54 *The Peasant and the Serpent.*

A Villager, in a snowy, frosty winter, found a Serpent under a hedge, almost dead with cold. The state of the poor creature excited his compaſsion, so he brought it home, and laid it upon the hearth near the fire, to warm it; but it had not lain there long, before it began to revive and to erect itself; instantly designing to hurt the preserver of its life, by hiſsing at and wounding him. „Vile wretch," cried the Peasant enraged, „even those that have been benevolent to thee, you will hurt with your native perfidy and malice? Die, as you deserve!" and so he killed it with his mattock.

Application.

There are some men, in whom bad qualites are so ingrafted, as not to be bettered, either by benevolence or punishment. We must act with the greatest circumspection against such worthleſs villains, who in a helpleſs conditon often excite our compaſsion by dissimulation, and prudently limit our love towards mankind, if we are not desirous of seeing our favours repaid with base ingratitude

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