

THE

ROSEBUDS

BY MRS. SHERWOOD

LONDON
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AUTHOR OF "LITTLE HENRY AND HIS BEARER,"

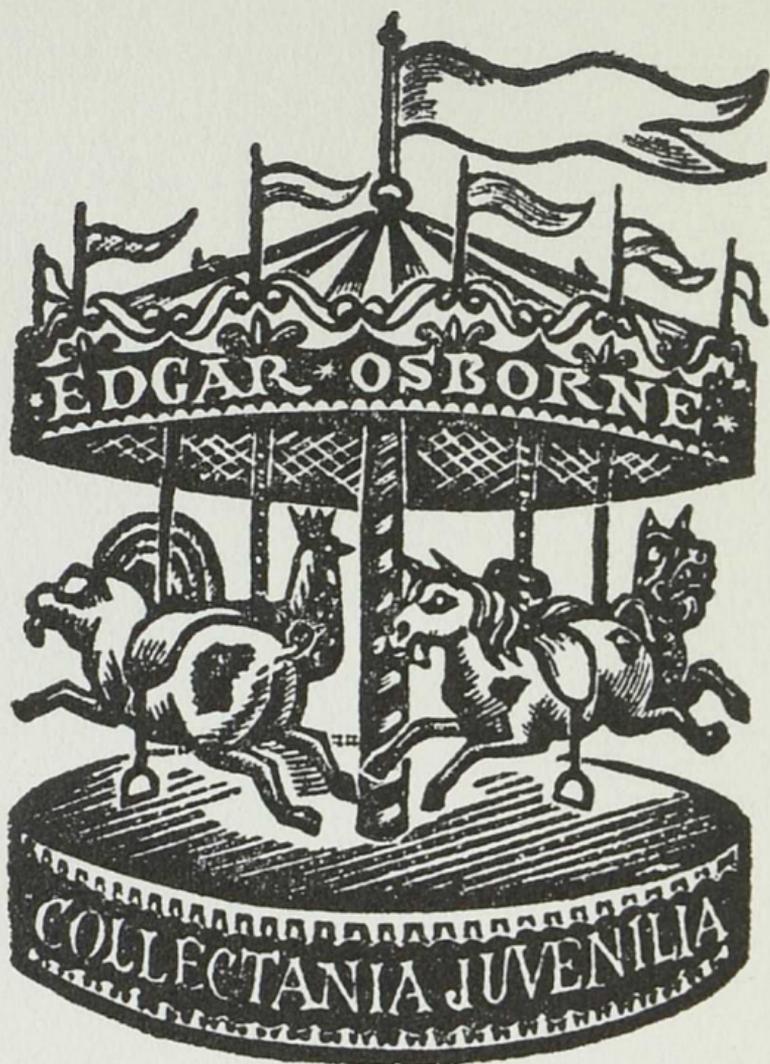
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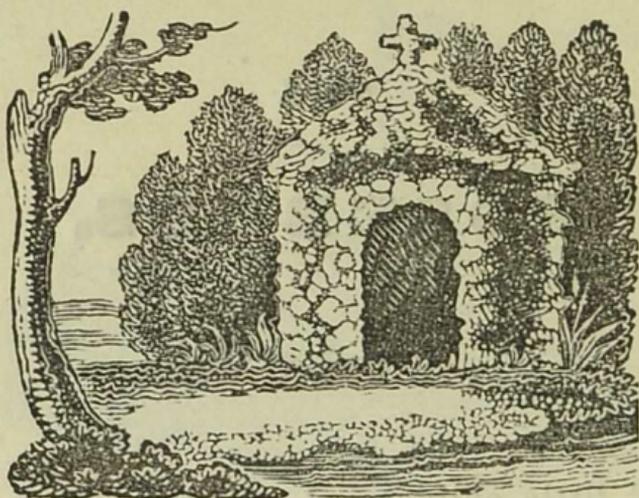
ROSEBUDS.



MY little children, I will tell you a circumstance which happened when I was very young.

