



~~~~~  
*A King.*

## FRONTISPIECE.



'Tis easier Work, if we begin  
To fear the Lord betimes:  
While Sinners that grow old in Sin  
Are harden'd in their Crimes.



# TRUE COURAGE:

OR,

## HEAVEN

NEVER

*Forsakes the Innocent.*



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## TRUE COURAGE.

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**I**N some distant country in the East, there was a King called Karam; see here he is:



He was naturally a good

man, and frequently stole out of his palace in disguise, accompanied only by two faithful domestics, in order to search into the grievances of his subjects. Providence one night conducted him near a small barred window, from whence the sound of a plaintive voice struck his ear. On enquiring of the domestics what the building was from whence the voice proceeded, he learnt that it was a prison where men convicted of murder were confined. He then approached the win-

dow, and listened with the



greatest attention to distinguish the words that accompanied this dismal voice, which seemed to issue from the bowels of the earth. These words soon met his attentive ear;—

“Almighty Father! Thou who watchest over the fate

of the wretched when deserted by the whole world, wilt thou suffer the innocent to undergo an undeserved punishment? O no! for thou art merciful, and dost not despise the meanest of thy creatures; but listeneth with pity to the complaints even of a worm.—O! hear, then, the sorrowful mourning of thy faithful servant, and, in the plenitude of thy goodness, avert the fatal blow.”

A silence, interrupted by sighs and groans, succeeded this ardent prayer. The King



returned to his palace, deeply affected by these mournful lamentations, and retired to his apartment; but he sought repose in vain, for his mind was agitated by this extraordinary adventure, and he wished for the morning with great earnestness, that he might clear up this distressing mystery.

As soon as the dawning day had tinged the horizon with its glowing hues, the impatient monarch arose, and dispatched a summons to his ministers. When they were

assembled, he related to them the melancholy soliloquy he had accidentally heard; he also described to them the place from whence it proceeded, and ordered them to repair to the place of confinement, and make strict enquiries concerning the prisoner, and the crime for which he was condemned to forfeit his life. They obeyed, and on their return informed him that the criminal was sentenced to suffer death that very morning for having committed mur-

der; which horrid crime was proved beyond a doubt by the testimony of two slaves who had been witness to it. The King was astonished and grieved at this account, but not being able to allege any thing against the justice of the sentence, he took no further step to prevent its being immediately executed.

The innocent slave, for he was indeed falsely accused, was drawn from his dungeon. He walked to the place of execution with a steady step and a firm countenance, and

his eyes turned towards Heaven with the confidence that conscious integrity can alone bestow. He arrived amidst the shouts and insults of the mob to the foot of the scaffold, and his unfeeling executioners had just loosed his chains, and began to undress him, when an alarming noise



instantly changed the aspect of this scene of death.

A party of formidable enemies, who had lurked around the city with a design to surprise it, now determined to take advantage of this opportunity. They all rushed, therefore, at this moment, like a torrent, from their ambuscades, and impetuously attacking the guards stationed at the principal gate of the city, dispersed them quickly, and passed through it, without any difficulty. They then darted unexpect-

edly on the astonished crowd, who either fell under the sword, or were taken prisoners: the only one whom Providence rescued from their fury, was the poor slave who was on the point of suffering an ignominious death. The daring enemies, however, at the approach of the King, with a superior



force, were soon dismayed, and, retreating with the booty that they had already amassed, deferred the completion of their enterprize to another opportunity.

In the mean time, the slave, who had been thus fortunately rescued from certain death, by the providential incursion of the enemy, fled from the scene of blood and carnage with all possible speed. He dreaded a pursuit, and continued his flight till midnight; when, overwhelmed with fatigue,

he climbed up into the middle of the spreading branches



of an oak tree. Sleep presently closed his eyes: his slumbers were, however, frequently disturbed by a terrified imagination, which figured to his mind the past imminent danger as still present, and the fearful vision



of bloody swords and pursuing enemies soon awoke him. Though his rest had been disturbed, yet he felt happy in finding that it was but a dream that had thus agitated him. He then came down from the tree, and, casting his eyes around, he perceived that he was opposite the entrance of a gloomy cavern, almost impervious to human sight, though two flaming torches appeared to be placed at the mouth of it, without dissipating the horrid obscurity. These strange lights created some surprise in the

slave's bosom, which was soon augmented to astonishment and dismay, when he saw them move slowly towards him. Too soon, however, he discovered that these supposed lights were only the fiery eyes of an enormous lion that was now



within a few paces of him.

