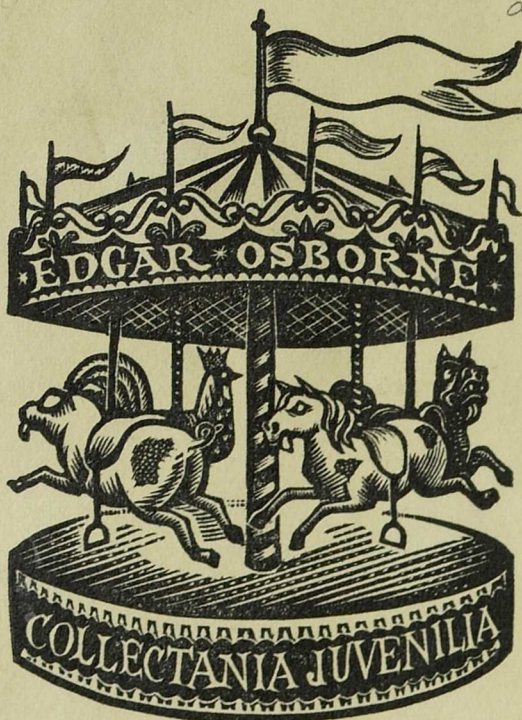


**THE
WAX TAPER
OR
EFFECTS OF BAD HABITS
BY
MARY ELLIOTT
1819**

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vide Wax Taper page 3.

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OR,
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BY MARY ELLIOTT, (*late Belson,*)

AUTHOR OF "INDUSTRY AND IDLENESS," &c.

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WAX-TAPER,

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LUCY and Esther were seated at their mother's work-table, making doll's-clothes. They were sisters, and both clever girls; few children learned their lessons better, or were less given to mischief: yet Esther often brought herself into scrapes, from a silly habit of meddling with things neither needful nor proper for her. In vain was she warned on

this point ; time seemed but to confirm the fault, and, sorry as she appeared the one day, the next found her guilty of the same failing.

On this day, the sisters had finished their school tasks, so as to meet their mamma's wishes ; and, in order to reward them, she gave each some silk and muslin for their dolls.

Lucy began a bonnet of green silk, while Esther measured her wooden baby for a frock.

"I do think," said she, "that I might contrive to make both a frock and spencer of this bit of

muslin, and it would look so pretty : would it not, Lucy ?”

“ Very pretty, indeed,” replied Lucy ; “ but I think you speak a little at random, for I don’t believe the muslin is large enough to make the two things ; I have measured mine, and find it will but make a frock.”

“ Perhaps my piece is larger than your’s,” said Esther ; “ and I know I can contrive it, by cutting my patterns very close.”

Lucy smiled. “ I wish you may be able to do so ; but I really doubt it.”

Esther nodded her head, with a look which spoke much for her own wisdom ; and, placing the patterns on the muslin, tried with all her skill to make them answer. But it was plain the thing could not be done without much joining, and she was on the point of owning it, when, catching the shrewd glance of her sister, she did not like to confess herself foiled in her plan, but pinned and unpinned her pattern a dozen times to no purpose.

“What think you of that ?” asked she, as she tried a new method.

“It will not do, my dear girl ; so give over the trial : a frock it will

make, and a very handsome one ; but, if you venture upon more, you will spoil the whole."

Well, but look now, Lucy ; I am sure this is not a bad idea :—" and she took up her scissars. "These nasty scissars would spoil any work, they are so blunt ; they do not cut at all."

"Use mine, then," said her sister, putting them towards her ; "they are much sharper than your's."

"So I will, and thank you too. But, stop ; I have just thought of what is still better ; mamma's new ones are in the work-table, and they must be very sharp indeed."

“So sharp, Esther, that she desired we would not touch them, lest we should cut ourselves.”

“Very true; but I am not such a child that I do not know how to use a pair of scissars, let them be ever so sharp:” and, as she said this, Esther drew out a small drawer, in which were the scissars.

