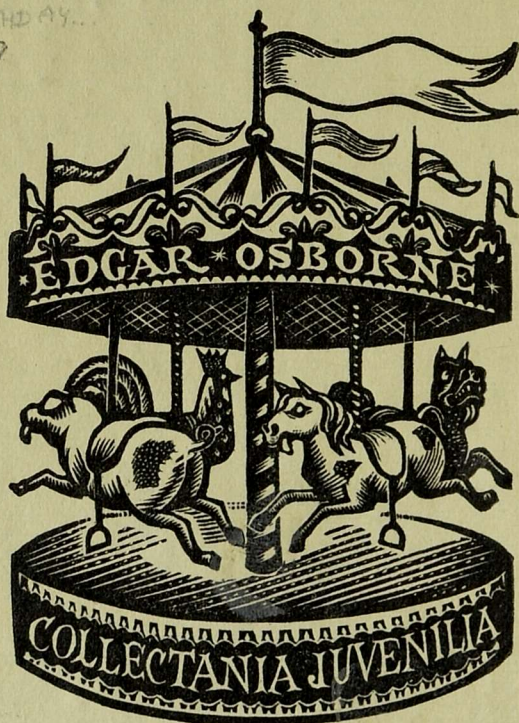




Mary Mawe

Oct. 4th 1789

BJ
BIRTHDAY...
1789



37131 009 548 736

I, 110

Hope

Mrs. Anne's Gift
to John & John
on their birthday
March 17th

1777

THIRTIETH YEAR

THE NEW YORK

AND THE

THE

OF THE

THE

THE

TO

MISS

T H I S

BIRTH-DAY PRESENT

IS OFFERED

BY HER VERY AFFECTIONATE MOTHER,

C O N T E N T S.

Page

<i>First Day's Conversation,</i>	
HAPPINESS,	1
<i>Second Day's Conversation,</i>	
CHEERFULNESS,	16
<i>Third Day's Conversation,</i>	
GOOD-HUMOUR,	27
<i>Fourth Day's Conversation,</i>	
BENEVOLENCE,	38
<i>Fifth Day's Conversation,</i>	
INDUSTRY,	56
<i>Sixth Day's Conversation,</i>	
MODERATION,	72
<i>Seventh Day's Conversation,</i>	
PRUDENCE,	82
<i>Eighth Day's Conversation,</i>	
RELIGION,	94
<i>Ninth Day's Conversation,</i>	
ADVICE ENFORCED,	109

A
BIRTH-DAY PRESENT.

FIRST DAY'S CONVERSATION.

H A P P I N E S S.

MAMMA *meeting* MARY.

MAMMA.

MY dear girl, come to me! receive the embraces and tenderest wishes of a mother: to-day, you know, is your birth-day.

MARY.

Mamma, I was just coming to thank you for your kindness. My sister says you have been so good as to invite a party of my young friends to visit me this afternoon; and that you have provided a little entertainment of cakes and fruit for us. I am very much obliged to you.

B

MAMMA.

My dear, I rejoice in every opportunity of giving you pleasure; and I am very glad to perceive, by your countenance, that this little scheme gratifies you so much; but I will not pretend to be so totally disinterested, as not to hope for some return on your part: and while I allotted the afternoon for your amusement among your school-fellows, I flattered myself that you would bestow the morning upon me.

I wish to have a great deal of conversation with you; therefore sit down, my dear, put aside, for a while, the thoughts of your diversions and gaities, and give me your serious attention.

You are this day, my dear, —— years old; an age at which, though you are still a child, yet every thing you do becomes of consequence; every moment becomes precious.

It is the privilege of infancy, to sport and frolic about carelessly, and at random; innocence and good-humour are the only

recommendations they need, and they find in their own health and gaiety, a constant source of enjoyment.

But, when young people leave that state, and become capable of more refined and enlarged pleasure, different qualifications are expected from them, and a different conduct is necessary for their own enjoyment. The pleasures of the mind must be added to those of the body, in order to make them as happy as they are capable of being. Their different studies and occupations will receive their highest relish, by the reflection, that they are doing that which is right and proper for them to do; and every amusement and gratification that is allowed them, will be enhanced, by receiving it as a testimony of their friends' kindness and esteem.

That curiosity which discovers itself so early, and is at first indulged only as a mean of diversion, may now be made a guide to knowledge, and be employed in inquiries into nature and art; which may be continu-

ally opening fresh sources of delight and wonder for their young minds.

At your age, not a minute can be wasted, without taking so much from the stock of happiness intended for you. The time that is suffered to remain idle is lost

From gaining knowledge,

From discharging your duty,

From improving your virtue,

From giving joy to your friends,

From serving your God.

After some years are past, you will make your appearance in the world as a young woman. You are very ready, I dare say, to suppose, that, in *that character*, much more will be required from you, than as a child: I know you think so, by the observations you sometimes make to me, on young ladies who are grown up.

MARY.

I confess I do, Madam: a great deal more seems to be expected of a young woman, than of a child.

MAMMA.

And how, Mary, is that expectation to be fulfilled?

You do not imagine that any wonderful charm is to take place in a young person at sixteen or seventeen, which shall present her to the world, polite, well instructed, ingenious, and agreeable, if her childhood have been negligent, idle, and ignorant.

Knowledge and accomplishments are obtained by a regular progress; by doing a little every day, in some years you will find a great deal done, and will be able to reward the labours of your friends, at the time that your improvements will be a credit to yourself and to them; and it depends upon your manner of spending your time now, whether they are to be so or not: besides, your coming into the world with the character you

would wish, is more connected with your present deportment than you may imagine.

People, though not disposed to be severe to children, are naturally led from a child's conduct, to form a judgment, what they will be when they grow up; you will, therefore, in a great measure, fix the opinion which persons will have of you hereafter, by your behaviour now; and some time hence, when you are of an age to visit, or be taken notice of, those who have daughters, and young friends, will court or avoid your acquaintance, according to the observations they have made of your conduct in your more youthful years.

MARY.

Yes, Mamma: I heard Mrs. *Censor* say of a young lady, the other day, that she hoped her daughter would never form an intimacy with her; for that she had always been so idle and headstrong a child, that she was sure she could never prove good for any thing, but would always be an occasion of vexation and shame to her friends.

MAMMA.

God forbid that should ever be said of you ! It makes a mother tremble, but to hear of it; and I think Mrs. *Censor* had much better have given her advice to her daughter in private, than have exposed this unfortunate young woman in a company where she was almost a stranger; but you may see by that, how little cautious people are in giving their opinion, and to how wide a circle the knowledge of these faults may spread, which you think have been scarcely observed at all, or seen but by a very few.

The character given of this young lady, whose name she publicly mentioned, though you have very prudently suppressed it, was heard by ten people; these ten people separate, and, whenever this lady is mentioned, spread through the circle of their acquaintance this account of her: they do the same; so that before she is seen or known, every body is prejudiced against her. I do not justify the conduct of those who speak so freely and unkindly; but it ought to make young per-

sons very careful, that they do not give the least ground for such reflections.

MARY.

I hope I shall not. Pray, Mamma, tell me of every thing you see amiss in me, that I may make haste to correct it.

MAMMA.

My child, with such a disposition you can never do wrong. What I have said has been to convince you, of how much consequence it is, in every respect, to improve your time to useful and virtuous purposes; not only that you may enjoy yourself at present, but be *hereafter* in the situation you would wish to be.

No scheme can be well executed, nothing can be done to the purpose, without our first forming a plan, and considering what it is we aim at, and what means it will be best for us to pursue.

If you are chusing any road, you consider whether it be safe and pleasant, and whither it will conduct you at last.

Now, that the road of life is before you, and the greatest part of it yet untried, cast your eyes a little forward; and, in the journey you are to make, reflect what is the end you aim at, and what path you are to take to arrive at it.

You see all the world in a bustle; what do you think they are pursuing?

MARY.

Many different things, I suppose, according to their different dispositions.

MAMMA.

Many different things, they are indeed pursuing! but they have all in view one object; that is, HAPPINESS.

Happiness is sought by all; but the various methods which men take to obtain it, and the frequent disappointments they meet with, show that the world is strangely mistaken about it. The greater part do not consider what Happiness is, nor how it is to be acquired; but, having fixed their minds on some particular thing, they think they cannot be happy without *that*; they seek it as

the means of happiness, and are disappointed either by their not obtaining the thing, or by finding it insufficient to the purpose for which they desired it—that of making them happy. This casts a gloom over their minds; they refuse to stretch out their hands to the enjoyments that are within their reach, because they cannot grasp at those which are beyond it: thus they remain dissatisfied and indolent, till some other object starts up before them, from the attainment of which, they hope for happiness. They seek it with an ardor proportionable to the value they set upon it; and, in the eagerness of their pursuit, overlook all those quiet and familiar pleasures which are around them: as a man, who is running a race, hastens to the goal, without regarding the beauties of the country through which he passes.

Whether they lose or possess the object ‘on which they dote,’ they miss of that ‘for which they dote,’ Happiness; which depends not so much on any particular attainment, as on the general disposition of the heart, and turn of the thoughts.

If you cultivate in yourself a pious, calm, cheerful, and benevolent temper of mind, Happiness will flow in upon you from a thousand sources; it will meet you in the path of duty, and join you in the innocent amusements of life, without your going out of your way to seek it; and those ingredients which are tasteless, or unpleasant to others, will make your cup overflow with joy.

MARY.

I remember the *Sparkler*, in the *Guardian*, says, ‘We should endeavour to be easy here, and happy hereafter.’

