

## FATAL PERSEVERANCE;

OR,

*CHARLES and SOPHIA.*


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CHARLES S. a candidate for the holy ministry, held the post of instructor to a house of female correction, and lived an easy cheerful life in the free city of T. in Germany; the tribunal of which exercised justice more strictly than others better enlightened. He enjoyed a comfortable sufficiency, and made it a pleasure as well as his occupation to console and assist the afflicted; in the exercise of which good qualities his situation furnished him with many occasions. The only deficiency he felt in his wishes was the choice of a wife. He had cast his eyes on several ladies, but saw none perfectly adapted to his disposition: he sought for one who had been unfortunate, and whose sole happiness would consist in an equal mixture of gratitude and love. — A young lady had been conducted to the town prison on a charge of having murdered her infant, and, as it was generally believed that she would suffer for the crime, Mr. S. received instructions to wait upon and prepare her for the awful change. — The singular wish of our candidate, in the execution of this commission, was completely gratified. — He became enamoured of the unfortunate Sophia; he made her an offer of his best services, and was at once her confidant and friend. The following are the particulars Sophia related to him of her melancholy fall. —

“ I was the daughter of a lady of great respectability, whose rigid lessons of morality and virtue were early instilled into my mind. She loved me tenderly, and I endeavoured to repay her affection. — A young gentleman, a foreigner, had been introduced at our house, and became a frequent visitor. — Conceiving that the advances he made to me were not of the most honourable kind, I requested him to alter his conduct, and not compel me to lay him under

the scourge of parental indignation.—He listened, promised fair, and swore it was my mind rather than my person he esteemed.—He regained my confidence, and I trusted myself one night with him to a masked ball—an amusement of which I was extremely fond, though disliked by my parents. Having danced till I was thirsty, he brought me refreshments and wine, in which he had infused some drugs of a stupifying and enervating quality.—Alas! I fell a victim to the superior address of the villain, and the following morning felt all the horrors of my situation.—I looked anxiously day by day for the customary visits of my seducer, but he had flown away for ever!—When I became pregnant, on a pretence of illness, I adjourned to the country seat of an old aunt, the more readily to avoid detection and disgrace. The old lady received me kindly, and endeavoured to lessen the anguish of my heart.—At length the day of my delivery came, and happened at a time when the servant was out.—My aunt set off for the midwife, but before she returned, the pains of labour had seized me, and I became the mother of a girl!—In a lapse of reason I destroyed the little victim, nor concealed the fatal deed from the woman who came to attend me.—When my intellects had returned, what agonizing pains filled my bosom! but sorrow came too late; the midwife told my crime to the tribunal, whose awful decision I now await.”

During the recital Mr. S. shed tears, and, when he quitted her, he immediately flew to an advocate, who informed him that every chance of escape was fruitless, as she stood condemned by her own confession. Every day Mr. S. waited on the unfortunate Sophia, and became more enamoured at each visit.—“Sophia,” said he one day to her, “I will marry you.—Induced by my respectability and this step, I hope your judges will grant you a pardon.” Sophia wept but the more at his generous goodness, without indulging a hope of softening her remorseless judges.—The amorous Mr. S. then waited personally on the members composing the tribunal, and obtained from some the tear of compassion, from others a stern rebuke. At length the day of judgment having arrived, various were the opinions of the crowded and compassionating court.—The general wish however was deceived, and Sophia was sentenced to death!—When she was re-conducted to prison, the Candidate did not forsake her. “My love,” said he, “our happiness is at an end.—

They have rejected my proposal of marriage; I would yield up my fortune as a mulct; but they will have nothing but your life.—In taking your's, they take mine.—There is another world, into which it is my determination to follow you, since we cannot be united here." Sophia fell at his knees, urged him by his love for her not to execute this rash design; but he adhered to his purpose, and told her soon to look for him in eternity.

On the dawn of the day of execution Mr. S. attended the wretched Sophia, encouraging her, and stated his intention of seeing her respectably interred; after which her grave should be the altar of their marriage. When Sophia mounted the scaffold, a general cry of pardon arose among the populace.—"Simple people," said Mr. S. "when you die, may you have a soul as free from guilt as that of this dear unfortunate!—You call her wretched, who is about to enter into eternal happiness!—but ye speak from pity, not reflexion!" He tied the bandage himself on the eyes of Sophia, and having tenderly embraced her, he promised, in a whisper, to be with her before the sun had repassed the horizon.—She replied by a sigh, and in less than a second the executioner separated her head from her body.—The body having been delivered up to her friends, Mr. S. attended the burial, and evinced a spirit more firm and calm than could have been expected.—This, however, was but deceptive; for at midnight he scaled the churchyard walls, and, laying himself on the turf beside the grave of his dear Sophia, with a pistol he effected his fatal purpose, and was buried on the remains of the object of his affections.

*F I N I S.*





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