his fidelity with that power, which would render his services most important; he took a ring from his own finger, and putting it upon that of Caled, 'Take this,' said he, 'as a pledge, that to-morrow Osmyn shall lose his head; and that, from this moment, thou art invested with his power.'

Caled having, in the conversation between ALMORAN and HAMET, discerned indubitable treachery, which he imputed to Osmyn whose appearance ALMORAN had then assumed, eagerly seized the opportunity to destroy him; he, therefore, not trusting to the event of his accusation, had mingled poison in the bowl which he presented to ALMORAN when he came out from HAMET: this, however, at first he had resolved to conceal.

In consequence of his accusation, he supposed Osmyn would be questioned upon the rack; he supposed also, that the accusation, as it was true, would be confirmed by his confession; that what ever he should then say to the prejudice of his accuser, would be disbelieved; and that when after a few hours the poison should take effect, no inquisition would be made into the death of a criminal, whom the bow-string or the scimitar would otherwise have been employed to destroy. But he now hoped to derive new merit from an act of zeal, which ALMORAN had approved before it was known, by condemning his rival to die, whose death he had already insured: 'May the wishes of my lord,' said he, 'be always anticipated; and may it be found, that whatever he ordains is already done: may he accept the zeal of his servant, whom he has delighted to honour; for, before the light of the morning shall return, the eyes of Osmyn shall close in everlasting darkness.'

At these words, the countenance of ALMORAN changed; his cheeks became pale, and his lips trembled: 'What then,' said he, 'hast thou done?' Caled, who was terrified and astonished, threw himself upon the ground, and was unable to reply. ALMORAN, who now, by the utmost effort of his mind, restrained his confusion and his fear, that he might learn the truth from Caled without dissimulation or disguise, raised him from the ground and repeated his enquiry. 'If I have erred,' said Caled, 'impute it not: when I had detected the treachery of Osmyn, I was transported by my zeal for thee. For proof that he is guilty, I appeal now to himself; for he yet lives: but that he might not escape the hand of justice, I mingled, in the bowl I give him, the drugs of death.'

At these words, ALMORAN, striking his hands together, looked upward in an agony of despair and horror, and fell back upon a sofa that was behind him. Caled, whose astonishment was equal to his disappointment and his fears, approached him with a trembling though hasty pace; but as he

stooped to support him, ALMORAN suddenly drew his dagger and stabbed him to the heart; and repeated the blow with reproaches and execrations, till his strength failed him.

In this dreadful moment, the Genius once more appeared before him; at the sight of whom he waved his hand, but was unable to speak. 'Nothing,' said the Genius, 'that has happened to ALMORAN, is hidden from me. Thy peace has been destroyed alike by the defection of Osmyn, and by the zeal of Caled: thy life may yet be preserved; but it can be preserved only by a charm, which HAMET must apply.' ALMORAN, who had raised his eyes, and conceived some languid hope, when he heard that he might yet live; cast them again down in despair, when he heard that he could receive life only from HAMET. 'From HAMET,' said he, 'I have already taken the power to save me; I have, by thy counsel, given him the instrument of death, which, by thy counsel also, I urged him to use: he received it with joy, and he is now doubtless numbered with the dead.' 'HAMET,' said the Genius, 'is not dead; but from the fountain of virtue he drinks life and peace. If what I shall propose, he refuses to perform, not all the powers of earth, and sea, and air, if they should combine, can give thee life: but if he complies, the death, that is now suspended over thee, shall fall upon his head; and thy life shall be again delivered to the hand of time.' 'Make haste then,' said ALMORAN, 'and I will here wait the event.' 'The event,' said the Genius, 'is not distant; and it is the last experiment which my power can make, either upon him or thee: when the star of the night, that is now near the horizon, shall set, I will be with him.'

When ALMORAN was alone, he reflected, that every act of supernatural power which the Genius had enabled him to perform, had brought upon him some new calamity, though it always promised him some new advantage. As he would not impute this disappointment to the purposes for which he employed the power that he had received, he indulged a suspicion, that it proceeded from the perfidy of the Being by whom it was bestowed; in his mind, therefore, he thus reasoned with himself: 'The Genius, who has pretended to be the friend of ALMORAN, has been secretly in confederacy with HAMET: why else do I yet sigh in vain for ALMEIDA? and why else did not HAMET perish, when his life was in my power? By his counsel, I persuaded HAMET to destroy himself; and, in the very act, I was betrayed to drink the potion, by which I shall be destroyed: I have been led on, from misery to misery, by ineffectual expedients, and fallacious hopes. In this crisis of my fate, I will not trust, with implicit confidence, in another: I will be present at the interview of this powerful, but suspected Being, with HAMET; and who can tell, but that if I detect a fraud, I may be able to disappoint it: however powerful, he is not omniscient; I may, therefore, be present, unknown and unsuspected even by him, in a form that I can chuse by a thought, to which he cannot be conscious.'

