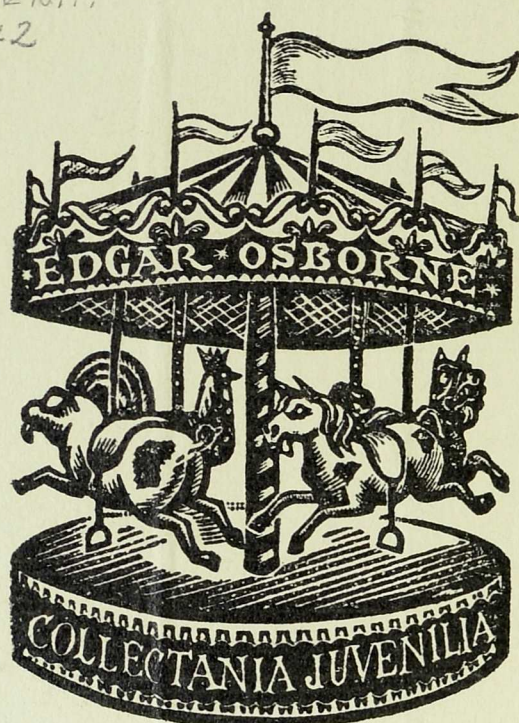


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AGDEN COURT:

A Tale

FOR CHILDREN.

LONDON:

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1842.

ALDEN COURT

1872

FOR CHILDREN

LONDON:

Printed by PALMER and CLAYTON,
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AGDEN COURT.

CHAPTER I.

AGDEN Court was a large, curious, and very old fashioned house, belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Villiers: and I am going to tell you something about the little boys and girls who lived in Agden Court. The eldest was Albert Villiers, he was twelve years old, and went to school. The next, Mary, was eleven, and her sister Ellen was ten: then came Frederic, he was only five years old; and Barbara, or Bebee as she called herself, was between two and three.

Now you will ask, perhaps, if these children were very good: indeed, they were very much like many children, sometimes good and sometimes naughty; but as their papa and mama were very anxious that they should grow up into good men and women, they had a great deal of pains taken with their education, both by Mr. and Mrs. Villiers and by Miss Nevill, who was their governess.

Albert, when he was younger, had been a pupil of Miss Nevill's, but now he was at school; so the only pupils that were still in the school-room were Mary and Ellen; for Fred. and Bebee were too young to be much out of the nursery.

I wish I could show you what a pleasant school-room they had at Agden Court. There were two large projecting stone bay-windows, that were so deep and wide, they were almost like little rooms. Round the stone casements climbed the pretty Virginian creeper, whose leaves turn red and orange in the autumn; and the red China rose and sweet white jasmine peeped into the windows. Mary and Ellen called one window "Miss Nevill's Bower;" she had a little table in it, with her writing and drawing and favourite books, and in the middle stood a bright azure vase, that held two or three flowers: the little girls took care, every other day, that she should have sweet and fresh flowers in her pretty vase, from their own little garden. The other deep bay-window they called their "Castle;" for they had little chairs and stools, a baby house, dolls, and all kinds of treasures in it. There they were allowed to play, sing, and chatter to their hearts' content; though, whenever the weather was fine, mama and Miss Nevill sent them out of doors to play, for nothing is so good for little boys and girls as plenty of fresh air and running about. These little girls were very happy when they were good—as all children

ought to be; but when they were naughty, they caused sorrow to themselves and to their mama and their kind governess, Miss Nevill. And now we will spend a few days with Mary and Ellen, at Agden Court: I assure you it is a very pleasant place; and they led a very happy, good, and healthy life there, as you might see by their cheerful faces, rosy cheeks, and straight active figures.

It is August. The sun rises before five o'clock; but Mary and Ellen do not get up quite so early as the sun now. They are still fast asleep, and do not know he is peeping into their windows, and making the red roses and starry jasmine open their eyes, awaking the sprightly little birds, the cheerful industrious bees, and the gay painted butterflies.

The clock strikes seven: the maid enters the little girls' room, draws up the blinds, and then wakes up Mary and Ellen. Now little boys and girls are often very sleepy when they are called in the morning, and if they do not jump out of bed the instant they awake, I have known them turn round and think they will just wait a minute longer; when, behold! down fall the heavy eyelids, and off they are asleep, as fast as before. And this happens to older people as well as to little boys and girls; and so the only thing to prevent their wishing, like the sluggard, for

“A little more sleep and a little more slumber,”

is, to jump out of bed instantly without thinking of anything.

Mary was always very sleepy in the morning; but Miss Nevill told her the longer she stayed in bed, the more unwilling she would feel to get up; and this she proved to her, by letting her one day stay in bed as long as she liked. And, what do you think? Mary slept till near twelve o'clock; and when she got up, she found Ellen had finished her lessons, and was gone out to ride with her papa, and call upon Mr. Graham, who had so many curious animals, that it was a great treat to go and see them. Miss Nevill, too, was gone out in the carriage with Mrs. Villiers and Frederic, so there was no one left at home but Bebee, to be a companion to lazy Mary. She felt so heavy and stupid, from too much sleep, and ashamed of herself for her indolence, that she determined to cure herself of this bad habit, and always to jump up directly she was called, before she had time to fall asleep again.

As soon as the girls were dressed, they went out to feed their poultry. When Mary was a very little girl, her godmother had given her some very pretty bantams; and her papa had built a little wee hen-house for them. Of this Mary had the key. So the first thing she did was to call her little feathered family together, and give them some barley; feeding at the same time some Guinea-fowls, that belonged to Ellen; they could not be made to roost in the bantam house, but

preferred the high trees for their bed ! They are wild creatures ! and fine hunts the little girls had for their nests and eggs.

Whilst Mary fed the poultry, Ellen took care that her own bulfinch and her sister's goldfinch should have clean sand and fresh water, and plenty of seed in their cages. For birds, like every other living thing, cannot be healthy without they are kept very clean.

All these feathered friends having had their breakfast, Mary and Ellen took a scamper through the shrubbery to the orchard. What do you think for ? Not for rosy-cheeked apples, though they grew there in abundance ; and each little girl had a basket. They stop under the great mulberry tree—you think, perhaps, they are going to eat mulberries ? No ; they are only gathering the leaves for their silk-worms' breakfast. And by the time they had gathered enough, and ran back to feed those ever-eating worms, they hear Miss Nevill calling to them to begin their lessons.

A short half hour is spent with their books ; and then, at half-past eight, comes breakfast. During breakfast, they chatted away with Miss Nevill. " I think," said Mary, " that the martens that have built under the stone of our window are almost full grown now. It is very curious, that the old pair come back every year to the same place ; they seem to like our school-room window as much as we do. But they will

soon be leaving Agden Court now; it is only their summer house. I wonder where they spend their winters, Miss Nevill?"

"No one knows; but they glide with their long wings, swiftly and easily, over hundreds of miles. Do you not remember Mrs. Howit's poetical address to the swallow,—

‘ Prythee, tell me how and where
Thou wast guided thro’ the air?
Prythee cease thy building labour,
And tell thy travel-story, neighbour:
But nought for answer can we get,
Save twitter, twitter, twitter, twet!’

Though that is all the answer we can get from these little travellers, yet there is no doubt they go to warmer climates."

"Did not people formerly fancy that the martens and swallows slept in the winter in the hollows of trees? and others thought they got to the bottom of ponds, and there remained asleep through the cold weather?"

"Yes; but that was an ignorant idea; for they cannot live under water any more than other birds. Though we do not know where they go, we know that they gather together into flocks the end of September; and when the summer seems quite gone, they fly away from us too.

"In Bewick's book of birds, there is a history of a young swallow that fell down a chimney in a gentleman's house, and the children begged leave

to bring him up. He was very soon friends with them, opening his mouth for flies, the same as if his mother was feeding him. When they brought him a fly, they used to whistle to him. Soon they took him out into the fields, and each child went hunting flies for him; when they caught one, they used to whistle, and the little swallow flew directly to receive the fly. The wild swallows flew all around him; but could not persuade him to go away with them. The moment any one of the children whistled, he flew to him directly. He soon learned to catch flies for himself; but still he remained in the house with the children. However, it took up so much of the children's time playing with him, and catching flies for him, for he ate from seven hundred to a thousand flies in a day, that he was put out of the window, and the window shut, that he might not come in again for many hours together. But he still came back to roost at night. At last, he grew rather more shy; he did not come quite so often, though he still answered by a chirp, when they whistled to him. When the summer ended, and the time for migrating came, he went off with his fellow-swallows to other lands."

"But did he not come back with the swallows next spring?" asked Ellen.

"I cannot tell you," replied Miss Nevill, "as that is not mentioned in the book. Did you ever hear a fable of Æsop's, called

THE SWALLOW AND OTHER BIRDS.

A very wise swallow seeing a farmer one day sowing his field with flax, she called all the birds together, and told them that when the flax was grown, man would make it into nets to catch birds; therefore she advised them to come and help her to pick up all the seed and destroy it. The birds paid very little attention to her advice. The goldfinch was full of his fine yellow feathers and red head, and did not like to dim his smart colours with hopping over a dirty field. The sparrows said, they had found out a field of corn, which they liked better than flax seed. The bulfinch was engaged to meet a party in a cherry orchard some way off. The linnets and chaffinches were going to a concert, to hear a new singer just come from Italy, named Signora Nightingale. In fact, all the birds found some excuse for not helping the swallow to destroy the flax. In a little time the flax sprung up; and again the wise swallow called the birds together, and told them, that from this plant man made those nets which were so destructive to the race of birds. She begged them to pull up the buds before they grew too strong and large: but they would not listen to her, and the flax grew up into stalk. She then once more begged them to attack it, ere it was too late; but they now laughed at

her, and called her a silly and false prophet. The swallow, finding all her remonstrances were in vain, determined to leave the society of such careless, unthinking creatures; so she quitted the woods, and repaired to the houses; and, instead of dwelling among birds, took up her abode among the dwellings of men.

“Indeed the swallow-tribe are very fearless and familiar with man: almost more so than the robin red-breast,” said Mary.

“Yes; and they do a great deal of good, clearing the air of thousands of flies, gnats, and troublesome insects. They are among our pleasant summer visitors; and Shakespeare says,—

“Where they
Most breed and haunt, I have observed the air
Is delicate.’”

“Then the air of Agden is delicate,” said Ellen, “for they build all round the house.”

“Yes,” replied Miss Neville; “they know where to choose pleasant and healthy spots for their hanging houses.”

Miss Nevill now looked at her watch, and found it was past nine. At half-past nine study began again; and before that the little girls always went to their mama’s room, to see if she was dressed.

CHAPTER II.

Mary and Ellen found mama quite dressed, and ready to come down to breakfast. She always took ten minutes stroll in the green-house and flower garden, while the servants were preparing the urne and toast, &c., for breakfast; and this morning she went with the little girls to their gardens, for they wished to gather some carnations and mignonette to put into Miss Nevill's pretty vase, for she was very fond of flowers.

At half-past nine the flowers were arranged, and the little girls busy in their pleasant school-room for the next three hours. Miss Nevill taught them all the things young ladies generally learn; but she taught them most particularly to control their tempers and improve their dispositions.

At half-past twelve they put all their lesson-books tidily away; for Miss Nevill particularly wished to teach Ellen to be tidy: for if Mary's fault was indolence, Ellen's was carelessness and untidiness; she was very apt to leave her things about, and thus lose or mislay them.

When all things were in order and in their proper places, they had an hour before dinner to play and amuse themselves; and now, as most of their silk-worms had done eating, and were beginning to spin, they had to pick out the spinners. They knew them by the clear yellow look

of their bodies, which seemed quite transparent. These they put into little paper cases, where they soon began to wrap themselves up in their fine silken garments.

“Look,” said Ellen to Mary, “here are several fine orange cocoons” — for so are called these balls of silk — “and I think it is time to wind them off.”