He was without weapons, and could make no defence. The majestic animal looked at him for some moments, then springing forward seized him, and hastened to his den. When the tremendous beast arrived there, he threw down the poor affrighted slave, and rushing back to the oak tree, tore it up by the roots, and laid it at the mouth of his den. Having in this manner secured the entrance, he flew into the neighbouring forest to seek his female, whose ravenous

appetite had made her wander from her young in search of prey. The mouth of the cavern was completely blocked up by the body of the tree, whose bulk frustrated every attempt the slave made to set himself at liberty. A couple of growling cubs lay in a corner of the den, the light of whose eyes disclosed to him the numberless human carcasses and bones with which it was strewed; his heart sunk within him at this sight, and he thought that death was now inevita-

ble. Nevertheless, this idea did not daunt his natural courage, but, turning his face towards the south, which is the custom in that country, he addressed a prayer to Heaven with as much



piety and reverence as if he had been in a place of the greatest security. This act

of devotion restored him all his wonted presence of mind, and he felt himself filled with confidence towards the divine arbitrator of his fate. He then cast his eyes around once more, and, venturing into the gloomy cavities of the dwelling, he saw many rich robes, and costly ornaments, that had belonged to the unhappy victims who had perished untimely in this horrid den. He searched into them, in hopes of finding some weapon of defence: in this expectation he was for

the present disappointed ; but, in the course of his search, he found a flint, and a piece of iron. The sight of these things suggested a scheme to him, and the mere idea of his escape animated him with fresh courage. He assembled a heap of the dry moss with which the den was covered, and, after laying it at the entrance, he struck fire with his flint and iron, and applying it to the moss, it was quickly in a flame. The fire soon penetrated the root of the tree, and increas-

ing with incredible rapidity, it reached the trunk, which instantly caught fire, and falling with a horrible crash, left the entrance free. Sufficient light now entered the cavern to enable the slave to perceive a bow and arrows, together with a poniard and a sabre, lying on the ground; he snatched them up, and, elated with joy, ran precipitately out of the cave, blessing the Almighty in his heart, for restoring him once more to liberty.

He had not left this dread-



ful dwelling many moments; when he saw the lion within a few steps of it; the lioness was also in sight; and they were both hastening towards him. In this extremity, flight being impossible, he determined to defend himself, he therefore placed his back against a tree, and held his bow in his hand. Thus prepared, the angry lion darted on him; but, instead of seizing his prey, he met the fatal arrow; it reached his heart, and he fell to the ground, howling in the agonies of

death. No sooner had the slave freed himself from this imminent danger, than another equally great threatened him. The lioness was now not far distant from him, he aimed an arrow at her also. It only wounded her slightly; which animating the animal with fresh rage, she threw herself with dreadful fury on the poor slave. Yet even then his presence of mind did not forsake him; but pulling his poniard hastily from the scabbard, he plunged it into the enormous sides of the enrag-

ed beast; she fell, and before she could rise, he, with a single stroke of his sabre, severed one of her fore feet from her body.

The vanquished beast lay weltering in her blood, and writhed her unwieldy bulk with extreme anguish; the air resounded with her fierce cries; these were answered by her hungry cubs from the hollow of their den, with such horrid yells, that might have appalled the soul of the most valiant.—The slave shuddered, but soon recollecting

himself, he put an end to the sufferings of the helpless animal, by piercing her to the heart. After this exploit, he returned to the cavern, and, when he had destroyed the two cubs, he gathered up some of the gold and precious stones, that were scattered profusely around him. He then left the den, and, after closing the entrance with some of the remaining branches of the oak tree, he went in search of a spring to quench his thirst.—Providence still befriended him ;

as he not only found means to satisfy his thirst, but his hunger also, for the neighbourhood was full of fruit-trees.



After this seasonable refreshment, the now happy slave, armed with his bow and arrow, and plentifully supplied with riches, turned

his steps towards his native country. In the course of a short time he arrived there, and repaired to the dwelling of his parents, from whom he



had been stolen many years before by a dealer of slaves. They, having long mourned his loss, received him with astonishment and joy. The

slave shortly after returned to the cavern, and secured the riches it contained, which he employed to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures. He built a grand caravansara, or inn, over the den, to afford an asylum to the pilgrims and travellers, who were obliged to pass that way; and of a dwelling of monsters he formed a temple of hospitality.

FINIS.

Houlstons, Printers.



*Bonaparte.*