“You are doing what is very wrong, Esther;” we were told not to meddle with any thing in mamma’s work-table; yet you are using what she chiefly desired might not be used.”

Esther had drawn them from the sheath, and was just opening them,

but Lucy's grave looks checked her. "If it is such very great harm, I suppose I must not use them;" but, at the same moment, she snipped the corner of the muslin.

"O! how nicely they do cut, and so easy too; I am sure mamma would lend them to me, if she were here. I will only just cut out the spencer, and leave the frock until I have asked her leave to use them."

Lucy was going to put in a word, but her sister's folly spared her the trouble.

The new scissars did cut sharp

and easy ; for, before Esther was aware, or could stop their progress, they went so far beyond the part she wished, that the muslin was quite spoiled for any purpose.

“Dear me !” she exclaimed, “here is a pretty job ; who would have thought it ! These nasty scissars, really, they are too sharp ; they have wasted all my pretty spotted muslin : I wish I had used your’s, Lucy.”

“So do I, Esther, but not on account of the muslin ; no, I am only sorry you should treat mamma’s commands so lightly.”

Esther now was sorry likewise, and began to excuse what she had done ; but Lucy could find no excuse for such wilful conduct.

Weak as Esther had proved herself to be, she had not the meanness to conceal her fault from her mother, though conscious she deserved much blame.

Mrs. Bradley shook her head, when she learned the muslin was so wasted. " I gave it," said she, " because I thought it would please my children to dress their dolls in the same kind of robe as their own ; I could have made other use of it, but wished to please them, rather

than myself. Lucy has met my wishes ; you, Esther, have behaved like an infant, who knows not right from wrong. I shall treat you as such ; and, in future, give you the scraps and bits I have until now given to little Fanny, who destroys them, because she knows no better : Lucy alone deserves what is useful, and I shall confine my gifts to her for the present."

This censure cost Esther some tears, and much regret, but it did her good ; for a fortnight passed without another fault of the kind, and not once did her mother reprove, or the servants blame her ; for it was common, when any thing

was misplaced or missing, to suppose Miss Esther had been meddling with or spoiling it.

What a pity that a little girl, whose heart was so good, temper so equal, and kind to all about her, should possess a failing so troublesome to her friends, and a constant source of evil to herself! To be accused when she did not deserve it, was a very painful thing; yet it was often her lot: and again, how often she caused the servants to be blamed for some meddling trick of her own.

One day, Martha, their nursemaid, begged that neither of the

young ladies would remove a basin she had turned upside down upon a table.

“Why are we not to touch it, Lucy?” asked Esther.

“Indeed, I know not,” returned her sister; “but I dare to say Martha has some good reason for telling us not to do so.”

Esther looked at the basin two or three times—it was an old China one, even cracked; so, Martha could not be in great fear of their breaking it. “O! Lucy, now I guess why we are to forbear touching it: see how many cracks are in it! Well, depend upon it, Martha has

been joining them with some of the cement mamma gave her ; and I declare she has mended them nicely, has she not ?”

“ I don’t know that she has joined them : for, although cracked, it does not appear to me the basin has ever been asunder. Any how, it is no concern of our’s ; we were told not to meddle with it.”

“ We were ;” said Esther, as she almost touched the basin.

“ Do, my dear sister, get your book, and learn your lessons for to-morrow, and leave Martha’s basin as it is.”

"O! I am not going to touch it, Lucy, I assure you; but I can learn my lessons here, as well as at the window:" and Esther took her book, and seated herself at the table.

"Now, I see you doubt me, Lucy."

Lucy smiled, but was silent.

"Well, you are very hard to convince, Lucy; shall I come and sit by you?"

"I wish you would, Esther."

Up jumped Esther, and "gather-



In an instant, LUCY caught up the growling creature, and held her tight, while ESTHER opened the window that the poor bird might escape."

• see page 17.

ing her books, she was turning from the table, when one volume fell from the rest upon the basin; she saw it falling, and eager to prevent mischief, strove to catch it; but the effort was vain—a second book finished what the first spared—the basin was broken into half-a-dozen pieces; while, to the surprise of both sisters, from under it flew a little bird.