Mary took one up and held it to her ear, and shook it; it rattled as if there was a pea or hard thing within! And so there was, for the yellow caterpillar had turned into a hard, brown grub. Some of the cocoons were of a pale lemon colour; and the little girls had two wooden winders, one for the orange colour and one for the lemon-coloured silk. The little girls sat down in their window, or “castle,” as they called it, and wound off all the cocoons that were fit to wind, putting the dark-brown grubs into a box of bran, where they hid themselves from the light.

Then they went to their gardens, to see what was to be done there, and whilst they were tying up their carnations and making the gardens look neat, papa came to tell them, that they should both ride with him, at three o'clock, to Mr. Graham's. Now this was very pleasant, for Mr. Graham had so many birds, beasts, and curious things at Rose Cottage, that they enjoyed paying him a visit.

They went with papa into the stables to order their ponies. Fairy and Zoë were two very pretty

little ponies. Fairy was a grey, and Zoë a chestnut colour; they were about the same size, and cantered away famously, side by side. At three o'clock the little girls were quite ready, and away they cantered with their papa. They went down a pleasant, shady lane, which led to a wood, where the rabbits popped in and out, and did not seem at all afraid of them. They knew Mr. Villiers had not got a gun—cunning fellows! Just as they were coming out of the wood they saw a cock-pheasant, with his beautiful shining plumage; but when he saw them, he flew up over their heads into the thick wood.

When they were within a mile of Mr. Graham's, they went past a plantation of Spanish chestnut-trees, and the little girls asked their papa if those trees bore chestnuts good to eat?

"I think if you ask that little squirrel I see on the boughs—there! he is off out of sight—he would say, if he could speak, that they were very good; but we should not find them so good as those we buy, which come from the South, for England is rather too cold to bring chestnuts to perfection."

"Have you ever seen the chestnuts growing in Spain, papa?"

"No, my dear; but I have seen them in Italy, in the states of Lucca."

"That is the place," said Ellen, "where our salad oil, called Lucca oil, comes from, is it not?"

“ Yes,” replied Mr. Villiers; “ Lucca is a very fruitful spot, and in the mountains of Lucca there are olive-trees from which they make the oil, and woods of chestnut, and vineyards; and half way up the chestnut-clad hills are perched the pretty white cottages of the peasants who cultivate the land.”

“ Oh! tell us about those pretty farms, papa,” said Mary.

“ You will see a little mountain cultivated, perhaps, by one family; a stoney zig-zag path leads up to their cottage. The first part of the way is under the shade of the chestnut-trees, and then you come to the vines, which they plant in terraces, one above the other, all the way up to their cottage. By the side of the cottage you will see a large fig-tree, as big as the oaks in Agden wood; it bears the most beautiful figs—so ripe and sweet. All round the house they have twined the vines with sticks, like a trellice-work, so that they make a covered walk or bower, and this they call a pergola. I assure you it is very pleasant to sit in the evening or walk in their pergolas!”

“ And do they grow no wheat on their land, papa?” asked Ellen.

“ Very little in the mountains, my dear. You will just find a little patch of wheat now and then; but the vine is what they cultivate most. They feed their cows on the vine leaves, and make wine of the fruit. If they grow wheat,

they do not eat it themselves: it is too great a luxury for those poor peasants!"

"Then what do they eat?" said Mary.

"What do you suppose?"

"Potatoes, perhaps," said Ellen.

"Their principal food," replied Mr. Villiers, "is the chestnut. When ripe, they grind them into flour, and of this they make cakes; they live on these cakes, and sell their wheat to the people in the towns."

"Did you ever taste their chestnut-cakes, papa?"

"No, my dear; but I tasted the flour, and it has a very sweet taste; I did not like it much: but these poor people think it very good. Your mama brought some home with her, and if you ask her will show it to you. But now, here we are at Rose Cottage."

Now Rose Cottage was the prettiest little cottage possible: it was covered with creepers, and the pink China rose climbed higher than all, quite up to the thatched roof; it was always in flower, and for this reason it was called Rose Cottage. There was a porch made of the twisted oak-lop, and the roses and honeysuckle twined in and out of that also, and on each side hung cages of singing birds: there was a linnet, a canary, and a goldfinch, all singing their sweetest songs.

Mr. Graham was rather an old man; his wife was dead, and his only son was a lawyer in

London; so that he lived by himself in Rose Cottage. But his grandchildren from London very often paid him visits. He was a very kind old gentleman, and fond of young people. Besides, he had quite a "menagerie" of live creatures, and a "museum" of curiosities.

As soon as Mr. Villiers and his daughters reached the porch, out came a very large dog; he had dark iron-grey shaggy hair all over him; a most fierce-looking fellow! But Mary and Ellen knew that Nelson was never fierce; and he now wagged his bushy tail, and greeted them in his canine language.

Mr. Graham came to the door, followed by his inseparable companion, Fidel; a little brown terrier, with a face like a pug dog. He was a most frolicsome and amusing little dog, with his smart red leather collar, on which were four silver bells, that tinkled every time he moved, like the bells on a baby's coral.

"Good morning, Mr. Villiers; good morning, my little lasses," said Mr. Graham; "I am very glad you have come to see me to-day, for to-morrow I go to London for a week. I think, I shall bring back some of my nephews and nieces with me, and then you must come and see them. But, come in!"

Fidel frisked about, and shook his silver bells; he seemed quite pleased to see the little girls. They went into Mr. Graham's favourite room, where he always sat; it was very small, and had

a glass door at one end, leading into a wee-wee green-house. His plants always looked greener and more healthy than any other person's; for he took care of them entirely himself. Next to the green-house door was a recess, which led to a large closet, which he called his "Museum." There was a little window in the closet, and it was quite full, from top to bottom, of curiosities. There were butterflies, and fossils, and shells, and minerals, and too many curious things to mention now. Ellen was a collector of butterflies, and Mr. Graham promised to give her a black and yellow "swallow tail," and a white and orange butterfly, that was common in the woods near Rose Cottage. To Mary, who collected shells and sea curiosities, he promised a star-fish.

"Now," said Mr. Graham, "we will go out of doors and see my live-stock. I have told John, who I call my 'Man Friday,' to see that they are ready to receive visitors and behave prettily. We will go this way through the green-house. Do you see my new cage of grey squirrels? And there is Mr. Cockatoo on his perch! Come, speak to the company, sir!"

The bird, accordingly, raised up the yellow feathers of his head, and said "cockatoo!"

"Ah! ah! Mr. Rook, are you there?" said Mr. Graham, as a young crow hopped up to the green-house door, and greeted him with a "caw! caw!"

“ This is a young rook,” said he, “ that was wounded; I bought him of some boys, who were going to kill him, and put him in a pie! He is, you see, very grateful to me for saving his life.”

They walked into the flower-garden, and in a nice sheltered spot were several bee-hives. The bees all knew Mr. Graham, and let him take them in his fingers without stinging him.* He took several up and stroked them, and showed them to the little girls.

“ They will sting us if we touch them, I suppose,” said Mary.

“ Yes; I fear they would; but if you would like, you can look into the hive and see how busily they are at work.”

Mr. Graham moved away the side of the hive, and there was a glass window in it: through this they could see the wax and the honey, that these industrious little insects collect.

In the middle of this garden there was a little pond.

“ This is what I call my ‘ Piscatorium,’ ” said Mr. Graham. “ I have many kinds of fish in it. Would you like to see some ? ”

He took some bread from his pocket, and threw it into the pond. The perch were the first to come, with their striped backs and prickly upright fins: they seemed quite tame. Presently the tench, in their golden scales, came to see

* A fact.

what was to be got also; and then the roach, with their red fins and silvery scales. At last, a large carp showed himself. A few steps further brought them to a spot Mr. Graham called his "Zoological Garden." There was a large cage with an eagle in it; and another place full of those pretty soft-looking doves, with a black ring round their necks. There was a monkey climbing up and down a pole, chattering and grinning.

" Monkey ! little merry fellow,
Thou art nature's Punchinello."

Mr. Graham gave him some nuts, which he quickly popped into his mouth, till his cheek was so full, it could hold no more ; he then took them out, one by one, and began cracking and eating them. The little girls saw many more things at Mr. Graham's little cottage ; but I fear you will be tired if I name any more now.

CHAPTER III.

“MISS NEVILL,” said Ellen, “mama has promised to give us that little room that has no furniture in it, for a museum, like Mr. Graham’s. But she says, it is only on condition that I keep it *very* tidy; and I assure you I mean to do so.”

“Really,” said Mary, “our window is so full, that it is difficult to keep our things tidy; but now we have this room we shall be able to keep our treasures in good order.”

“And you will help us to arrange them, Miss Nevill,” said Ellen, “and tell us about every thing?”

“I am afraid,” replied Miss Nevill, smiling, “I shall not be able to tell you about *every thing*!”

“But I mean, you will tell us something about the things we put into our museum; for mama says we must learn all we can about our specimens. The housemaid is to clean and brush the room this morning, and as soon as we have finished our lessons we will begin to arrange our museum.”

Accordingly, after dinner, the little girls began to look out their treasures; and, to their great delight, when they went into the room, they found papa had made the carpenter put up some shelves

on the wall; and there were two deal tables and two chairs placed in the room. They ran to ask Miss Nevill to come and give her advice about placing their curiosities. First, Mary brought a large piece of white coral and some shells they had picked up at the sea side; and one shelf was to be kept for them. Then Ellen had a box of butterflies, and insects that she had caught herself; and these were placed upon one table. Next came Albert's collection of birds-nests and eggs, which he had left in his sister's charge.

A pair of stuffed goldfinches of Mary's, a kingfisher of Albert's, a squirrel of Ellen's, were then hung up on nails in the wall; and a bunch of Indian arrows placed upon the table.

"Really, Miss Nevill," said Mary, "our museum makes a very respectable appearance already. And then there is my star-fish to come, and Ellen's butterflies that Mr. Graham gave us."

"Albert comes home next week," said Ellen; "and he is sure to bring something home with him for the museum."

The little girls went to fetch their mama, to come and see the commencement of their museum. Mrs. Villiers came in with a basket on her arm, and a small neatly bound book in the other hand.

"Here," said she, "is a blank book to make a catalogue or list of your curiosities. You must arrange them under proper heads. With Miss Nevill's kind assistance, I hope the book will

be kept quite free from blots, and I think one table should be kept on purpose to write on. In this basket I have a little inkstand of green marble—I brought it from Florence; and here is a large wide-mouthed bottle for gum, and a portfolio with some paper. You must cut little pieces of paper, and number them, and stick them on your specimens, and then write the names of each number in the book.”

“ Oh! dear mama,” said Ellen, “ that is very nice.”

Now Ellen dearly loved anything new, and the novelty of the museum and the catalogue greatly delighted her.

Mama smiled, and said: “ I hope, my dear Ellen, you remember my conditions,—everything in the museum must be in its place; and I am afraid you will find that a difficult matter!”

“ Oh! mama, I will promise to do my share as tidily as Mary.”

“ Do not promise too much, my dear,” said Mrs. Villiers; “ for you are not sure you can perform all that.”

“ But I will try,” said Ellen.

“ That is all you can promise,” said Mrs. Villiers; “ because we cannot grow orderly and tidy in one day—all of a sudden; but it requires patience and constant attention; and I hope some day to see you as tidy as Mary.”

“ Now, Miss Nevill,” said Mary, “ will you make a list on a piece of paper, and show us how

we had best arrange our things in the museum book."

"First, you must number the pages in pencil."

"Yes."

"And then you must class your specimens in proper order; one page for each. One for insects, one for shells, and so on."

"What shall we place first?" said Mary: "which do you think most important?"

"Everything in nature is important," said Miss Nevill; "all God's works are perfect and beautiful: I do not know that we can call any one of his works more beautiful and important than another. But as you are the eldest, Mary, you shall choose what specimens of nature shall be first entered in the book."

