

SUICIDE THROUGH DISTRESS.

The manuscript finished with the following lines written by *Madeleine* in French ; “ Poor unfortunate *Eliza* ! God have mercy on her soul. She could bear her sufferings no longer ! This morning when I entered her cell, she was kneeling before a crucifix, and with a steady hand, she was drawing a sharp knife through her throat. I flew to her, but, alas ! it was too late,—I was covered with her blood. She looked at me, and, lifting her hands to Heaven, as if to implore forgiveness, she expired in my arms ! Almighty Creator ! forgive her ! may her sin be upon the cruel wretch who drove her to that dreadful SUICIDE !

HENRI DE FRANCEUR.

A French Tale.

HENRI DE FRANCEUR was born at *Dijon*, in *Burgundy*, in 1735. His father was a respectable tradesman, and, though his honesty and industry were remarkable, he had experienced so many severe losses, that it was with difficulty he could maintain his family, which consisted of seven children. His wife, the beloved partner of his sorrows, had sunk under the accumulated pressure of grief and penury, and *Mr. de Franceur* exerted himself to support his dear children in as comfortable a state as he could, devoting every moment, in which he was at leisure, to the improvement of their minds. Though he was an excellent father, and treated all his children with great kindness, he could not help feeling more partiality for *Henri* ; his disposition was so amiable—he was so gentle, so obedient, and so desirous of improving, that it was impossible not to love him more than his brothers. When he had attained his twelfth year, his father, who lamented his inability to give him as brilliant an education

SUICIDE THROUGH DISTRESS.

as he wished, wrote most pressingly to a rich merchant at *Paris*, who had frequently offered his services. *Mr. de Francœur* ingenuously confessed his embarrassed situation. "I can barely subsist," said he; "but that I do not mind so much as the impossibility of sending my children to a college, where they might receive an education suitable to the rank which their grandfather held at *Dijon*. *Henri* in particular might become a prodigy, his assiduity is truly astonishing; he devotes all his days to study. You have often expressed a wish of serving me—if you can find some situation where *Henri* may improve himself, I shall be for ever thankful." The merchant was a man really possessed of the most benevolent sentiments; he wrote immediately to *Mr. de Francœur*; "Send me your *Henri*; I shall take care of him, and give him every opportunity of indulging his laudable desire of studying. I shall treat him as my son, provided he continues to behave as well as you say he does."

Mr. de Francœur overjoyed, called his son to him; "My dear *Henri*," said he, "you must quit me for some time, but it is for your good, my circumscribed means prevent me from enabling you to pursue your studies; my friend at *Paris* has promised to treat you as his son; you will have every opportunity of improving, and you may one day become the support of your aged father, and perhaps of some of your brothers. Go, my dearest *Henri*, may the blessing of Heaven be with you! Be obedient and grateful to *Mr. Laborde*, revere him as a second father." *Henri*, who dearly loved his father, was greatly affected at being forced to leave him; he would gladly have abandoned all his flattering prospects to remain with him; but *Mr. de Francœur* knew too well the value of *Mr. Laborde's* offer to neglect it; and *Henri*, after assuring his father that he would write to him every week, set out from his native town, and arrived safely at *Mr. Laborde's* house. He was received and treated with the utmost kindness. *Mr. Laborde* allowed him to visit all the curiosities of the capital, after which he sent him to

the college of recommending him to the principal in the warmest terms. He had not been six months at the college, when *Mr. Laborde* received a letter from the principal, in which he praised *Henri's* diligence and assiduity in the warmest terms, and said, that he would unquestionably become one of his best informed pupils. The kind *Mr. Laborde* enclosed that letter in one of his, and sent it to *Mr. de Francœur*, who was delighted at hearing so favourable an account of his dear *Henri*. When *Henri* had been five years at the college *Mr. Laborde* resolved to send for him, and endeavour to place him advantageously : he therefore wrote to *Henri* and desired him to set out in a month. *Henri* immediately answered his letter, and in the most pressing terms requested leave to remain six months longer. *Mr. Laborde* was rather surprized at the request, and still more at the agony which he expressed at the thought of quitting the college, but he attributed it to his love for study, and he consented. When the time was nearly elapsed, *Henri* wrote to his benefactor, and in the most urgent terms entreated him to let him remain some time longer. *Mr. Laborde*, astonished at that request, wrote to the principal, and, after having imparted to him his design of removing *Henri* from the college, he inquired whether *Henri* had fulfilled his expectations. The principal answered that *Henri* was one of the best educated, and one of the most amiable young men that he had ever known. *Mr. Laborde* then determined to pay a visit to *Henri*, and learn from him the cause of his repugnance to quit the college ; he received his benefactor with the most affectionate respect ; "*Henri*," said the venerable *Laborde*, rather seriously, " I have heard an excellent account of your improvement and behaviour, but you are now nearly nineteen, I wish you to quit the college, I am desirous of placing you in some of the public offices, until I find you a situation, you will remain with me, and be treated as my son ; what is the reason that you appear to dislike residing with me ? I thought you loved me." " I