For some minutes they stood in amaze, not knowing how to act; but, as the little flutterer flew from place to place, the cat entered the room. The sight of her seemed to recall their senses. In an instant, Lucy caught up the growling crea-

ture, and held her tight, while Esther opened the window that the poor bird might escape.

Keen were the feelings of these little girls, until they beheld the young warbler wing its way across the garden ; then puss was set free, and they had leisure to reflect on the past danger.

Esther's tears streamed in torrents ; Lucy knew not what to say ; she was almost angry with her, but felt softened by her present grief.

The door of the nursery opened ; Martha, with the young Frances in one hand, and a bird-cage in the

other, entered, smiling, with her usual good-humour.

“Well, my dear young ladies,” said she, “here I am at last; I suppose you thought I was never coming back: but now you shall learn what kept me so long:—I have the sweetest little thrush for you, sings like a—” “Dear me,” she added, “what ails miss Esther; my dear child, what is the matter?”

Esther could not receive the kiss Martha would have bestowed: she turned from her, pointing to the broken basin.

Lucy now explained what had taken place ; but assured Martha her sister did not mean to touch it, when the books fell, and caused the mischief.

“ And the poor bird ;” said Martha.

“ Is safe, I hope, Martha ; for we let it fly out of the window.”

“ I rejoice the cat did not get it,” said Martha ; “ but the bird is very young, and was never out of a cage before this morning, when my brother brought it as a present for ye both ; I fear it cannot fly far, and may come to some harm.”

Perhaps," cried Lucy, "if we go into the garden at once, we may find it ; for 'tis only a few minutes since we set it free."

Martha thought this might be the case ; so all three repaired to the garden : but the search was vain. The cat ran across a path at some distance, and Martha fancied she had something in her mouth ; but her pace was so swift, that, although pursued by all, she escaped ; and it was not till the next day their fears were confirmed, when Esther perceived some feathers under a gooseberry bush, in a state that left no doubt of puss's meal the day before.

“Cruel creature!” said Lucy; “how could she destroy the pretty harmless bird.”

“No, Lucy, the cat deserves not this blame; for I have heard mamma say, it is their nature, their instinct, which leads them to destroy birds: I alone am in fault. Had I, like you, learned my lessons in a proper place, and not troubled my head with Martha’s basin, all would have been right: the poor bird would have been now singing to us, and the cat would have sought her prey in vain. I shall never see a bird again, but my heart will reproach me; for indeed, Lucy, I am not cruel.”

“Cruel ! Esther ; no, indeed, I believe not ; you are not even unkind to anybody, or anything. I only wish you would get rid of this mischievous habit of meddling ; I did hope, after the muslin frock being spoiled, you would have been more careful.”

Esther looked down, blushed, but made no reply.

Many weeks, nay months, passed, without a single instance of Esther's folly. The doll had lost her frock, and the poor bird it's life ; both were subjects of regret ; but the first only could be deemed a trifling loss, compared with the second.

Esther turned her head aside, as she passed the bush where she found the bird's remains; and many a kind pat of the head did poor puss lose, as she jumped upon the knee of her young mistress.

“Our dear Esther is cured,” would Mrs. Bradley say; “and, much as I was shocked by the bird's cruel death, I will hope its fate has been of real service to my child.”

One would almost be tempted to suppose, that bad habits were pleasant in their result, rather than the contrary, some children retain them so long, in spite of the evils they produce. And our little readers

will wonder to hear, that Esther once more transgressed, and brought upon herself a grief far beyond what has been already told. Sorry are we to confess the truth ; and of one too, who, in every other respect, deserved praise, rather than censure :—but let our tale speak for itself.

Little Frances, whom we have once or twice named, was the youngest of Mrs. Bradley's children ; she was, at this period, about fifteen months old, the picture of health and good-nature. No words can do justice to the fondness with which her sisters beheld her ; it was their study to divert, and make her happy.