MAMMA.

She does so; and in many respects it is very just. But there is even in this world ‘a joy which no man can take from us,’ and ‘a peace which passeth all understanding:’ this joy and this peace can be found only where few are disposed to look for it—in the discharge of our duty;—it is the gift of God, and is bestowed only on those who do his will. To be truly happy, you must be religious; religion is first requisite to happiness;

and religion will incline you to such a uniform temper of mind and general course of conduct, as will fit your heart for the reception of happiness, from every channel through which it shall please God to convey it; which will be many more than those are aware of, who suffer impetuous passions and evil habits to obstruct its course.

What this temper and conduct may be, I wish to explain more at large to you. But I have almost tired your attention at present: go and take a turn in the garden, and then make yourself ready for the reception of your friends in the afternoon. We will renew our conversation as we sit at work to-morrow morning;—and I hope to point out to you such a plan, as shall enable you to enjoy as much delight and comfort as can be had in this world; and to heighten that enjoyment, by the prospect of much more abundant delight in another.

MARY.

I am not at all wearied, Madam; but I fear I might not be able to remember a

great deal more at once: I will therefore go and walk in the garden, and endeavour to recollect all that you have said to me, and impress it upon my memory.

MAMMA.

You may amuse yourself likewise by learning these verses, which are not unsuitable to the subject on which we have been talking.

O D E.

FANTASTIC Power, whose airy mien
Proclaims thee Pleasure—giddy Queen,

This paradox unfold:

Wherefore do all declare thee vain,

Yet fondly labour to obtain

Thy stores of fancy'd gold?

Why, when, with unsuccessful chace,

They oft' have try'd thy paths to trace,

By Destiny repell'd;

Why do they still thy route pursue,

And why the vain attempts renew,

Where they so oft' have fail'd?

Say, by thy unsubstantial side,

Indeed, does Happiness reside,

In gaudy splendor drest?

Must she be sought in pleasure's maze,

Nor look'd for in the silent ways

Of solitude and rest?

Fond man, alas! with passion fraught,
By fancy's wild chimæras taught,
Seeks her in beauty's smile;
Dreams that she dwells 'midst pomp and show,
Or sits upon the lofty brow,
Of bold ambition's hill.

"Delusions all! but thou, my soul,"
Submit to reason's just controul—
Attend religion's lore;
Guided by her unerring rays,
With grateful awe the wond'rous ways
Of love divine explore.

Tho' in her train no Cupids play,
Nor *Flora*, in her sober way,
Profuse her flow'rets shed;
Fair peace shall in her steps attend,
And Heav'n its choicest blessings send
Where'er she deigns to tread.

SECOND DAY'S CONVERSATION.

CHEERFULNESS.

MAMMA and MARY at work.

MAMMA.

I BELIEVE, *Mary*, your visitors were very well pleased, by what I heard of their mirth when I was absent: their politeness restrained the exuberance of their gaiety while I was in the room.

MARY.

Indeed, Mamma, we were all in high spirits, and our mirth was not always of the quietest kind; but still, in the midst of our merriment, I could not help thinking, that the pleasure we enjoyed did not answer the idea you had given me of happiness in the morning. We were diverted; but something more seemed wanting to make one truly happy.

MAMMA,

I am pleased that you so well understand what I said to you; and I hope to assist you in laying a much more solid foundation for happiness, than the transient overflow of mirth and spirits. What was wanting to you was, the pleasure of reflection: your enjoyment would not bear a cool and deliberate review: there was nothing expressly wrong in it; but there was nothing to look back to with any satisfaction.

If you have been entertained with a book, an agreeable piece of work, or any amusement of that sort, it is a pleasure to you to recollect what you have read or done; you approve yourself while you are doing it, and are glad afterwards, that you have been so usefully employed: but it gives you no particular pleasure to-day, to remember that you have laughed and jumped about so much yesterday.

MARY.

My dear Mamma! I feel the force of what you say; but I hope you do not severely

condemn the giddiness of my play yesterday, as I was led into it by a desire of making the afternoon pass cheerfully and agreeably to my friends.

MAMMA.

I am not disposed to be severe upon you at all. It may sometimes be necessary to join in sport and frolic; but I am glad you see that something more is essential to happiness.

I was considering before you came in, what were the chief essentials to happiness, and (Religion pre-supposed) I think they are,

Evenness of temper—by which I would understand a regular cheerfulness, founded on good-humour, refined by benevolence, and adorned by politeness,

Industry,

Moderation, and

Prudence.

You may think my mentioning cheerfulness a contradiction to what I said just now; but if you will read the *Spectator*, No. 381, you will learn a very judicious distinction between cheerfulness and mirth. Cheerfulness is a regular temper of the mind. Mirth is a sudden start and fall. Cheerfulness tends to support our spirits; mirth exhausts them. Cheerfulness is consistent with every thing that is serious, useful, and respectable: intemperate mirth inclines us to idleness, levity, and carelessness.

A cheerful temper is the most pleasing and desirable thing in the world: it keeps a person alive to every impression of gladness and delight which is presented to him by the objects about him; enables him to give and receive pleasure from a thousand little incidents, which, though they may seem trifling, because they are occurring every day, yet altogether make up a very considerable sum of happiness. The *Spectator* has somewhere this passage, which was pointed out to me long since by a very sensible friend:

‘It is, perhaps, not much thought of, but
‘it is certainly a very important lesson, to
‘learn how to enjoy ordinary life, and to
‘be able to relish our being, without the
‘transport of some passion, or the gratifica-
‘tion of some appetite.’

This is what a cheerful even temper enables us to do; it teaches us to improve the present moment and circumstance, whatever it is; instead of wasting our time and happiness in vain wishes and regret, for something that is not. It supplies us with a thousand arguments in our own favour, by suggesting reasons why we should be satisfied and happy: it sweetens every situation, transforms a wilderness into a garden, and improves a garden into a paradise.

MARY.

But, Mamma! one cannot be pleased and cheerful, whether things go to one’s mind or not.

MAMMA.

My dear, a cheerful temper will generally make things go to your mind; it will

prevent all that fretting, and disquietude at little vexations and disappointments; which, though the occasions that produce them may be trifling enough, yet deduct greatly from the happiness of life; and when it is joined with religion and good sense, it will enable a person to enjoy a great deal of comfort, in situations that are not the most pleasant, and which they would not have chosen for themselves.

It is impossible to make every event and circumstance fall out just as you would have it. The sun will be under a cloud, when you wish it to shine; a horse will be lame, when you want to go out; and the diligence or leisure of other people will not always keep pace with your wishes: so that if your happiness be to depend on what may happen in the next hour, it stands on a very insecure footing. But a temper truly even and cheerful, as it cannot make time and occasion bend to it, bends to them; where it cannot do just what it intended, considers what is next best, and sets about it without lingering and discontent.

For many more years of your life, at least, my dear, it will be your duty to submit to the direction and inclination of others; and it will be a sad thing if it be not your *pleasure* too, if you feel yourself uneasy and dissatisfied, whenever your inclinations are broken in upon, by those whose authority and experience you ought to respect.

MARY.

I do not know, Madam, that I am ever disobedient to your commands.

MAMMA.

No, my dear; but I love you too well to be contented with mere slavish obedience. Reluctant obedience, as it can hardly satisfy your own conscience, so it will neither secure your happiness, render you amiable to your friends, nor acceptable to me.

It is necessary, for your own benefit, and for the good order of the family, that your conduct should be subject to my control; and whether you may, in every particular instance, see the propriety and necessity of the restraint I lay upon you or not, yet, as you have general grounds for believing that

I wish to promote your happiness and welfare in every thing, and must be convinced, that young people are not able to conduct and take care of themselves, there is abundant reason why you should cheerfully and readily conform to my wishes: and indeed a cheerful and quick compliance is the only praise you can have. Every body knows, that a parent must be obeyed, if they choose to be so; they therefore give a young person no credit for doing as they are desired; but if children can change their schemes, or give up their inclinations, with unaffected willingness, and a smiling countenance, there is a beauty in their behaviour, which seldom escapes observation. As, on the contrary, nothing has shocked or disgusted me more, than sometimes to see, among my acquaintance, a parent's commands received with a gloomy and dejected countenance, and obeyed with lingering feet, and murmurs which were perhaps not always secret.

Against such disgrace and folly, a cheerful uniformity of temper will preserve you,

and teach you to find amusement and happiness within the limits allotted you.

There is likewise an obstacle to cheerfulness, which I would wish to guard you against, and which, though it often proceeds as much from a bad habit, as from any settled discontent, yet wears off the brightness of your own cheerfulness, breaks very much in upon that of the society you live amongst, and by no means prejudices strangers in your favour: I mean, a way of indulging little complaints, or impatience on every trifling occasion, as ‘How teasing this work is!’ ‘How this buckle hurts me!’ ‘This pen is so tiresome!’ and a hundred such exclamations: which, though they may be forgotten almost as soon as they are uttered; yet interrupt ‘the even tenor of our way,’ and are very opposite to that spirit of cheerfulness, which should teach us either to remove, or bear little inconveniences, without thinking them worth complaining of.

Still worse, are repeated lamentations, at some degree, often, perhaps, a very slight one, of pain and illness.

How often have I observed a very bearable head-ach, a chilblain, a little tooth-ach, or even a scratched finger, interrupt the conversation, and disturb the cheerfulness of a family for a whole afternoon.