"Well, I think," said Mary, "I will have my shells placed first."

"Very well! then on the first page we will write 'Conchology.'"

"Mary has chosen the sea, so I will choose the air; my butterflies and insects shall be next. May I write above them 'Entymology?'"

"Now, what next, Miss Nevill?" said Mary.

"We have sea and air, so I will choose the earth; 'Mineralogy' shall be written on the next page. At present you have very few specimens of minerals, I think."

"Only some 'dog's-tooth crystals,' and some shining lead ore," said Mary.

"I will give you a piece of Sicilian agate," said

Miss Nevill; "and also some pieces of jet, both polished and unpolished."

"Oh! thank you, Miss Nevill; we have now to put down birds'-nests and eggs, stuffed birds, and foreign curiosities. I will begin," continued Mary, "to put little tickets on the large shells; the little shells I will put into card trays, and number them. But we must get a pair of scissors."

The girls ran to fetch their scissors. Mary soon came back with hers, because she always kept them in her work-basket; but Ellen, after hunting about for a long time, came back, and said she could not find hers. During the time she had been hunting for her lost scissors, Mary had cut out and numbered all the shells, and was now gumming tickets on the minerals.

"My dear Ellen," said Miss Nevill, "you see how much time your carelessness causes you to lose. A minute or two employed in putting things in their proper places would save ten or twenty minutes wasted in searching for them."

Mary lent Ellen her scissors, and she determined she would try and put her things into their right places; and, after thinking upon the truth of Miss Nevill's remarks for some minutes, she said, "Do you not think it would be a good thing always to keep a pair of scissors on the museum table? As I have two shillings left of my pocket-money, if we may ride into the town to-day, I will buy a pair of scissors for the

museum. Do you think I can buy a pair for eighteen-pence?"

"I think you can," answered Miss Nevill; "and then I hope they will never be mislaid."

"That is a good plan," said Mary; "and I will run and ask mama if we may ride to-day and buy the scissors."

It was soon arranged, that the little girls were to ride; and Miss Nevill was to ride with them, on Mrs. Villiers' horse. The town was about four miles off; and in the afternoon they set out to make their purchase.

"I am so fond of riding," said Ellen, "that I should like to ride all day long!"

"All day long!" said Mary, smiling; "I think, Ellen, you would be very tired if you rode all day."

"I think so, too," said Miss Nevill; "and I think, too, you would not find much pleasure in it at last. You would be like the little girl that wished to play all day long; she was allowed to have her wish, and found it a very weary day. We can only enjoy in moderation: change, and variety of exercise and occupation, is necessary to our enjoyment. You must know, my dear Ellen, that we have all more than four hundred muscles in our bodies. It is by means of these muscles we move about,—our body is all over muscles; we could not walk without the muscles of our legs, nor hold these reins without the muscles of our hands and arms; nor sit

upright on our saddle without the muscles of our backs. Well, these four hundred muscles require rest sometimes."

"Yes," said Mary; "and I think the muscles of Ellen's back would ache very much if she sat all day on Fairy's back."

"Indeed they would," said Miss Nevill; "and she would be glad to get down and rest them. Now the muscles of her legs have been at rest, and hanging over the pommel of the saddle, so that they would be glad to be used a little in walking; for too much rest is as unpleasant to the muscles as too much exercise."

"Then our limbs ache and feel tired when we do not use them at all; and also when we use them too much?" said Mary.

"Yes," said Miss Nevill; "God has made our muscles most perfect, and he has ordained that, to keep them healthy and perfect, we must use them, and then rest them, and use them again, and rest again: that is the only way to enjoy exercise."

"Have horses muscles too?" said Ellen.

"Yes," replied Miss Nevill; "every animal has muscles to enable him to move about."

"A horse cannot use his muscles all day long without rest?" said Mary.

"No; he cannot trot all day long. When we take horses a long journey, we drive them for three or four hours, and then stop for a couple of hours to rest, that is to give their muscles rest;

and then after rest, they start again quite fresh, and finish the journey; then they rest again, till the next day; and so on, we can go many hundred miles with the same horses. I have been often two hundred miles with the same horses. But if we had taken them on all day without rest, they would have dropped down dead long before they had gone half the distance."

"Where did you travel two hundred miles with the same horses?" said Mary.

"It was in Switzerland. They have no post-horses there, nor any fast coaches to gallop away ten miles an hour, and then find fresh horses waiting to be put-to, and in a minute gallop off again. So if you wish to go a long journey in Switzerland you must hire a 'Voiturier,' that is, a man who has two, three, or four horses belonging to him. He puts his horses to your carriage, and jogs away with you, from thirty to forty miles a day. And this travelling is called travelling '*en Voiturier*.'"

"Oh! do tell us," said Ellen, "about your travels *en voiturier*."

"Another time I will tell you about my journey from Germany to Switzerland, with *voiturier* horses: here we are now in the town."

CHAPTER IV.

THE scissors were brought and placed on the table, the gum was melted in the bottle, and a paint-brush put into it; everything was nicely arranged in the new museum at Agden Court.

Miss Nevill proposed drawing a wreath of flowers, to hang over the door, and within it was to be written this motto :—

“ A place for every thing, and every thing in its place.”

The little girls were to choose the flowers for the wreath. They chose all their favourites: the sweet violet, the pale primrose, the speckled cowslip, the snowy lily of the valley, the nodding blue bell, the feathery fern, the tall fox-glove, and the little water-loving forget-me-not.

These were Mary and Ellen's favourite wild flowers: they grew in the pleasant woods and fields round Agden Court.

Miss Nevill sat down in her window, and began to draw the outline of this wreath. Mary was busily engaged in writing in a book, which she called her “Album.” She was copying out a fable, that Mrs. Villiers had written in verse for her. Mary was very fond of poetry; and this was the fable :—

THE ANT AND GRASSHOPPER.

1.

It was the winter season,
The bright flowers all were gone,
The cold wind tossed the leaves about,
The trees seemed all forlorn !

2.

But busy were the little ants,
Stowing away their grain ;
They piled it up in heaps to dry,
At the gate of their domain.

3.

A grasshopper accosted them,
In a most humble tone :
“ Kind ants, pray give some food to me,
“ I’m poor, and all alone ! ”

4.

Then answered a wise old ant, and said,
“ You are stronger than we, I’m sure ;
“ Then what did you do all summer time,
“ That now you are so poor ? ”

5.

“ Alas ! sir,” said the grasshopper,
“ In the bright summer hours,
“ I never thought of winter days ;
“ But lived among the flowers.

6.

“ I danced upon the greenest grass,
“ And drank the purest dew ;
“ I sang from morning until night,
“ I could not *work* like you ! ”

7.

The wise ant shook his head, and said,

“ Excuse me, if I say,

“ That they must starve in winter

“ Who their summer waste in play.”

Ellen was in the museum; for she was quite determined that the part that was under her charge should be tidy and in nice order. She dusted all the shelves, with a duster kept on purpose in a drawer of the table; and having made everything look neat, she went into the school-room to ask if it was not time to go out. She asked Mary to get her bows and arrows, and have a game of archery with her. Miss Nevill said she would come and shoot too. Mary, however, was very anxious to stay in the house, and read a new book her papa had given her.

“ I am sorry, my dear,” said Miss Nevill, “ to be obliged to make you go out; but I must do so, as it is good for your health.”

“ Oh! I am sure it cannot signify for once, Miss Nevill,” said Mary.

“ No, perhaps not for once; but you must remember that several days this week you have not gone out at our exercise hours; twice the rain has prevented us—that you could not help; but very often, you know, you find some excuse for staying in. Now, my dear Mary, I told you yesterday, that God has given you four hundred muscles which require exercise. It is quite

necessary to health, to exercise our limbs every day in the open air; and if we do not do this we can have no health; and without health we can have no happiness in this world. I wish you to like everything that is your duty; and it is quite a duty to take exercise."

"Papa says he would rather we missed our lessons than our exercise," said Ellen.

"Yes, your papa wishes you to grow up into healthy women, as well as clever and good women. When you are once out of doors, Mary, you enjoy it as much as Ellen does; but it is a little indolence that makes you fancy it is a trouble to move, when you have aught indoors that amuses you. But make up your mind to put aside anything you may be doing at once, for exercise is of the greatest importance to young girls; and if I excused you to-day, I should not be doing my duty to you, my dear."

So Mary put up her books, and ran to get ready; because she was a sensible girl, and understood the truth of what Miss Nevill told her. Ellen danced and sang all the way upstairs, for she was always very glad to go out of doors.

There was a nice green piece of turf in the middle of the pleasure-grounds of Agden Court; and they called it "Robin Hood's Glade." Here the targets stood, and the grass was mown very short and close, that the arrows might not be lost. The target had five circles; the middle,

gold, was called the bull's eye; the second circle was red; the third, white; the fourth, black; and the fifth, white.

Mary had ruled some cards, and painted the first line yellow, the second red, the third was left white, the fourth was painted black, and the fifth white again. A pin was tied on to the card, to prick holes and mark the number of arrows that hit the target. If an arrow went into the bull's eye, which was in the middle of the target, they pricked a hole in the yellow line, and that counted for nine. If the arrow hit the red, they pricked it in the red line, and that counted seven. If the arrow was in the inner white, it counted five; if in the black, it counted three; and if in the last white circle, it only counted one. Outside the last white circle was a green rim, and if the arrow hit that, it did not count at all. This green rim was called the petticoat. I dare say my little readers have often shot at a target, and jumped for joy when the arrow hit the golden bull's eye: and often, I fancy, they have hit the target's green petticoat; and oftener, perhaps, the arrow stuck only in the green grass!

"This is a nice exercise," said Miss Nevill. "Are you not glad, Mary, that you came out?"

"Yes, I am now; especially as I think I have the largest score, and have shot the best to-day," replied Mary. "In drawing the bow, Miss Nevill, do we not use the muscles of our arms?"

and in walking from target to target we use the muscles of our legs?"

"Certainly," said Miss Nevill: "and in stooping to pick up our arrows we use the muscles of our bodies; so that archery is a fine exercise for all our muscles, you see."

"Then no wonder Robin Hood and Little John were fine healthy fellows; and, I dare say, Maid Marian was a strong damsel, and had not delicate nerves or a pale face."

"Archers are no longer so skilful as Robin Hood or Maid Marian," said Miss Nevill:

"On the fairest time of June
You may go with sun and moon,
Or the seven stars to light you;
But you never may behold
Little John or Robin bold,
Friar Tuck or Marian,
Never one of all the clan!"

"Papa says, we should not have so many unhealthy and delicate young ladies," said Ellen, "if we all loved exercise as you do, Miss Nevill."

"I do not think I am so very fond of exercise, my dear," replied Miss Nevill; "but I think it necessary for the health. I think it right to use the muscles God has given me. The great and good God has made our limbs to be used; and he wishes his creatures to enjoy themselves and

be happy. See how the young animals frisk about and enjoy themselves; so do young children if allowed. No one who is idle and indolent can be healthy or happy!"

"Certainly, the time passes much quicker when we have something to do," said Mary.

"You remember the story of 'Eyes and no Eyes,' in the 'Evenings at Home;' how much one boy enjoyed his walk, whilst the other was tired," said Miss Nevill. "A walk in search of insects and flowers, where the mind is amused, does more good to the muscles than a walk without an object."

"Then archery amuses the mind?" said Ellen.

"Yes," replied Miss Nevill; "and therefore it is a good exercise. You have shot for an hour, and are not a bit tired, I dare say; but it is time to leave off."

Mary and Ellen carried their bows and arrows into the house, and then got a pencil to add up the numbers they had shot.