do indeed love and revere you," exclaimed *Henri* in tears, but I — you will be displeased with me." "What have you done? Why should I be displeased?" replied *Mr. Laborde*. "Because I have not revealed to you the motive which makes me so desirous of remaining here." "I think I can guess it," said *Mr. Laborde* smiling; "you have some attachment." "It is true," stammered out *Henri*: "I love, I adore, *Miss de M . . .* she lives two miles from the college; I have the happiness of seeing her three times a week; her father detests the capital, and will not suffer her to go there; if I quit this place, I shall never see her again; and forgive me, if I say that I cannot exist without her." "Does she love you, my dear *Henri*?" "Oh yes! very much; she could not live without me." "Well, well," said *Mr. Laborde*, "I shall see whether I cannot prevail upon *Mr. de M . . .* to give you his daughter, but you must not be too sanguine in your expectations, for he is very proud of his family. I have known him many years, and have often heard him say, that he would give no portion to his children if they married without his consent; but, however, I shall see what I can do. Let us depart for *Paris*, and to-morrow I shall wait on *Mr. de M . . .*" Late in the evening of the succeeding day, *Mr. Laborde* sent for *Henri* in his closet, and informed him that *Mr. de M . . .* was so incensed at his daughter's attachment, that he was determined she should never have a shilling. "But, *Henri*," continued *Mr. Laborde*, "I have such a high opinion of you, that I thought you would prefer *Miss de M . . .* without fortune to any other woman, even with a large fortune, and accordingly I told *Mr. de M . . .* that I wanted only his consent; for, that it was my intention to provide for you, in placing you in some lucrative situation; therefore in a week's time *Miss de M . . .* will be yours." It is impossible to describe the joy, the happiness, of young *Franœur*. He wrote immediately to his father; and, after describing *Mr. Laborde's* behaviour with the warmth of gratitude, he requested his blessing and consent. *Mr. Laborde* kept his word; and,

eight days after, *Miss de M* made *Henri de Francœur* the happiest of men. A few weeks after their marriage, *Mr. Laborde* sent for his young friend; "My dearest *Henri*," said he, "I have at length succeeded,—I have procured you a situation of twenty four thousand livres a year, (*about 1000*l.* sterling,*) you will be immediately under the *Controller of Finance*; no one but he can remove you from the office, and he has promised to be your friend. I now feel happy. I assured your father, that I should take as much care of you as if you were my son; I have, I hope, fulfilled my promise. I am old, and shall not probably live many years. I shall die with the consoling thought that you are secure from want." *Henri* pressed his kind benefactor to his heart, and ran to impart the happy news to his fond and faithful *Elizabeth*. He had the good fortune to please the controller, and his days glided in tranquillity and happiness. Six years after, his revered, his excellent, friend and patron, *Mr. Laborde*, quitted this world. *Henri* and his amiable wife felt the sincerest affliction, and shed tears of gratitude on his grave; before their grief had subsided, *Henri* received a letter from his brother acquainting him with the death of *Mr. de Francœur*. "My dearest *Elizabeth*," said *Henri*, "I have lost my two fathers, almost at the same time!" He was so much affected, that his health was impaired for a short time, but at last, the endearing attention of his wife, and the infantine carresses of his beloved children, restored him to tranquillity. *Henri de Francœur* was so universally respected by those who knew him, that his father-in-law sent for him, and treated him with the utmost affection. Poor *Elizabeth* was now completely happy; for, though she sometimes visited her father, she had felt distressed at his neglect of her beloved husband.

