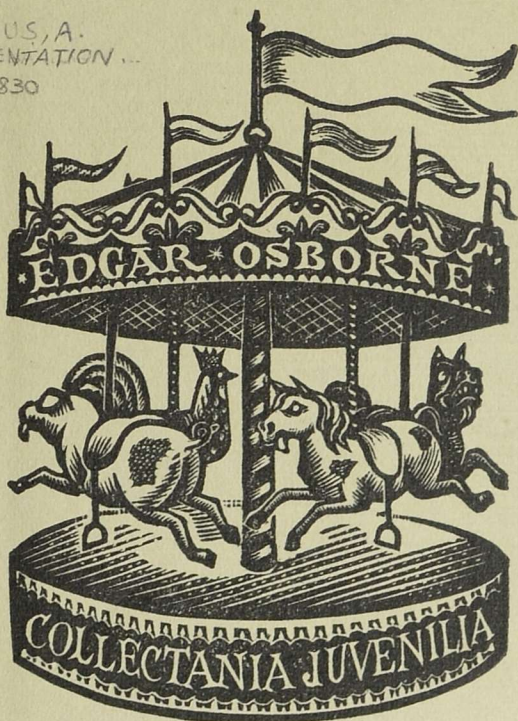




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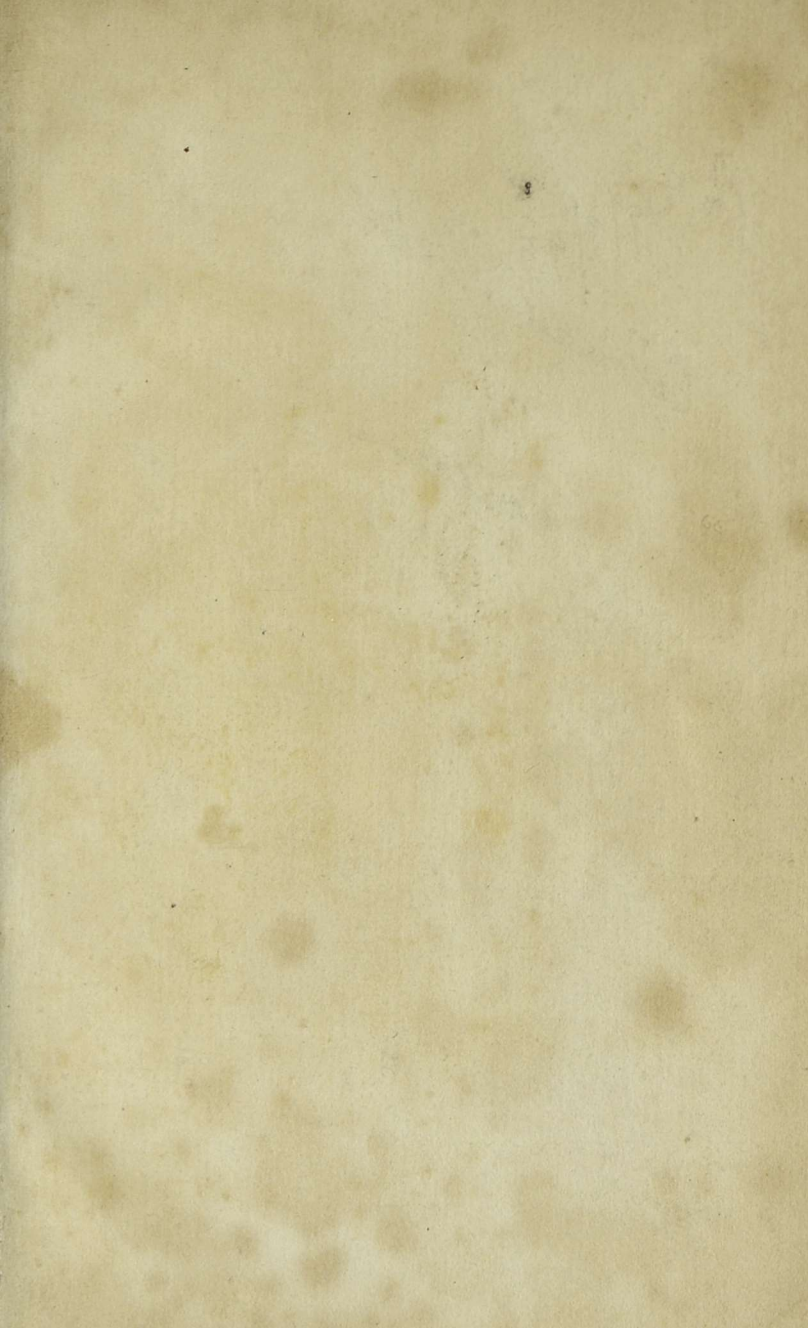
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"I came to return you thanks ma'am," said Mr<sup>s</sup> Dawson, curts'ying to Miss Colville; "your kind recommendation has saved me and mine from ruin."

*see Vol. I page 31.*



OSTENTATION

*Envy*

AND

*Modesty*

LIBERALITY:

A TALE.

BY ARABELLA ARGUS,

AUTHOR OF "THE JUVENILE SPECTATOR."

---

There is in Virtue sure a hidden charm,  
To force esteem, and Envy to disarm.

*Duchess of Devonshire to Fenelon.*

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# OSTENTATION AND LIBERALITY.

A TALE.

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“WELL, I have seen your paragon of excellence,” said Frances Austen; “and I know you will say I am prejudiced: but indeed, my dear Miss Colville, I do not think so much of her.”

“So much, and so little, are relative terms,” replied Miss Colville, smiling, “and, when applied to character, often mislead us. But, who is this wonder? I do not recollect such a being in my small circle of friends.”

“Why, who could it be but Lady Jane?” returned Frances: “you will not understand me; and I am certain, before I say another word, you will think I am prejudiced.”

“Not unless I find you so,” said



Miss Colville; “yet allow me to observe, my dear, that the mind is not at all times equally open for the reception of the most obvious truths; as such, suppose we defer this subject till to-morrow?”

“It is not yet eight o’clock,” observed Frances; “and I thought you would like to hear of Lady Jane.”

“I can have no objection to hear of Lady Jane’s having had the pleasure of meeting you at her aunt’s,” returned Miss Colville: “you know it has been my wish that you should see her; not because she was a ‘paragon of excellence;’ but simply, because I was persuaded that such an unaffected and amiable girl was a desirable acquaintance for you.”

“Now you are laughing,” said Frances, twisting her bonnet-strings as she spoke: “could such a learned lady think it pleasure to meet me? And indeed, my dear Miss Colville, though I dare say Lady Jane

was not affected when you knew her, I can assure you she is very much so now."

"Indeed! then I do not wonder you should not like her so much," said Miss Colville; "for affectation is not more ridiculous than disfiguring."

"We agree in that, at least," quickly observed Frances; "and, as Lady Jane is not at all pretty, of course, one sees it more. You understand me?"

"Not exactly," returned Miss Colville; "but, when you have explained how this unfortunate change in my former pupil shews itself, I shall perhaps catch your meaning."

"Oh!" said Frances, "I could not possibly do that; you would say I was ill-natured, or too observant."

"No, I should not," returned Miss Colville; "on the contrary, my dear, it is only by close observation such discoveries are made. You perhaps have a talent for this sort of analysis; and, as I do not think you would meditate

the indulgence of ill-nature, I rather expect information from your detail."

Frances looked disconcerted; but that frowardness, which it is so difficult to repress when the mind has taken a wrong bias, urged her on; and with some vehemence she observed, "Then *you* do not call it affectation, to blush, and deny that she plays well upon the piano, when all the time she knows she does? *I* call it great affectation."

"I see nothing in this," said Miss Colville, "but the usage of the world; a practice which, unlike many to which we conform, is perfectly consistent with humility. Let me ask you, my dear child, what would you say, had Lady Jane received these praises as a matter of course; and by her silence assented to their purport: what would you say?"

"That she was very vain, to be sure," replied Frances.

"Then, what should be done?" in-



quired Miss Colville: "I am persuaded she did not say much upon these subjects."

"Not a great deal," said Frances; "and I suppose she thought she must pay Charlotte Percival a compliment in return, for she praised her performance extravagantly."

"Then," said Miss Colville, "Miss Percival is not a good performer: Lady Jane was civil at the expense of truth?"

"Indeed," returned Frances, "I think Charlotte plays delightfully for her age; but I am sure Lady Jane could not think so much of it."

"Why not?" inquired Miss Colville. "Do you draw this conclusion from your own idea of Lady Jane's superior talent for music; or do you possess the power of knowing people's thoughts?"

"I am sure you know what I would say," retorted Frances; "only you will not: I never knew you so teasing."

“It would be difficult to comprehend your meaning,” said Miss Colville; “but I am sorry to add, that you have afforded me more than one reason for believing that you are prejudiced against an entire stranger; and” —

“My dear Miss Colville,” interrupted Frances, with an increased energy of manner, “why do you judge so hastily? Lady Jane must be altered, very much altered; for she is not only affected, but ostentatious, and full of what she does, and how she spends her pocket-money: you never heard any thing so pompous in your life. Only listen to me, and then you will allow I am right.”