Her cheek would glow with deeper roses, her infant tongue make double efforts to speak, when *they* came in sight; she knew their voices, and would chuckle with delight, as she heard them repeat her name, after school-hours.

No sooner were the daily lessons ended, than they flew to the nursery, to kiss and amuse their darling: no toys were too good for her, while every nice orange, pear, or plum, was eaten but in part, that the dear little pet might share it with them.

One day that Mrs. Bradley was engaged in writing, the children

sat around her, Lucy and Esther building card-houses, to please the happy Frances.

Mrs. Bradley had just finished writing, and was sealing her letter, when her presence was required in the next room. As she rose to leave the merry party, she desired they would not touch the lighted taper.

On a sudden, the little Frances caught up the unsealed letter, and Lucy was obliged to coax her some minutes, before she would give it up. It was a playful trick, and, to reward her for yielding the prize without crying, Lucy folded a piece of

waste-paper into the same form, and gave it to her, with a pencil to scribble on it, which she did, in great glee.

“See,” cried Esther, “see, how well she holds the pencil; sweet creature, all she does is clever. Now suppose I seal the letter for her, she will be so pleased.”

And, in a moment, Esther had the letter in one hand, and the sealing-wax in the other.

“What are you about?” said Lucy, laying her hand upon the raised one of her sister. “Esther, do you forget what mamma said as she quitted the room?”

Esther stopped short. "Yes, I know she desired us not to touch the lighted taper, but I dare say she meant Frances, for she could not fear such big girls as we are; besides, you know, there is no danger in a wax-taper: candles, I know, may do mischief, if they are only moved."

"The flame is the same in both," answered Lucy; "and, of course, the lighted part is all there is to fear."

"That is very true, Lucy, I did not think of that; so I will only pretend to seal it; dear little Frances will not find out I am playing her a trick."

Lucy thought there was no reason for playing any trick in this case, but she was content; Esther had not acted as she feared she would do when first she spoke of the taper.

Little Frances laughed, and clapped her hands, as she watched Esther's motions; and, as soon as she got the letter in her hands, went through the whole process, in *her* way, to the great delight of Esther, who declared she never saw a grown person more expert than her little scholar. Lucy smiled too, as she looked at the pretty mimic, but expressed a hope that she might not prove too expert, and burn her little fingers.

“Oh, but she is never left alone ; and we always watch her too closely to allow of her doing that.”

Esther had great pride in showing Martha how clever Frances was ; how prettily she folded and sealed a letter : but Esther forgot that infants do not retain what girls of her age did, from more than habit ; so, to her great surprise, when first she hoped to show her off, the little dear had quite forgotten all she had been taught ; and Esther was obliged to teach her a second time ; so that, at length the baby was as apt as she could wish.

But it was not thus that Esther's teaching ended.

Lucy had been some days unwell with a cold, during which Esther had helped to nurse her with the fondest care; never was there a kinder sister than Esther, never one who better deserved such kindness than Lucy.

Little Frances, too, had her share in cheering the spirits of the sick girl; for her tender caresses, and infant sports, amused the languid Lucy, who often raised her aching head from the pillow, to observe the motions of her little pet.

“I am afraid,” said Esther, one evening, “that this noise is too much for your poor head, Lucy.

Dr. Home desired you might be kept quiet; but Miss Frances seems to think her prattling is the best cure; suppose I take her into the nursery?

“Do so, my love, and request Martha to send me a little gruel of her own making.”

Esther took her young sister in her arms, and sought Martha in the nursery; when, having made known Lucy's request, Martha quickly threw aside her work, and began mixing the gruel, pleased that her young lady should prefer her cooking; for Lucy was beloved by all in the house; and Martha,

who had nursed her from childhood, was aware, that few children owned so many good traits, or were less inclined to harm others. Lucy's praise was her constant theme; in which Esther warmly joined her; for to her, Lucy was still dearer.

Whilst Martha was engaged with the gruel, Esther had recourse to the old plan of letter-folding; and, for this purpose, she begged some waste paper of her mamma, to amuse Frances. She did not on this night attempt, or pretend, to seal the letter; but Frances was now too knowing to be deceived, and made every sign she could express for Esther to finish it.

