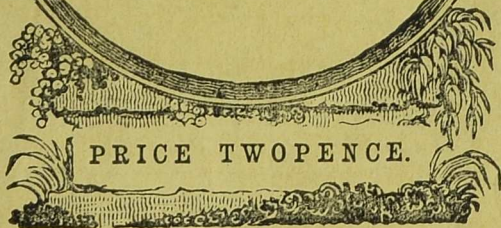


THE

Orange Grobe

BY

MRS. SHERWOOD.



PRICE TWOPENCE.

LONDON  
HOULSTON AND WRIGHT

65, PATERNOSTER ROW.







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*Page 13.*



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BY MRS. SHERWOOD

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER,"  
ETC., ETC.

NEW EDITION

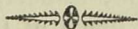
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## THE ORANGE GROVE.



**W**HEN a little boy, I lived in India with my dear father and mother, who are since dead. I remember several little brothers and sisters, who all died in infancy. Some of them lived only a few months, and others one or two years. They used to become very pale and thin, and refuse to eat, and then die. This was a great grief to my parents: but my father said, when he was dying, that he knew the sicknesses and deaths of his little children had been the greatest of blessings to himself, because these severe trials had occasioned him to think less of this world, and more of the next; and caused him to know the value of that dear Saviour, who had prepared a place in heaven for his lamented little ones.

Thus I was the only one of my father's children who lived beyond the years of early childhood; and my parents were very anxious that I should grow up in the fear of



God; lest I should be for ever separated from my little brothers and sisters: for they used often to say to me, "You can never enjoy the company of your brothers and sisters in this world, Robert, and you must, therefore, think much of that happy time, when you may hope to meet them again, in the presence of your God, to part from them no more; in that place where all tears are wiped from every eye."

Thus they were accustomed often to talk to me upon these subjects; and therefore it is not to be wondered at, if I thought more of religion, at that time, than many other children of my age. *Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* (Prov. xxii. 6.) My mother was very much afraid that I might be taught what was wrong by the black servants, most of whom either worshipped idols of stone and wood, or took the prophet Mahomet and the foolish and wicked book which he wrote about twelve hundred years ago for their rule of life, as Christians do the Bible. So, to prevent this evil, she sought out an old black Christian woman to be my nurse, and this poor woman took care of me, from the time I could first speak and walk, till I was nine years old; and



then I was sent to England, and never saw my dear parents, or my lovely native land, again

I have now been in England nearly eight years; but still I often think of the country in which I was born, and the friends who loved me there.

The sky in India is of the brightest, deepest blue; and there we seldom see a cloud but in the rainy season; and after that season, how green, how very green, is the grass! and how grand and noble are the trees! and what sweet odours proceed from the flowers and blossoms! I remember, too, the various fine fruits of that country, and the songs of the doves which abounded in the trees. These and many other things often come into my mind when I am alone, and I can scarcely endure to think that I perhaps may never see them more.—But I am going to relate some events which befel me when I was a child.

When I was three years old, my papa bought me a little carriage, drawn by a pony; and from that time, till I left India, I used to take an airing in this carriage, almost every morning and evening, with my nurse, whose name was Miriam; and by that name you are to know her.





The Old Testament in the Naugree character first appeared in print about that time, and my father had me taught to read it; and I was very much pleased to be able to read to my dear Miriam, who was too old and had too bad sight to be able to make out all the curious little crooked figures, and dots, and curves, which are found in the Naugree alphabet: but when I was with her in my little carriage, I was accustomed to read a chapter to her as we went slowly along; and the *sais* who walked by the horse used often to call out, “Whaw! whaw!” which was as much as to say, “Wonderful! won-



derful! what a surprisingly learned young gentleman is this!"

I was always pleased when the *sais* cried out in this way; and, no doubt, sometimes felt conceited on these occasions; but I do not remember that I did so; I only remember the diligence with which I used to read; for we are much more apt to recollect any good we think we have done than any evil into which we have fallen.