“I will hear your little sketch tomorrow, my dear,” returned Miss Colville; “it is now late: retire, Frances, with the assurance that I am disposed to be impartial; and seriously anxious that my former, as well as my

present pupil, may pass through this projected scrutiny with credit."

Frances obeyed, half glad to escape an elucidation that was becoming more intricate every moment. She did not resign the contest altogether; no, she believed she possessed facts that would bear out her position; and she was but too well aware, that the warmth of her manner had somewhat embarrassed her delineation. To-morrow she should be more equal to the task; and Miss Colville, who had (as she thought) teased her, might perhaps be better disposed to listen to her statement.

The morrow arrived. Frances had had time to reflect: many of the points on which she could have descanted with perfect ease, now seemed trivial: in fact, she regretted having fixed a period for a discussion she would most willingly have absolved herself from, had it been possible: but it would look as if she really was prejudiced; and she was sure that she was



not. Why should she feel prejudiced, or wish to decry the merits of Lady Jane? it was quite ridiculous. Thus self-assured, she descended to the breakfast-room.

Miss Colville saw in the countenance of Frances what was passing in her mind. She was too fond of her charge, to suffer so fair an opportunity of amending her character to be lost. When they sat down to breakfast, she requested Frances to give her the promised sketch.

“O! you mean what I think of Lady Jane,” said Frances. “Well, you know I told you how she behaved when every body praised her performance. Besides, Mrs. Percival begged her to dance a *pas seul*: she said she would rather join in a *quadrille*; but, after some time, she was persuaded, and did dance alone; of course, all the company said fine things, and paid her compliments.”

“But, why of course, my dear?” asked Miss Colville; “no one was compelled to do more than thank her for being obliging.”

“I suppose they thought she danced better than other girls,” returned Frances.

“Did you think so?” inquired Miss Colville.

“I am no judge of dancing,” replied Frances.

“Perhaps you only know when people dance ill,” said Miss Colville: “but pray proceed.”

“We all danced a quadrille after,” continued Frances; “and *she* would dance with such a little girl, it was quite ridiculous; and when Mrs. Percival sent Emma to bed, Lady Jane said she would take her to the nurse; and what do you think was her reason?”

“I cannot guess,” replied Miss Colville; “unless it was from her

fondness for children ; I know she always enjoyed being with young folks.”

“That was not her motive,” returned Frances ;” for I was determined to know why she went ; so I asked Charlotte if I might not go too ? she said yes ; and we went together. Well, the nursery-maid was so glad to see her ladyship, and made her such fine curtsies ; and so then Charlotte said, ‘ See, Jane, Margaret has almost finished your gown.’ ‘ What ! is this for you ?’ said I : for it was only a sprigged calico ; and Charlotte said, ‘ it was one Lady Jane had given to Emma’s nurse.’ So it was clear to me she took Emma up stairs that the nurse might thank her.”

“I do not agree with you, my dear,” said Miss Colville. “Have you any thing more to say ?”

“Yes, indeed I have,” replied Frances ; “for, when we went down stairs, most of the company had left ; so we three, that is, Lady Jane, Char-



lotte, and myself, sat in a corner. I to'd Charlotte to ask her cousin what was her allowance. Charlotte knew; and said it was a pound a-month, and that she bought her own gloves out of it. I did not believe Charlotte could be right; for you know I have more than that, yet I could not afford to buy gloves out of my allowance. Lady Jane heard us, laughed, and said Charlotte was right. So then we talked about spending money; and I said I hoped I never should have to buy my own gloves; for I hated to be limited in such things, and I thought a soiled glove looked vulgar. Charlotte said she had begun to find her own gloves the last quarter, and she liked it much; 'and I do as you advised me Jane,' said she; 'I mend them once a-week; and my mamma says I am much neater since I have had the management of them myself.'—'I thought you would like it,' said Lady Jane; and I hope you go on with the

account-book.'—So then I found that Lady Jane kept an account of all she expends, and that Charlotte imitates her. Now, is not this very ostentatious?"

"It only proves what I have often told you," replied Miss Colville, "that Lady Jane always judged well: you please, but you do not surprise me, by the intimation of her continuing to observe those habits of order which enable their possessor to follow the impulses of her generosity."

"O! it is of no use talking to you," said Frances; "I knew you would defend her: but I am certain, *if you had* seen her manner, you would think very differently; and I am sure you have told me it was wrong to make presents to servants."

"Think again, my dear," returned Miss Colville; "you mistake the matter altogether. I have said to you, it was a pity when young ladies found it necessary to compro-

mise with their servants ; and, by making useless presents to them, bribe them to overlook the impatience and unkindness of those whom it ought to be their pleasure to serve.”

Frances bit her lips, and was silent. The allusion lost none of its force, as she secretly contrasted the manners of the person she wished to depreciate, with her own unbridled disposition.

At this moment a servant brought in a note : it was addressed to Miss Austen.

“ My aunt Nixon will call at three o’clock, and take me to the Bazaar, if you have no objection ;” said Frances, looking doubtingly at Miss Colville.

“ As it is a promise of some standing, I do not wish to prevent you,” said Miss Colville. “ Yet, —— at all events, you may accept Mrs. Nixon’s offer : if I have occasion to alter my opinion, I will endeavour to account for it satisfactorily to your aunt.”

“ Oh ! thank you, my dear Miss



Colville," joyfully returned Frances, "I will do every thing you desire; I *do so* long to go to the Bazaar, and particularly to-day; and I promise you I will not mention the name of Lady Jane again: so, shall I read?"

"I do not make terms with little girls," replied Miss Colville mildly; "on the contrary, I shall return to the subject you propose to dismiss; and shall think the time as well employed, in tracing and unfolding your real sentiments respecting Lady Jane, as though I were listening to the history of other times. History teaches much; but it is from the scene passing before us, from those characters that lie open to our view, that the most conclusive deductions may be drawn."

"I suppose you know best," said Frances, with a gentleness somewhat unusual: "shall I read?"

"No, my love," replied Miss Colville; "I have said that I think we may employ ourselves to equal advan-

tage by returning to the subject we were discussing."

Frances seated herself: and, no longer eloquent or self-confident, she awaited the pleasure of Miss Colville with more dread than curiosity.

"You have been very free in your remarks upon my young friend, Lady Jane Milner," resumed Miss Colville; "and, though I have encouraged you to be communicative, this privilege was not intended to make you illiberal or censorious. Every person will have their opinion: this is fair, and tends greatly to improve society, and correct erroneous sentiments. But only imagine, my dear, how unfortunate poor Lady Jane would be, if all who saw her for a few hours were to imbibe prejudices similar to yours?"

"But I have said that I am not prejudiced," replied Frances.

"I know you *have* said so, Frances," returned Miss Colville; "yet, such an assertion is superfluous in the pre-

sent case ; every word you have uttered evinces the contrary : and let me ask you, is there not something unfair and illiberal in watching and scrutinizing the habits and manners of a stranger ? Would you like the same kind of conduct, observed towards yourself ?”

“There is no fear of my being an object of attention to any one,” said Frances ; “I never was held up as a wonder ; so nothing is expected from me.”

“Something is expected from all who profess themselves Christians,” rejoined Miss Colville, “and that something is justice towards others, as we hope to find it for ourselves.”

“Why, you make this silly visit of serious consequence,” returned Frances ; “I never heard you so particular.”

“The visit is not the point in question,” said Miss Colville ; “its consequences are but too obvious : you



have seen a young person of whom you had heard much,—for Lady Jane is very generally esteemed; you have repeatedly begged me to describe her qualifications, and you appeared to take much interest in my description; yet I believe I have never omitted to express my firm conviction of Lady Jane's humility. Without this essential security against vanity, I should have considered her a very unfortunate girl. Few persons of her age have made greater progress in the pursuits to which her mind has been directed; and, while I do justice to her real superiority in those accomplishments which are too frequently the chief objects of the young, I turn with delight to those lasting qualities of the heart, which will render her estimable through life."

"Yet you will not allow me to call her a paragon of excellence," observed Frances: "so good and so accom-

plished, how can she fail being more than perfect?"