CHAP. XIX.

In consequence of this resolution, ALMORAN, having commanded one of the soldiers of the guard that attended upon HAMET into an inner room of the palace, he ordered him to wait there till his return: then making fast the door, he assumed his figure, and went immediately to the dungeon; where producing his signet, he said, he had received orders from the king to remain with the prisoner, till the watch expired.

As he entered without speaking, and without a light, HAMET continued stretched upon the ground, with his face towards the earth; and ALMORAN, having silently retired to a remote corner of the place, waited for the appearance of the Genius.

The dawn of the morning now broke; and, in a few minutes, the prison shook, and the Genius appeared. He was visible by a lambent light that played around him; and HAMET starting from the ground, turned to the vision with reverence and wonder: but as the Omnipotent was ever present to his mind, to whom all beings in all worlds are obedient, and on whom alone he relied for protection, he was neither confused nor afraid. 'HAMET,' said the Genius, 'the crisis of thy fate is near.' 'Who art thou,' said HAMET, and for what purpose art thou come?' 'I am,' replied the Genius, 'an inhabitant of the world above thee; and to the will of thy brother, my powers have been obedient: upon him they have not conferred happiness, but they have brought evil upon thee. It was my voice, that forbad thy marriage with ALMEIDA; and my voice, that decreed the throne to ALMORAN: I gave him the power to assume thy form; and, by me, the hand of oppression is now heavy upon thee. Yet I have not decreed, that he should be happy, nor that thou shouldst be wretched: darkness as yet rests upon my purpose; but my heart in secret is thy friend.' 'If thou art, indeed my friend,' said HAMET, 'deliver me from this prison; and preserve HAMET for ALMEIDA.' 'Thy deliverance,' said the Genius, 'must depend upon thyself. There is a charm, of which the power is great; but it is by thy will only, that this power can be exerted.'

The Genius then held out towards him a scroll, on which the seal of seven powers was impressed. 'Take, said he, 'this scroll, in which the mysterious name of Orosmales is written. Invoke the spirits, that reside westward from the rising of the sun; and northward, in the regions of cold and darkness: then stretch out thy hand, and a lamp of sulphur, self kindled, shall burn before thee. In the fire of this lamp, consume that which I now give thee; and as the smoke, into which it changes, shall mix with the air, a mighty charm shall be formed, which shall defend thee from all mischief: from that instant no poison, however potent, can hurt thee; nor shall any prison confine: in one moment, thou shalt be restored to the throne, and to ALMEIDA; and the Angel of death, shall lay his hand upon thy brother; to whom, if I had confided this last best effort of my power, he

would have secured the good to himself, and have transferred the evil to thee.'

ALMORAN, who had listened unseen to this address of the Genius to HAMET, was now confirmed in his suspicions, that evil had been ultimately intended against him; and that he had been entangled in the toils of perfidy, while he believed himself to be assisted by the efforts of friendship: he was also convinced, that by the Genius he was not known to be present. HAMET, however, stood still doubtful, and ALMORAN was kept silent by his fears. 'Whoever thou art,' said HAMET, the condition of the advantages which thou hast offered me, is such as it is not lawful to fulfill: these horrid rites, and this commerce with unholy powers, are prohibited to mortals in the Law of life.' 'See thou to that,' said the Genius: 'Good and evil are before thee; that which I now offer thee, I will offer no more.'

HAMET, who had not fortitude to give up at once the possibility of securing the advantages that had been offered, and who was seduced by human frailty to deliberate at least upon the choice; stretched out his hand, and receiving the scroll, the Genius instantly disappeared. That which had been proposed as a trial of his virtue, ALMORAN believed indeed to be an offer of advantage; he had no hope, therefore, but that HAMET would refuse the conditions, and that he should be able to obtain the talisman, and fulfill them himself: he judged that the mind of HAMET was in suspense, and was doubtful to which side it might finally incline; he, therefore, instantly assumed the voice and the person of OMAR, that by the influence of his council he might be able to turn the scale.