There were several roads which we travelled in our carriage, but the favourite one was over a wide heath at no great distance from my father's house; which we liked best, because the wind, before sunrise and after sunset, blew fresher over this heath than in the closer and more shadowy ways. This heath was bare and sandy; and there was scarcely a tree to be seen through all the extent of it, excepting in one place about a *coss* (or two miles) from our house, where was an orange grove, inclosed by a very high wall, and having a summer-house or *kiosk* in the middle of it. The entrance into this grove was through a door in the wall, and the trees in some places hung over the wall; there were, also, several palm trees within the wall which raised their heads high above the orange trees: and, as the car.



riage passed under the wall, there was often the scent of delightful flowers, and a pleasing sound from the songs of many birds then sitting among the thick boughs of the trees. This place was called the *begum's* garden; or, the garden of the princess, because it belonged to a native princess whose chief residence was at some small distance; but I never heard of the *begum* visiting this garden, and, often as we passed by it for several years, I never saw the gate open, or a single person go in or out of it.

Curiosity is natural to children; and after having passed times without number under this wall, I became quite anxious to see the garden, and I daily asked Miriam and the *sais* a variety of questions respecting it.

The *sais* was always ready to tell me a thousand wonders about this garden. He said, that there was a tank within it, lined with marble, and abounding with gold and silver fish; that there were parterres, also, there, which were gay with various kinds of fragrant flowers; and that the roof and walls of the summer-house were fretted with gold.

“And why does not the *begum* visit this place?” I asked.



The *sais* replied, that she was old and infirm, and could not move without pain.

Now there is little in India to amuse children. It is necessary for them to be shut up in the house from seven in the morning till five or six in the evening, for during that time the heat is often such that they can neither play nor study; and so they have little to think of, and less to do. And this being my situation, I thought the more of the orange grove, and was always contriving, that it might be possible for me to see what was on the other side the wall: and after I had indulged my wishes for a long time, my desires were gratified; and I will tell you how it happened.

It was early one evening in the cold season, (that is, the finest and pleasantest season in India,) as I was riding with Miriam, in my little carriage, under the wall of the orange grove, suddenly one of the wheels of the carriage came off, and we were thrown over. Through the divine mercy, neither Miriam nor I was hurt, but we were both frightened; and Miriam shrieked and cried so loudly, that, if the horse had not been a very gentle one, he would have taken to his heels, and perhaps have dragged the fallen carriage over us. He was, however, very





quiet, and we sustained no injury; and the *sais* proposed leaving us with the carriage, and going back with the horse to fetch some one to repair the damage; and while we were thinking what we should do, we saw the door in the wall of the garden open, and a very old Hindoo, with a long white beard, come out, having been drawn there by the cries of Miriam.

This old man's name, as he afterwards told me, was Nerkon, and he asked us very kindly if we were hurt; and then, understanding that we had to wait till the *sais* returned, he invited us into the garden: and



you may be quite sure that I was ready to accept the invitation, for now I hoped that my curiosity was to be satisfied; and indeed I thought the *begum's* garden a very fine place. It was quite square, and near the wall on each side were ranges of orange trees; the oranges being at that time ripe. Underneath these trees were straight walks, well sanded, extending round the garden; and in the middle of the garden was a summer-house, with green latticed doors, standing on a green lawn, covered with beautiful shrubs. Before the summer-house was a *cherbuter*; beyond which was a marble tank, in which were many gold and silver fish, and some beautiful water-fowls; and the inner part of the roof of the summer-house, as we had been told, was fretted with gold, and ornamented with crystal, of azure, green, and purple colour; very grand and splendid. There was, moreover, a large peacock, with a starry tail of some shining materials, placed as a sort of vane, or weathercock, on the roof of this summer-house.

I was so much delighted with what I saw, that I ran, in the space of a quarter of an hour, over the whole garden: and saw the little hut, in a corner of it, where Nerkon had lived for many years alone, like



a hermit; his business being to preserve the garden; excepting at such times as the *begum*, seeing no company, visited the place; an event which had not happened for many years. At length, when I had tired myself with running about, I returned to Miriam, and found that she had seated herself on the *cherbuter*, between the summer-house and the tank, and was talking to the old man, asking him a number of questions about the *begum*, and about the garden, and about himself: and he was telling her that he had lived in his present situation ever since the *Sahebs* (by whom he meant the English) had been there, which was between fifty and sixty years ago; and that, as he had lived, so he hoped to die, in the place where he then was.