This proof of her genius was a fresh delight to her playmate, who held a bit of paper to the candle, as she would have done sealing-wax to a taper; and, in this way, put a mock seal to Fanny's letter.

“Do you think, Miss Esther,” asked Martha, as she poured the gruel into a cup; “do you think I might venture to leave the child with you the while I take this gruel to your sister?”

“To be sure you may, Martha. How many hours have I played with her in the drawing-room, and never did any mischief befall her?”

“Very true, my dear; I know you will not leave her; and I charge you not to let her go near the fire.”

“Never fear, never fear,” replied Esther; “I promise you she shall not stir from this chair; so make your mind easy. I am sure I know how to manage her by this time; and you often tell me I am a nice little nurse.”

Martha, as she kissed her cheek, agreed it was all very true, and then quitted the room on her errand.

By this time, Frances had used all the paper, and wanted more.

Fearful lest she should cry and disturb Lucy, Esther searched every drawer for another bit, but could find none.

At length it occurred to her, that she had seen Martha take some from the cupboard at the other end of the room, and to the cupboard she went; but, knowing she was never allowed to move a candle, Esther went in the dark to feel for it.

Meantime, Frances climbed from the chair to the table, and, catching up a slip of paper, held it to the candle, as Esther had done a few minutes before; when, pretending

to seal the letter, the flame ran quickly down the paper, and the little dear, feeling the heat approach her fingers, dropped it hastily : it fell on her muslin frock : she shook the frock ; this but fanned the flame, and, in one minute, her clothes were in a blaze. As her first scream reached the ear of Esther, the sudden light behind her gave some idea of the truth. Trembling, she rushed from the closet, and beheld the dreadful scene.

Few little girls of nine years of age possess strong presence of mind ; and, in danger like that we now describe, it may be supposed Esther was too much frightened to act very

promptly: but she screamed still louder than poor Frances, and even snatched the rug from the hearth, to wrap round her sister; but, by this time, Martha had run to their succour; and, other servants joining her, the sweet babe was rescued from death, and the flames subdued.

For many long weeks did the moans of the little sufferer pierce the heart of her conscious sister. The silent tear of their mother was almost as painful a reproof. Lucy, with her wonted goodness, tried to soothe the wretched Esther, though, like her, she had no doubt as to the cause of Fanny's accident. Often

indeed had she taken the paper from the child's hand, as she climbed the table to light it, and as often had she pointed out to Esther the danger of teaching her so bad a habit.

The skill of the doctor, and the united care of her friends, restored the little Fanny to health; and, to the surprise of all, she had but one scar, which was on the back of her left hand.

“Oh, that shocking scar,” said Esther; “I cannot bear to look at it, yet my eyes turn to it every time she moves. I feel as if I were that moment giving her pain; and I

think, when she is old enough to learn how that scar came, she will not love me so well as you, Lucy."

"Do't think so, my dear Esther; for we have no reason to suppose she will have a bad heart; and that she must have, if she loved you the less for what has happened: she will soon see that your kindness towards her is equal to ours; and, when she hears how much sorrow she has caused you, it will be her delight to forget the past, and strive to make you forget it too."

"I wish you may be right, dear Lucy; but you are always saying

or doing something to make every body happy.”

From this time no trace of Esther's fault remained : it became quite needless to caution her on those points ; whatever was left in her way remained as it was left. The servants no longer supposed Miss Esther had touched this, or removed that : they could rely on her honour, as they had ever done on Lucy's ; and, we surely need not add, the good word of every body, is a source of real pleasure to those who secure it by their own good conduct.

Esther was now quite reformed ; but she had yet to feel regret from

the same source, even when the fault had passed away.

The birth-day of one of their young friends brought an annual treat; and, as Lucy and Esther were very fond of Miss Butler, they looked forward to this day with much delight.