"Perfection is not to be found in this life, my dear," said Miss Colville, "nor, when you call Lady Jane a paragon of excellence, do you really mean what you say. No, it is the little taunt of a young critic, who hopes she has detected blemishes where she would gladly have found glaring faults. You look surprised, and perhaps think me unkind; but, allow me to make this clear to you. Lady Jane was asked to dance; she complied: the request came from an aunt whom she loves, and she was civil to accede. You admit that she did not wish to dance alone: but here again the pleasure of another caused her to sacrifice her own feelings. This is what all young persons should do in such cases: it is extremely troublesome to see girls resisting the wishes of those who might be supposed to have some authority over them. Well, then she

played upon the piano; you are not yet sufficiently advanced in this science to judge how far she excels in it; but you say the company were profuse in their compliments;—they might say a little more than was necessary; for compliments are often polite fibs. Yet, from my knowledge of her musical talent, I should say, none but persons unacquainted with music, or unwilling to allow merit, could be insensible to the excellence of her performance. Lady Jane's dancing with a mere child, I could safely pronounce to be choice; she is particularly fond of children. I think you said she gave great praise to Miss Percival's skill: this is one of the traits in her character which always met my admiration; she is willing to be pleased with every one; and has often made me smile at the beauty and talent she discovered, where I saw little of either."

"Then you do not think she said so, because she found it necessary to



please those who paid her fine compliments?" asked Frances.

"I will venture to say, so mean an idea never entered her imagination," returned Miss Colville; "and, strange as it may appear to you, my dear, I can assure you, she is much more disposed to laugh at such fine compliments, than to remember them."

"I never can believe that," interrupted Frances; "why, you have often said that it was laudable to desire the praise of sensible people."

"Understand me, my dear girl," returned Miss Colville, "I should pity the being, who, having exercised his or her ability in the acquirement of any knowledge, subsequently recedes from the praise due to perseverance. I consider such a state of the feelings quite unnatural; there is a pleasure in well-doing, which must produce a certain portion of self-satisfaction. The danger, in all these cases, consists in the false, the

undue estimation, we attach to things in themselves trivial."

"I should like to know what you really will allow one to be proud of?" asked Frances.

"I will answer you in a few words," said Miss Colville. "Pride is an odious vice; and there is no knowledge, nor accomplishment, which does not become valueless, when pride is attached to it."

"Well, I am afraid I should be proud, if people praised me as I heard them praise Lady Jane," said Frances: "indeed, I think it would be impossible to avoid it."

"I rather think you intended to say you should be vain," observed Miss Colville.

"Why, is it not the same thing?" asked Frances.

"No," replied Miss Colville, "pride and vanity are distinct: pride leads its possessor to think well of himself; va-

nity makes him desire the good opinion of others."

"I understand that: yes, that is clear enough," said the pupil. "Still, my dear Miss Colville, if the praise of sensible people is to be desired, how can we be sure we shall not in time become vain?"

"The question is fair," returned Miss Colville; "yet, a little reflection may help to guard against this deformity. As people of sense even will sometimes exceed those limits which anxious friendship would avoid, you should frequently ask yourself a few questions, such as, For what did Mrs. Linton praise me? Was it for any thing that can make me more valued by my parents? more useful in my particular station of life? and, above all, more acceptable to my Maker? If your conscience does not assent to these positions, assure yourself that the acquirement, though innocent and pleasing as an embellishment, does



not in reality confer any lasting cause for self-satisfaction."

"I am not in danger of being spoiled by praise," said Frances, with a smile that conveyed something like reproach.

"Admiration had nearly done you irreparable mischief, when you were, shall I say so unhappy, as to be placed under my care?" observed Miss Colville.

"I never said I was unhappy with you," rejoined the subdued girl; "I am sure my papa knows it; for I often tell him how much I love you, though you do find out all my faults."

"Well then, my dear," said Miss Colville, "as I give full credit to your avowal, and have lately had occasion to applaud your self-correction in a few trivial points, let me hope that you will reflect upon what I have now said. Rely upon it, my dear child, evil dispositions are easily roused. Envy, malice, and uncharitableness,

are of one family ; and, when once we take pleasure in depreciating our fellow-creatures, it is impossible to say where our criminality will end."

"But I hope you do not think I wished to humble Lady Jane in your opinion?" inquired Frances.

"You could not do that," said Miss Colville; "you might lessen my respect for you, by betraying a love of detraction. But, let me finish my analysis of this formidable, but I trust fortunate, visit." Here Frances sighed, and shook her head. Miss Colville proceeded: "I see nothing ostentatious in Lady Jane's going to the nursery of her cousin, which she is in the habit of doing; and perhaps you do not know that the child's nurse is the daughter of one of her papa's tenants. In making a present to a person so situated there is nothing remarkable; and that her ladyship is able to indulge her feelings in this way, is creditable to

her economy; for, as you observed, her pocket-money is not equal to yours.

“It was that which surprised me so much,” said Frances; “and then, you know, she buys her own gloves. But, do you really think it a good plan to keep an account-book: is it not pompous in a girl?”

“Is it pompous to be just?” asked Miss Colville. “My dear, you must learn to think before you speak. The word *pompous* is here out of all place: you would ask, ‘is it not too womanly, too much like setting yourselves above others?’ I reply No: Lady Jane engaged, when the allowance was made her, to keep herself in gloves, and always to appear neat, and like a gentlewoman. Justice therefore requires that she should know exactly what she expends; and it is this just and sensible mode of ascertaining her means, which gives her the pleasurable power of being useful.”



“Well, you *are* determined to defend Lady Jane,” observed Frances; “so it will be nonsense for me to say any more.”

“If I had done so at the expense of truth, I am persuaded you would have set me right,” returned Miss Colville; “but, my dear Frances, you are pretty certain that I have been but just; nay, more; your own sentiments have undergone a revolution within the last half hour, and I congratulate you upon the improvement.”

“What do you mean?” asked Frances, half smiling;—“I am sure I cannot guess.”

“We will leave time to decide how far I am correct in my surmises,” replied Miss Colville; “only now remember my present prediction: when next you meet Lady Jane, you will not follow her, to watch and animadvert upon her manners and actions; no, you will see her with a new eye, and silently assent to what I have said of her.”

“Do you think so?” said Frances; “indeed, my dear Miss Colville, though Lady Jane may be all you say, she is not the sort of girl I ever can like.”

The arrival of Mrs. Nixon checked any farther conversation. Frances was permitted to accompany her aunt: and she followed to her carriage, with a countenance full of mysterious importance.

If it were possible to expose all the workings of an envious mind, how few would indulge dispositions so inimical to goodness; so contrary to that temper of the soul, which the whole tenor of the Christian religion so strongly enforces

Miss Colville was not what is called a learned or highly accomplished woman: her mind was well cultivated; but, with every disposition to shew kindness to her charge, she was scrupulously zealous in detecting those shades in the character which are too often placed to the account of youth and inexperience.

The most common observer of nature is aware that the young plant is trained,

the exuberant shoot pruned, and the diseased one probed. Are we then to infer, that the only production destined for immortality by the great Author of all things, is to be excluded from that preparation we bestow upon every thing around us? Common sense refutes such a belief; and, while we may hope that actual vice is a stranger to the bosom of the young, it will be found that, in many, the germs of evil are latently hidden: nor is it kindness which induces the guardians of children to believe that time will correct their unreprieved errors.

Time matures: granted. It swells the acorn to an oak, and it nourishes the deadly nightshade.

All general theory must fail where the dispositions of human nature are the object: in the right application of means much skill is requisite; but never let mistaken tenderness withhold the appropriate reproof. Children know when they offend; they are not prone to respect the feelings of others; nor should we be too



lenient in addressing theirs. So much depends upon tracing their feelings and opinions, and bringing them home; so much may be gained, by convincing them that experience is not to be deceived by the mere decoration of words; that I know not a more cruel oversight, than that of leaving children to make acquaintance with their own hearts when habit has blunted their sensibility. Conscience may, and will, silently admonish us; but much of the salutary effects of this divine part of our nature is abridged, when our reasoning powers have been slumbering when they should have been vigilant. Did we bestow as much time upon proving the heart and correcting the temper of children, as is cheerfully employed in polishing their exterior, we, as a nation, should be a more acceptable people.

Frances returned in high spirits. Three or four small parcels, which she appeared sedulously to guard from the scrutiny of her friend, were instantly conveyed to

her own room. Miss Colville made no remark upon the mysterious manner of her little friend; convinced, from her knowledge of children, that they are always prone to communication when they think they deserve praise.

“I have been very extravagant to-day,” said Frances, as she re-entered the school-room: “how much do you think I have spent?”

Miss Colville guessed a few shillings. Frances smiled; and with an air of consequence added, “No! I have laid out one pound fourteen shillings; and I am certain you will admire one of my purchases; but it will not come home before six o’clock: don’t then ask me what it is. You will see it in time: I want to surprise you.”

Miss Colville promised to restrain her curiosity; and Frances applied herself to business till the hour of tea.

“Well, now I may tell you all about the Bazaar; it is really beautiful;” said Frances: “I am certain I could lay out

twenty pounds, without getting all I should like to have."

"I believe you," said Miss Colville, smiling.

"Oh! you can have no idea of its gaiety," returned Frances; "and such a *quantity* of people."

"A *number* of persons, and a *quantity* of goods," interjoined Miss Colville.

"True," said Frances, "that would have been more proper: but only think, my dear Miss Colville, how odd it was I should meet Lady Jane at the Bazaar. I could not help smiling when I saw her; it was so droll, after our late conversation."