Mary's score was this:—

2 reds, each value 7; twice 7	14
3 inner whites, each value 5; 3 times 5.....	15
1 black, value 3.....	3

Added together, made.... 32

Ellen's score was,

1 gold, value	9
1 red, value	7
2 inner white, each value 5	10
3 on the white, value 1 ; 3 times 1.....	3
	29

Miss Nevill had,

1 red, value 7	7
1 inner white, value 5.....	5
2 black, each value 3 ; twice 3.....	6
4 outer white, value 1 ; 4 times 1.....	4
	21

So that Mary's was the highest score, she was thirty-two ; Ellen's next, she was twenty-nine ; and Miss Nevill, who did not shoot so well, or practise so much as the little girls, was only twenty-one.

These were nice little easy sums for Mary and Ellen : but at archery meetings, ladies and gentlemen get from one hundred to two hundred, and that makes a longer and more difficult sum to cast up.

CHAPTER V.

MISS NEVILL had promised to tell the little girls a fairy-tale; and after the bows and arrows were put away, they got some work, and sat down in an arbour in the pleasure-grounds; when Miss Nevill told them the following story of

BIANCA AND ROSALINA.

“There was once upon a time, in Italy, an old couple, who lived in a pretty cottage. It had on one side a wood of sweet chestnut-trees: before it were vineyards; and behind it an olive garden. Above shone the blue sky and bright southern sun, so that the *contadina*’s, or peasant’s cottage, seemed quite a paradise! In the spring the nightingale sang in the chestnut-tree. In the summer hundreds of *cicale*, an insect that makes a noise something like a grasshopper, chirped in the olive-trees; the hotter the sun shone the louder they sang for joy; and only when he sank behind the mountains, did they cease their merry noise. In the autumn the pretty little bird called the beccafica hopped down from the vines to the fig-trees, and grew fat on the luscious grapes and figs! The *contadina* had two daughters, Bianca and Rosalina; they were twins, the merriest and kindest maidens; very much alike in person,

but Bianca was much handsomer than her sister. They loved one another dearly; and were very industrious, dutiful, and affectionate daughters.

“ Night and morn did they carry on their heads baskets of vine-leaves and long grass which they cut for their cows; and often did Rosalina walk to market with her fresh butter and ripe fruit, whilst Bianca made the cakes, and spun with her mother at home.

“ One day there was a *festa*, or holiday in the village, for the Italians have many festadays in the year. The sisters dressed themselves in their best; and went to dance with their friends under the shade of the acacia-trees. All the peasants were in their best, with bodices laced with scarlet, and short petticoats trimmed with the same colour. Bianca had taken great pains to arrange her bright red handkerchief becomingly on her head; and had borrowed her mother's row of pearls to hang round her neck. The *contadinas* have all pearl necklaces; they buy them bead by bead; and they are handed down from generation to generation, and never parted with unless great poverty and misfortune befall the family. Rosalina wore only her own double row of coral beads, for she was always ready to give up anything to Bianca. So the two sisters walked together, with their large green paper fans in their hands, most happily and merrily to the *festa*.

“ A villa some few miles from the village had been this year hired by a duchess: this great

lady came with a party of her friends to see the peasants dance; and when they got out of their carriages, they were greatly stared at by the simple peasants, who had never before seen such smart Parisian fashions. The *contadinas* of this remote village never changed their fashions; their simple bodices and petticoats were made of the same materials and shape as their grandmothers before them; and the handkerchief pinned upon the head, served them in the place of caps and bonnets.

“They danced as merrily, however, and looked as handsome as ladies who have new dresses and bonnets every month.

“As Bianca and Rosalina were walking home from the festa, the moon shone upon their lonely mountain path bright as day. They talked about the gay ladies they had seen. Rosalina had only looked at them as a curious rare sight; but Bianca had observed their splendour, only to become discontented with her own finery. Her pearl necklace, of which she had been so proud, now appeared as nothing beside the rainbow stones, set in glittering gold, that clasped the arms, and shone on the bosoms of the duchess and her friends. ‘Oh! how I wish I were a duchess!’ said she, sighing: ‘how much happier must be a lady’s life than a poor *contadina*’s, for every day is a festa to them!’

“‘Oh! Bianca,’ said Rosalina, ‘I am sure a

contadina's life is happy too! Are we not very happy in our pretty cottage? Oh! I would not change places with those grand ladies—I should not be happy in those fine clothes; that beautiful bonnet on the duchess's head, with those pretty pink feathers, it did not shade her from the sun so well as our red handkerchief. And though the roses underneath in her hair were very wonderful, and like real flowers, they do not smell sweet like the roses in our garden!

“ ‘But that beautiful satin petticoat,’ sighed Bianca.

“ ‘Yes, that was lovely,’ replied Rosalina, ‘for it was the colour of our grapes when they are ripest. But, sister, if we had that pretty petticoat, how could we walk up the mountains in it? it was so long that we should every minute be putting our feet through it.’

“ ‘Then her shoes!’ said Bianca.

“ ‘As to her shoes, sister,’ answered Rosalina, ‘the stones in our pathways would cut them to pieces in a minute. We could never in them fetch poor Buffo from the far pastures, without bruising and hurting our feet.’

“ ‘But did you observe her fan, Rosalina? surely you would like to have that,’ said Bianca.

“ ‘It could not give more air than mine,’ said Rosalina, waving her green paper fan to and fro; ‘but, sister, if you admire it, I will buy you a beautiful fan with pictures all over it, next time

I go to the town; for I have saved three paoli (fifteen-pence) on purpose to make you a nice birthday present.'

" 'Thank you, dear Rosalina,' said Bianca: but she still sighed and felt discontented with her humble lot.

" At this moment they heard a rustling in the tall fern; and a little old woman stood before them in the pathway. They knew at a glance that she was a good fairy, who lived far up in the lovely lonely mountains. They moved aside to let her pass, she was a very little body, and did not require much room; but she waved her wand, and bade them stop, saying 'I have heard your conversation, and am willing and able to grant you all your wishes. I offer you the choice of a palace or a cottage. You, Bianca, speak first. Will you be a princess, and live in a great palace; or a peasant, in a lowly cottage?'

" Bianca was overjoyed at this realization of her ambitious wishes, she threw herself on her knees, and begged for a palace.'

" 'It shall be yours,' said the fairy.

" Bianca kissed her hand and thanked her over and over again for her good gift. 'Stop! stop!' said the little fairy; 'do not thank me until you have proved that it is a good gift! And now, Rosalina, will not you have a palace too?'

" 'No, I thank you, signora,' said Rosalina; 'I am but a simple country girl; and I think I should be happiest in a cottage, even our own

dear cottage, with its vines, olives, and chestnut-trees !’

“ ‘ And is there nothing more that you desire ? ’ said the good fairy.

“ ‘ You are very kind, signora,—there is something ; our cow has but a poor shed for the wintry weather ; and I should like a better place for her ; and if you please also, a larger field of wheat, that our father and mother may have bread all the year round : for they like the nice white loaves better than their chestnut cakes.’

“ ‘ Maidens ! ’ said the fairy, ‘ your wishes shall be granted ; and may you, Bianca, be as happy in your palace, as Rosalina in her cottage ! ’ The fairy waved her wand, and vanished.

“ A short time after this a handsome young prince came hunting in these mountains : he lost his companions, and his way ; and found himself close to our contadina’s cottage. He was much fatigued, and very hungry ; and whilst Rosalina fed and tended his tired horse, Bianca gave some new milk, white bread, and ripe grapes to the prince.

“ Of course, to fulfil the fairy’s promise, this young prince fell in love with the beautiful Bianca, and it was soon settled she was to marry him, become a princess, and live in a palace ! He sent her splendid dresses and jewels, that quite dazzled her imagination ; she thought no mortal was ever so fortunate as herself ; for the prince, besides being young and handsome, had a very

polite courtly manner, that made every one fancy he was as amiable as handsome. Rosalina, when she saw how good tempered the prince appeared, could not help rejoicing at her sister's marriage, though she felt very sad at the idea of losing her. The prince was so kind as to offer to take her also to his palace, and find her a grand husband amid his lords and chamberlains; but Rosalina refused to leave her father and mother, and her native cottage. Who was to prune the vines, and pick the olives for them, if she went away? who was to tend the cow? and what would little Buffo, the pretty large-eyed calf, do without her? No persuasions could induce her to leave her humble cottage; and so the prince carried off his bride in the most splendid *portantine* (which is something like a sedan-chair, and carried by two men); for no carriage could ascend the steep narrow path that led to the cottage.

“ Bianca's *portantine* was carried on two gilt poles, by pages dressed in scarlet and gold; and it was lined with crimson velvet and gold lace.

“ Poor Rosalina wept bitterly as they carried away her dear sister; and hoped in her heart, that she might be as happy in her grand palace as they had been together in their little cottage.

“ Shortly, an industrious and amiable young peasant, who had known the sisters from childhood, and had always admired Rosalina's sweet temper and industrious contented disposition,

asked her to be his wife ; she was accordingly married to Enrico : he had saved a little money by his industry, and was rich for his station in life ; so that now the fairy's promises were all accomplished.

“ Enrico built a new cow house, and bought two more cows ; he added two rooms to the cottage ; bought a field to grow wheat, and all kinds of grain ; made a flower-garden for Rosalina, and planted plum, peach, and nectarine-trees in the garden. No one could be happier than Rosalina ; and she thought there was not such another husband in the world as her Enrico.”

“ And was Bianca, the princess, happy ? ”

“ The first year her husband was kind to her ; and he took delight in loading his pretty princess with jewels. He gave fêtes in her honour ; and it was always festa with her now ! The ladies of the Court thought she must be the happiest creature in the world ! But she was not so happy as she had been in her girlhood, 'mid the far mountains. She often sighed when she looked at the crowd of gay persons who surrounded her ; who all accosted her with flattering speeches ; but she knew not one who loved her a quarter so well as her father, mother, and sister Rosalina. Indeed, in their hearts they despised and envied the princess ; they wondered why the prince had been so foolish as to marry a poor contadina ; she might be handsome ; but she had no manners,

and was not fit for a Court. Thus, they took every opportunity of speaking against her; and one wicked old chamberlain, who wanted to see his own daughter made princess, did all in his power to set the prince, her husband, against poor Bianca.

Thus, whilst Rosalina, in her country dress and simple coral necklace, was singing in her garden, tending her cows, and spinning under her bower of vine leaves; industrious as the bees that hovered over the flowers, merry as the cicale, that never ceased singing in her olive trees; poor Bianca, in her satins and jewels, sat sighing in her palace, and would gladly have given all her gold and gems for her old peasant's bodice, and the light heart that used to beat under it. Her rosy healthy cheek was faded, from the idle luxurious life she led. The air of crowded rooms was not like the pure air of her native mountains. Her spirits, too, were gone with her health. But she had chosen her own lot! she ought not to repine! she was a princess, and lived in a palace; she sat in chairs of velvet and gold; she drank from a golden cup, and eat from a silver plate! But though she had all the splendour the world could give, she had not a friend! There was but one lady at Court who looked kindly on her; that was the Comtessa Amabile, who had a kind heart, and pitied the poor lovely neglected princess.

“ Now we will return to the cottage, among the

mountains. Years flew by, and Rosaline was still happy; she had a little boy and girl; and the girl she named after her sister, Bianca. All this time it had never reached the secluded cottage, that Bianca, the princess, was unhappy.

“ The happy peasant’s family were sitting one evening, in September, before their cottage; the sun was just sinking behind the vine-clad hills; the cicale was chirping his last song; the shining green lizards had crept to their pleasant beds in the green grass and under the stones. The old people were enjoying the cool evening breeze, in their easy arm-chairs, presents from their good son-in-law, Enrico, who had been working hard all day in his vineyard and olive garden; he now sat upon the soft turf, nursing his youngest child, Tomaso, whilst little Bianca was frolicking about with Canino, the favourite dog. Rosalina was walking from one to the other of her happy family, talking and smiling, yet all the time industriously knitting their nice warm stockings for the winter. A lady, very handsomely, yet very plainly dressed, approached that happy and contented party. She wore a thick veil, which quite concealed her face. It was with feeble steps she approached the cottage, and her figure seemed bent with age or sickness. It was so unusual a thing for strangers to come near the cottage, that Rosalina thought it must be a lady from a neighbouring villa, who had lost her way. In an instant, the kind-hearted peasant brought her a

chair, and asked her to take a cup of milk or bunch of grapes to refresh her.