To suppress such complaints, may, indeed rather be called an exercise of patience, than of cheerfulness; but it is what habitual cheerfulness will very much assist you in; since it is the part of cheerfulness, not only to heighten the comforts, but to lessen the evils of life.

But your eyes are cast on yonder window; and indeed all nature looks so gay and pleasant, that I think the best method

to promote your cheerfulness at present,
is to take a walk in the garden.

Little *Lydia* will be very much pleased
to go with you, and to have her little
basket filled with roses; there are a great
many that want cutting.

THIRD DAY'S CONVERSATION.

GOOD-HUMOUR.

MAMMA *and* MARY.

MAMMA.

I DID not expect Mrs. *Ramble* would have gone so soon: you were, I dare say, sorry to part with the young ladies, and I believe they would not have disliked a longer visit; they seemed very much to enjoy themselves in the garden.

MARY.

I do not know what kind of enjoyment they might have; but I confess that I had none in their company.

They were often very merry; but their mirth was so unkind, that I could have no

share in it; each seemed delighted, when she could play the other some cross, rude trick.

Miss *Ramble* threw her sister down, every time she stooped to gather strawberries; pricked her with sweet-briar, scattered her flowers, and, when she had provoked Miss *Maria* to be peevish, appeared highly entertained: nor was *Maria* much behind-hand with her, but retaliated in the same kind of way; so that their whole time was divided between a laugh of ill-natured triumph, and a grumble of petulance and contention; indeed, they both of them found occasions enough for quarrelling; for nothing was so trifling, as not to be thought worth a contest; a snail's shell, or a pebble, would furnish abundant matter for a dispute; and two or three poor caterpillars were squeezed to death, while each was endeavouring to make them their prize.

They were never of the same mind, except when they joined in some mischievous

trick against me: that, however, did not afford them all the entertainment they expected, because I did not divert them with any exclamations or complaints; and though they were very ingenious in devising how to perplex me, they had not once the pleasure of seeing me either quarrellsome or sulky.

MAMMA.

I am very glad you acted so properly; I dare say your conduct proceeded from motives of the purest good-nature; but if you wish to punish or teize an ill-tempered person, nothing can do it so effectually, as preserving your own temper unmoved; for by that mean you disappoint them in the very thing they aimed at; they sought to make themselves merry at your expense, by provoking you, and then diverting themselves with all the contortions of your mind; as some who show their brutality in another way, find themselves sport, in the awkward twisting and writhing of the creature whose body they have tormented.

Or, if their malignity be more serious; instead of stinging, they wish to stab; and desire that every wound they inflict, should be fatal to the serenity and cheerfulness of your soul.

By an easy and unaffected calmness, and good-humour, you defeat all their endeavours, and make them feel their worthlessness and insignificance in the most forcible manner; they are then thrown below you; but any person with whom you enter into a contest, you raise to an equality with you; which does not seem enough attended to, by those proud people, who are always taking offence and disputing.

But, as I said before, I hope you will always do what is right, from the most benevolent motives; and you are not to consider the unpleasant time you spent with these ladies, as lost; since it has given you an opportunity of exercising your virtue: and may lead you to consider, how necessary it is, to the happiness of life, that

cheerfulness should be connected with good-humour; they were sportive and gay; but very aptly may *Solomon's* comparison be used to their mirth; it was like 'the crackling of thorns under the pots;' like *that* short-lived, and while it lasted, *they*, like the thorns, were consuming away—consuming away with evil and vexatious passions, which, though they break out into petulant mirth, destroy all real happiness; for can that pleasure be well founded, which arises from the uneasiness of another?—Dreadful is the condition of that man, to whom food is tasteful, only when he can mix poison with the nourishment of others.

MARY.

I am sure, if I were ever disposed to be rude and ill-natured, the recollection of the Miss *Rambles* would check me at once, for I would not for the world appear in so disagreeable a light to any body, as they did to me.

MAMMA.

The *Lacedemonians*, you know, used to make their slaves drunken, and then ex-

hibit them to their children, that the disgust they conceived from their appearance, might deter them from drunkenness; and I think, the sight of an ill-tempered person, may as forcibly persuade to the government of one's passions another way, for, indeed, no one could bear to excite such sentiments as a quarrelsome man produces in all who observe him.

But I was observing to you, that, in order to 'possess your soul in peace,' it is necessary that the cheerfulness of temper, which I recommend to you, should be founded on good-humour.

There arise, in the intercourse of every day, so many little interferences of interest and inclination, so many trifling errors, and slight provocations, that good-nature seems to be a virtue continually necessary to make life pass comfortably to ourselves or others.

As there is no virtue which is more connected with happiness, since it secures to

us the serenity of our own minds, so there is none which so much conciliates the favour, esteem, and good-will of all about us. The love of others is, indeed, but a natural return for that pleasure and satisfaction which good-nature every where communicates: and esteem is connected with those qualities and dispositions of the mind, from which good-nature and kindness flow; as, on the other hand, the inconveniences we suffer from ill-nature, do not offend us so much, as the temper of mind from which it proceeds.

Nothing so much obstructs the exercise of good-nature, as pride and selfishness; qualities which no one would choose to be thought possessed of; and the imputation of which is an affront: and yet, from what origin, but pride and selfishness, do all those quarrels and disputes, which disgrace the world, and too often private families, proceed?

If a person is humble enough to believe that those he lives amongst, are at least as

wife, and of as much consequence as himself, and have full as much right to assert their own opinion, and gratify their own humour, as he has,—if, I say, any one, ‘thinks thus soberly of himself,’ he will be little inclined to contend sharply for his own way, or resent, with acrimony, any opposition to his sentiments or inclinations; and if to humility, he joins that disinterestedness, which makes him not desire inordinately to gratify himself, but inclines him to seek the satisfaction and enjoyment of his friends, almost all occasion for contest and complaint will cease; and the fiery look, the scornful sneer, the pout of discontent, the contentious struggle, or the voice of angry clamour, would never be known in a family, where pride and selfishness were strangers.

MARY.

I have heard it said, that no person meets with so many mortifications as a proud man.

MAMMA.

It is truly said; and if proud and selfish persons could listen to the voice of reason, they might be told, that the methods they usually pursue, do but ill serve the cause of those very passions they are so bent upon indulging; for methinks it can be no great compliment to a man's pride, that he puts his comfort and happiness in the power of any person who chooses to make an attempt upon it, by suffering every little contradiction or opposition, to disturb the tranquility and cheerfulness of his mind, and excite in him the painful sensations which fretfulness, passion, indignation, and all such angry emotions always produce.

If he must be proud, his superiority, one would think, might be much better maintained, by not thinking any person of consequence enough to break in upon his peace and serenity, or to provoke him to argument and disputation: and the selfish man might likewise find, that in consulting his own pleasure and indulgence, the truest way

to secure it, would be to contend less about it.

After all his eagerness and clamour, he is often overborne, and loses that which he disputed for, and conciliates neither the pity, nor good-will of any one; but, did he voluntarily yield to others, on some occasions, they would naturally return such kindness, by preferring his gratification on other occasions; and he might be ten times more the master of the property and actions of other men, than he could ever be by violence and turbulence.

Besides, my dear girl, what indulgence can ever be enjoyed, that is obtained at the expence of good-humour and benevolence? The mind, from whence alone true happiness can flow, is disquieted and disturbed: and you might as well expect harmonious sounds to be drawn forth, by heaping books of music upon an instrument that is out of tune, as that happiness could be

produced by any outward possessions or gratifications, when the soul is sick and disordered.

But in talking so long, I forget how much your youth wants variety. I had something more to say; but we will reserve it for another time.

FOURTH DAY'S CONVERSATION.

B E N E V O L E N C E.

MARY *reading—to her enter* MAMMA.

MAMMA.

I DID not expect to find you returned so soon, *Mary*.

MARY.

I have not been out, Madam.

MAMMA.

How did that happen? I saw you running with great alacrity, to get your hat, when your Papa called you to go into the fields, and botanize with him and *George*; what prevented you?

MARY.

You know, Mamma, the accident to *Leah's* foot will not allow her to walk at present, she is debarred many pleasures

which we enjoy. This morning she had set her mind upon working at her map of *England*; but she could not begin it, without a little assistance from me; and though she said nothing, she looked so disappointed, when she saw me going out, that I went and excused myself to my Papa, and sat down with her; and I am sure, no pleasure I could have had, in following my own inclinations, could have been equal to the joy I have felt, from seeing how happy this little attention has made her. She is so full of affection to me, and of delight at the neat appearance her work makes, that I am very far from regretting the little self-denial I exercised. *Mary* has just now assisted her to go into her own room to dress, she took her work with her, that she might have the pleasure of showing it first to you herself.

MAMMA.

You seem, my dear girl, so well to understand the joys of kindness, or benevolence, that I almost think, what I had to say on the subject unnecessary; for to those

who know, by experience, the blessedness of giving pleasure or satisfaction to a friend, all arguments and persuasions are superfluous. All we want, is to persuade people to taste and see 'how good and joyful a thing it is,' to be kind and loving, and then we may trust them to their own feelings.

MARY.

I should, Madam, almost, repent what I have been rejoicing in, if it prevented me from hearing any advice or instruction which you were so kind as to intend for me.

MAMMA.

I only meant, my dear, to enlarge a little upon the subject we entered upon yesterday, and show you the happiness that arises from good-humour, as heightened by benevolence.