Martha, whose constant care was to keep their clothes in the greatest order, had taken much pains in preparing their best frocks for the fête; and, as she ironed the pretty lace which trimmed the bosom and sleeves, Esther stood by to admire how neatly she did it.

“What trouble you are taking, my dear Martha,” said she; “I am sure our frocks will be the neatest of any in the whole party. Indeed, mamma says you do every thing well.”

“My mistress is good enough to take the will for the deed,” answered the pleased Martha; “but I hope in this case I have not failed; for I wish all the pretty work round the bottom to rise as it should do, and lace should be ironed very even.”

“I am sure no one could do either better than yourself,” returned Esther.

The frocks were finished, and placed at some distance from the fire to dry. Esther went to read to her mamma and Lucy, while Martha took the little Frances into the garden for her morning's walk.

After reading some time, Mrs. Bradley proposed that Esther should join her sister in the garden, whilst Lucy went on with the book.

In passing through the nursery to get her bonnet, Esther observed that a strong current of air drew one of the frocks nearer to the fire than she thought was safe, for the windows and doors were both

open. "I wonder," said she, "that Martha left the room so much exposed, now the wind is so high. I think I will just move this frock a little more from the fire; but Martha told me not to touch it; and perhaps she will think me meddling, as I used to be.

Still Esther was inclined to move it; and for some minutes she stood watching its motions as the wind wafted it to and fro. But again, the fear of doing mischief, or being accused of old habits, checked her from going nearer; and she at length quitted the room, and ran to seek Frances in the garden.

Upon meeting Martha, she named her fears of the frocks being injured, and her reason for not moving it from danger.

“I wish you had, my dear,” said Martha; “for I doubt if I shall find it safe. I knew the wind was very strong, and therefore opened but one window. I conclude, that Robert, (who knows your mamma likes the nursery to have a thorough draught when we are not in it,) has opened the other window and the door. I will leave your sister on the grass; for I am sure I can now trust her to your care, whilst I hasten in-doors to prevent mischief.”

Away ran Martha, but too late for the good she hoped. The frock was already too near the bars of the grate to escape singeing: the worked bottom, the lace, were quite spoiled; and Martha, in doleful plight, went to acquaint her mistress with what had happened.

The frock proved to be Lucy's. Esther wished to give her own to her sister, as being the eldest; but, beside that it was too short, Mrs. Bradley would not allow of the change, saying, "A plainer frock will neither lessen Lucy in the eyes of her real friends, or take from the pleasure she is to share. Fine clothes cannot make us happy; and I doubt

not Lucy will enjoy the day in a coarse garment, as much as she would have done in this, her best. I only regret, my dear Esther, that you had not prudence to remove it, when you saw the danger?"

"So I should, mamma, but (and she blushed) I feared to be thought meddling; and we were always told to avoid going near the fire."

"True, Esther; and I give you credit for the feeling you thus display. You must now see your late habit in its true point of view: it has not only caused you to bring sorrow and pain on those you love, but it has also taken from you the

power of serving them when you alone could do so ; and, from a fear of doing wrong, you missed the pleasure of doing right : but I can attach trifling blame to your conduct in this instance, for the motive was good. Shall I tell you a story of a little boy I once knew ?”

“ Yes ; oh ! do, mamma ; but I hope he was wiser than I have been.”

“ That you shall hear, and judge for yourself. Like you, he had not many bad habits ; but he had one ; and that was, to pry into every thing that was going forward, whether it concerned him or not.”

“ ‘What is that?’ ‘Let me see?’ were his constant phrases; nothing escaped him. If he saw any thing put by with care, he never rested until he viewed it nearer, to know why it was to be preserved? His maid could not put a basin on a shelf, but he climbed a chair to peep into it; not that he was a greedy child, or would have taken what was not given to him, but, as I said, he must know every body’s affairs as well as his own.

“ One day his mamma had been shopping; and, on her return, was kind enough to shew him many of her purchases. Charles was in high spirits as he viewed them; but, on

seeing her lay aside one parcel unopened, he, as usual, felt the strongest desire to see what it was.