Fortune smiled upon *Henri de Francœur* until the year 1774. At that time he was happy as a man can be; he had *thirteen* children; and, though a family so numerous prevented him from amassing a fortune, he lived contentedly, and did not wish for more. The *Abbé du T*

was very unexpectedly appointed *controller-general*: his name will be long remembered with detestation. The *Baroness de . . .* his avowed mistress, expended immense sums with the most shameful prodigality; her style of living surpassed in magnificence and luxury that of any princess, and the contemptible *Ablé*, in order to support her in her extravagance, made several changes in the department of finance, and removed several persons whose services were of the greatest utility. One morning when the unfortunate *Henri de Francœur* went to his office, he was denied admittance; and, upon inquiring the reason, a man gave him a letter, by which the *Ablé du T . . .* informed him, that his services were no longer wanted. He fainted instantly, and it was with much trouble that the person who happened to be present could recover him. As soon as he could walk, he slowly and dejectedly bent his way towards his home, where his presence had so often defused gladness, but alas! his countenance was so altered, that the affectionate *Elizabeth* and her children were alarmed. "Great God! what has happened?" she exclaimed. "Thou art as pale as death! Oh, my beloved, what ails thee?" "Dost thou think I can see you all starve?" calmly he replied, with the hollow voice of despair. "Starve!" they all cried; "Yes, starve: the *Ablé du T . . .* has dismissed me. I have lost my place, and you consequently have no means of subsistence," but,— "Calm thyself, for God's sake!" said the wretched and weeping *Elizabeth*: "I shall go to my father's, he loves me, he will perhaps assist us." "I do not think he will," replied *Henri*; "he is not very rich—and besides, he will not swerve from his oath; but try what success thou canst have. I shall go to the *controller-general*, perhaps he will take compassion on our situation; I wish I had gone to him before I made you all unhappy." He left the house with a gleam of hope. When he arrived at the *Ablé du T . . .*'s he found it very difficult to gain admittance; at last he was ushered in a most magnificent apartment, where the *Ablé* was sipping his chocolate; "What do you want?" he asked *Henri* in the most impolite manner.

ner. "My lord, I have taken the liberty of waiting on you to represent my wretched situation to you. I have a wife and thirteen children, they subsist merely through my exertions; I have served in the financial department with honour for fifteen years, you have this morning been pleased to dismiss me from my employment. Allow me to observe, that, by so doing, you have doomed fourteen innocent persons to experience the horrors of penury." "I have done what I pleased," interrupted the detestable *Ablé*, "and I find you extremely impertinent to come and trouble me with your complaints." "But, my lord, what must I do? what is to become of my unhappy children?" "Let them starve, it is nothing to me." The *Ablé* then ordered one of his attendants to turn *Henri* out of his house. The distracted man fell on his knees, and silently imprecated the terrible malediction of Heaven on the cruel and insulting *Ablé*. He then went home with a heavy heart, and found his *Elizabeth* in tears. Oppressed by their sorrows, they remained silent for some time; at last the unhappy woman threw herself in the arms of her *Henri*; "My father will not do any thing for us," said she sobbing; "he says he pities us very much, but that, even if he had the means of supporting us, the terrible oath which he took, of never assisting any of his children if they married against his will, would prevent him; and thou, my *Henri*, thou hast also been unfortunate in thy application to the *Ablé*." "The vengeance of Heaven be upon him!" exclaimed *Henri* impetuously; "he wishes our children to starve. Oh, *Elizabeth*! Oh, my adored children! what will become of you? As for me, I do not care, but the thought that I shall perhaps see you die of hunger fires my brain. I cannot remain in that state of horrid suspense, I shall go to all my friends. I have many, perhaps they will assist me." He darted out of his house. The children endeavoured to console their afflicted and weeping mother; their sympathizing grief served as a balm to her distress; she was particularly struck with the tender attention of

SUICIDE THROUGH DISTRESS.