I am the second of three sisters: my elder sister is called Mary, my own name is Anna, and my younger sister is Sarah. We lost our dear papa and mamma when we were so young that Mary even does not remember them.

As soon as the last of our dear parents was laid in the grave, our grandmamma sent for us to her own house, and we lived with her till she died, which happened when Sarah was about eighteen. Dear, dear grandmamma! how happy we were when under her care! We never felt the loss of our own mamma; we never knew what orphans feel.



Grandmamma's house was a cottage, with a thatched roof, and casement windows; but it was a pleasant place: it stood in a garden; and when the windows were open in a summer's morning, we could smell the flowers in every chamber. There was a grotto too at one end of the garden, dressed with moss and shells and bits of coloured glass, and a spring of fresh water, running over a pebbled channel, and a long row of filbert trees, where, in the season for fruit, the little squirrels used to come and rob us. But grandmamma never would suffer any of them to be disturbed; for she used to say, that it was worth while to lose a few filberts for the pleasure of seeing these

beautiful creatures sitting in the branches of the trees, and breaking the shells.

We had each of us a little piece of ground not far from the kitchen-window : for grandmamma had chosen this place for us, because, as she said, when she was at the dresser making the pies, she could see what we were about.

Our bit of garden-ground was small, but it was regularly divided, and inclosed with a fence of light lattice work. My sisters and I measured this lattice work, and allotted an equal portion to each ; and planted it without and within with rose trees, which we inclined to bend over the little wooden bars, so that we had a complete hedge of roses : and in the season, it was really a pleasant sight to see the wreaths and garlands of this most beautiful flower which adorned our fence ; for, as the old song says,—

“ There is no flower that blows
So lovely as the rose.”

And is not the emblem of the rose used to shew the perfections of the Redeemer ? He is the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valley : the Rose because of its fragrance and healing qualities ; and the Lily of the Valley on account of its spotless purity.



But I will proceed with my story. Through all the pleasant spring and summer months we spent some hours each day in our gardens; and there we cultivated, besides our roses, southern-wood and lavender, pinks and crocuses, and polyanthuses, with carnations and tulips, hyacinths, hearts-ease, and eye-bright.

From April till October, we presented our grandmother with posies every Saturday evening; and these were placed in china vases on the mantle-piece, the fairest nosegay being always honoured with the middle place. We also gathered and dried our rose leaves and lavender, and sewed the dried leaves in white paper bags, pricked with many curious devices, and gave

them to our grandmamma to lay in her drawers among the linen, and in the seasons when these bags were to be made, we were excused from other needlework for several days, and had some other privileges which I now forget. From our garden also we gathered garlands to adorn the grotto on our birth-days. Our grandmamma, on these occasions, always gave us a holiday, and a few tarts to make a feast, permitting us to invite two little neighbours, Eliza and Clara, the only acquaintance we had in the parish. My birth-day happened in May, that of little Sally's in June, and Mary's in August.

When I was to enter my eleventh year, grandmamma made me some cheesecakes and rhubarb tarts, and gave out of her cabinet our little set of china, and sent to invite Clara and Eliza. Our last act before we got into bed, and our first in the morning, was to look out from the window to observe the weather. The moonbeams were on the distant hills as we dropped the curtain at night, and it was a morning without clouds when we peeped again through the curtains at dawn of day.

As soon as our grandmother's bell rang, which it always did at six o'clock, we knew that it was lawful to get up. We were

dressed immediately, and ran down into our gardens to prepare our garlands. The dew was still upon the herbs and flowers; but as Clara and Eliza were to come to breakfast at eight o'clock, we set to work in good earnest, and formed long wreaths to hang in festoons within and without the grotto. We had several little friendly arguments about these wreaths and the manner in which we should mix our flowers; but at length I said, "I am resolved I will have one garland of roses for the entrance of the grotto."

"Indeed, Anna, you cannot," replied Mary: "There are very few full-blown roses. Let us keep our roses for Sarah's birth-day, which is in another month."