"In London such meetings must occur daily, my dear," observed Miss Colville; "persons whose habits of life are similar, will necessarily resort to known and approved places of traffic."

"I suppose so," returned Frances, for I saw many I knew. Lady Jane made very trifling purchases indeed,—only three steel bodkins and a pair of



common scissars : but I can assure you I did not watch her to-day ; she was at the same stand, so I could not help seeing what she bought. It is no matter what I bought there ; you will hear, if you do not see the articles. Well, then we paid a few visits ; and afterwards my aunt ordered the carriage to a straw-hat shop in Oxford-street : there we again found Lady Jane. She laughed, and said we haunted each other ; indeed she was quite civil to me : I did not expect she would remember me, but she did. She had a great pile of coarse cottage-bonnets before her ; you never saw such coarse things in your life, not fit for a beggar to wear : and for whom do you think she bought them ?”

Miss Colville could not say.

“ Why,” continued Frances, “ for a school in the country : she took twelve of them. To be sure they were cheap enough, only a shilling a-piece ; for my part, I would not make presents at all,

if I did not give things worth acceptance?"

"Poor Lady Jane!" sighingly said Miss Colville; "if I did not know you possessed resources in your own pure mind, which must make you indifferent to the opinion of strangers, I should pity you."

"But now, indeed," said Frances, "if you had seen the bonnets, you would think as I do. Oh! here is the parcel I expected," continued she, jumping up, and taking a hat-box from a servant. "Now tell me, is not this a very pretty hat for a child? see, what beautiful feathers and band!"

"It is a very handsome hat," said Miss Colville; "I never saw a better beaver: but this hat is not intended for a child belonging to a public charity-school?"

"Oh, no!" returned Frances, "I mean this for Nurse Dawson's little boy. you saw her one day, soon after you came to me, and you admired the child."

"I remember the circumstance per-

fectly well," said Miss Colville; "the mother of the babe was in extreme poverty; and one of your servants, who was acquainted with her distress, asked me for any old apparel I could spare, to assist the poor woman in clothing her child. Now, can you think a hat of this description is suitable for a child so situated?"

Frances admired her purchase; and was not inclined to believe her present could not be proper. Yet she looked grave, and as though she had some internal convictions which she was unwilling to avow.

"May I enquire what this hat cost?" asked Miss Colville.

"Eighteen shillings," was the reply.

"Then, my dear," returned Miss Colville, "only calculate how much more advantageously such a sum might have been laid out; nay, perhaps the money itself would have been of greater service to poor Mrs. Dawson."

"But I did not think of that," said



the disappointed pupil; “and, besides, I preferred giving the child something to wear for my sake.”

“You have pleased yourself, then,” observed Miss Colville; “but you cannot convince me that a shilling hat, and one or two cotton frocks, would not have been a more useful and suitable present.”

“I know the child will look beautiful in it,—so I am quite glad I bought it,” said Frances, hastily; “and, indeed, I should not think Mrs. Dawson would like people to know she was so poor as to want a few shillings.”

“Yet she told you she was in some need,” returned Miss Colville.

“I beg your pardon, Miss Colville; but I do not recollect her saying any thing of the kind.”

“Did she not tell you,” said Miss Colville, “that her husband had been out of employment more than two months; and that she had been trying to get work from a warehouse, but had not succeeded.”

“O yes, she said that,” replied Frances; “but I did not understand what she meant.

“I do not expect you to enter into the views and feelings of persons to whose habits you have hitherto been a stranger,” resumed Miss Colville; “but be assured, my dear child, even at your age, it is possible you may, by little observation and civil attention to the language addressed to you, render yourself very useful to your fellow-creatures.”

“I wish I had not bought this odious hat,” said Frances petulantly: “yet I don’t know either; I won’t decide till I have seen papa.”

Frances joined her papa in the evening; and the result was soothing to her ostentation:—her papa commended her liberality. The smart hat with its feathers was conveyed to the abode of poverty; and Miss Austen retired, greatly satisfied with herself.

Miss Colville was not disheartened: she could make allowance for the feel-

ings of a fond father ; who, in the act of his child, saw only its disinterestedness. Nor did she omit to take into consideration the address with which a lively child can carry a favourite point, where the parent is indulgent.

The next morning saw Frances triumphant : yet she was not more faulty than many girls similarly situated. There is something so congenial to human feelings in believing that those whose judgment we approve are sometimes found to be fallible, it would be unjust to visit this infirmity in Miss Austen too severely. Her best friend accordingly observed her usual manner towards her pupil ; neither reverting to the past, nor dwelling upon the line of conduct she wished her to pursue. Miss Colville trusted to the great elucidator of truth—Time ; not doubting but future events would better illustrate her views for the happiness of her charge, than any advice prematurely offered.

Upon going into the apartment of a female servant, a few days afterwards,



the extent of Miss Austen's liberality was very conspicuously displayed. A fine pasteboard box and pincushion, highly gilt and ornamented, was shown to the governess as the gift of Miss.

"But she always was a generous young lady," said the loquacious Sarah; "and, as I often say, when she's a woman, she'll make a pattern for a mistress."

"Indeed!" said Miss Colville, smiling; who had heard the same person declare 'it was impossible to please Miss Austen,—she was so uncertain in her temper.'

"And I'm sure I never saw a prettier ruff than this," added a slatternly girl, who attended upon Miss Austen, and was constantly reprov'd for her untidy dress. "I'm quite delighted with my present:—Miss bought it for me at the Bazaar."

Frances entered the room at this moment: her eyes glanced transiently over these proofs of her liberality, to rest upon those of her governess. In them she saw

nothing like approbation. Half-vexed at this insensibility to her merits, she was upon the point of venturing an observation, when Miss Colville was called away to see a person who waited below stairs. Frances followed. What was her surprise to find it was Nurse Dawson with her little boy; but, strange to relate, the child was not dressed in the smart beaver hat.

“I came to return you thanks, ma’am,” said Mrs. Dawson, curtsying to Miss Colville; “your kind recommendation has saved me and mine from ruin.”

“The young lady gave you employment;” said Miss Colville.

“Yes, ma’am,” returned Mrs. Dawson; “she did more than that. The day I took your letter, she gave me a one-pound note, and talked to me in the kindest way: if she had been a woman of eighty, she could not have been more thoughtful. It was quite overpowering, to hear such a young

creature enter into the affairs of a person like me. I have done a good deal of needle-work for her ladyship; and she was pleased to say she liked it much. But to-day, ma'am, she has made us so happy:—we are to have the charge of his lordship's house while they are out of town; and my husband is to be engaged directly in place of the old porter; who is not well, and is going to the family-seat. God will reward you, ma'am; but indeed I cannot tell you how much we feel your goodness."

"I hoped my young friend would serve you," returned Miss Colville; "and I am truly glad to find she has met with a family so worthy of protection."

Frances sat in breathless expectation of hearing the name of this young patroness; but it did not reach her ear: an intuitive feeling seemed to point at Lady Jane. She longed for, yet shrunk from seeking, intelligence; when, turning to the child, whose shabby hat annoyed



her vanity, she half-carelessly inquired  
 “if the beaver hat fitted the child?”

“I ought to ask your pardon, Miss Austen,” replied Nurse Dawson; “but you must excuse me, Miss; we have been in such trouble, I could not think of any thing. I am much obliged to you for the handsome hat you sent; it is a little too big for him just now, but by the autumn it will do nicely.”

“What a pity he cannot wear it now,” said Frances; “it will be old-fashioned by that time.”

“My dear young lady,” said Dawson, “that is of little consequence to people like us; but I hope it will last him two years at least. My husband begged his duty and thanks to you, Miss, for thinking of little George; but he hopes you won’t take it amiss that we take the feathers out of the hat: he says they are not fit for a child of his; and I’m quite of his mind.”

Frances looked disconcerted. She feared Miss Colville’s moment for tri-

umph had arrived; and, though she secretly condemned the mean taste of Dawson and his wife, it is probable that regret for having laid out her money so uselessly had some influence on her feelings at the moment. The departure of Nurse Dawson and her child did not relieve the embarrassment of poor Frances. Silence might imply that she was contrasting her own plans with those of the young lady just eulogized. Such an idea did not suit her present frame of mind; so, in order to say something, she fixed upon the subject of all others least likely to sooth her wounded pride.

“I dare say you will not agree with me,” she observed; “but I must think Dawson is not of a grateful disposition: she might not like feathers; but she need not have told me so. I did not ask her what she liked; I chose what pleased myself.”

“Really, my dear,” returned Miss Colville, “I do not see Mrs. Dawson’s

conduct in that light. She very respectfully told you that she and her husband thought feathers were not fit for their child. There was nothing ungrateful in this."

"The fact is," continued Frances, "her head was full of the rich lady and her one-pound note;—she could not think of a poor present like mine."

"You do Mrs. Dawson injustice," returned Miss Colville; "and you ascribe to the young lady what does not pertain to her;—she is not rich."