We considered good-humour yesterday, as a necessary ingredient to happiness, because it preserves our own mind easy and calm, and procures for us the good-will and kind offices of those we live amongst; it is also

very certain, that easiness of temper preserves a person from a thousand vexations and perplexities, that fall to the lot of the captious and quarrelsome man; but when good-nature is founded on benevolence, and the interest we take in the happiness, and satisfaction of others, it then, indeed, becomes the source of the most exquisite delight: then, indeed, is it like the precious ointment, alluded to by the Psalmist, that being poured upon the head, ran down unto the beard, even unto *Aaron's* beard, and went down unto the skirts of his cloathing: giving value and charms to the most trifling occurrence and common circumstance of life, and filling all the house with the sweet odour of its perfume.

You say yourself, you had more pleasure in this little sacrifice you made to kindness and good-nature, than any pleasure that terminated merely in yourself, could have given you; and those who make great sacrifices, and exercise great self-denials, for the sake of benevolence and charity, receive a

reward, by which they are abundantly recompensed.

I have often wondered, when I have seen persons, by their petulance, fretfulness, and asperity, diffuse dissatisfaction and distress all round them—I have, I say, wondered, how they could rob themselves of the delicate pleasure, which they might have purchased by a contrary conduct, and how they could bear to see that countenance clouded with grief, or suffused with anger, which a kind word, or action, might have overspread with the smiles of cheerfulness and affection; or how they could support the reflection, that, instead of being like good angels, the ministers of peace, of joy, and love, they could choose so much to imitate evil ones, by spreading discord, distress, and enmity, and lose, without remorse, and regret, that delight which arises from a mutual intercourse of tender and obliging offices; for surely no delight can be equal to that of seeing the countenance of another lighted up, and his heart made glad, by our behaviour to him.

It is a very alarming thought, and which ought to make us very cautious of our conduct, that the happiness of others is put so much in our power; for who is there so insignificant, that he has not the pain or pleasure of some circle, however small, in his hands; who, cannot by kindness, forbearance, and compliance, lessen to some few who depend upon him, the evils of life; or heighten its joys; or who may not by neglect, rudeness, or contradiction, damp their enjoyments, or give poignancy to their sorrows?

You, my dear, live in a large family, in which you may have frequent opportunities of exercising your own virtues, and of communicating and receiving happiness by a thousand 'gentle offices of patient love;' but even in seeking our own happiness, some little resolution and self-command is necessary; an angry emotion will sometimes arise, which the peace of yourself and others require you to suppress; inclinations will in-

terfere; and you cannot enjoy the sweets of social affection, without denying a present humour.

The impetuosity of youth will sometimes hurry you on, and it will be necessary to stop and consider, whether, while you are pursuing your own pleasure, you are not giving pain to some one who ought to be dear to you. To enjoy all the bliss that benevolence is capable of bestowing, it is requisite to have a general guard over your actions, a constant attention to your conduct, that you may lose no opportunity of doing a kind action, nor ever be betrayed into doing an unkind one.

You have shown, that you can prefer the present pleasure of another person to your own; and by cherishing such a disposition, till it becomes the uniform and habitual temper of your mind, you will refine and exalt every enjoyment: your pleasures will be multiplied a thousand fold, when you

can not only be happy in the happiness of others, but have a still nearer share in their satisfaction, by seeing it arise from your own actions.

MARY.

I cannot think myself of consequence enough, to contribute to the happiness of many persons; but your kindness, Madam, and that of my brothers and sisters, gives importance to what I do in my own family; and I should be very much shocked, if I could be the cause of the least uneasiness to any of you.

MAMMA.

I am sure, my dear, it can never be your deliberate design: but where people live continually together, their affairs and inclinations will so mingle and intersect each other, their pleasures and pursuits will so often interfere, and the freedom of familiar discourse be so apt to throw them off their guard, that a person who would be mutually pleased and pleasing in such

a society, ought to have upon their minds a continual fear of causing offence and pain, and a sincere solicitude to give satisfaction and pleasure.

I have known young people, who would not have done a thing deliberately cruel, or malevolent, yet, who from want of being sufficiently alive to the feelings of other people, and from hastiness of spirit, positiveness, and a love of their own way, have kept their family in a state of constant confusion and uneasiness.

With a family of such a disposition, I once spent a few days, and very painful ones they were. One could never be secure of passing a quarter of an hour, without having one's ears wounded by some harsh joke, rude contradiction, satiric speech, or angry squabble.

I was frightened every time any of them walked across the room, or opened their lips, lest some rude or heedless thing should

be done, or some provoking or disgusting word spoken, or supposed to be spoken, which should put them in a flame: for no trifle was ever passed over, for the sake of peace; no severe saying ever suppressed from tenderness and delicacy; no fault forgiven from motives of affection; but every error was enlarged upon, every mote was magnified, their spirits were always ready to take the alarm, and in the midst of the gayest play, a small hurt, totally undesigned, or an unpleasant word, carelessly spoken, were enough to overset them all.

MARY.

Dear Mamma—what a picture have you drawn! I tremble, lest I should ever, in the smallest degree, have resembled it.

MAMMA.

My time has not, however, always passed so unpleasantly. I have been happy enough to mix in little societies, where all was 'peace and good-will;' where their hearts stood prepared to receive every thing that was said and done, with more than civility,

with tendernefs and affection; ever, were they ready to put the kindeft interpretation upon the words and actions of each other.

Very feldom in that family was there occafion to ‘pafs by a tranfgreffion,’ but if it did happen, I am fure they made it their ‘glory.’

No retorting, no recrimination, no bitter bandying of words, in defence of an unimportant opinion.

One fubject alone they contended upon, which, fhould give up his own indulgence, or defire, to that of his brothers and fifters. The ‘law of kindnefs was on their lips,’ their demeanour was gentlenefs, and their conftant aim, to communicate that happinefs with which their own breasts overflowed.

I need not afk, my dear girl, which fociety you would wifh to refemble; nor which you would wifh to dwell among.

MARY.

Surely not! May I be like the latter! and may my lot ever be with such.

MAMMA.

If the first part of your wish be fulfilled, it will be likely to bring with it the accomplishment of the second: for, surely, such a temper must impart some of its own sweetness to all whom it is placed near.

I have hitherto set forth the charms of Benevolence, only as it is related to the daily intercourse of family friendship, and is connected with the innumerable occasions of common life, where, though it is chiefly employed in small things, yet does it not, for that reason, lose its value or its beauty; indeed, such is the magic of Benevolence, that it can convert the most trifling and insignificant action into a deed of importance, or of virtue, give it a new nature, and a dignity not its own.

F

What I have already said, has, I fear, been too long for you, but would my time, and the vivacity of your youth permit, could I enlarge on the higher and more extraordinary labours of Benevolence, could I show you all the mighty works of generosity, self-denial, and humanity, which *Charity* is capable of performing, I should open a wide and magnificent view, which might, however, lead me too far. Your scene of action has at present narrower limits: hereafter you may extend it:

‘Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life and
‘sense,

‘In one close system of Benevolence;

‘Happier as kinder, in whate’er degree,

‘And height of bliss, but height of *Charity*.’

You will then, I hope, know experimentally the joy there is in forgiving injuries, in communicating comfort, in soothing sorrow, or in relieving wretchedness; a joy, which the mere exercise of good-humour, without sentiment, can never bestow.

There are some characters who preserve an unaffected and uniform good-humour, but never enter enough into your feelings to act the part of a friend: who hear your tale of sorrow with the same vacant or smiling countenance, that they listen to tea-table chat; advise you to be easy, and convince you that they are so perfectly so, that your anxieties will never break in upon their quiet.

Persons of this cast, though they may escape much of the uneasiness which is produced by a morose and dissatisfied temper, yet will never taste the sublime pleasure, which arises from sentiment and sensibility.

Do not, therefore, arm your breast against a compassionate sympathy, from a fear that your portion of happiness will be lessened by your becoming a sharer in the sufferings of others. Though your gaiety may be now and then interrupted by a summons to 'weep with them who weep,' yet will you be made abundant amends by the frequent oppor-

tunities you will have to 'rejoice with them that do rejoice.'

Nay, such virtuous sadness is not without its satisfaction:

'For tender sorrow has her pleasure too,

'Pleasures which prosp'rous dulness never
knew.'

And your tears will be converted into pearls, which will at once adorn and dignify you.

It may seem strange, after enlarging upon such noble and substantial good qualities, to mention politeness as an auxiliary to virtue and happiness; yet, certain it is, that nothing tends more to cherish and cultivate kindness and good-will, than an habitual politeness; it softens the manners, corrects the conduct, and, by laying a restraint upon that blunt manner of acting and speaking, too frequent among familiar friends, cuts off a thousand little occa-

sions of offence, and superinduces a habit of humanity and kindness.

For want of this, people not naturally ill-natured, are yet continually giving pain and disgust, for every man feels that he does not like to have coarse jokes, blunt truths, or troublesome freedoms used to himself, though his delicacy does not restrain him from using them to others; and, indeed, to casual observers, nothing can be more disagreeable, than to see people behave with clownish roughness to each other, only because they are the most near and intimate friends in the world: as on the other hand, how delightful it is to see a family of near relations, though entirely free from restraint and ceremony, yet behaving to each other with constant civility and complaisance; not neglecting an attention to common modes of life, the performance of trifling good offices, but affectionate without art, and polite without pains.

MARY.

Indeed, Madam, your advice makes me acquainted with my own conduct. I fear I have often been remiss in little attentions to my brothers and sisters, which I should have been ashamed to be wanting in, to any body else.

MAMMA.