“The lady thanked her kindly, in a low voice, and seemed much overcome; whilst Rosalina said, if she would excuse a humble bed, they had a room at her service; but if she would not sleep under their cottage roof, Enrico would run to the village and fetch a portantine to carry her home!

“The strange lady looked intently upon Rosalina, whose brilliant eyes were as bright as when she tripped merrily to the festa, and met the fairy; her cheeks had lost none of their rosy hue of health, and her straight figure was not bent, only perhaps a little stouter and stronger.

“‘Rosalina!’ said the strange lady, throwing up her veil, ‘have you forgotten your unfortunate sister, Bianca?’—for it was Bianca herself; but how altered! Her dark black hair was striped with grey; her bright eyes dim; her rosy cheeks pale and shrunk, and her fine elastic figure bent, like an old woman’s. No wonder her sister did not at first know the altered Bianca; but she now took her to her bosom, and offered her once more a home in her native cottage. Bianca gratefully accepted the offer; for she had done with palaces for ever! She had found nothing but sorrow within their marble walls.

“She told her tale, and how, at last, the prince took a dislike to her; and how the wicked chamberlain persuaded him to declare his marriage

with a peasant against the laws, and Bianca was to be turned out of the palace. But the kind Comtessa Amabile removed her before her sentence was pronounced; and furnished her with a carriage and money to return to her native place: she had dismissed the carriage at the village, and walked to her sister's cottage. Well did she know that stony pathway; but she could not now tread it with the same firm step and light heart!

“ She immediately threw aside her lady's attire, and once more put on a peasant's dress; and in helping her sister in her domestic labours, attending on the old people, and nursing the children, she soon began to feel more happiness than she had known in her splendid palace. The pure air and labour improved her broken health; the love of her sister, Rosalina, and the merriment of her children, restored something of her former spirits, and she lived to be thankful and contented with her lot in life!”

CHAPTER VI.

“MISS NEVILL,” said Ellen, “I think mama will consider our museum book or catalogue very neat; we have made no blots; I am going to take it to her now.”

Ellen soon returned with the book, which met mama’s approbation, and she gave Ellen a “cicale;” one of those insects which are mentioned in the fairy tale, and which Mrs. Villiers had herself caught, and brought from Italy.

“Mama says, she hopes that we know something about our treasures besides the names,” said Ellen.

“I do not think,” replied Mary, “that we know much about the kingfisher; will you tell us something about him, Miss Nevill?”

“You know,” replied Miss Nevill, “that he lives by the side of brooks and streams; and

‘There busily, busily all the day long,

He seeks for small fishes the shallows among.’

It is very difficult to find his nest, which he builds in a hole in the bank. He and the brown water-rat are neighbours; but they are not very friendly neighbours! I knew a gentleman once who watched a kingfisher, in order to discover its nest; he at last saw it go into a hole, too small

for him to put his hand in, so he got a spade and dug round it, and there he found a great many fish-bones, and six beautiful eggs, about the size of a pigeon's egg, only more round, and of a brighter white, and shining like large pearls. I had a small collection of eggs then, and this gentleman gave me two of the kingfisher's eggs, and I thought them the prettiest eggs in my collection. The ancients knew very little about the kingfisher, and they called it the halcyon, and had all sorts of marvellous histories about it. They thought its nest floated like a fairy boat upon the calm waves. They fancied, too, that when it was dead it would always point with its beak the way the wind blew; so they hung it up, stuffed, for that purpose!"

"Perhaps, its long bill might answer like a weather-cock?" said Mary.

"Yes; but people thought that, if you closed the windows and doors, and let no air in, it would still point the way the wind blew. They also were foolish enough to believe that it was a protection against thunder, and that keeping it would make you rich; besides this, they fancied that even when dead it had fresh new feathers growing on it every season!"

"People of former days seem to have believed a great many foolish things that were not true, Miss Nevill," said Mary.

"They did not take the trouble to observe for themselves, and to study nature. They made

marvellous tales out of their own heads, instead of observing real facts. Since then, people have watched the kingfisher, and know he is a very beautiful bird ; but he is only a bird ; and cannot move about or have fresh feathers after he is dead, and stuffed !”

“ Thank you, Miss Nevill, for your amusing account of the stuffed kingfisher ; and now I am going to help Ellen write and gum on the names of her new butterflies and my star-fish, which Mr. Graham sent us.”

“ Do you know the name of the large black and yellow swallow-tail butterfly, Ellen ?”

“ Yes ; Mr. Graham told me it was the ‘ machaön,’—it is the largest English butterfly.”

“ And do you know,” said Miss Nevill, “ that there are but two butterflies in England with swallow-tails, and this is one ?”

“ Yes ; it is quite a treasure,” said Ellen ; “ and the other pretty little white butterfly, with orange tips to its wings, is also very pretty. Have you ever seen these butterflies alive, and flying about ?”

“ I have never seen the large ‘ swallow-tail’ alive ; but the ‘ orange-tip,’ or ‘ lady of the woods,’ I have seen often : it was plentiful near my home in the woods, and many a hunt have I had after it with my butterfly-net, when I was a girl. You will find it in my little book of butterflies. I used to catch all I could, to draw in my book, and

there you will find its proper Latin name, written under it."

Ellen fetched the book, and found it written 'papilio cardemines.'

"You know," said Miss Nevill, "that *papilio* means butterfly; so the 'machaön' is called 'papilio machaön.'"

"Yes," said Ellen, "I know that; and at first I used to think those Latin names so hard, I thought I could not learn them!"

"But," continued Miss Nevill, smiling,

'The names that were so hard and tough,
Are easy now, and clear enough!'

So you must add them to your catalogue."

"I have the star-fish to add," said Mary; "but I do not know what to call it: is it a shell-fish?"

"No, my dear, it is called a zoöphite, or vegetable animal."

"A worm is a zoöphite, too, is it not?" said Mary.

"Yes; a worm is a zoöphite, which lives in the earth; and a star-fish is a zoöphite, which lives in the sea. We are very ignorant of this class of animals, called zoöphites; but, as they are made by the same Almighty hand, they are beautifully and wonderfully formed; and though they seem to us only half alive, no doubt that they enjoy their existence as much as larger and livelier-looking animals. They hunt for their food in the great sea as cleverly and perseveringly

as the creatures on the earth, that are more exposed to our eyes."

"Did you ever see a star-fish alive?" asked Mary.

"Yes; I once found one of these 'sea stars,' as some people call them, on the beach; it was larger, but not so nice a specimen as this one Mr. Graham has given you. But now run and put your new treasures in the museum, for in half an hour I shall be ready to walk out."

"And will you tell us about your travels with voiturier horses, Miss Nevill?" said Ellen.

"Yes, my dear, I can tell you about them during our walk."

It had rained heavily this morning, which made it too wet to walk in the fields, so they went upon the gravel road, which was dry.

"And now, Miss Nevill," said the little girls, "do begin your travels."

Miss Nevill began.

"We were at Baden-Baden, a spa in Germany—do you know what a spa means?"

"Yes," said Mary; "a place where there are mineral waters, like physic. Bath, Cheltenham, and Leamington are spas."

"Well! Baden-Baden is a large spa, or watering-place, where the Germans and the English, and people of every nation, go in the summer; some to drink and bathe in its waters; but many go because it is a beautiful place, situated in the middle of lovely hills."

“I suppose that is why you went?” said Ellen.

“Yes,” replied Miss Nevill; “I went about exploring and sketching: sometimes we went on donkeys, up the steep hills, to an old ruined castle; sometimes we drove through the beautiful wooded valleys, and amid the clear streams and pretty waterfalls. After we had stayed there a fortnight, we determined to go into Switzerland; so we hired a voiturier, with four strong black horses, to carry us as far as Interlachen—a journey of more than 200 miles.”

“And how long were you going?” said the little girls.

“We were a fortnight: but we were not always travelling; sometimes we stopped half a day at a place; sometimes a whole day; and sometimes two. Our voiturier’s name was Giovanni: he was a Roman, and was a merry, good-natured fellow, and took great care of his four black horses, who had bells hung round their necks, which gingled merrily as they trotted soberly along. He had also a black, funny-looking dog, called ‘Moreau.’ My brother, who was a boy of sixteen, scraped a great friendship with Moreau: he was a very curious-looking-dog; not at all like an English dog, for his ears were upright and pointed, like a fox’s; his tail was bushy, like a squirrel’s, and curled quite tight over the top of his back. My brother would often take him up on the coach box, when he thought he was tired, trotting by the side of the horses. Our road, after we left

Baden-Baden, was most beautiful—it was through the Black Forest; we went up and down hills covered with dark fir-trees—and that is why it is called the Black Forest. The roads were rather narrow, and there were steep places by the side of the road. The first day we met some carts drawn by oxen, and in the carts was the bark of trees, piled up very carelessly; the road was narrow, and our large carriage took so much room, that it knocked against the bark, and it came tumbling down; but this was better than tumbling over the precipice ourselves; and the oxen seemed very patient creatures: they stood quite still whilst the bark was tumbling about their ears.”

“Did you see many wild animals in the Black Forest, Miss Nevill?” said Ellen.

“I dare say there are many wild animals in that huge forest, but they did not show themselves; indeed, I was surprised I did not see any birds and animals as we passed along. But the roads were very pleasant—for it was July—and the dark fir-trees looked nice and shady, and the little streams came sparkling and tumbling over the stones; and every now and then on the little brooks, we saw a saw-mill—the wheel turning round and round, and the saw going up and down; it seemed almost like a living thing, in the dark, lonely wood. I saw no man near it; and it appeared working away by itself, sawing up into boards the great fir-trees; but I suppose there was a man, under the shed, who set the wheel

going, and moved the wood, when necessary. Now and then we came to some dark wooden cottages, with wide over-hanging roofs. The cottagers in the Black Forest seemed to take great care of their bees; for under their windows were placed rows of hives; and they also had a wide over-hanging roof to protect them from the rain and snow; the happy, industrious bees seemed quite to live under the same roof as the family. One evening we reached a pretty little town, called Hornberg: and as the inn was nice and clean, and there was a clear stream ran by it, we stayed a day and a half, and my brother and a gentleman with us, got out their fishing rods, and tried to catch some trout."

"You took some sketches, Miss Nevill, whilst they fished, did you not?"

"Yes; I drew a picture of a ruined castle, on the top of a hill, near the town. You have seen cuckoo clocks, and other little painted wooden clocks? I saw a great many here, as they make them in the Black Forest. At last we left the Black Forest, and arrived at a place called Donauchinger. I was very sorry to leave the dark trees and mountains; but there was something curious to be seen at Donauchinger—and that was the source of the river Danube! There bubbled up, in a little round pond, the spring or source of that mighty river. You must find all the places I have mentioned on the map, when we go in.

"The next day we reached another mighty

river—the Rhine; we got up very early, because we wanted to get early to the falls of the Rhine. Indeed, we always got up early, and started on our journey by eight o'clock, because Giovanni liked to go about fifteen or twenty miles before twelve o'clock, which was his dinner hour. He and his horses required two hours and a half, to eat their dinners and rest.

“We generally dined, too, during this time, and explored the place; and if there was a river or brook near, my brother took out his fishing-rod. At the steep hills, we used to get out and walk; and so did Giovanni; he cracked his whip, and talked Italian to his horses. At two or three o'clock we were off again: the horses' bells ginging, and Moreau barking and jumping before them—for he seemed to enjoy the journey; and at about six o'clock we generally arrived at our sleeping place. The day's journey done, the poor horses had a good rest, and plentiful supper; and so had we. But I must tell you about the falls of the Rhine, and the rest of our journey, another day.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE little girls took the first opportunity of asking Miss Nevill to finish the history of her journey with Giovanni, and his black dog, Moreau.