“And have you no wife or little children?” I asked.

“Nain! nain!” was his answer.

“And is it not very dull living here,” I asked, “with no other companions but birds?”

He shook his head, as if to say, no.

“And don’t you hear the jackalls howling in the night?” I said.

“They cannot get over the wall,” he answered.



"But do not their voices sound dismally?" I asked.

He told me that he was accustomed to the sound.

"But suppose," I said, "that you should be seized by illness in this place, without any one to take care of you; what could you do?"

"I know not," he answered.

"And you might die while alone," I added; for the idea of being thus secluded from the world was dreadful to my young mind.

"What can I do?" he answered, with as stupid an appearance in his face as I ever witnessed: "God must do as he pleases with me."

"I know that," I said: "God must do as he pleases with us all; but he is not angry when we try to help ourselves. Are you a Christian?"

He seemed angry at the question, and told me that he was a Hindoe.

"Then you worship idols!" I answered.

He did not know what I meant by idols.

I told him that they were gods of wood and stone; images made by men; and I asked him what these could do for him in the next world.



He called me a little boy, and asked Miriam, with a significant smile, where I had learned to talk of all these things.

Miriam then spoke very properly and affectionately to him, telling him that we were sorry for him, because he lived alone and without friends in this world; and we feared he had not yet thought of preparing for another world.

He answered, that his father and grandfather had lived and died in that garden, and that he himself must be content to do as his ancestors had done: and then he seemed to become angry; and arose, (for he had been sitting before at some distance from us on the *cherbuter*,) and was walking away, when I got up and followed him, and said, "Please not to be angry: I have a book in my carriage; if I give it you, will you read it? Can you read?"

He answered, that he could, having been taught by his father; and, without noticing my offers, asked me if he should shew me his book.

"Yes," I said, "you shall shew me your book, if you will read mine; and if you will fetch yours, I will fetch mine which is in the carriage; and you shall keep it. I hope you will consult it, for it will inform you



about the beginning of the world, and Adam and Eve, and Paradise ; and about the Lord Jesus Christ ; and about heaven, and the way to get there ; and how to be safe and happy after death. Do, I beseech you, read my book."

Although my eagerness and anxiety were calculated to make any one smile at my childish ways ; yet the old man was quite unaffected, and looked quite stupid, and did not so much as say I might fetch my book. However, I did not wait for his leave, but away I ran to the carriage, which was at the garden-gate ; and when I came back, I found the old man seated again on the *cherbuter*, at the very edge of it, smoking his *hookah*, which was made of a cocoa-nut, and appearing as if he had not much more sense than a monkey or an owl. "Here, here, *bap*, (which word means father in Hindoostaunee,) here," I said, "is the book ; I will give it you if you will promise to read it : and here is its silken cover ; you shall have this too."

The case was of rich thin *quaub*, all brocaded with gold and silver ; and I suppose it pleased his eye, for he nodded, and said he was willing to receive the present.

"But you shall not have it," I replied.





“unless you can read the book;” and I opened to the first page, and held it before him. He read the first verse without hesitation; on which I closed the book, put it into its case, and laid it by him.

Not one feature of his face changed its expression while I was doing this: he neither smiled nor looked angry, but seemed like a wooden figure fixed on the corner of the *cherbuter*; and he did not touch the present, or even look at it as it lay before him; nor would he talk with us any more that day; but sat smoking till the *sais* returned, and brought with him the *palanquin* and *bearers* to take us home.

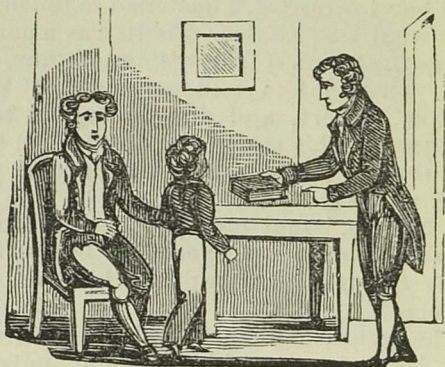


When I returned, I hastened to tell my father what I had done. There was a gentleman sitting at that time with my father, who said, when I had told my story, "Well, Master Robert, and do you expect to do any good to this stupid old man?—you have just thrown away as much money as your book was worth."