little *Eugene*, who was only eight years of age ; he spoke of his father with such affection, and used so many means to console his mother, that he nearly succeeded. At that moment *Mr. de M . . .* (her father,) entered ; “ My dearest daughter,” said he, “ believe me when I assure you, that I regret very much my impossibility to serve you. I sincerely wish that imperious circumstances did not prevent me ; but do not give way to despondency, I have spoken to the *Count de V . . .* who has promised he would use his interest, and endeavour to persuade the *Abbé* to give your husband another situation. I am afraid he will not succeed to the full extent of his wishes, but I have no doubt of his being able to ameliorate your situation, therefore calm yourself : where is your husband ? ” “ My dearest father,” answered the poor *Elizabeth*, “ he is gone to his friends to solicit their protection ; would to God he knew what you have just told me, for he is so extremely distressed that I greatly fear he will never recover this shock ; after having lived in a state of happiness for fifteen years, to be thus suddenly reduced to want and misery, that has had a dreadful effect upon him ; I shall be truly wretched until he return.” As she spoke, she heard a knock at the door, and sprang to meet her beloved *Henri*. Alas ! it was not he ; a stranger asked whether her name was not *Franœur* : upon her answering in the affirmative, he gave her a letter, and hastily withdrew. She looked at the letter ! It had no direction ! She trembled as she opened it ! Scarcely had she begun to read it, when she uttered a loud and piercing shriek, and fell senseless on the floor. Her father and the children ran to her, and thought her dead. He sent immediately for a physician, who bled her, and said, that she had only fainted. Her father had picked up the fatal letter ; and, as soon as he heard that the life of *Elizabeth* was not in danger, he hastily perused the letter, which he perceived had been written by the unfortunate *Henri de Franœur*. The following were the contents of it ; “ Dearest *Elizabeth*, when thou readest

this, thy faithful *Henri* will be no more : the *Seine* will contain the body of him who loved thee so well ; do not think me rash in thus disposing of my life without thy consent : hear what happened, and thou wilt not blame my memory. After I quitted thee, I went to all my friends to request them to unite their interest, and endeavour to procure me a situation which might enable me to support my beloved family. Oh, my *Elizabeth* ! thou wilt shudder to hear how thy unfortunate *Henri* was received. *Mr. C. L . . . t* was the first to whom I applied ; he assured me, that he knew no greater pleasure than that of rendering me every service in his power, but that in this instance he could not speak in my favour without running the risk of losing all his protectors. "It is very clear," said he, "that the *Abbé du T . . .* is irritated against you, and it would be dangerous for me to testify my friendship for you on the very day that such a powerful man has turned you out of his house ; in every other case command me." I left him with contempt, and went to the Chevalier *Francis Jules de R . . .* ; he lamented my misfortune and protested to me, that he was very sorry that I had been turned out of the *Abbé's* house, for he intended to invite me and my wife to go to the country with him. "And you must be aware," said he, "that I cannot invite the man whom the *Abbé* has dismissed from his employment and turned out of doors !" Furious at these disappointments, I rushed out of his house, and went to that old *Mr. de D . . .* whom thou didst esteem more than any of my friends. When I related to him my misfortune, he appeared very much affected at it, and told me, that he could do nothing for me in point of recommendation, but that he would lend me *five hundred louisd'or*, (about 500*l.*) and that I should return them when it was perfectly convenient ; he got up, went to his bureau, and, turning round with an air of disappointment, "Good God ! my dear friend," said he, "I have involuntarily committed a very great mistake ; I have not *ten louisd'or* in the house ; I am extremely sorry, that it is not in my power

SUICIDE THROUGH DISTRESS.