“ You were going to see the falls of the Rhine, Miss Nevill, when you left off,” said Mary.

“ Well ! You must fancy a great river falling down over a high rock ; and the water came down leaping and foaming and sparkling. We went on to a wooden gallery that was made close to the fall ; and you could not hear a person speak, if he bawled ever so loud, for the roaring of the water drowned the loudest voice. It looked, too, very terrific, as if it would sweep you away.”

“ And were you not frightened, to be so near ?” said Mary.

“ It was not very pleasant ; for the spray reached us there, and made the gallery wet and slippery ; we were obliged to walk carefully, and hold the rails. I knew a lady, whose foot slipped, and she fell in the water under the gallery : if she had not held fast by the wood-work at the bottom, she would soon have been swept into the roaring, boiling falls, and have been dashed to atoms. But she had the presence of mind to hold fast till she was picked up, and placed in safety.

“ We went next to the Lake of Constance, which looks like a little sea, it is so large ; and if you

look in the map, you will see it is a good-sized lake. The weather was now very hot, and the flies bit the poor horses dreadfully; there were thousands fastened on them, drinking their blood, poor beasts! and they were often glad to stop and rest at a shady inn, by the road side, and have a little water, and a little brown bread; for Giovanni used to cut up a loaf of brown bread, in a trough, for the horses; and they seemed to enjoy this food as well as English horses do oats.

“Once, when we stopped at one of these little country inns, we got out, and the landlady, dressed in a very curious dress, brought us some wine and water; the wine-glasses were those pretty-coloured glass, like the vase that holds my flowers, and called Bohemian glass: we thought the landlady’s dress very curious, and I dare say she thought our dresses quite as curious. We could not speak her language, nor could she understand ours, so all our conversation was nods and smiles; and I saw her looking at my friend’s black satin gown, she felt it, and nodded, as if she thought it was very beautiful, soft stuff: we thought her woollen petticoat much more curious.

“After we left Constance, I went on a little tour with some friends, and we agreed to meet mama and my brother again at Zurich. I don’t think I have anything particular to tell you about that journey; but on the third day we drove by the banks of the Lake of Zurich, to the town of Zurich. We saw a great many neat white houses,

with plenty of vines growing all about; but the grapes were not ripe. When we got to the inn, at Zurich, we found mama and my brother were not arrived; so we chose some good rooms for the whole party, and ordered dinner. Very soon I heard a gingling of bells, and the rolling of a heavy carriage; and when I looked out of the window, up the street, I saw the old yellow chariot and the four black horses, and Moreau, with his curly tail, running on before."

Miss Nevill here left off, and promised, if they liked, she would tell them some more of her travels another day, as it was time for dinner. After dinner Mary went to her little bantam house, to see for the new laid eggs: she never went until the afternoon, for fear of disturbing her hens, for many of them laid late in the day. The little bantams furnished nice fresh eggs for the next morning's breakfast; and papa preferred Mary's bantams' eggs to any other eggs.

To-day was a joyful day for the little girls, for their brother Albert was to come home for his holidays. In the afternoon they went with their mama, in the carriage, to fetch Albert from the coach. He was, of course, much delighted to come home, and to see his papa, mama, and sisters; to ride pretty Zoë or Fairy; and to run about his old haunts in Agden Wood. As soon as he got back to his dear home, Agden, he visited all his old pets; and then the little girls showed him the new museum, and he had brought some addi-

tions to it: he had a pair of large beetles, called "stag-beetles," for Ellen. They were very curious—the male beetle had horns like a stag; these he caught himself in Windsor Forest. A boy at school, who had been in Jamaica, had given him "a scorpion," and told him that, in Jamaica, it was necessary to be very careful in putting on your slippers or shoes, for sometimes scorpions creep into the toe, and find it a snug, comfortable birth; sometimes they creep into the beds!

"They must be very unpleasant bed fellows; for their sting is very bad, indeed, is it not?" said Ellen.

"Yes," said Miss Nevill; "people have been known to die of their sting. I will tell you a story about an animal who got into a shoe, that is not quite so bad as a scorpion:—We had a servant boy, in London, once, who put his foot into his shoe, without looking, and was surprised to find something prick his toes most dreadfully, so that he was obliged to draw his foot back in great haste; and what do you think had got into the shoe? There was a young hedgehog comfortably rolled up in it!"

"But how could a hedgehog get there, in London?" said Albert.

"We kept a young tame hedge-hog in the kitchen, for we were overrun with black beetles; and we heard that a hedgehog would soon destroy

them all. But the boy never thought this prickly friend would take a fancy to sleep in his shoe."

"That was not so bad as finding a scorpion in your shoe," said Mary.

Albert had another treasure for the museum—a stuffed "night-jar." They begged Miss Nevill to tell them something about this curious-looking bird.

"I have heard them often in Kent," said Miss Nevill; "they make a jarring noise, in the evening, which has caused them to be called night-jars. Sometimes their noise is like a spinning-wheel; and they have a great many names: I will tell you four names—night-jar, goat-sucker, fern-owl, and dor-hawk."

"It was called goat-sucker," said Albert, "because people thought it sucked the goats?"

"Yes," replied Miss Nevill; "but that was a foolish idea, for he only feeds harmlessly upon insects, in the dusk; catching large moths; and he is also very fond of making his supper on the cock-chaffer or dor-beetle, which has caused some people to call him the dor-hawk."

"But why is he called the fern-owl?" said Ellen.

"I suppose the name of owl is given him because he prefers the darkness to the light. A poet says:—

+
'The lone *fern-owl* now flaps his heavy way
To his dark home, scar'd by the approach of day.'

+

He loves to sit in the shade, and cannot bear the glaring sunshine: but he has his pleasures; God is good, and cares for his smallest creatures; he has made the birds happy: some to glide about in the shades of night, and others to frisk in the light of day; and the night-jar enjoys his moth-hunting by the light of the silvery moon—

‘Whilst the glow-worm lights him home to bed.’ ”

“I have one more insect to give you,” said Albert, “and that is a spider; such a large one, with very odd, long hairy legs; I caught it myself. Don’t look afraid of it, Mary, for it is not alive! I like spiders, myself, though young ladies seem to have a horror of them; they are such clever fellows, and build their houses, and set traps for their game, so cleverly. Besides, he is useful in destroying those plagues, the flies.”

“Yes,” said Miss Nevill; “and if you had been in Italy, you would wish to have some tame spiders to make their webs all round you, and rid you of the flies; for there they come in hundreds, and settle on your hands, tickle your nose, buzz in your hair, and bite and fidget you, so that you must be ever flapping them away; but they return the next moment, and settle on you again.”

“Spiders are very long-lived animals,” said Albert. “I read of a spider who had made his web in the drawer of a store-room, where a lady kept her soap—and she never disturbed him; he lived there comfortably thirteen years, when one

day some tidy housemaid cleaned out the drawer; the lady forget to tell her to leave the cobweb, and not disturb her old tenant, the spider, or perhaps he might have lived many years longer.— And now, Miss Nevill, will you give Mary and Ellen leave to go with me to Agden Wood? I long to take a look at the old oaks, and the ripe hazel-nuts.”

Miss Nevill told the little girls they might go, for she liked them to be out in the fresh, health-breathing fields and woods in fine weather.

“Get a basket,” said Albert to his sisters, “and I will fetch my old hook-sticks; I see they are safe and sound in the corner of my room, just as I left them. We will bring you such a quantity of nuts, Miss Nevill.”

“But Miss Nevill does not think nuts wholesome,” said Mary.

“No, my dear; but I think *picking* them very wholesome, if not eating them; so you won’t eat many, I hope, but save them for Mr. Graham’s monkey and squirrels—they will be very good for them.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE little girls arranged their new possessions in the museum, and wrote their names neatly in the catalogue. Ellen begged Albert to admire her two new butterflies, that were presents from Mr. Graham; especially the little "orange-tip," or "lady of the woods." As a reward for having tried to be tidy and neat all this week, Miss Nevill had drawn the "lady of the woods" in Ellen's album, and written these verses under it:—

THE COLIAS CARDIMINES; OR, LADY OF THE
WOODS.

THE butterfly, the butterfly,
With orange-tipped wing;
She is the "lady of the woods,"
A gay and gentle thing.

She gossips with the primroses,
In their green and mossy bowers;
And they tell her all the news there is,
About their sister flowers.

How oft the Bumble-bee does call
Upon my Lady Thyme;
How the laughing Blue-bells say he comes
Just at the hour they dine.

How Mrs. Daisy is kept at home
By the cares of a large family;
So she cannot go out to a single rout,
Or accept an invite to tea.

Oh ! butterfly, what a charming life

Ye lead among the flowers ;

When with the blue-robed violets

Ye spend the evening hours.

They tell to thee, in whispered tones,

Their thoughts so pure and sweet ;

And their cousins, the wild anemones,

With nodding smiles thee greet.

There are ladies in our cities vast,

Rich in all worldly goods ;

They are bright and gay—yet I'd rather be,

The lady of the woods !

The lady bright, the lady gay,

With white and orange wing ;

Who rides on a sunbeam, and sails about

On the breezes of the spring !

The little girls were as much pleased with these verses, as people were once with the song called “ I'd be a butterfly ;” and Ellen said, “ Indeed, to live in the woods is a pleasant life, in summer time ; I could not bear to live in a town, Miss Nevill.”

“ Yes,” said Mary ; “ Ellen is right ; I am sure a country life is the happiest life ; don't you think so ?”

Miss Nevill replied : “ I like it the best ; but I do not say *it* is the best : only it suits *me* best ; but people's happiness must depend on themselves, not on the place they live in. We who have been used to the country have learned to love it : it is full of amusement and variety to you, my

my dears, because you have been taught to observe nature. All nature is God's work, and from God's works we derive pleasure that never tires.

‘Listen to Nature :

A thousand joys her happy followers prove;

Health, plenty, rest, society, and love !’

But wherever we live, if we do our duty, and take care of our health, regulate our tempers, and occupy our time, we must be happy. But if we neglect our duty and God's laws, we may have every luxury in the world, and yet we shall be miserable! ‘There is no rest for the wicked.’ And now,” said Miss Nevill, looking at her watch, “we must begin our studies, my dears.”

They each had a book, in which they wrote out texts from the Bible; they wrote the text one day, and learned it by heart the next morning; to-day they each wrote this, “Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, shall observe it with my whole heart.”

Mary had a good ear for music, and as Mrs. Villiers herself played very well on the piano, she gave Mary every day half an hour's lesson in music. Miss Nevill did not understand music, but she had a fine talent for drawing, and as Ellen had some taste for drawing, Miss Nevill gave her a drawing lesson, whilst Mary was having her music lesson.

In a few days some more inmates were expected at Agden Court. Mr. Villiers had two

nieces, called Constance and Lucy ; their mother was dead, and their father was often obliged to go abroad ; he was not able to be much with his children, so sent them to school. He was now going abroad for a year, and Mrs. Villiers had kindly offered to take charge of his daughters ; and Miss Nevill had been also so good as to say she would teach them with Mary and Ellen. Constance was fourteen, and Lucy twelve, a year older than Mary : these little girls had had a great deal of pains taken with them in some things—such as French, music, drawing, and dancing ; but they had not had much pains taken with their minds, disposition, and temper.

Mary and Ellen were very anxious for their cousins to arrive : “ Because, now Albert is at home,” said Ellen, “ we shall be a nice merry party together—for nutting in the woods, gleaning in the fields, picking blackberries, riding, and archery.”

“ But I am not quite so sure,” said Miss Nevill, “ that your cousins will think all those pleasures that you name.”