“ ‘All these are very pretty,’ said he; ‘but, pray, mamma, what is in that paper?’ ”

“ ‘What you have seen many times, Charles; not any thing new, I assure you;’ and she put it on the mantle-shelf.

“ ‘What can it be?’ thought he; I have seen it many times; and is it not new? Why can’t mamma show it me once more? ”

“He threw out more than one hint; but his mamma heeded them not. Some ladies called on a morning visit, and Charles was sent out of the room: his last look was at the mantle, or chimney-shelf.

“After dinner, he, as usual, went to join his father and mother for an hour. His mamma sent him to the drawing-room to fetch a book. The moment he entered the room, he looked to see if the parcel was still on the shelf. It was; and in an instant he drew a chair to the spot, and, jumping upon it, stretched out his hand to seize the prize; but, in his hurry, he lost his balance just as he reached it, and fell with the chair

upon him : the object of his search fell with him.

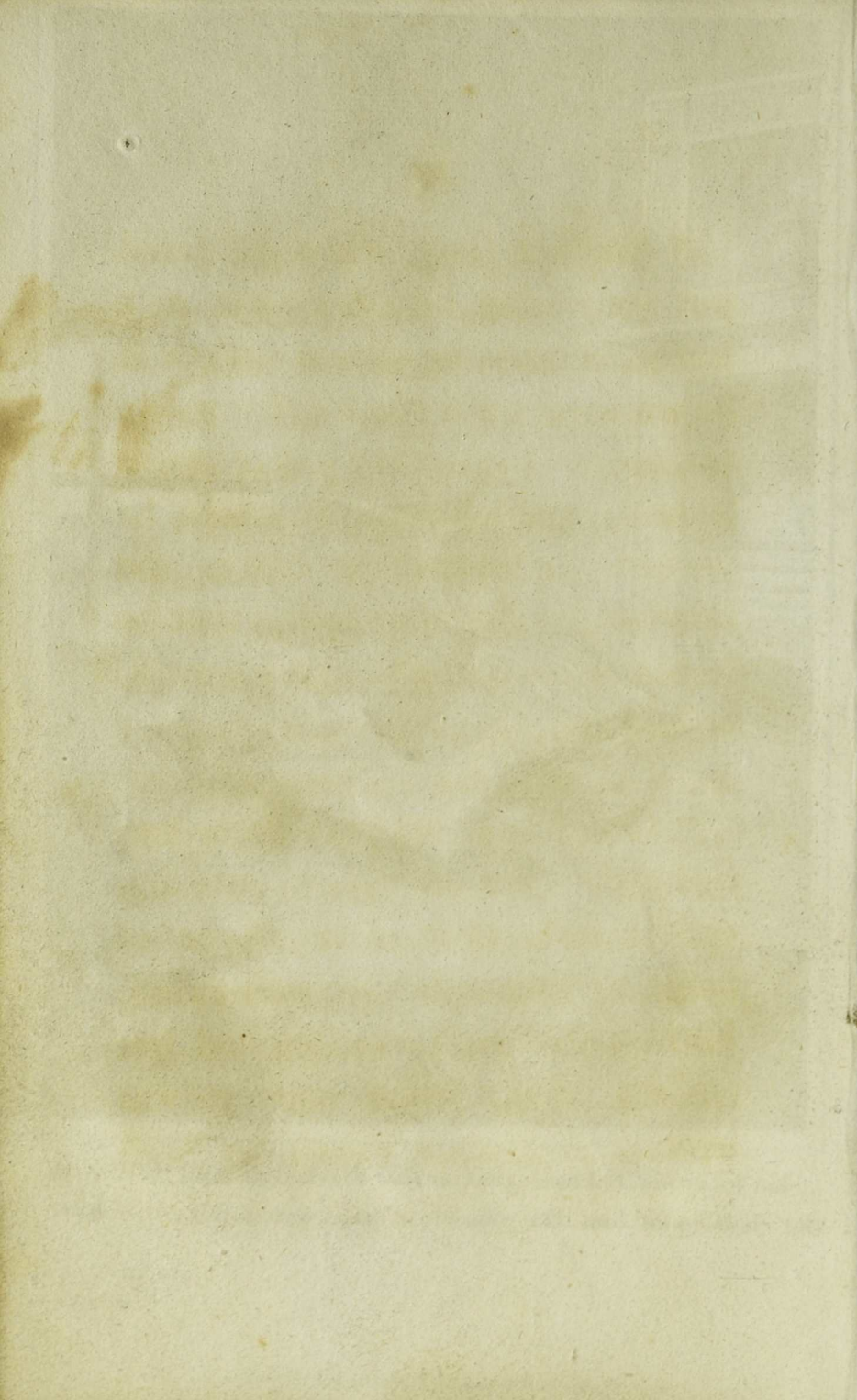
“ Charles was too much hurt himself to think of the mischief he had done, although he heard a loud crash on the hearth ; but, when his frightened parents had raised him, and rubbed his leg with vinegar, the cause of his fault was made known ; for broken in many pieces lay his papa’s watch, which had been only mended that morning.