"Do *I* know her? Did I ever see her?" asked Frances eagerly.

"You have," replied Miss Colville; "it is Lady Jane Milner to whom Mrs. Dawson alluded."

"Lady Jane Milner!" echoed Frances in a thoughtful tone of voice; then rousing herself, she added: "Forgive me, Miss Colville, but the whole world cannot make *me* believe that Lady Jane has not a larger allowance than she acknowledges."



“I should be sorry if even a small part of what is called the world were to sit in judgment upon the possessions or merits of my young friend,” replied Miss Colville; “and I really grieve, my dear Frances, to perceive how ready you are to misconstrue the character of a young person to whom you are almost a stranger.”

“Why,” observed Frances, “is she not constantly brought forward? Do I hear of any thing but Lady Jane’s talents,—Lady Jane’s liberality,—Lady Jane’s everything?”

“Not one of your assertions are tenable, child,” returned Miss Colville; I will *not* say you dislike Lady Jane; but, as it is evident that the qualities of her heart and understanding are not of a character to please you, I rather wonder you so constantly revert to her name.”

“Who? I!” exclaimed Frances: “I revert to her name? I should never men-

tion her I am certain, if I were left to myself."

"I shall leave you to yourself now," said Miss Colville, rising; "but, before I go, remember I do so in compassion to your feelings. Employ the half hour I give you in proving your heart; recollect how far your prejudices have transported you; that they have not only betrayed you into the most unjustifiable cruelty towards my former pupil, but that they have led you to utter things totally void of truth."

Miss Colville withdrew: and Frances sat overpowered by contending emotions. She was an object for compassion: for the reproof of her governess was appropriate. With that hardihood which generally accompanies error, she had attempted to defend her opinions by throwing blame upon another. This could not avail her in the moment of impartial investigation. No; she felt all the truth of Miss Colville's exposition; she was ashamed of her own heart; and only

wondered how feelings which she had hoped were hidden from all, could have been so accurately known by her governess.

From the moment of Miss Colville's becoming a resident in the house of Mr. Austen, it was the practice of Frances to make minute but natural inquiries respecting the attainments of Lady Jane Milner. That the female who had watched the growth, and cultivated the mind of the amiable Lady Jane, should take delight in speaking of the structure she had reared, cannot surprise; yet, from her knowledge of human nature, Miss Colville carefully avoided all mention of her former pupil, unless solicited to do so. How far Miss Austen was correct in saying she never quoted the name of Lady Jane, it is not necessary to affirm: facts speak for themselves, and to them the reader is referred.

Nearly an hour elapsed; and Frances, who really loved her governess, be-



gan to think that something was required from her, before Miss Colville could understand the present state of her feelings. How to open the subject, was the difficulty; yet it must be done. The arrival of the tea-equipage gave her the desired opportunity. She fled to the apartment of Miss Colville; and, tapping gently at the door, said, "Tea is ready." Miss Colville returned, she would join her in a few minutes; and Frances with equal speed hastened to place a chair, and have all things ready.

Miss Colville upon her entrance looked grave; but her manner was kind as ever. Frances regarded her for a moment in silence:—her heart was full; and, bursting into tears, she declared "she should never be happy again, if Miss Colville would not say she forgave her."

"What am I to forgive?" was Miss Colville's question in return.

"My foolish, my cruel injustice to Lady Jane," replied Frances; "I know,

I am sure she is an amiable girl; but I did not like to allow it; because—indeed I cannot tell how I came to be so unjust.”

“Unfortunately, I cannot attempt to set you at ease upon the nature of your former feelings but by the mention of that name which offended you,” said Miss Colville. “What can I do, Frances?”

“Talk of her,” answered Frances; “tell me all she ever did and said; and I will try to be as good,—if you will but love me.”

Miss Colville seized this moment of self-conviction; and, with the tenderness of a true friend, dilated much, and made Frances acquainted with her own heart. The susceptible girl, when she heard her governess describe the tendency of the rancour she had expressed towards Lady Jane, the effect it would have upon her own happiness, and the consequences that might finally fall upon her, as she was accountable

for every word she uttered, wept unrestrainedly.

“ I rejoice at these tears,” said Miss Colville, throwing her arms round her Frances. “ I can now talk to you. That you really admired the girl you strove to depreciate, I was well aware ; but, when I tell you you have been anxious to imitate her from the first time of your meeting, you will say I am not right : this is however true. Shall I tell you how, and why you failed.”

Frances begged she would.

“ You mistook, then, the mode of vying with Lady Jane for imitation,” said Miss Colville ; “ in the same way that envy is often mistaken for emulation ; yet no two feelings are more distinct. My late pupil is generous, but she is economical ; therefore I call her liberal. You determined to outdo her in the value of your gifts : you have not learned the very necessary art of fitness,—of giving what we do give appropriately. For instance, a pasteboard box is, or ought to be, a use-



less ornament to a housemaid's toilet; in the same way that a fashionable ruff cannot be useful to a young woman, whose stockings but too often evince her inattention to those decencies to which every woman should attend. Thus, while Lady Jane's actions are characteristic of liberality, yours have betrayed—what?”

“Ostentation,” said Frances; “I see it as clearly as possible: you are quite right, my dear Miss Colville. And then, the ridiculous hat and feathers;—what do you say to them?”

“That such a gift was most injudicious,” replied Miss Colville. “You encourage me to go on, my dear Frances; so I will not soften the matter;” added Miss Colville. Frances pressed her hand; and begged she would proceed. “Well then,” continued Miss Colville, “I condemn the practice of giving finery of any kind to persons in the humbler walks of life. If they have been so fortunate as to escape this injurious sort of emulation, you may unintentionally per-

vert their happy simplicity; if, on the contrary, they pretend to vie with their superiors, you give them a just reproof, when, by the plainness of your gift, or, more properly speaking, its fitness, you convince them that you thought only of its usefulness."

"How happy Lady Jane must feel when she sees poor Dawson made so comfortable!" exclaimed Frances. "I wish I had not bought those silly feathers; but indeed, my dear Miss Colville, I did not understand that my nurse was in such distress."

"No, my love, you did not attend to her little tale," said Miss Colville, smiling; "your head was then projecting something out of the common, something that was to outvie,—no matter whom:" Miss Colville still smiled. "Let us now picture," she continued, "to ourselves Mrs. Dawson, her sick husband, and nice little baby, in their poor habitation, perhaps without a fire, and wanting all the comforts she so feelingly la-

mented, as requisite for Mr. Dawson's then weak state of health. Well, a footman arrives with a parcel;—her heart bounds with joy;—it comes from the child she has nursed;—she opens it, and finds—a hat and feathers. Conceive her disappointment! Can any thing appear more absurd? or, do you think that your intended kindness could at such a moment be of any value?"

"No! no! it must appear almost cruel," said Frances: "I am afraid poor Nurse will think me a ridiculous girl."

"She would not be justified in so doing," returned Miss Colville. "No; though your present might arrive at a period when it was impossible for her to estimate your intended kindness; she must, and has, no doubt, reflected upon your attention to her child with real gratitude."

A few days subsequent to this promising dawn of better things in the mind of Frances, she was unfortunately



led into a situation, which partially retarded the amendment so necessary to her happiness. Mr. Austen, though a man of sense, was too fondly attached to his daughter, to bear even the most transient separation from her. He had engaged himself to make a visit of a week to a widow lady, a distant connexion of his late wife. Mrs. Wilton had two daughters; and Frances was expected to accompany her father, in order to be introduced to the young ladies. Miss Colville regretted the separation, more especially at this period; when the happiest results might have been expected from her newly-awakened sense of right. The arrangement however gave so much pleasure to Frances and Mr. Austen, who had expressed his delight in the intellectual improvement of his child, and seemed so desirous of introducing her to her mother's connexions, that Miss Colville was forced to yield, though she did it with reluctance.

Of the Miss Wiltons she had some

knowledge. They resided near Bloom Hill, the seat of Lady Jane's father. The young people met occasionally; but the Earl of —— was too judicious a parent, to permit any very strict intimacy between them. The Miss Wiltons were showy girls, not only in their persons but their acquirements. With great wealth to sanction their self-importance, they had a thorough contempt for every thing and every body that did not answer *their* ideas of magnificence. To expose a girl like Frances to an association so dangerous, gave Miss Colville real uneasiness; yet, to guard her against persons with whom she was connected by blood, was at once unnatural and illiberal.

All she could do, was to beg she would think before she spoke; be scrupulous of giving her opinion upon subjects with which she was not perfectly acquainted; to avoid entering into the concerns of others upon frivolous occasions; and to bear in mind, that, as she

had lately discovered the fallacy of being hasty in her judgments, so she hoped that a lesson, by which she had so materially benefited, would often be present to her perception.

Frances promised all and every thing that was required of her. She was too happy, to restrain her feelings; and, though she really disliked parting with Miss Colville, and shed a few tears when the carriage was announced, her sensibility was not lasting.