"Not so," said my father: "if Robert does the old man no good, he has at least made the trial, and satisfied his own conscience."

The gentleman answered, "True, Sir; and I am far from blaming him, notwithstanding what I have said." And then my father and the gentleman conversed a long time upon the subject of idolatry; and shewed, in many instances, how idolatry stupifies the mind; so that people who practise it often die in it, without any fear of death or a future state—so much so, that it seems as if a miracle were necessary to make them truly serious. My father also remarked, that the love of pleasure often renders people, who are not idol-worshippers, equally stupid; and, turning to me, he said, that little children were often diverted from religion by loving play too much, and being too fond of toys, and trifling amusements.





Then, to shew me that he was pleased with what I had done, he gave me another Nau-gree Bible; and the tailor was set to work to make a handsome cover for it.

Some days after this, we went again to the door leading to the orange grove, where we knocked awhile, and at length it was opened for us by the old man. "I am come again, *baba*," I said: "may I come in and see your garden?"

He opened the door, but made no answer.

Miriam and I walked in, leaving the *sais* without; but, by my father's advice, I did



not ask him any questions about the book at first. I admired his garden, and asked if I might walk round it.

"You will not touch the fruit or flowers?" he said.

"No," I replied, "my book tells me that I must not take what belongs to another."

"Very good," he answered: "and I wish all you *tope waullas* would study this book."

"The book is good," said Miriam; "though some who read it are not so."

The old man made no answer to this, but I thought that he was more familiar with me than he had been on our first visit; and I ran round the garden again, and peeped into the hut, and saw a mat spread at the door, and the Naugree Bible lying open by it at the second chapter. I then joined the old man again, and he presented me with a ripe orange.

I was afterwards received by Nerkon as an old acquaintance. I took him a present of a warm cotton quilt or *rosaie*, which pleased him much; and he asked me, as we sat on the *cherbuter*, some questions about Noah's flood, which proved to me that he had been reading my book, and had made some progress. He observed, that all nations believed in the great flood,





but that what was written about it in my book was not so true as what he had read in his own.

I acknowledged, that I was a little boy, and could not dispute; and to this he answered, "Very good."

During the visit he shewed me several pretty birds which harboured in the trees, and among these a pair of doves, which he had rendered so tame, that they hopped about him without the least fear. He expressed great pleasure in the company of these birds; and as he was so kind to me, I took the liberty of saying to him, "How very



happy I should be, to hope that in the last day, when our Lord Jesus Christ shall gather his disciples to himself, we might meet and live together !”

He asked me what I meant ; and then I told him what my papa had taught me, that the time would come when the Lord Jesus Christ should finish his mediatorial kingdom, by bringing all his disciples to glory ; and I pointed out to him where he might find the account of these things in the Nau-gree Bible. He fetched the book, and turned down the places, saying, “ These are true words, I believe ; for man is capacitated to enjoy everlasting happiness.”

After that visit I never returned to the orange grove. Troubles came upon us after troubles. First, poor Miriam was taken ill, and died ; and then I fell sick, and was parted from my dear parents, and sent to England. And in England I was placed in a school ; where so many new things happened, and so many fresh scenes presented themselves, that I began to think of the days I had spent in India as of dreams long passed away ; and I heard much less of religion than I did in my father’s house : and as I became better in health, I became more

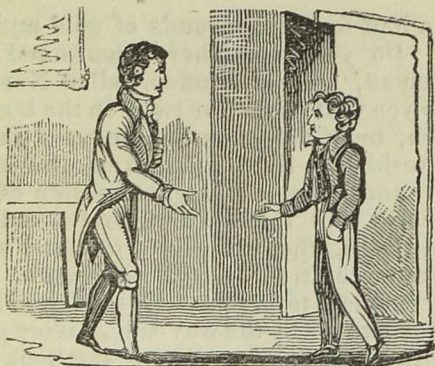


fond of play, and had less delight in good things than I formerly had.