“ What, not like to gather the brown hazelnuts,” said Ellen ; “ or hunt in the pretty green lanes for blackberries ?”

“ Or walk in the pleasant harvest fields, and ride Zoë and Fairy ?” said Mary.

“ Perhaps,” replied Miss Nevill, “ they may like to ride on your ponies, but nothing else you mention.”

“Then they must be very stupid girls,” said Ellen, “if they don’t enjoy all our nice country pleasures.”

“Not stupid, my dear,” said Miss Nevill; “for I remember Constance was rather a clever girl; and I dare say you will find they both know many things you do not. You must not despise people for not liking what you like; and you must remember that your cousins have lived in London all their lives—where there are no hazelnuts, blackberries, green woods, or lanes—so you must try and teach them to love your country amusements. And now, Ellen, you and I will go and enjoy one of our country pleasures together, and take a nice walk. You rode yesterday, so it is Mary’s turn to ride to-day with Mr. Villiers and Albert.”

So Miss Nevill and Ellen set off for one of their favourite walks: over the park, through a gate into a shady walk, called the Grove, and at the end of which was a corn-field: and a prettier corn-field you never saw. It was upon the slope of a hill, and a wood made a green belt all round it. Here they were carrying the wheat; the last cart-load was nearly full:—

“I will glean a good handful of corn,” said Ellen, “for poor widow White—then it really will be my own gift, because I have worked for it; that will be what you call *charity*, Miss Nevill?”

“Yes, that will be more charity than giving away your papa’s and mama’s money, or bread—

which gives you no trouble, and you do not miss it, so that such a gift is hardly charity. I will help you to glean for poor widow White."

When they had picked up a sufficient quantity, they sat down on some fallen trees in the shade, and whilst Ellen was tying up the wheat-ears closely together that she might carry them better, she asked Miss Nevill if she would tell her a story—some strange tale she heard when she was travelling—and she told her a legend of the Rhine, called

"BISHOP HATTO AND THE RATS.

"On the banks of the river Rhine are many ruined castles, and there is one situated on a rock in the middle of the river, called 'The Mouse Tower,' and this is the history or legend that the Germans tell of it:—

"There was once a Bishop Hatto, who lived near the Rhine, in a fine castle; he was very rich: his granaries were full of corn, and his cellars full of wine, and he had all the good things of this world in plenty. It happened there was great distress and famine in the land, and the poor people all came begging at the rich man's gate. At first he refused to give them anything, and the poor people went away in despair, but hunger drove them back again to the hard-hearted man's castle. This time he did not send them away, but gave notice that if they would all come

to his great barn, he would give them some of his corn. Rejoiced at this good tidings, old and young, women and children, came flocking to the great barn: it was quite full, and then the wicked Hatto ordered the great doors to be shut, and set fire to the barn! Thus, instead of giving them food, as he promised, he burnt the poor starving people to death! The wicked man felt no pity; but whilst the flames were raging, and the wretched people screaming in vain for mercy, he said, laughingly, 'It is an excellent bonfire! and I am sure the country is greatly obliged to me for destroying these rats, that only consume the corn! Only hear how the rats squeak!'

"He went to his palace, eat his supper, and slept that night as an innocent man; but he never slept again: for the next morning his punishment began. He entered his hall; and the first thing that met his view was his own picture, which the rats had eaten up during the night: there was nothing but the frame left hanging on the wall. The next minute a servant came in and said,

" 'My Lord I opened your granaries this morn,
And the rats had eaten all your corn.'

"Presently came another servant, pale with fear, crying out 'Fly! my Lord Bishop, fly! ten thousand rats are coming this way!'

"The wicked man felt alarmed at these tidings. 'I'll go to my tower on the Rhine,' said he; it is the safest place in all Germany.'

"So he got into his boat without delay, and rowed to his tower, that stood on a rock, in the

middle of the river. He thought himself safe, for surely the rats dare not follow him through the rushing waters; but to make himself doubly secure, he barred up all the windows, doors, and loop-holes of his tower, and at night he laid himself down to sleep. As soon as he closed his eyes, he heard a loud scream; he started up, and saw two eyes of flame at the bottom of his bed: he jumped out of his bed, and found it was only the *cat*.

“Yet the Bishop grew more fearful for that. He knew, as she sat screaming, mad with fear, that she smelt the rats were coming. He looked out of the window, and there were the ten thousand rats swimming over the river! the blue waters were quite black with them. They soon reached the tower, and crawled up the rocky walls, and gnawed through the windows and doors.

“The wicked Hatto fell down on his knees with fear, when he heard them whetting their sharp teeth against the hard stones! He thought of the poor people in his barn who had so vainly called for mercy! But on came the rats, some in at the windows, and some at the doors—through the ceiling, and through the floors. They fell upon the cruel man, with their sharp, hungry jaws, and in a few minutes there was nothing left of him but his bones! Thus did the rats punish the cruel murderer.”

Miss Nevill having finished her story, said: “And now we must walk again, and take the wheat to widow White’s cottage.”

CHAPTER XI.

LET us take a peep into the nursery at Agden Court. Beebe was a nice little fat, round thing, that toddled about, and imitated every thing she saw; she was just beginning to try and say every word she heard, and a very funny language she talked sometimes. She liked looking at picture-books, and was careful, and did not tear or crumple them. Freddy was a very merry, lively fellow, and very fond of his little sister, and very obedient to his nurse and mama. He could read in Mrs. Barbauld's pretty books, called "Early Lessons," and his mama taught him a little every day. He had a small garden, just under the nursery window, but as he was always digging and raking and moving his plants, his garden did not thrive very well. But it amused him, and when he is older he will learn better, and have a nice garden, like his sisters. Sometimes they let him help them water their flowers, with his own little green watering-pot; he often watered himself as well as the flowers, and nurse looked very grave at the wet pinafore and frock; but he was but five years old, so she could hardly expect him to be very careful.

There was a large black cat that lived up in the nursery, and both Freddy and Bebee were very fond indeed of puss; they carried her about like a baby, and never was cat so kissed and

hugged and pulled about as this; but she was very good-tempered, and seemed to like the children very much, and never scratched them, except her patience was quite exhausted by their rough play. And when they were in bed, and asleep, she enjoyed herself in Freddy's little chair, where she lay curled round, and purring with content: dreaming, no doubt, of the fine chases she had had in her younger days after mice in houses, barns, and fields.

Every child loves a soft, clean cat, I think; and cats love children too, and seldom scratch them, unless they are teased. And the black pussy at Agden Court lived a happy life with Freddy and Bebee, in their nursery. Mary used sometimes to teach Freddy pretty lines of poetry, and she was quite pleased when she got him to repeat these lines "To a Ladybird" quite perfectly:—

"Ladybird! ladybird! fly away home,
The field mouse is gone to her nest;
The daises have shut up their sleepy red eyes,
And the bees and the birds are at rest.

Ladybird! ladybird! fly away home,
The fairy-bells tinkle afar;
Make haste, or they'll catch ye, and harness ye fast
With a cobweb, to Oberon's car.

Ladybird! ladybird! fly away home,
To your house in the old willow tree;
Where your children so dear have invited the ant,
And a few cozy neighbours, to tea.

Ladybird ! ladybird ! fly away home,
And if not gobbled up by the way,
Nor yoked by the fairies to Oberon's car,
You're in luck—that's all I've to say."

Whenever Freddy saw a ladybird, he used to repeat some of these lines ; he knew also " How doth the little busy bee," and " Let dogs delight to bark and bite ;" and he never quarrelled with and plagued his little Bebee, but loved her very dearly, and taught her the names of every thing, though often she could not pronounce the words very plainly, but she tried to say all he taught her.

Freddy was very much delighted when his sisters, Mary and Ellen, took him into their school-room window, or " castle," as they called it, and told him little funny stories. One of Freddy's favourite stories was about grandpapa's monkey. Shall I tell it you as Ellen told it to little Freddy?

" Grandpapa had a little monkey : he was a very comical fellow, full of tricks ; he used to grin and chatter when he was pleased ; and grunt and whine when anything displeased him. He was always running about, and putting his long arms into every hole and corner. He used to put his head on one side, and peep into grandpapa's pockets, and sometimes he found a cake or sugar-plum, and then he was very much delighted : quite as delighted as Bebee is, when you give her something new to play with. Well, this monkey was not only fond of cakes and sugar-

plums, but he also was very fond of cream and sugar, and if grandmama left the sugar basin or cream jug on the breakfast table, and went out of the room for a minute, the monkey used to get on her chair and drink up all the cream, and then eat up the sugar in a trice. So one day grandmama went out of the room to fetch something, and she thought she would put the cream and sugar away, out of the monkey's reach. There was a very high chimney-piece in the room, and she put the cream jug and sugar basin upon this high chimney-piece. As soon as she was gone, the cunning monkey put a chair close to the chimney-piece—he then climbed up the back of the chair, and scrambled somehow to the top of the chimney-piece; and when grandmama came in, there he was, sitting up, drinking the cream and eating the sugar, as fast as he could.”

“Did grandmama whip the naughty monkey?” said Freddy.

“If it had been a little boy, instead of a monkey, I think he would have deserved whipping, but the monkey did not know he was doing wrong; he could not understand what was said to him; so grandmama only took him down off the chimney-piece, and took care next time not to leave him alone in the room with the cream and sugar.”

A lady, a friend of Mrs. Villiers, had given Mary a little conversation in poetry, between a brother and sister; and she began to teach

the pretty lines to little Freddy. These were the lines:—

SISTER.

“ Brother, take this little flower,
And tell me how it grows ;
Who made the pretty jasmine,
And yonder blushing rose ?”

BROTHER.

“ ’Tis God, my dear, I’ve often heard :
I think he’s very good,
Who takes such care of you and me,
And gives us daily food.”

SISTER.

“ And is it God that does all this ?
And makes us hear and see,
And walk about this pretty world,
And gives such life to me ?”

BROTHER.

“ ’Tis only he can give you life ;
Indeed, I know ’tis so :
I asked mama—she told me this,
Not many days ago.
Tho’ she can paint a little bird,
She cannot make it fly ;
She says ’tis only God who can,
Who lives above the sky.
You know she always tells the truth,
And says that we must, too ;
Or else we shall not go to God,
And sing as angels do.

“ Well, dear, we’ll go and play, I think,
Another time we’ll talk ;
I want to plant this pretty flower
In yonder shady walk.”

I hope you will like these lines as much as my little friends at Agden Court did, and also learn them perfectly by heart, like little Freddy ; and thank God, who has made all the beautiful and curious things in this world. Man makes very beautiful and curious things, but he could not make anything, if God had not given him something to make them of, as well as hands to work with, and a mind to understand. Indeed, the benevolent God has given very good gifts to man ; and he should thank Him for these good gifts, and use them properly.

CHAPTER X.

THE cousins Constance and Lucy Villiers arrived : Constance was such a tall girl that Mary and Ellen thought she was quite a woman, and would be too old to play with them. But she seemed very goodnatured, and thanked them for showing her all about Agden Court. Lucy also appeared delighted with the size of the house, and with the orange-trees that stood in the inner court of the house. She said “ It was

very grand, and she liked anything large and grand." She admired the pleasure grounds and gardens, but did not take enough notice to please Ellen, of an owl in the wall garden, which the keeper had given Albert. Now Ellen was very fond of animals herself; and as the owl was a new possession, she was amused by its hissing noise, and its funny round face and staring eyes. She also wished her cousins to see how cleverly she and Albert had built the owlet a house, with some bricks, in the corner of the wall, and thatched it with turf: making a nice hut for the owl to sit out of the light in the day time. She called it "Robinson Crusoe's hut."

"Are you not fond of reading 'Robinson Crusoe?'" said Ellen. "Should you not have liked to live on that pleasant island?"

"Oh! dear no!" said Lucy, with disgust. "I do not like reading Robinson Crusoe at all; so horrid to be drest in skins, and live with stupid birds and animals, and an ugly black man."