“ He had too much honour to deny what he had done ; and was dismissed to bed in disgrace : but the watch never went correctly from that moment.



—he lost his balance just as he reached it, and fell with the chair upon him: the object of his search fell with him.

see page 53.



“ Another time, when his maid put something into a drawer in a hurry, because he should not see it, he watched until she left the room, and opened the drawer just to see, as he said; when, hearing footsteps, he pushed the drawer in haste, and jammed his finger so badly, that he wore one hand in a sling for a week, or longer.

“ One would suppose these two instances were enough to cure any child: but, such is the force of habit, as you are but too well aware, Esther, that pain like this had but trifling effect, when once it was over.

“ I have told you this little boy had not many faults: indeed, this one bad habit was quite enough for any child. But, really, Charles had a kind heart, and never wished to give pain, though he but too often caused it. While he alone suffered, advice or warning had slight hold of him; but, having once turned over a bottle with vitriol, and burned his nurse-maid's arm, he began to reflect on his folly, and made a resolve to correct himself. This was, of course, rather a hard task; but, by degrees, he was able to check every impulse of the kind; and, in less than three months, Charles had no desire to seek into any-

body's affairs, or look into drawers, basins, or such things as were put from his sight.

“So strict was he in this respect, that he would have waited an hour for what he wanted, rather than touch it, in the absence of his mamma, or the servant.

“Charles had a little cousin; a rude, spoiled child, who took delight in breaking every toy given him, tearing his book, and, in short, doing all sort of mischief.

“He could never entice Charles to join in these tricks; and, even when the latter was given to pry-

ing, it was not from the same motive; for Edward was a greedy child, and always seeking for something sweet and nice.

“As Charles improved, and conquered his folly, Edward liked him less as a playmate; and laughed, when his cousin would persuade, or rather try to persuade, him from touching what was forbidden them to touch.

“One day, being left to themselves, Edward, as usual, began prying into every hole and corner of the room, and cupboard. Charles in vain tried to divert him from his purpose: he would neither look at his

cousin's new books or pretty pictures.

“ ‘No, no,’ cried he, ‘I can see plenty of such things at home. I want to find out Mrs. Nurse’s hoards; I know she keeps some famous nice things in this cupboard.’ ”

“ ‘If she does, Ned, I am sure we shall have some of them for asking; for she never keeps nice things from me; but, really, you must not take them without leave.’ ”

“ ‘Why, you are mighty good, Charles. I don’t forget the last time I staid here: you could search

every-where, as well as I. Oh! here is the very jar from which you used to give me sugar-candy: it is all to a powder now,—but, here goes.’

Edward took some in his hand, and quickly swallowed it; but the taste soon induced him to spit it out; for, in fact, it was poison for the rats; and, although a doctor was nigh at hand, the foolish boy had taken enough to kill him; and Charles, with anguish, beheld his cousin fall a victim to his own folly.”

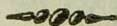
THE END.

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