In this state I knew very well that I was wrong; and sometimes I used to cry in my bed at night, when I compared my condition with what I fancied I had been once; not considering that, when I was in India, I had only been what my parents had made me, and that neither at one time nor the other had there been any real, substantial good in me: yet I still, by the divine blessing, wished to do well, and was very unhappy to find I could not do what I wished.

When I had been at school three years, however, new troubles came upon me. I heard, first, of the death of my dear mother, and then of that of my dear father; and I found myself an orphan, far, far away from the place of my birth, and the burying-place of my family, when I was little more than twelve years of age. I remained at school for three more years; and my master knowing me to be an orphan, treated me with so much kindness, that I loved him, and still love him, as a father: and it was about the time that I was to be removed for awhile from this dear master, that the following circumstance took place.





I was one day suddenly called into the parlour from the school-room, and there I saw a gentleman whom I instantly knew to be the same person who had been sitting with my father when I returned from my first visit to the orange grove. He received me with the greatest affability, and told me that he had not long arrived from India; “and I made one of my first visits to you, my dear Robert,” he said, “not only on account of the affection I had for your father, but in order to give you the history of a circumstance which ought to make you very happy—more happy,” he added, “than



if you had found thousands of gold and silver. Do you remember," continued this gentleman, "an old Hindoo, called Nerkon, whom you visited once or twice in the *begum's* garden, near the place where your father then resided? Since you left us, the *begum* died; and her son taking possession of her property, sold this garden, and dismissed the old man, who, being very old, and without money or friends, suffered much, and, being reduced to the last necessity, laid himself down to die by the way-side, having parted with all he had, excepting the book you gave him. A charitable English lady passing by, saw him, and stopped her carriage that she might question him. She was affected by his miserable state, and had him brought into an outhouse in her yard; and there, nourishment having been given him, he recovered as far as his extreme age would permit; and when able to move about again, he came to her, and told her that through the means of the book which had been given him by a little English *saheb*, he now felt inclined to renounce his idolatries and his *caste*, and to be baptized. He then shewed his book, and related how he had at first opened it merely from curiosity, and how he had been induced to



read chapter after chapter, till his heart began to feel; and, as he described it, his whole mind had been changed. He added, that he had often enquired after the little *saheb*, but had never been able to hear of him."

The gentleman further told me, that the English lady being a pious woman, heard this confession of poor old Nerkon with delight, and adopted those means by which he was soon afterwards baptized and received into the congregation of the faithful: there being no doubt but his heart was really and truly changed by the power of the Holy Spirit—that Spirit who has power to awaken such as are dead in sin, to give sight to the blind, and to heal the broken-hearted.

This was the story told me by my father's old friend, and I cannot describe the delight it gave me. Yet I was humbled by it, and could not help thinking what a change had passed in me since I was a little boy. When I was a child, I appeared desirous of doing good, and it was a pleasure to me to lead those to God who never knew him before; but since I came to England, to live among people who call themselves Christians, I have been negligent and useless.



What boy in the school has been the better for any thing I have ever said to him?—Then I thought of my brothers and sisters who had died in their infancy, and particularly of my little brother Henry, whom I remembered more distinctly than any of the rest; and I felt convinced, that if my parents were permitted to view me from their place of rest, I should now be the only one of their children for whom there could be occasion for feeling anxiety.

I would feel thankful that God has condescendingly employed me for any good to this poor old man; but O! what shame ought I to feel that a change of place and circumstances has made so great an alteration in my religious feelings! I am convinced of the importance and necessity of a radical change of heart, according to the Saviour's own words—*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* (John iii. 3.) If my religion is to be durable and happy, I must be thus transformed by the renewing of my mind; and then I shall prove what is that “good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God,” by which all his people are sanctified and saved. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy*



*Latr.* (Psalm cxix. 18.) I would learn, also, to adore Him who preserveth his saints, and without whose power there is no safety to the best of men—but *who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* (1 Peter i. 5.)



















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