On the second day after her departure, the following letter reached Miss Colville.

*Mount Wilton; Sept. 4th.*

“ MY DEAR MISS COLVILLE,

“ We reached this charming place about five yesterday evening. I was greatly pleased with the view of Mount Wilton from the valley; but I had no idea it was so magnificent a place. Papa is making a sketch of the scenery this morning, which I shall hope to shew



you. My cousins are very nice girls; I think Marian quite beautiful. I can assure you I shall not find my ball-dress too fine for this place. The Miss Wiltons dress so elegantly, I look quite shabby by them: so you see I was not wrong in begging so hard for my ball-frock. Mrs. Wilton is a very nice woman, and behaves kindly to me; she says I ought not to go out of doors without a veil; so I sent for one this morning from the village. She is trying to persuade papa to change my masters; and has given him a list of those she wishes him to engage. You would have been pleased with papa's reply. He said he left these things to you; and that he was quite satisfied with my present instructors: So I do not know how it will end; for Mrs. Wilton told me she should attack papa again. My cousins have finished their education; yet Caroline is only fifteen, and Marian one year younger. I do not think they are very fond of their studies; for they laughed at my

bringing my portfolio, and have locked it up till I go away. They will not let me look into their books, of which they have a vast quantity ; but, as this is all from a wish to have my company, I ought not to complain. I tell you of it, because you wished me to attempt a sketch from nature, which I fear I shall not be able to accomplish. Papa begs me to make his compliments to you ; and I hope it is unnecessary to add, that I am, my dear Miss Colville,

Yours, with much affection,

FRANCES AUSTEN."

"P. S. Papa peeped over my shoulder just now, and said he anticipates your remarks on a few words in this letter ; but he will not say which they are."

The fears of Miss Colville did not diminish upon the perusal of this epistle. She foresaw that her pupil must be injured, by the suspension of those habits of diligence which the young in particular do not readily continue. Fran-

ces was but too much prone to value personal decoration; it was therefore peculiarly unfortunate she should have been thrown into a situation where its influence would be recommended by the really handsome persons of her cousins. On replying to her pupil, Miss Colville glanced slightly at the "ball-frock;" and rather smiled at the taste of Frances, which could lead her to think blond lace and flowers a dress suitable for any private party. She hoped her young friend would use persuasion to induce the Miss Wiltons to return her sketch-book; as she still hoped to see a specimen of her taste in drawing, which she could in few places have a better opportunity of displaying than at Mount Wilton.

Upon the postscript, Miss Colville expressed herself thus: "I should imagine your papa's remarks to refer to the words 'nice,' and the 'vast quantity of books,' your cousins possess. The word *nice* is often applied where the existence



of the habit of cleanliness cannot in reason be questioned. It is a word that has latterly crept into conversation, to the exclusion of half a hundred terms infinitely more appropriate. For instance, Mrs. Wilton is rich, dresses well, and, (of course,) is never dirty: still, the word 'nice' can hardly apply to her appearance. She may be pleasing, agreeable, or elegant; but I do not see the fitness of calling her nice. Your cousins being 'nice girls,' is liable to the same objection. You describe them as very elegant in their dress; and I am apt to think, that your ideas of elegance must make this term more particularly out of place. When we speak of a nice servant, we understand a neat person, though the word is in this case nearly superfluous; as 'neatness' would express all we mean to say. I think you will make your own deductions from my remarks, and agree with me, that this word is unnecessarily pressed into use. 'A vast quantity of books,' is not an unusual mode of ex-

pression ; but, ‘an extensive library,’ or, ‘a great number of books,’ appears to me better,” &c.

Had this letter reached Frances one day earlier than it did, not a sentence of its kindly-disposed writer would have been lost. Alas ! it came too late. Frances had walked to Bloom Hill ; and that walk produced a relapse in her sentiments respecting Lady Jane Milner. The Miss Wiltons were profuse in their censure of Lady Jane ; and, after numberless insinuations, which betrayed their dislike to her ladyship, they concluded by observing, that their mamma quite rejoiced that they were not wonders ; for that nothing was so fatiguing as those “wonderful” young ladies. Frances smiled ; and this smile was taken for assent. The most eloquent narrations ensued—all equally edifying and authentic : for, though the Miss Wiltons were slightly acquainted with Lady Jane, their anecdotes of her ladyship were collected from a discarded servant of the

Earl's;—an authority which the Miss Wiltons would have despised, had the object been any other than Lady Jane Milner. Again Frances thought Miss Colville must be mistaken; it was some time since she quitted the Earl's family; and, though she might answer for Lady Jane while under her guidance, it was very possible she might be changed.

Poor Frances! how weak are the reasonings of a half-formed mind! how incompetent are the unsettled and prejudiced in all their judgments! Did she believe, or did she wish to find her conclusions just? Could Lady Jane's defalcations raise her in the esteem of her own friends; or, did she hope that her ladyship's descent would make her a more practicable model for imitation?

The latter could not be the case; for, in proportion as we lower others, we secretly ascribe some new excellence to ourselves,—a something hitherto unnoticed recurs to memory.



We wonder we ever suffered our discernment to be blinded by the false glare of the eulogized party; and we feel we have not been true to ourselves.

This sort of self-delusion is so far pardonable, as it offers the only apology that can be made for illiberal feelings and sentiments. For, if we depreciate and deform the good, for the mere pleasure of being ill-natured, the sin were enormous. But this deceit, though usual, is short-lived;—no human being continues to err without a consciousness of so doing; and, though the force of example is sometimes offered, as extenuating those errors of imitation into which the young are frequently led, the excuse is insufficient. Circumstances may place us in the vicinity of the unworthy. Does it necessarily follow, that we must imbibe their faults? How would it sound in the ear of the youthful and supposed mo-

ral girl, were she told she was wicked? Yet is the term applicable, where the mind has assented to the censorious tale! It is observable, that intelligent children will question the truth of well-authenticated histories; while the hasty anecdote, framed to suit the purposes of the malicious, will find immediate credit. Yet, how distinct is the danger we incur in either particular!

If the judgment be misled by the admission of hypothesis as fact, of fiction in place of truth, we injure no one; our knowledge may be incorrect, but the mind is pure. Whereas, in listening to the tale of malevolence, the understanding is degraded; and, worse than all, the heart is corrupted.

The Miss Wiltons gave much weight to their descriptions, by frequently declaring that everybody thought Lady Jane an odd sort of girl. To be sure, there were a few old ladies in the neighbourhood who held her ladyship

up as a model for those of her own age. But these warm eulogists were just the sort of persons whose opinions were of no value ;—they were old-fashioned—quite old quizzes. Frances did not exactly know what was meant by the word quiz ; but she was disposed to be quiescent, and therefore did not cavil with words.

In the course of conversation it transpired, that the governess of Frances had filled a similar station in the Earl of ——'s family. The young ladies instantly recognised her as another, but more offensive, kind of quiz.

“Do'nt you remember how impertinent she was to mamma, Marian?” said Miss Wilton.

Frances could not bear this attack ; she assured her cousins, “Miss Colville was incapable of rudeness to any one.”

“O ! but she was, I can assure you,” returned Miss Wilton : “I will tell you all about it. Lord —— happened to be in London ; we had a little dance,



and mamma invited Lady Jane; and, do you know she refused to let her come: and, (it was so cunning of her!) she made Lady Jane write the refusal herself; as if any girl would have given up a dance of her own accord."

"Perhaps Lord —— might have desired her to refuse all invitations while he was absent;" observed Frances.

"No, indeed, that was not the case," said Marian; "for, a few evenings afterwards, we met her at a stupid little party at Mrs. Musgrove's; and mamma was so vexed, she spoke to the Miss Somebody the governess, and said she thought it very strange Lady Jane should have declined her invitation, when it was evident she was permitted to go out. I remember mamma said the governess carried herself very high; but I forget what she said; only I know we never spoke to her from that time, though we always continued to be acquainted with Lady Jane."

Frances was firm here; she was sure

there was some mistake: but, upon her saying she would ask Miss Colville to explain the business, the young ladies begged she would not, for they required no explanation. There was a something in the manner of her cousins at this moment which rather startled Frances. She was in the habit of pressing all subjects home in which she believed she was right. She could only account for a contrary line of conduct, by supposing that the party were not quite so sure of their own rectitude.

On the ensuing morning, Mr. Austen accompanied the young ladies in a walk of some length; the object of their excursion was to view a tunnel upon the estate of Lord ——. They were on their return to Mount Wilton, when they overtook a gentleman and lady on horseback. Mr. Austen recognized Lord ——; and the Miss Wiltons, with apparent delight, exclaimed, “Dear Lady Jane, when did you arrive?” Her ladyship replied politely, but with great calmness, that she had arrived late the preceding evening.





The Miss Wiltons were astonished; it was unaccountable, to hear a person of no consideration thus honoured by the inquiries of their noble neighbour.