My dear, understand me. There are certain ceremonials, that it may be necessary to observe to strangers, which would have too formal an air in our own family; but there are a thousand delicate civilities, which contribute to the convenience of a friend, shew that you are not unmindful of them, and produce a reciprocation of kindness and regard. These, like gay flowers, in the midst of cultivated fields, enliven and beautify the more serious and solid employments of domestic life.

But the clock reminds me, that I have but a short time to dress, and I should

very much offend against my own maxim, if I suffered myself to go down to dinner in a slovenly or negligent garb; for it would seem as if I had no solicitude to be pleasing in the eyes of my family: therefore be so good as to ring my bell.

FIFTH DAY'S CONVERSATION.

I N D U S T R Y.

MAMMA and MARY, as just returned from
a visit.

MARY.

I WONDER what is the reason that
Miss *Eliza Young* never appears as her
sister does !

She seems to have as good health, her
Mamma is quite as kind to one, as to
the other, and her grandmother and aunts
make her as many presents, and take her
out as much as they do her sister, yet
Miss *Young* appears always cheerful and
pleased; and Miss *Eliza* is generally un-
comfortable, low-spirited, and discontented.

MAMMA.

I believe the true reason why Miss *Eliza* is not happy, is, that she is very idle and indolent.

Miss *Young* is always employed in something improving or useful, she has, therefore, a constant fund of entertainment and satisfaction, the variety and judicious choice of her employments afford her amusement; and consciousness that she is properly employed, supplies her with a superior pleasure.

Miss *Eliza*, on the contrary, suffers day after day to pass, without being able to produce one useful thing that she has done; as her mind has no exercise, it can have neither health nor vigour; all is languor and lassitude, what, you may remember, Miss *Talbot* calls, 'the rust of unused faculties.'

All those sources of pleasure, which are open to the diligent and persevering, are

shut to her; and in the midst of youth, health, and riches, she is continually fretful, dispirited, and dissatisfied.

Industry, my dear child, is absolutely necessary to happiness. God, who mercifully connects our duty and happiness, has done so, particularly in this, and the same means by which we become beneficial to others, make us also comfortable to ourselves: as on the other hand, if the idle person is a dead weight to society, he is no less a burden to himself. Employment alone can make us cheerful and satisfied.

MARY.

I thought, Mamma, industry was more particularly the virtue of the poor; and that persons in a higher station were exempted from so strict an attention to the manner of spending their time.

MAMMA.

There are, *Mary*, employments of very different kinds; and suitable to very different stations; but employment of some kind is the duty of every one.

I do not mean only to recommend that kind of business which is particularly understood by the phrase, *work*; for though that certainly ought not to be overlooked by a young lady, so neither ought it to engross all her time. But what I would enforce upon you, with every power of persuasion I have, is never to be idle.

To have always some rational occupation, is as much the duty of the rich as the poor; nor can there be a more uncomfortable, or contemptible creature, than one who saunters and whiles away the day in listless indolence.

Both mind and body were intended by that God who created them, for employment; and no one can act counter to the will of God, and be happy.

Idleness is, indeed, so unsuitable to our nature, that all our faculties languish under it.

You would think it a very severe punishment to be confined within the precincts

of a prison. But this is a sentence, which the idle man voluntarily inflicts upon himself; if to idleness, laziness be added, he often allows his body no larger a range, his mind, at least, is always confined in narrow limits, without exercise, without variety, without pleasures to entertain it, or any comforts to refresh it.

To him the book of nature is shut.

‘Fair knowledge to his eyes her ample page,
‘Rich with the spoils of time, does ne’er unfold.’

He rises without an object to pursue, or hope of the day being made glad, by any praise-worthy performance: and sinks at night to a rest, which is not made sweet by any self-approving recollection. The lamentation that *Titus* once made, ‘I have lost a day!’ he may appropriate always; and as idleness makes a man thus uneasy and wearisome to himself, it makes him likewise insipid and insignificant to his acquaintance. Tasteless to himself, he has

no arts, by which he may become pleasing to others; ill-supplied as his mind is, he can furnish out no entertainment to his guests; he is tiresome to society, yet solitude is death to him; without any fund of comfort in his own breast, he is compelled, as *Seed* says, ‘to beg his daily happiness;’ but often finds people as little disposed to attend to him, as they are to the beggar of another class, whose laziness prompts him to solicit an alms, because he will not be at the pains to procure food for himself by labour.

MARY.

You would make one out of love with idleness.

MAMMA.

I shall rejoice to do so; and, I hope, win you to a love of industry, application, and activity, by representing the pleasures and comforts they bring with them.

We love that which leads us to the accomplishment of our wishes; this, industry,

humanly speaking, does. There are few things which are denied to resolute industry and perseverance.

‘The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath not.’

How poor is it to say, ‘I wish I had this advantage: I wish I was informed on such a subject: I wish I had executed such a work’ when nothing is wanting to the obtaining our wish, but our own efforts and diligence.

Industry, then, bestows the pleasure, which every one must feel, in seeing his work prosper and improve under his hands; of seeing that, which he hath undertaken to do, grow up into something useful or ornamental.

You never, I dare say, finished any piece of work, without feeling glad that it was done: I do not mean glad that the trouble was over; but pleased that the thing was performed.

The more regularly industrious you are, the more of this kind of pleasure you will feel; a calm and satisfied pleasure, arising from the thought, that you have done rightly, that all is going on well, and every different task you have to do will be performed in its proper time and place, composedly and thoroughly.

The industry and application of the mind will be continually opening to you bright and enchanting prospects; still presenting something new and delightful to you, which will amply repay your diligence and assiduity, gratify the most laudable curiosity, and fill every vacancy in your thoughts with the richest treasures: treasures, which the more they are reviewed, the more will their value increase.

MARY.

I often wish to do a great deal more than I find time to do.

MAMMA.

You will be sure of doing a great deal, if you are never unemployed; but you are

apt to lose a great part of the day, while you are waiting for an opportunity to do this or that particular thing.

It has been observed, I think by Lord Chesterfield, that the minutes and *quart d'heures* which we idle away, while we are waiting for a carriage, expecting a summons to dinner, or the like, would suffice for acquiring some useful science, or performing some work of consequence.

It is not the sudden effort that overcomes difficulties, and makes a progress.

The Allegory I have somewhere seen of the effect of time upon paintings, may, with very little alteration be applied to industry.

Although the exertion of every single moment produces nothing distinguishing; yet by regular perseverance, the effect becomes beautiful and striking.

The fine and laborious productions, which you have sometimes seen in needle-work, drawing, or other things, shew you what may be done; and, though you may not wish to exert your efforts exactly in the same way, it evinces the possibility of making a progress in any thing you may chuse to apply to.

How easy to assort and vary your occupations, so as to prevent any of them from becoming tedious to you; or if at any time you should feel a little reluctance to do what you are convinced you ought to do, you will be abundantly rewarded for that little pain, by the pleasure you will feel at having got the better of yourself, and persevering in what you knew was right.

MARY.

But is not relaxation sometimes necessary?

MAMMA.

The very change of your employments will be relaxation; especially if you teach

yourself to take pleasure in some particular ones.

You know you have formerly, when your morning business has been done, gone to work upon your doll's things, by way of amusement, in the same manner would I wish you to do now, with your drawing, fancy works, lighter kind of reading, and so on. But I cannot think it necessary to be ever quite idle.

I do not mean, that I would not sometimes have you lay down your book, to *think*. 'More is got by thinking an hour, than by reading a year.' But then take care that you do think; not suffer your thoughts to stand still, or ramble to trifles; and that, when you are sent out to gather fruit, you do not divert yourself with picking daisies.

MARY.

I often think over my books when I am walking; you do not, I am sure, account it idle to walk, for you often bid me go and take a walk.

MAMMA.

Certainly not; to walk out is absolutely necessary to secure health, and to refresh your spirits; and may be highly useful, as well as delightful, if we keep our minds open to the beauties of nature, and to all that variety of wonders, which the works of God offer to our view; but I should call it idle, if you were to saunter away your morning in the fields, or in the garden, instead of settling to more necessary business, and to such employments as are more particularly requisite for your age and situation. Walking is so far from being an idle way of spending your time, that it is, perhaps, a necessary duty; because, as I said before, it promotes the health of your body, and the cheerfulness of your mind. I do not even condemn the gaiety of sportive play; it may conduce to the same purposes, and be sometimes a mean of promoting good-will and kindness among little societies. But to enjoy such relaxations, they must be under due regulations; downright idleness can ne-

ver be excused, nor can it contribute to your pleasure or comfort.

I call *downright idleness*, lounging about from one room to another, or doing some frivolous thing, which can never answer any useful purpose; merely to loiter away the time.

Nor is idleness only shown in doing nothing; it is frequently discovered in the manner in which you set about your proper business: there is an indolent, unmeaning way of working, reading, and so on, which carries its own punishment with it; because it retards your progress in all your improvements and performances; and after many hours, perhaps spent with your work or book in your hand, little is gained; for the eyes and attention were continually wandering after some trifle or other, or like a true idler, fixed on nothing at all.

MARY.

I hope you think I spend my time to more advantage.

MAMMA.

I am fure you will experience the comforts of it.

In common life, the conveniences of industry, activity, and regularity, which last is generally their attendant, are innumerable.

There are few who move in so high a sphere, as to have all the inconveniences of their remissness and negligence obviated by the diligence of others; in your situation, and that of the generality of young persons, a great deal must depend upon your own care and regularity; laziness or forgetfulness in little matters, frequently indulged, will deduct much from the pleasure and enjoyment of your life, produce a thousand petty perplexities, and often make those uncomfortable and displeased, whom you most wish to oblige and gratify.