When the change was effected, he called HAMET by his name; and HAMET, who knew the voice, answered him in a transport of joy and wonder: 'My friend,' said he, 'my father! in this dreary solitude, in this hour of trial, thou art welcome to my soul as liberty and life! Guide me to thee by thy voice; and tell while I hold thee to my bosom, how and wherefore thou art come?' 'Do not now ask me,' said ALMORAN: 'it is enough that I am here; and that I am permitted to warn thee of the precipice, on which thou standest. It is enough, that concealed in this darkness, I have overheard the specious guile, which some evil demon has practised upon thee.' 'Is it then certain,' said HAMET, 'that this being is evil?' 'Is not that being evil, said ALMORAN,' 'who proposes evil, as the condition of good?' 'Shall I then,' said HAMET, 'renounce my liberty and life? The rack is now ready; and, perhaps, the next moment, its tortures will be inevitable.' 'Let me ask thee then,' said ALMORAN, 'to preserve thy life, wilt thou destroy thy soul?' 'O! stay,' said HAMET—'Let me not be tried too far! Let the strength of Him who is Almighty, be manifest in my weakness!' HAMET then paused a few moments; but he was no longer in doubt: and ALMORAN, who disbelieved and despised the arguments, by which he intended to persuade him to renounce what, upon the same condition, he was impatient to secure for himself, conceived hopes that he should succeed; and those hopes were instantly confirmed.' 'Take then,' said HAMET, this unholy charm; and remove it far from me, as the sands of Alai from the trees of Oman; lest, in some dreadful hour, my virtue may fail me, and thy counsel may be wanting!' 'Give it me then,' said ALMORAN; and feeling for the hands of each other, he snatched it from him in an extasy of joy, and instantly resuming his own voice and figure, he cried out, 'At length I have prevailed: and life and love, dominion and revenge, are now at once in my hand!'

HAMET heard and knew the voice of his brother, with astonishment; but it was too late to wish that he had withheld the charm, which his virtue would not permit him to use. 'Yet a few moments pass,' said ALMORAN, and thou art nothing.' HAMET, who doubted not of the power of the talisman, and knew that ALMORAN had no principles which would restrain him from using it to his destruction, resigned himself to death, with a sacred joy that he had escaped from guilt. ALMORAN then, with an elation of mind that sparkled in his eyes, and glowed upon his cheek, stretched out his hand, in which he held the scroll; and a lamp of burning sulphur was immediately suspended in the air before him: he held the mysterious writing in the flame; and as it began to burn, the place shook with reiterated thunder, of which every peal was more terrible and more loud. HAMET, wrapping his robe round him, cried out, 'In the Fountain of Life that flows for ever, let my life be mingled! Let me not be, as if I had never been; but still conscious of my being, let me still glorify Him from whom it is derived, and be still happy in his love!'

ALMORAN, who was absorbed in the anticipation of his own felicity, heard the thunder without dread, as the proclamation of his triumph: 'Let thy hopes,' said he, 'be thy portion; and the pleasures that I have secured, shall be mine.' As he pronounced these words, he started as at a sudden pang; his eyes became fixed, and his posture immovable; yet his senses still remained, and he perceived the Genius once more to stand before him. 'ALMORAN,' said he, 'to the last sounds which thou shalt hear, let thine ear be attentive! Of the spirits that rejoice to fulfill the purpose of the Almighty, I am one. To HAMET, and to ALMORAN, I have been commissioned from above: I have been appointed to perfect virtue, by adversity; and in the folly of her own projects, to entangle vice. The charm, which could be formed only by guilt, has power only to produce misery: of every good, which thou, ALMORAN, wouldst have secured by disobedience, the opposite evil is thy portion; and of every evil, which thou, HAMET, wast, by Obedience, willing to incur, the opposite good is bestowed upon thee. To thee, HAMET, are now given the throne of thy father, and ALMEIDA. And thou, ALMORAN, who, while I speak, art incorporating with the earth, shalt remain, through all generations, a memorial of the truths which thy life has taught!'

At the words of the Genius, the earth trembled beneath, and above the walls of the prison disappeared: the figure of ALMORAN, which was hardened into stone, expanded by degrees; and a rock, by which his form and attitude are still rudely expressed, became at once a monument of his punishment and his guilt.

Such are the events recorded by ACMET, the descendant of the Prophet, and the preacher of

righteousness! for, to ACMET, that which passed in secret was revealed by the Angel of instruction, that the world might know, that, to the wicked, increase of power is increase of wretchedness; and that those who condemn the folly of an attempt to defeat the purpose of a Genius, might no longer hope to elude the appointment of the Most High.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ALMORAN AND HAMET: AN ORIENTAL TALE

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