“Is not that Miss Austen?” she continued. Frances, with a flushed cheek, replied by a curtsy. Lady Jane extended her hand; and, as Frances received the overture, her ladyship inquired after Miss Colville. The Earl regarded Miss Austen with complacency. “You are under the care of a most amiable woman,” said he: “is Miss Colville at Mount Wilton?” Frances replied in the negative. The Miss Wiltons were astonished; it was unaccountable, to hear a person of no consideration thus honoured by the inquiries of their noble neighbour.

The parties separated. Frances, who had felt more surprise at the very cordial manner of Lady Jane, became thoughtful: her conscience upbraided her. Miss Colville had often told her, “that perfect good-breeding embraced a much wider field of action than was generally understood. ‘It is benevolence under its most graceful form,’ would she say; ‘it is kindness upon princi-

ple, offered with the wish to oblige, and utterly void of ostentation.'

Surely, thought Frances, this is the very manner Miss Colville so highly extols. I never saw Lady Jane till we met at my aunt's; yet, how civil she has been ever since! If she knew how unjustly I have arraigned her conduct, she would not have noticed me. As these thoughts passed in her mind she grew uneasy. She almost dreaded the result of this interview; for it was evident the Miss Wiltons would not overlook the attention Lady Jane had shewn her. Mr. Austen laughed at the silence of his companions; and begged to know what had caused it. "I was thinking what an odd man Lord \_\_\_\_\_ must be," said Miss Wilton; "he always comes and goes so suddenly, one never knows where to find him. I know every body thinks him strange; for people have made parties on purpose for him; but he can seldom accept invitations: this is very odd, you know."



Mr. Austen explained that his lordship was of an active turn of mind, and pursued many useful plans for the improvement of his very extensive property; and these necessarily called upon his time. "Then, I am sure, if he is so rich," said Marian, "I wonder Lady Jane does not make a better appearance: did you ever see any thing so shabby as her habit? I am sure she has worn it these three years to my knowledge."

This observation was addressed to Frances; who, though she might have arranged a reply had her father been absent, felt it then impossible to do so: there was a gravity in his countenance which somewhat alarmed her. The Miss Wiltons were not easily repelled. They attributed the silence of their cousin to that change of sentiment which suddenly takes place in weak minds. They thought Frances, flattered by the notice of Lady Jane, would gladly retract her opinion of

her ladyship. This neither suited their natural dispositions, nor accorded with their loquacious habit of judging their acquaintance. It is always pleasing to such persons when they can make converts; they may not value the opinions of the party, but it in a manner palliates their own errors, when they can refer to some one who thinks like themselves.

Compelled at last to say something, Frances owned, "that she had not observed the dress of Lady Jane."

The sisters smiled significantly.

"I waited for your reply with some anxiety," said Mr. Austen, turning to his daughter; "and I should have been grievously disappointed had you expressed yourself otherwise than you have done. As a child, you cannot possibly be supposed to have a correct judgment in matters of this kind; nor can you have any right to criticise the personal appearance of one whose station in life is too distinct from your

own to be judged by the same medium."

Frances had never heard her father speak in so grave, so decisive a manner: all she had ever thought and said of Lady Jane rose to her mental view. Mount Wilton lost its attractions; she felt she was in danger; and secretly longed to quit a place, of which she, a few days before, believed she could never tire.

As they reached the house, Mr. Austen half-playfully addressed his daughter. "I do not pretend to understand female costume," said he; "but, my dear Frances, I must beg you will not wear the finery you wore last evening: it offended my eye, as being much too dressy for the country. I fear we want Miss Colville's good taste to direct us. However, in her absence, I must decide: be plain and well-dressed; but do not wear any thing fine."

Frances said something about obedience; but it was too indistinct to be re-



corded. The Miss Wiltons tittered; and in a whisper pronounced Mr. Austen a quiz. The young ladies separated; and, though Miss Austen conformed to the desire of her father, and appeared in plain attire, the evening passed heavily: she felt humbled, and had neither spirits nor inclination to combat the wit of her cousins. The Mount Wilton family proposed calling at Bloom Hill next morning; for, minutely as they scanned the actions and conduct of its inhabitants, Mrs. Wilton yet considered their acquaintance of importance.

Frances knew not whether to be glad or sorry, as the hour approached for this visit: she did not question the civility of her reception; but she felt she did not deserve the very marked notice of Lady Jane. In receiving kindness from those we have endeavoured to depreciate, there must always be a humiliating sense of our unworthiness. How deeply Frances suffered this just punishment of the traducer! How acutely did her

heart reproach her ; as Lady Jane, with that distinguished good-breeding which defines between the vulgarity of freedom and the formality of the unenlightened, received and entertained her visitors with the utmost ease and elegance. She conversed with each of the party, and with a suitableness that evinced the clearness of her understanding. To Frances she shewed the attentions that accorded with her age ; and, as she spoke of Miss Colville with a warmth that evinced her attachment to that friend of her youth, she arose, and, opening a door, directed the attention of Frances to it. “ In that room,” said she, “ we passed all our mornings : she has half-promised to make me a visit at Christmas, and she shall find it exactly what it was when we lived so happily together.”

Miss Austen, though pleased with this mention of her governess, was really too ill at ease to look happy. “ I am afraid you do not like my plan,”

added her ladyship; "but, if Mr. Austen will spare you for a week, I may increase my pleasure by his permitting you to accompany Miss Colville."

Frances regarded her father with eyes full of expectation.

"Your ladyship does my daughter honour," said he; "but I beg to assure you, it must always afford me satisfaction to contribute to the happiness of Miss Colville; and I can readily believe she cannot have a higher enjoyment, than that of contemplating a character she so well knows how to prize."

"Jane owes Miss Colville much," said the Earl; "and she knows and feels it properly. But it is I who am her great debtor. I was a silly, but of course, in my own opinion, a most tender father, when this excellent woman stepped in, and taught me to understand that the creature I was rearing, was neither bestowed upon me as a toy for my pastime, nor a mere automaton, that was to pass through certain common forms;



and enter the world to be gazed at for a day, and then perish amid the wreck of meaner things. She has formed my child for something higher; and I rejoice to find your motherless girl is so fortunate as to have fallen into such good hands."

If Mr. Austen had not previously considered Miss Colville with esteem, this eulogium, from a parent so capable of estimating her worth, must have been highly satisfactory. Mrs. Wilton took no part in the conversation: she had many questions to ask concerning London and its gaieties; and, though Lady Jane was less informed in these matters than might have been expected, from her station in life, Mrs. Wilton did not cease to persecute her with inquiries. The sisters, always easy and undaunted, by turns admired or detected the faults in some drawings which they discovered upon a sofa-table.

"This is not yours, I am certain,"

said Caroline; "it wants the correctness of your style."

"It is mine nevertheless," said Lady Jane; "and I preserve it, because it is so faulty, it helps to guard me against similar blunders."

"Well, I am not quite so humble," replied Miss Wilton; "in truth, my eye is so easily offended, I destroy every thing that is not well done."

"I often say you are fastidious," interjoined Mrs. Wilton; "but young people will be young people: they will have their whims as well as ourselves."

This was addressed to the Earl and Mrs. Austen: the former merely smiled. Mr. Austen observed, that "whims, like other foibles, should be traced to their source; that, for his own part, he was indulgent to the weaknesses of human nature so long as the error bore a character of simplicity, of that ignorance to which inexperience must concede; but that, wherever a tendency to vanity

could be detected, it was cruel to pass it over."

Mr. Austen now examined the criticised drawings. He was an admirable judge of the art, and often employed a leisure hour by the exercise of his pencil. On some of the sketches he bestowed unqualified praise; but, upon turning to one, he recollected the subject as one which Frances had attempted with success. He appealed to his daughter; who replied by saying, "she often drew from those drawings of Lady Jane which Miss Colville had particularly admired."

"It appears to me you could not do better," resumed Mr. Austen; "here are some exquisite touches; your ladyship's pencil is free, decisive. I believe I must entreat to copy this myself; it is a view from the lawn, which I stopped to admire as we came in."

Lady Jane offered the drawing with a graceful smile; but modestly suggested, that Mr. Austen would find greater in-



terest in making his sketch from nature. The Earl seconded the proposition; and the next morning was fixed for a sketching-party, to which Frances and the Miss Wiltons were invited.

The sisters declined joining in the pursuit; but they should have great pleasure in looking on. "In fact, I cannot bear perspective; that part of the art is an immense bore to me," said Caroline; "and really, I must say, I think it cramps the natural genius: don't you think so, Lady Jane?"

Her ladyship thought it essentially necessary to all who wished to draw from nature; and she said so. Mrs. Wilton thought it proper to say something. She lamented "that unfortunate characteristic of genius, which always led its possessors to despise common rules."

"You are too lenient, my dear madam," said Mr. Austen; "real genius is by no means so common as is imagined; idleness is frequently mistaken for that sublime species of indifference,

which may pertain to, but does not always accompany, true genius."