There are some young persons, who, when they are called upon to go out, never have

any thing in readiness; their indolence prompts them to neglect that which they have not immediate occasion for; and where the occasion does come, they are all in confusion, need all the house to wait upon them, and after detaining their friends for an hour, and hurrying their spirits, they set out without any thing about them being properly adjusted; when a quarter of the trouble they have had, would have served in a cooler moment, to put every thing in order.

Have you never experienced something of the same kind, *Mary*?

MARY.

I hope at least, I shall not again. I have been trying lately to portion out my time, that all my busineses may be done in their proper places, and then, if I have an hour or two left, I may count them for my own. I do not mean to idle, but to employ them as I like best.

MAMMA.

You are very good, and you will find that a judicious distribution of your time, will greatly facilitate your progress, and enable you to profit much more by what you read and learn, than if your business were performed at random; by which means your employment might often be so unskilfully jumbled, as that no part of your studies would be so properly remembered and understood as they ought to be.

I must leave you now.

SIXTH DAY'S CONVERSATION.

M O D E R A T I O N.

MAMMA and MARY.

MARY.

I THINK Miss *Wild* must have been very happy at the play; she was so eager and delighted about gaity.

MAMMA.

I cannot help differing from you; for I think if her spirits had been more composed, and her joy less tumultuous, that she would have had ten times as much enjoyment of the evening.

Her anxiety while the scheme was doubtful, and transport afterward, had flurried her so, that she was half in a fever; her voice, her step, her look, all showed hurry and perturbation; and though she felt so

highly gratified, at having obtained her wish, yet her mind was too much agitated to be in a happy state at that time, not well qualified to taste all the pleasure she expected, and her spirits afterward were probably fatigued and exhausted.

We are often very earnest in pursuit of a variety of pleasures, as the means of happiness, and disregard that, without which happiness cannot possibly be enjoyed—Moderation.

In the coarser kinds of pleasure, the fatal consequences of intemperance are well known, and generally acknowledged; and the glutton, and the wine-bibber scarcely pretend to excuse their excesses, while they are pursuing them. But there is an intemperance of a more delicate kind, which, though it may wear a less unlovely form, is scarcely less dangerous to reason, to happiness, and frequently to health. Any pleasure, however innocent, or engaging in its nature, if indulged to excess, becomes a vice.

Moderation alone can connect happiness with pleasure, secure our delight beyond the present moment, and preserve us in such a temper of mind as shall qualify us for enjoyment.

‘Awe nature’s tumults, and chastise her joys,

‘Lest while we clasp, we kill them.’

Moderation, I know, is a virtue of so grave an appearance, that young persons are apt to dismiss her to the society of their seniors; for which, by her garb and aspect, she seems better fitted: but if you would venture to cultivate an acquaintance with her, you would find her a most desirable companion; she will never restrain you from any real pleasure, but will persuade you to move so slowly towards the captivating object, that you may be able to discern whether or not it be good, and a thing to be desired to make you happy; she would give you time to discover its evils and inconveniences, if it have any; or leisure

to examine and enjoy its beauties and delights.

There is nothing, my dear *Mary*, through the whole course of your life, more requisite to keep you virtuous, respectable, and easy, than moderation. Nothing human can bear to be carried to excess, not even our virtues; they may degenerate into vices, or weakneses, if not kept within proper bounds, and our blessings, if not seasoned with moderation, may be corrupted into evils.

I have said before, that happiness does not depend so much on any particular attainment, as upon the general temper of the mind; but that serene and satisfied temper of mind which is most favourable to happiness, is lost in the ardent pursuit of casual gratifications.

Excessive eagerness after pleasure or amusement, wastes our spirits, makes us un-

settled, and unfit to relish any of the more common enjoyments of life, or to perform rightly the common duties of it. In this situation, the heart is ill at ease, and unfit to enter coolly and cheerfully into itself, or to answer all the questions which reason or religion might ask; much less can it boldly present its schemes before them, unfold its projects, and confess that it is engrossed by vanity and trifles, when they demand its time and affection for better purposes. The most essential requisite to happiness, is self-approbation: while any doubts remain about us, when we cannot lay our hands upon our hearts, and say faithfully, I trust I am doing right, we know not happiness.

MARY.

That is very true; and I hope I shall never covet pleasure so much, as to sacrifice my duty to it, or forfeit the approbation of my own conscience; but it is natural for young persons to engage warmly in any thing that delights them.

MAMMA.

It may be natural; but you are to remember, my dear, that our nature is not now in its perfection, and that following what is natural, is not always following what is right. However, I do not profess myself a friend to stoical frigidity; but the vehemence some young people show in the pursuit of pleasure, is not the warmth of health, but the heat of a fever; and proves destructive to that very enjoyment for which they are so anxious. If 'pleasure is embraced with too much ardour, it will perish in your grasp.'

MARY.

You remind me of the Boy and the Butterfly in *Dodsley's Fables*.

MAMMA.

I meant so to do; the allegory may be trifling; but the moral is excellent.

When the mind has been hurried and disordered, and the expectation extravagantly

raised, we leave to the objects of our wishes but little power to delight us; our thoughts have been so pre-occupied with their charms, that they cannot go beyond what our imaginations have told us of them: but how generally do they fall short of it, and what a dissatisfaction and void do they leave in the heart, which had emptied itself of nobler guests to receive them.

Moderation, on the other hand, gives the highest relish to every innocent pleasure; he who keeps his faculties composed and calm, is in the best disposition to perceive and taste the charms of every entertainment that can be offered him. As he has indulged no romantic expectations, he will not be liable to disappointment; every little circumstance that is amusing or pleasurable, will be welcome to him; his mind is in a disposition to be pleased; pleased with every little gratification around him; pleased with mankind; pleased with himself; and

he tastes a thousand delicate joys, which do not enter into the idea of the selfish and zealous votary of pleasure.

I saw by accident in the *Spectator*, the other day, some observations on this subject, which are so judicious and apposite, that I could not forbear transcribing them for you; though they are so much superior to any thing I can say, that they will make what I have to offer appear to great disadvantage.

‘He that is moderate in his wishes from reason and choice, and not resigned from sourness, distaste, or disappointment, doubles all the pleasures of life. The air, the season, a sunshiny day, or a fair prospect, are circumstances of happiness; and that which he enjoys in common with all the world, by his exemption from the enchantments by which all the world are bewitched, are to him uncommon benefits, and new acquisitions.’

Moderation; you see then, my dear, is so far from abating your enjoyments, that they make every common gratification tasteful; but the uncertainty of every thing in this world, is another persuasive to moderation in our pursuits and attachments.

If our happiness be fixed on the world, with the fashion of the world it will pass away.

If you lean upon an unstable reed, as it gives way, you must fall with it.

Moderation, as it enables us to enjoy the gratifications that are offered us, prepares us to bear their absence; as they have never excited a vehement desire, they will never be the subject of excessive lamentations.

The moderate man is open to all those arguments from religion and philosophy, which may comfort him under temporal

losses; he is ready to coincide with the wise schemes of Providence, by resigning that which God does not see convenient for him; and to imitate angels in their best virtue,—obedience to the will of God.

SEVENTH DAY'S CONVERSATION.

P R U D E N C E.

MAMMA *and* MARY.

MAMMA.

WELL, my dear *Mary*, are you not almost tired of our grave morning lectures?

MARY.

I should be alarmed for myself, my dear Mamma, if I could ever be tired of receiving good advice and instruction; especially from you.

MAMMA.

That is handsomely said, my dear, and it gives great reason to hope, that you will not only hear it, but attend to it, and form your conduct by it. A life that is spent without rule, and without a plan, cannot be a happy one; persons, who live in that manner, if they do right. they do it

almost without design; and I am afraid their doing evil, undesignedly too, will be but a slender excuse for them, when they ought to have considered and known the consequence of their actions.

I wished, as a Supplement to our yesterday's conversation, to say, that there is a quality which is nearly allied to Moderation, though it is not exactly the same; that is, Prudence, and a more useful quality young persons cannot have; it is the guardian of virtue and happiness.

How many persons, who have never once deliberately intended to do ill, have been condemned, despised, and distressed, only for want of prudence; nay, sometimes, only for want of prudence in some particular instance, which drew after it a train of consequences.

One particular action often influences the whole course of a man's circumstances, turns his affairs into a particular channel,

and determines his lot for life; it is of great consequence, then, to ‘ponder the path of our feet, that all our ways may be well established.’

Circumstances and events, which appear extremely distant, are so intertwined and mingled with each other, that when we once step out of the path of prudence and discretion, we know not whither we shall be led.

MARY.

If I am so happy as to have your directions for all my conduct, I shall be in little danger of suffering by imprudence.

MAMMA.

I am pleased, that you place so much confidence in me, but my advice cannot be always at hand; and indeed I should wish sometimes to see, that your acting properly, resulted from your own ‘sound judgment and discretion.’ In any thing of importance, I dare say, you would not chuse to act without my concurrence; but

there are many leffer occasions, in which though imprudence may not bring after it such serious consequences, yet it produces little vexations and perplexities, which break very much in upon happiness. That situation can never be pleasant, in which you have occasion to say, 'I wish I had not done this, or that;' I mean when there is a consciousness that the acting otherwise might have been more discreet.

The best rule, therefore, in great, as well as small matters, is, never to do that on which we cannot seriously bear our own judgment; not to follow the present inclination, when we have any suspicion that it would be more proper to do otherwise.