to assist you ; I now remember that I lent all my ready money to my cousin.' At that moment his servant entered, and told him that *Prugon*, the coach-maker, had called to know whether he would purchase a beautiful English curricule, the price of which was only 310*l*. " Oh ! by all means," replied the man, who could not find above ten louisd'or. " Here is the money," said he, giving 320*l*. to the footman ; " get the difference from him, and return it me." When I found, that the man, who expressed so much sorrow at his not being able to lend me any money, gave without hesitation 320*l*. for the purchase of a curricule, I began to perceive that all my friends were of that kind, who are faithful only in time of prosperity ; my agony increased every moment, and I dreaded the hour in which I should be compelled to declare to you, that I had not the means of supporting you. I had only a feeble hope left—it was to call on the Chevalier *Silvio de Montano*, that Italian nobleman, who had always expressed the greatest desire of serving me, or any one of my family. After I had related the whole transaction to him, he looked at me, and said calmly, " I am much distressed at this sudden reverse of fortune,—you will lose all your friends : as to me, I never assist any of my acquaintances, it would subject me to many disagreeable applications." I immediately bowed, and was leaving the room when he called me back, and asked me what I intended to do ; adding, that he would enable me to support my family in affluence if I would accede to his proposal.—Oh, *Elizabeth* ! dearest partner of my bosom ! it was to connive at thy dishonour. The infamous wretch had the audacity of proposing to me to barter thy virtue for gold. I became desperate. I insisted upon immediate satisfaction. I used such insulting epithets, that the villain was at last roused :—we fought ! and the hand of thy *Henri* has avenged thee !—But thy husband could not live—he could not see thee and our beloved children starve ; my punishing that villain would prevent me from seeking even the means of procuring bread for you all. I quit thee ! Adieu,

SUICIDE THROUGH DISTRESS.

Elizabeth!—my fond, virtuous, unhappy, wife, adieu! Think sometimes of him, who was *once* thy fortunate and beloved husband, *Henri de Francœur.*”

Mr. de M felt indescribable distress at the perusal of the letter; and he immediately resolved to endeavour to find the body of the unfortunate *de Francœur.* As he was going, the wretched *Elizabeth* came down with her children, and told her father that she knew where he was going, and that she intended to accompany him. “I must see once more the body of my dear *Henri!*” she exclaimed. Her father tried in vain to make her alter her resolution; he represented to her that it would only add to her distress, but she remained firm, and the mournful family proceeded to that part of the *Seine*, which is generally dragged once a day. When they arrived, some men were employed in that melancholy office; and, in a few minutes, the body of poor *Henri de Francœur* was brought up. Though much disfigured, the distracted *Elizabeth* knew it instantly, and threw herself upon it; the weeping children surrounded the livid body of their father. Suddenly *Eugene* started up: “Which of you all loved our father the most?” he demanded with a loud voice. “I!...I!” answered several of his brothers. “I shall prove to you,” replied he, “that little *Eugene* loved him more than all of you.” In saying those words, he ran to the river-side, and plunged into it, with such rapidity, that no one could prevent him; every attempt to save him was tried, but without effect. Mr. de M took the greatest care of his daughter, and sent her two of the best physicians, but it was too late, her heart was broken, and she died ten days after the fatal death of her much-loved and unfortunate husband. The tragical story reached the king’s ears, and he granted a small pension to the orphans. All the friends of Mr. de M interested themselves for the children of *Henri de Francœur*, who had been so generally esteemed; and whose days would have flowed in a course of uninterrupted happiness, had not the detestable *Abbé du T* deprived him of the means of sup-
104 porting

porting his amiable and numerous family. When the revolution happened, in 1789, three of Henri's children were living, and it is supposed they have fallen victims to its horrors.

SUICIDE OF WILLIAM L ,

A native of Sheffield.

(Thomas & George Barnwell)

AT the beginning of the last century, lived, at Sheffield, Mr. T . . . a merchant, who might be called a man after God's own heart : his delight was in doing good, and assisting the poor ; he was an excellent father, and a faithful and affectionate husband. Returning home one day in a very severe winter, he was much distressed at beholding a beautiful boy, about eleven or twelve years of age, who was nearly naked : he was shivering at the door of an inn, and imploring charity of every person who entered. At the moment that Mr. T . . . was passing, the brutal landlord came out, and with a whip drove unmercifully the poor weeping suppliant from his door. Mr. T . . . immediately called the boy, gave him some money, and asked him who he was, and why he was begging ? The boy answered, that his father's name was Edward L . . . n ; that he was a blacksmith, and had five children ; that he had been ill and unable to work, and they were consequently starving. Mr. T . . . went with the boy to convince himself of the truth of his statement, and, finding it correct, he generously relieved them, and took William home with him in the capacity of a servant ; promising him that, if he behaved well, he would be a good friend to him. William, who was overjoyed at his change of situation, did every thing in his power to please his master ; and Mr. T . . . admiring his diligence, determined to give him an education, calculated to qualify him for a counting-house ; and, if he found his abilities equal to his