"And why," I answered, "should not I have a garland of roses on my birth-day as well as Sarah?"

"For no other reason," replied Mary, "but because you was born earlier in the spring."

"I don't care," I said, "I will have a garland of roses; and if you and Sarah will give me all you have, I am sure that I shall be able to make out one garland long enough."

My sisters replied very kindly, that they would give me all their full-blown roses;



when I set to work, but had not finished more than one half of the wreath I wished to make before all the full-blown roses were used up; and I applied to my sisters to give me their half-blown roses.

“Indeed, sister, we would rather not,” they replied.

However, they brought me a few, and I added them to my wreath; but still finding it too short, I became very impatient, and being determined to have my own way, I took a pair of scissars, and cleared every rosebud, and every half-blown rose from my trees. Thus I finished my wreath, and hung it up at the entrance of the grotto, where it made no very good appearance, one part of it being composed of full-blown roses, and

the other of little buds which scarcely shewed the smallest portion of those fair pink blossoms which were now doomed never to unfold themselves.

Clara and Eliza came to breakfast. The sun shone bright, the birds sang in the trees, the flowers gave forth a delightful smell, the water rippled down the channel of the brook, the bees hummed in the air, my little friends were gay, my sisters kind, my dear grand-mamma came out several times leaning on her ebony walking-staff to smile at us and wish us every innocent delight; but I was not happy, for every time I saw my garland of fading roses and dying rosebuds, I was reminded of my impatience, and was dissatisfied with myself. For my grandmother had so brought me up, that I could not be content, when I knew that I had done wrong, till I had made up for the evil I had done to my fellow-creatures, and asked forgiveness of God—having been taught that all sin and wickedness would be forgiven me for the sake of my beloved Saviour.

About a month after that time, my grandmother had what she used to call her summer-wash; when all her store of family-linen was duly bleached and laid by for another year: and she wished her first

yearly present of rose-bags to lay by with her linen.

Now she came into our gardens to examine what store of roses we had to present to her. "You have abundance for me, Mary," she said, "and will have two or three pleasant days' employment to prepare the bags for me; and, little Sarah, too, your fence is very gay;—but how happens it that I do not see one full-blown rose on your side of the garden, Anna?"

"It is all my own fault, grandmamma," I replied, bursting into tears: "I was obstinate, and would cut off all my rosebuds before they were blown, to adorn the grotto on my own birth-day; and I was naughty and cross about it, and I am very sorry."

"If you are sorry, my dear child," said my grandmamma, "I shall not reprove you. We should confess our faults, and humble ourselves, praying to be set free from our sins, and to be made partakers of the temper of our blessed Redeemer." So saying, she put her arms round my neck to kiss me, at the same time seating herself on a little bench which we had caused to be placed in the corner of our garden. "And now," said she, "let us remember this event for our good. Draw near to me, my beloved chil-



dren, and hear what I have to say. Worldly persons, and those who have not the fear of God, are described by the wise man in the Apocrypha as thus speaking to each other: *'Our time is a very shadow that passeth away; and after our end there is no returning: for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again. Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present: and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments: and let no flower of the spring pass by us: let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered.'* (Wisdom of Solomon ii. 5—8.) They cannot wait God's time for any thing; but they gather their fruit before it is ripe, and their flowers before they bloom, and in their eagerness to

get every thing enjoy nothing. But you, my dear children, learn from the history of the rosebuds to be patient, and to wait for the good things which the Almighty has prepared for those who love him; and whenever you feel anxious to get any thing which God does not think fit to bestow, or whenever you feel impatient because any thing is held from you by your fellow-creatures, especially those who are in authority over you, remember these few words—

“ ‘ For he that plucks his rosebuds in May,
Will miss, in June, his garlands gay.’ ”

And now, my little reader, if you have liked my story, and should wish to hear more of me and my sisters, I advise you to spend another penny, and buy the history of The Idiot Boy.

FINIS.

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MRS. SHERWOOD.

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