In our general conduct, prudence and discretion save us from a thousand mortifications and troubles that attend the inconsiderate man.

Some people have that giddy good-humour, which makes them ready to join any

party, to take a share in any conversation, or to acquiesce in any scheme; such persons, though they may sometimes be sought after, can never be esteemed, or respected, their opinion can never be decisive, their conduct can never be an example. They will be drawn into many difficulties and inconveniences, and often find reason to regret, that, at the expense of their judgment, they have followed their own inclinations, or complied with that of others.

Our own inclinations are very various, and the humours of others still more so; if, therefore, we do what we do not strictly approve, to indulge ourselves, or oblige others, our deviations from rectitude will be innumerable: and the dissatisfaction and uneasiness one feels upon such occasions, is a sufficient admonition to us not to act so. I never allowed myself an afternoon's amusement, when I knew I was neglecting something that required my attention; nor even exchanged one employment for another, less useful or necessary, without feeling so

dissatisfied and uncomfortable, as to lose the best part of the pleasures I proposed to myself.

Happiness and rectitude are so connected, that we cannot deviate, even in trifles, from what is right and proper, without incurring some degree of pain and punishment for such a deviation; and we are so ignorant and uncertain, with respect to every event and incident that may happen, that we have no security for our future peace and content, but to act always the right and prudent part.

The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities,—‘but a wounded spirit’—wounded with the reflection, that those infirmities are the effect of his own misconduct—‘who can bear?’

MARY.

But, Mamma, if people mean no harm—

MAMMA.

Alas! my dear, people may do a great deal of harm without *meaning* it; but the truth is, that a being, who is blessed with reason, should never act without a meaning.

If a light is held out to me, by which I might see round me, and I will walk with my eyes shut, and so run against a post, though I might not mean to break my nose, you will hardly think I deserved to be pitted for doing it.

A prudent person will consider what is likely to be the consequences of his actions; whether it might not be more wise and safe to do otherwise; and by that mean avoid bringing distresses upon himself and others, which are not the less felt because they were produced by inconsideration.

A prudent man has likewise the advantage of being always consistent; the same disposition which leads him not to enter upon

any action, or adopt any opinion, before he has thoroughly reflected upon it, will likewise incline him to perseverance and steadiness, when once his plans are formed; he will, therefore, always be found the same, unless when some weighty and important reason justifies a change, and will obtain that confidence and esteem which are never given to the capricious and inconsistent man; for who will depend upon him, who cannot depend upon himself? or what respect will be paid to the opinion or conduct of that man, who may adopt another opinion or conduct to-morrow?

MARY.

Dear Mamma, give me some rules for conducting myself with that prudence which you recommend.

MAMMA.

I have, my dear, advised you before, never to act without consideration; nor can my advice be better expressed, than in that well-known sentence:

‘Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss.’

It is not possible to enumerate all the occasions there may be for the exercise of prudence. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning one instance, in which it is particularly useful, because it is that, on which young and generous minds are least apt to attend to its decision, I mean in the choice of a friend.

Good young persons, open and sincere themselves, and not having learned by experience, that all are not so, are apt to be taken with the first appearance of amiable or virtuous qualities; they wait not to examine, whether all be intrinsic and uniform, but, having seen something fair and engaging, impute all the virtues and graces which they wish their new acquaintance to be possessed of, and their imagination completes the character: their time and their hearts are given up without reserve to this favourite, till a freer intimacy, and longer acquaintance, discover that they judged too

hastily ; they find the gay picture their fancy had drawn, is not like the original, and thus disappointed in their expectation, their friendship begins to decline ; it is well, indeed, if it be suffered quietly to expire, and if some unhappy circumstance do not change the flame of friendship, into that of resentment.

The picture, however, still dwells on their imagination ; nor is it long before a casual glance persuades them that they have found one who perfectly resembles it ; their arms are again opened, and they meet with the same success.

When this has happened several times, a young person grows ridiculous, her friendship and esteem become no longer valuable, when they are so easily removed or transferred ; and she obtains the character of being capricious and fickle, when, in reality, her fault has been indiscretion, in forming a friendship before she was thoroughly acquainted with the temper and qualities of her, on whom she conferred her regard.

Observe the wise man's rule: 'Be in peace with many; nevertheless, have but one counsellor of a thousand. If thou wouldst get a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him.'

Avoid the charge of levity, and the pain of disappointment, by making cautious advances towards an intimate friendship:

'Pause—ponder—sift—not eager in the choice,

'Nor jealous of the chosen—fixing—fix,

'Judge before friendship, then confide till death.'

If you are so happy as to find that rare treasure, a good faithful friend, one with whom you may go hand-in-hand in the paths of piety and virtue, let no whimsical doubts, no hasty prejudices, rob you of it; but then do not be proud of displaying your acquisition to the world; be content to keep the jewel for your own use, without ostentatiously producing it, lest you disgust those on whom you do not appear to set so high a price, and they be inclined either to depreciate its value, or to charge

you with affectation. And indeed, with respect to every blessing, or advantage you have, it is the part of prudence, 'to bear your faculties meekly,' and not to excite the envy of the world, by making a parade of your happiness or superiority. But we must not pass the whole morning in talking:—where is your book?

EIGHTH DAY'S CONVERSATION.

RELIGION.

MAMMA and MARY.

MAMMA.

MY dear *Mary*, I have been happy in seeing the affectionate attention you have given to my discourses; I hope you will not be unwilling to lend that attention to me a little longer. I have engaged the young ones elsewhere, that we might not be interrupted.

I have, till now, my child, purposely avoided enlarging upon the joys of religion and piety, because I wished, after we had considered all the subordinate means of happiness, to fix your attention upon that, as the great object on which your thoughts should delight to dwell, and from which

you should expect the purest, the most exalted, and the most permanent felicity.

All other things are only the probable means of happiness, secondary causes, by which we obtain some portion of that good which God has poured out on his creation; but *piety*, as it carries us directly to the throne of God, brings us at once to the great source of bliss, and enables us to satisfy those desires, which no created good can fill.

Piety shows us some part of *his* glory, in whose 'presence is fulness of joy,' and gives us some taste of those 'rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand for evermore.'

Formed 'after the image of him who created us,' and made to receive our happiness from him, we feel within us, hopes and fears, and wants, which nothing in this world can satisfy or relieve.

Our anxious and aspiring hearts ask a thousand questions, form a multitude of

wishes, and pant with a variety of terrors, which can receive satisfaction only, by a voice from the mercy seat.

When labouring with such perplexities, we inquire of the Lord, and say, Wherefore am I thus?

Piety will unfold to us the counsel of the Almighty, will resolve our doubts, will direct our hopes to that immortality which alone can satisfy them, and allay our apprehensions, by a sight of that cross on which our divine Redeemer triumphed over all our enemies, and took 'out of the way all that was against us, or contrary to us, nailing it to his cross.'—It will guide us to that 'anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast,' on which, amidst all the fluctuating events of this life, we may repose, and which will not be taken from us, till our vessel is safely lodged in the haven of eternal rest.

MARY.

I feel myself pleased, my dear Madam, with the representation you make, and ex-

cited as far as my years are capable of it, to the love of piety and devotion.

MAMMA.

If you sincerely wish to seek God, he who visited 'the child *Samuel*,' and accepted the praise of babes, will draw your heart to him; that Saviour, who embraced and blessed the little children, will love you, and come unto you, and make his abode with you. At an age of more experience and acquirements, you will be equally unable of yourself to serve God acceptably; it is his grace alone, which can direct your heart to the love of God; the flame of religion can only be kindled by a coal from the altar.

But, under the name of piety, I wish to comprehend much more than occasional acts of prayer, or exercises of meditation. Such piety as I would enforce, does not confine itself to a house of prayer, or a book of devotion, but knowing that God is every-where present, and directs every

event, seeks him in all places, and acknowledges him in all occurrences; she is delighted, indeed, to converse with God in solitude and privacy, but the presence of crouds does not make her forget him. Amidst pomp and splendor, amidst gait and greatness, her silent whisper is, 'whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee.'

Every circumstance of her life she refers to him, whom she confides in, as her protector, her benefactor, her friend.

Is she cheerful? is her mind attuned to notes of delight? Gratitude to Heaven mingles with her songs of joy, and she 'maketh melody in her heart to the Lord.'

Is she sad? are her spirits oppressed? Clouds of sorrow and distress hide not from her sight the loving kindness of the Lord, but in her 'heaviness she thinks upon God.'

Every action of common life she sanctifies into an act of religion, by offering it first to God, upon the altar of an honest and sincere heart.

Of this piety, the first and only sure foundation, is faith towards our Lord Jesus, and a deep dependance on the all-atoning merits of that sacrifice which the Saviour of men has offered unto God for you: for what else could give you so much confidence towards God, as should enable you to approach him as a father and a friend, to repose all your desires and wants upon him, and seek to him for counsel and security.

The more you learn to examine your own heart, the more you will find the deficiency of your best endeavours and purest performances, and the more you will see the necessity of having some better offering to present to God, in order to make him propitious to you. Trembling and forlorn must you ever have stood without the

tabernacle, if you had not obtained, 'boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus.'

Every present grace, and every future hope you receive from God, and if you are enabled to pursue such a course of piety as I have been describing, it is through his grace, though not so as to preclude your own cares and endeavours.

Of such a piety, my dear *Mary*, the joys are not to be described, experience only can acquaint you with them; and in order to make the blessed trial, you must learn to consider the world, not as distinct from, but subordinate to religion.