"Oh! cousin Lucy," said Ellen; "you do not call animals stupid?"

"Why, as to stupid," said Albert: "although our owlet sits staring there very much like a stupid fellow, yet he is not stupid. I heard of an owl once who built her nest for a number of years in the same hole, in the wall of a house. The people repaired the house, and stopped up this hole in the wall. But the owl did not approve of their depriving her of her old haunt,

and so she came every night to the place, and made such a dreadful hooting and noise, that the people could have no peace until they opened the hole in the wall for her again. I don't think that was stupid of her, was it, Lucy?"

"Well," replied Lucy, "I know nothing of animals, but I know they can't talk; and if they could, I would prefer the conversation of ladies and gentlemen."

"Oh, but animals can talk," said Albert, "after their fashion; but I think, cousin Lucy, you don't understand their language. I am sure mama's paroquet always thanks us for giving him fruit and cakes; and as to Zoë and Fairy, if you will come into the stable with me, you shall hear how they neigh and talk to me in their horse language."

"Cousin Albert," said Constance, smiling, "you know that Lucy and I have not lived in the country; but you must teach us to understand your animals' language. I am sure Lucy will try and learn it."

Constance was a very sweet-tempered girl; and though she did not care much about animals, no more than Lucy, yet she saw that her cousins were fond of them, and they were showing all their pets, out of kindness, to entertain them; therefore she felt very much obliged to her kind cousins, and was willing to listen to all their little histories. Now Lucy, though she was not ill-natured, was foolish: she thought it was

childish to like animals. She was also rather proud and vain, and liked every thing that seemed fine and grand: she was therefore much pleased to live at Agden Court, because the house was large; and she was proud of her uncle and aunt Villiers, because they were rich, and had so many servants. Miss Nevill saw this fault in her disposition, and she hoped in time, as she was a sensible girl, to cure her of this folly: because it is only little minds that are proud of having larger houses and smarter clothes than their neighbours. Albert, Mary, and Ellen had been taught that health, virtue, and happiness were much better than riches and fine houses. They knew that pride is a sin, and that God only loves the humble and meek. Wise and good men do not value rank and riches: they only love those that are honourable and virtuous.

Mr. and Mrs. Villiers wished their children to be good, wise, and virtuous; and they had not only learned, but understood this text: "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver?"

Lucy had a great deal to learn: and as she admired very much the flower-garden at Agden Court, with its great beds of fuchsias, heliotropes, scarlet geraniums, verbenas, and other sweet green-house plants, growing luxuriantly in the autumn sun; Mrs. Villiers offered her a garden of her own, but she understood nothing about

gardening; so it was decided she and Constance should have a little garden together, and that their cousins should help them plant it, and teach them how to manage their flowers.

Constance drew very nicely, and Miss Nevill persuaded her to try and draw flowers from nature. Miss Nevill had herself a book of wild flowers that she had drawn when she was a girl, and Constance admired them so much, that under Miss Nevill's kind instructions, she thought she would begin to paint all the pretty flowers that grew about Agden. Thus she found out one of the pleasures of the country, and soon enjoyed, with her cousins, hunting in Agden Wood for flowers to draw. It was getting rather late in the year: the wild flowers were many of them faded and gone; but they found a bunch of red poppies, and with a spray of fern they made a very pretty group. To complete the picture, Ellen begged she would draw a "peacock butterfly" on the fern leaves; they caught one, and put it under a glass. Poor butterfly! he would rather have been in Agden Wood, under the green trees, and gazed at by the sunbeams, instead of being looked at by several pairs of little curious eyes, that were now watching him sitting for his picture. At last it was done; and the bright prisoner was allowed to fly out of the window, where he soon joined his handsome brothers, the "atalantas, or red admirals," who love to display their red and black wings over the dahlias."

Constance soon began to take an interest in the gay painted butterflies ; the industrious bees ; the sweet robin, who perched in the highest branch of the highest trees, and sang his autumnal song. Miss Nevill told her many interesting anecdotes of that well-known and loved bird. I am sure that every country child loves the robin redbreast, with his black shining eyes and slender legs. Lucy, too, was amused by the wonderful things Miss Nevill told them about birds; and Constance became very anxious to learn something of the works of nature, which are the works of God. For though she had been taught to play and to sing, to dance, draw, read French and Italian, yet she was very ignorant of the works of creation—of all the beautiful objects with which God has filled this world. Lucy knew even less of these things than her sister, but Miss Nevill hoped to teach them that

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 "Every object of creation
 Can furnish hints of contemplation,"

and give delight, and teach wisdom, to a humble and well-directed mind ; and I have no doubt that, ere long, Constance and Lucy will be so improved by Miss Nevill's lessons, that they will scarcely appear the same girls.

The girls were talking together one day about people being discontented with their lot in life; and how often they fancied that if they could

change places with others they should be happier. Miss Nevill repeated to them this fable:—

THE DONKEY AND THE SHEEP.

“How hard is my fate!

What sorrows await,”

Said the ass to the sheep, “my deplorable fate!

“Cold, naked, ill-fed,

I sleep in a shed,

Where the snow, wind, and rain come in over head!

“All this day did I pass

In a yard without grass.

What a pity that I was created an ass!

“As for master, he sat

By the fire with the cat;

And they both look as you do, contented and fat.

“Your nice coat of wool,

So elastic and full,

Makes you much to be envied—ay, more than the bull.”

“How can you pretend,”

Said the sheep to her friend,

“To complain? Let me silence to you recommend.

“My sorrows are deep,”

Continued the sheep;

And her eyes looked as if she was ready to weep.

“I expect—tis no fable—

To be dragged from the stable,

And to-morrow, perhaps, be cut up for the table

"Now you, with docility,
Strength, and civility,
Will live some years longer, in all probability.

"So no envy, I beg,
For, I'll bet you an egg,
You will carry the spinach to eat with my leg!"

CHAPTER XI.

ONE day there was a very heavy rain at Agden : so heavy that the little girls could not go out of doors ; so after playing Les Graces and battledore and shuttlecock in the large hall, they returned to the school-room, and asked Miss Nevill what they should do the rest of the afternoon.

"Suppose you choose some useful occupation," said Miss Nevill.

"What shall it be?" said Mary.

"Cannot you think of something both useful and benevolent?" replied Miss Nevill.

"Oh! I know what Miss Nevill means," said Ellen. "We will work for the poor—let us fetch our charity basket."

They soon returned, carrying between them a large basket, and Constance and Lucy wondered what was in it. Can you guess?

Mrs. Villiers wished her children to understand

plain, useful work, and she also wished them to give away the fruits of their industry to poor people; so she allowed them to make their old frocks into pinafores and night-gowns for poor people's babies. She gave them calico to make shirts and caps, and they bought all the tapes, bobbins, and cotton required out of their own pocket money; and sometimes they bought calico and print also, when they had no old things to cut up.

When Constance and Lucy saw the great basket opened, it was full of little articles of dress: some made up, and some only cut out ready for making; they wondered what it was all for, as they had not been taught that it was their duty to do all the good in their power to their poorer neighbours.

"I have a present for your basket," said Miss Nevill: "an old cotton dress, which will cut into some nice frocks and pinafores."

"O! thank you," said Mary; "and will you, Constance, cut out some pinafores, and help us?"

"I am sorry I do not know how to cut out," said Constance.

"What nonsense," said Lucy, pertly; "I am sure young ladies need not learn to cut out pinafores and frocks! What a strange thing that aunt Villiers, who is so rich, should make you do this kind of work. I hate plain work, myself."

Miss Nevill returned just as Lucy made this

silly speech. "Do you think, my dear," said Miss Nevill, "that because people are rich they should never do any thing useful? Riches sometimes take to themselves wings and fly away, and then what is a poor, useless, helpless lady to do?"

Lucy coloured, and said nothing.

"Mrs. Villiers," continued Miss Nevill, "is not only rich, but a very wise and benevolent person, which is far better; she wishes her daughters to work well, and know every thing useful, as well as ornamental. I do not think Mary is fond of plain work, but she has learned to cut out and make every article of children's dress, and she feels a pleasure in doing something to help the poor."

Constance said she should be glad to learn, and help her cousins to work for the poor also, if they would be so kind as to teach her. Upon which, Ellen began to contrive something out of Miss Nevill's old dress.

Lucy, finding they were all so busy and well occupied, took out some fancy work to employ herself. Miss Nevill did not ask her to help work for the poor, nor did she lecture her on the subject. She was pleased to see Constance's readiness to learn to do useful work, and she hoped in time Lucy would wish, of her own accord, to do the same: for charity is worth nothing if it is not willing. We can do no good until

we love doing good. Miss Nevill hoped that when Lucy saw how happy these little presents of clothes made the poor people, that she would learn the pleasure of benevolence, and assist her cousins.

Albert, who had been in the green-house, now came in. "I really must," said he, "stay in the house all this day, I fear; for it is too bad to attempt to stay out. Well! you seem all busily employed, so I must help you."

"You cannot make clothes, too?" said Lucy.

"Yes, but I can though, if you call hats part of clothing. I can plait straw pretty well, I assure you; so now, Ellen, for my work;" and he began to plait some coarse straw as fast as possible. "Do you know," said Albert, "that Mr. Graham is come from London, and has brought some of his nephews and nieces with him? Papa had a note from him this morning. And I can tell you something else you will like to hear, Ellen: mama proposes that next week we have a gipsej party, or, as you London young ladies call it, a *pic-nic*, to the ruins in Welborn Forest. Will not that be pleasant? I like to dine, like the fairies, with a green table-cloth. It is such fun, too, laying out the dinner, and waiting on ourselves. Mr. Graham is such a pleasant man, and always amuses us so much at these kind of parties; and his nephews and nieces are very merry, too."

Whilst the party in Agden Court school-room were thus busily engaged in working and chatting, a large spider scampered over Lucy's lap. Up she jumped, and screamed, "Oh! pray somebody kill that horrid creature!"

"Poor spider!" said Ellen, taking him up, and putting him gently out at the window; "he won't hurt you, Lucy."

"Oh! how could you touch such a nasty beast?" said she. "What an odd girl you are not to kill a spider."

"Do you think it odd not to be cruel?" said Mary. "I do not see any pleasure in killing anything."

"No," said Albert; "there is room enough in the world for every living creature; and I see no occasion to kill insects that do you no harm, merely because they are ugly looking."

"If they do not hurt man, why should man hurt them?"

"You think we should be kind to animals and insects, as well as to the poor?" said Constance.

"Certainly, my dear," said Miss Nevill. "God made the defenceless insect as well as the powerful man."

"Children are naturally cruel, until they are taught better," said Mary; "do you not think they are, Miss Nevill?"

"Yes, my dear; children have an animal delight in destroying and killing; they do not con-

sider, perhaps, that they are giving pain; and they require to be taught that they must restrain the propensity to hurt and destroy, and indulge only kindly feelings to all living things. We must not only never injure one another, but we must not wantonly hurt even the inferior creatures. Do you not remember the lines in Wordsworth's 'Ancient Mariner?' "

Mary replied, "Yes; you mean these lines:—

‘He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.’ ”

"Yes, those are pretty lines; and a good Christian will be kind-hearted and considerate towards every thing: 'all things both great and small.' Why should we destroy that life we cannot give, and shorten the hours of an insect's existence?"

"I do believe that the rain is over," said Albert; "and the sun is coming out. I will just look out and see."

Albert soon returned with the good tidings that it did not rain, and as Miss Nevill never liked them to miss walking out, if possible, they put away their work for the present, and ran to put on

very thick shoes and clogs, and take a scamper before the rain came on again.

And now Farewell! my little readers; and if you read, and like this little book, I will soon tell you more about AGDEN COURT.

THE END.

very thick shoes and close and take a stranger
before the man came on board.
And now I am in the middle of the road and if
you want, and the little book, I will tell
you more about it.

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