Many persons, who mean well, think they have done their duty, if, having consecrated a closet, having built a little chamber in the wall to their religion, they visit her there at stated times, pay her respectful homage, and then take their leave of her, till the next season of attendance, to

pursue the necessary employments, and, as they suppose, innocent amusements of life.

They even think it would be an affront to her, to make her their companion through all their course, nor could their worldly or frivolous occupations abide the sanctity of her presence; but this is not the deportment she chuses, she wishes to be used with less distance, and more attachment; to be treated like a friend, venerable indeed! but beloved; to be admitted into our domestic and social circles, to mix in our sober recreations, to be consulted in all our transactions with the world; she expects, indeed, that her presence should restrain all unbecoming levity, and check the risings of every unworthy passion, but she hopes that she is able to make abundant amends for such little sacrifices, and to 'put more gladness on the heart, than when corn, and wine, and oil increase.'

If you would be truly happy, and taste all the delight that religion is capable of conferring, you must make her your constant companion and chief counsellor, join in no fellowship, where she may not find a welcome, undertake no action which she has not sanctified with her approbation.

The Apostle's rule is, 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God;' and then, indeed, is your state happy, when you perform every action, not with a view to gratify a particular humour, but because it is your duty; because you hope it will be acceptable to God, and in some way or other coincide with the wise and gracious plans of his Providence.

That you may be able to do this readily and willingly, you cannot too much endeavour to impress upon your mind a conviction, that every command of God, every law of your holy religion, is founded in wisdom, truth, and mercy.

You will with more cheerfulness obey the directions of God, when you consider them not as arbitrary commands, but as salutary laws, given to secure your own happiness. 'Fear hath torment.' If you regard God as a despotic monarch, issuing out his injunctions, merely after 'the pleasure of his own will,' because he has power to enforce submission, you will be too apt to pay a reluctant obedience; you will be tempted to adjust too nicely the boundaries between sin and duty, and to try how nearly you can approach to that which is forbidden, without incurring the penalties of disobedience; but when you are convinced, that his precepts are those of an affectionate parent, who prescribes them because he knows they are good and profitable for you; when you acknowledge, in his laws, the wisdom of an omniscient legislator, whose commandments are pure, just, and holy; how ready ought to be your compliance. For would you confess to yourself, that you are unwilling to be guided by perfect rectitude, and to consult your own truest happiness.

I am very far from meaning, that you should presumptuously inquire into the ways of God, or should hesitate in your obedience to his law, because the particular reason of it may not be obvious to you; but since he himself condescends to appeal to his people, and to call upon them to judge ‘whether his ways be not equal,’ he will not be offended at a pious and humble study of his laws, in order to convince ourselves, by the wisdom, sanctity, and justice, which we shall so often behold beaming forth in them, that every injunction is equally good, is rich with the same treasures, though their brightness is less visible to us.

These inquiries, indeed, and this study, cannot take place in the tumult and bustle of the world; and it is one of the greatest advantages of the calm and temperate course of life I have been recommending to you, that it leaves the thoughts and heart at liberty to acquaint ourselves with God.

In a more advanced age, care and engagements may press upon us, and the very duties of the station to which God hath called us, if we are not careful, may estrange him from our thoughts.

But young persons are without excuse, if they are entangled in this world; they voluntarily cast themselves into that net, into which others are unwarily drawn, and when the nature of their situation would allow them time for reflection, whirl themselves round till they are giddy.

MARY.

I have often heard it said, that youth was the season for gaiety and pleasure, and that *then* giddiness was excusable.

MAMMA.

Those who allow such great privileges to youth, ought to allow at least as much to childhood; yet it is generally thought proper that children should be within some limits, and that some restraint should be put upon their levity and sportiveness, that they

may be taught such knowledge and qualifications, as it is supposed will be useful to them in their future life.

Youth, likewise, is a season of preparation, a preparation for 'a long life, even for ever and ever.' It is during youth, that you must learn those lessons which shall make you 'wise unto salvation.' If at that time, when your best, and most vigorous faculties may be exercised in this great work, you neglect to begin, under pretence that youth is the season for play, a thousand dreadful contingencies may prevent your ever perfecting it.

It is to be lamented, that the world, and an intimate connection with the objects about us, teach us to consider our part as finished, and our scene of action closed by death. Death is only a point in our existence, a stage in our journey, at which we lay down to rest, but shall find, when we awake, our situation greatly affected by the progress we have made, and the precautions we have used before.

There is a quotation in the *Guardian* on this subject, so beautiful and animating, that I must desire you to learn it by heart:

‘It is unworthy a Christian philosopher to let any thing here below stand in the least competition with his duty; in vain is reason fortified by faith, if it produce in our practice no greater effects than what reason wrought on mere man.

‘I condemn, in dependance on the support of Heaven I speak it, I condemn all which the generality of mankind call great and glorious. I will no longer think or act as a mortal, but consider myself as a being that commenced at my birth, and is to endure to all eternity. The accident of death will not end, but improve my being; I will think of myself, and provide for myself, as an immortal; and I will do nothing now, which I do not believe I shall approve a thousand years hence.’

Govern yourself, my dear girl, by this best wisdom, so shall you be free from all those doubts, distrusts, and self-reproaches, which damp the pleasures of the inconsiderate and vicious, and receive from every innocent pleasure an enjoyment, which can be tasted only, when 'the Lord himself prepares our table.'

NINTH DAY'S CONVERSATION.

THE FOREGOING ADVICE ENFORCED.

MAMMA *and* MARY.

MAMMA.

HAVE you, my dear *Mary*, learned the passage in the *Guardian*, which I recommended to you?

MARY.

I have, Madam; and I am endeavouring to recollect as much as I can of the discourses you have lately been so kind as to hold with me.

MAMMA.

I wish to spare your memory that trouble, and have therefore committed to writing our late conversations; because I thought it would be both useful and pleasant to you to review them at leisure.

On looking over them, I find I have said some things, which may be rather above your comprehension at present, but my subjects led me on; and, besides, as the uncertainty of life makes it impossible for me to know how long I may be lent to you, I wish to store your mind with such principles and instructions as may be useful to you, when I shall no longer be permitted to watch over your conduct; and if you should ever, in any way, be separated from me, I hope you will consider this little book, as your parent and friend, still talking with you, and still pointing to you the path of happiness.

I might, my dear, certainly have put into your hands, many books, some particularly calculated for young persons, where you would find advice much superior to mine, or such advice expressed in a superior manner; but they must all want a weight and recommendation, which, I trust, your affection will give to this—that of being

dictated by the zeal and affection of a parent, ardently anxious for your present and future felicity.

If you do not discover in these writings the beams of genius, you will at least perceive the glowings of maternal love; and your confidence in me will induce you to follow those counsels on which I have assured you, so much depends.

I might have added more to the advice I have given you already, and I hope still to be able to do so; but if you attend to the few counsels contained in this book, you will make a very considerable progress towards true happiness.

MARY.

I am sure it shall be my constant endeavour: but, Mamma, we see very few people govern themselves by such rules.

MAMMA.

It is true, my dear; and we see very few people enjoy so much happiness, as from circumstances and situation they might. But because many miss this pearl of great price, it is not for that reason the less worth seeking after.

In the lottery, you know, great prizes become the property of but a few; but that does not hinder you from wishing to become a candidate for them, though the attainment depends on what is usually called chance.

The inestimable prize of happiness has this advantage, that the attainment of it is in your own power: I do not mean, that you can be the author of your own happiness. Happiness is the gift of God, and you cannot wrest it out of his hands; but that treasure which we cannot seize,

he who hath the key of the house of *David* has procured us admission to; it is the voice of the Son of God, which says, 'Ask and you shall receive.'

If you, through Christ, sincerely seek God, and apply to him for grace and protection, he will give you those dispositions and virtues to which, in the order of his providence, he has annexed peace and comfort, and as much happiness as can be enjoyed in this world; a happiness which is often heightened into rapture, by the prospect of joy, unmixed and inexpressible, in the next.

This present happiness, this future joy, my dear child, is what I covet for you; and my seeing so many fall short of it, appears so far from being a reason not to animate you towards the attainment of it, that it is a motive with me to urge you

more earnestly, and to persuade you more forcibly to endeavour after it.

If you should be so unhappy as to fail of it, your unfelicity will not be lessened by the number of companions which you may have in misery; besides, of those numbers, the errors may have many alleviations, which yours would not have.

To some, the right way may never have been shown; and others may have been but seldom invited to walk in it.

You have had it continually pointed out to you, and have heard many a friendly voice say, 'This is the way, walk you in it.'

If, therefore, you wilfully go out of the road, you have not those mitigations of your fault, which others have, who have not been blessed with such advantages as

you have. Improve those advantages to your present and future comfort; and may He, from whom every good gift cometh, grant, that you may both perceive and know what things you ought to do, and also give you grace and strength faithfully to fulfil the same.

THE END.

Lately Published,

MAY DAY; or, Anecdotes of Miss Lydia Lively.
Intended to improve and amuse the rising Generation. Price 1s.

MIDSUMMER HOLYDAYS; or, a Long Story. Price 1s.

LA BAGATELLE. Intended to introduce Children of three or four Years old to some Knowledge of the French Language. 2 Vols. Price 2s.

HISTOIRE de plusieurs petits Garçon & petites Filles, pour l'Amusement de tous les bons Enfans Agés de quatre ou cinq Ans. Price 6d.