"I see your plan," said Mrs. Wilton smilingly, "you would discourage every thing that could excite vanity; but, my dear Mr. Austen, this may be carried too far. There may be parents who can withhold the praise that is due to those young people who exert themselves to our satisfaction. I confess I am not of the number; and I must believe your own indulgent disposition would refute such injudicious opinions."

Mr. Austen declared that, "whatever might have been his errors in this particular, he had recently seen all the advantages that were to be expected from an opposite line of conduct; and he was determined to follow the example."

Frances comprehended the allusion that was intended: the direction her father's eye had taken, left no doubt in her mind; and she had often heard Miss Colville say "that Lady Jane was sel-

dom praised by her father; though he, upon some occasions, thanked her for the zeal she displayed, when directed to studies for which she had no decided taste. This had been the case with her drawing; and, though she now delighted in the art, and exhibited pleasing proofs of her ability in it, it was not a favourite pursuit. Perseverance, and the laudable desire of pleasing her father, produced that result; and the same would in a thousand instances be found effective, were these principles more generally felt and acted upon.

In their ride home, the Miss Wiltons could not refrain from a few inuendoes. "Did you see what Lady Jane was about when we first arrived?" said Caroline. "O yes," replied Marian, "she was settling her accounts; I saw figures, and the words 'James Wells, seven shillings.' Well, she may be very clever; I do not pretend to say she is not; but it is quite ridiculous to see so much parade about a few shillings or a



few pounds: indeed, *she* is the last person who should make a display of the kind."

"I did not observe anything ostentatious in her ladyship," said Mr. Austen: "we surprised her; her right to occupy her time as she pleases cannot be questioned; ours, to pry into the nature of her employments, lies open to many objections; nor can I understand how you could gain the information you have given."

"I can read writing any way," retorted Marian: "I saw it as clearly as possible while I was shaking hands with her."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Austen, laughing; "but now, Marian, may I ask, why Lady Jane in particular should hide her benefactions from observation?"

"Why," replied Marian, "because she professes such very different ideas about charity: Caroline can tell you all about it. She had a downright dispute

with Lady Jane concerning this very business."

"Could Lady Jane *dispute*?" asked Mr. Austen.

"O dear no; I dare say she would tell you she was not in the least angry," said Caroline; "but I venture to think for myself:" she coloured, and said it was quite nonsensical for girls like us to talk upon such subjects; but, for all that, she would not give up the point."

"And what was this favourite point?" inquired Mr. Austen, whose prepossession strongly favoured the firmness of her ladyship, even previous to the required elucidation.

"Why you know," returned Caroline, "the lower orders of the people were much distressed last year; well, Lady Jane came to take tea with us; the county-paper happened to lie upon the table; I took it up, and read the list of the subscribers that had contributed to their relief; neither Lord —, nor her ladyship's name, were down. I

asked if her papa had given any thing; she said 'she did not know.' Marian, in one of her wild whims, said, 'perhaps he will give them an ox; he has plenty of *them*.' again Lady Jane said 'she did not know.' I then said, if they had given any thing, their names would have appeared; so it was unnecessary to ask the question. Lady Jane observed, 'that did not follow; for many persons disliked having their names made known upon such occasions.' I said, I thought it was satisfactory; because the poor might otherwise be defrauded. She would not allow this; and said, 'it was cruel to suspect any set of men of a crime so odious.' Then Marian insisted that Lady Jane had given, but would not say how much. It was then her ladyship looked angry, though she affected to laugh. We told her the sum we had given, and shewed her our names; but she would not say anything more, and called it 'a ridiculous curiosity for girls like us.' But it was clear to me she



would have been glad enough to speak upon the subject, if she could have done it with credit to her rank."

"And these are your real sentiments, Caroline?" asked Mr. Austen.

"To be sure they are," returned Caroline.

"Then I must set you right, child," said Mr. Austen: "that Lady Jane should define between Ostentation and Liberality is not extraordinary, considering whose child she is; that she should have done so without betraying the disgust she must have felt at an attack so unauthorized, is perhaps, from your report, the highest eulogium you could have passed upon her."

Mrs. Wilton was roused by this bold censure of her daughter; and, in a tone which bore a general inference, "she desired she might hear no more of Lady Jane: she was sick of the subject."

Frances listened to these opinions of her father, with a full presentiment that this visit would have its due weight upon

her subsequent habits and conduct. She was a girl of quick discernment; yet, like most young persons whom indulgence had rendered supine, she did not desire any further change in the plan of her education. Miss Colville had introduced many regulations, which appeared formidable at first; to these however she had become reconciled; but she did not see the necessity for any new adoptions, more especially as she guessed their bearings.

The succeeding morning proving fine, the sketching-party was talked over at breakfast. Mr. Austen prepared pencils for his daughter, and desired her to make an attempt, however rough. The Miss Wiltons were irresolute: "they did not know whether they should go or not. It was a dull sort of thing: to be sure Lady Jane would expect them; she might think it strange, and perhaps Frances would not like to go without them, as she was almost a stranger to her ladyship."

“Do what is agreeable to yourselves,” said Mr. Austen: “my little girl is of no consequence; she is a child, and can have no other object in the excursion, but of being permitted to share its pleasure, without breaking-in upon the employment or conversation of the party.”

“Poor child,” said Caroline, laughing, “I think you had better resolve to remain with me. We will practise quadrilles. Tell me, Frances, shall you and I give up this dumb meeting?”

“Frances has no voice on the occasion,” observed Mr. Austen; “she must accompany me.”

“Caroline is only jesting,” said Mrs. Wilton; “she intends to go:—You will both go;” she added, nodding her head; “for I wish, if possible, to make up a little dance before our friends leave us; and I wish you to learn how Lady Jane’s engagements stand.”

Thus commanded to do what they really wished, the young ladies accompanied Mr. Austen and his daughter. They



found Lady Jane employed ; but Marian, with all her quick-sightedness, could not make out the address of a letter which she saw put into a small band-box, and carefully placed upon a slab. The act was unimportant, and too common to excite curiosity ; and it would have passed, had not her ladyship, in a low voice, said something to Frances, which called forth a ready assent and a pleasant smile.

While the party were collecting their drawing-materials, Marian sought an explanation from her cousin. Now the Miss Wiltons had not gained upon the esteem of their visitor since the first two or three days. She had found them uniformly disposed to laugh at every one ; they could not allow merit in any of the young persons of whom they spoke ; and, though very anxious to know every body's business, and almost rude in pressing their inquiries, they frequently repressed *her* simple questions, with "Don't be curious, child ; children should not ask questions." The spirit of retaliation

seized Frances at this moment ; and, in a cheerful tone, she begged Marian would not be curious, &c.

“You are quite ridiculous,” said Marian ; “*What* could Lady Jane say to you, that need be a secret?”

“Aye, that is the question,” said Frances, laughing ; “but I cannot stay, papa is beckoning me.”

The party now took their positions. Lady Jane, in compliment to the Miss Wiltons, did not join in the pursuit ; but with great good-humour divided her attentions, sometimes looking over Frances, and frequently applauding the very great ease of her pencil. Mr. Austen’s sketch proved a happy one ; and her ladyship, with unfeigned delight, pointed out its chief excellencies. “It wants some of your ladyship’s touches in the foliage of this oak,” said Mr. Austen, pointing to the drawing. “The tree wants body,” said Lady Jane.

The Miss Wiltons instantly pronounced the tree to be the best thing

they had ever seen expressed by the pencil. Mr. Austen smiled, but made no reply to them : Lady Jane looked a little abashed. "If I rightly recollect," said Mr. Austen, "you are the lady who, when your drawing-master added some touches to your drawing, annexed his name to your own in the corner?"

"It was one of my whims," returned Lady Jane, laughing; "I guess who told you of it; but I always disliked that things should be represented as mine, when they were not my entire performance."

"I admire the principles which dictated such a reproof," replied Mr. Austen; "the practice you condemn is too common: were all young ladies to adopt your plan, we should see indeed fewer finished performances, but this would be compensated by the approbation with which we must contemplate every effort of an understanding so amenable to justice."

"There is very little merit in acting



honestly," returned Lady Jane, laughing; "I should as soon think of purloining the apparel of another, as accepting praise for an action I had never performed."

Mr. Austen looked his delight: even Frances paused to regard the manner and voice in which this sentiment was uttered.

"Charlotte Percival is not quite so strict as you are," said Miss Wilton; "she used to make us laugh at the fine things that had been said to her about her drawing. We learnt of the same master, and we know he always took them home to fix, as he called it; but his junior pupils could scarcely recognize their own attempts after they had been in his hands. He did not, of course, pursue the same method with his elder scholars."

"Are you sure of that, Caroline?" asked Mr. Austen.

"We should have detected it, sir,"

returned Caroline; "nor could it *always* be necessary."

Lady Jane did not laugh; but the arch glance Frances directed towards her had nearly disposed her to do so. "I must defend my friend Charlotte Percival," observed Lady Jane; "she certainly has submitted to the deception you describe; and, with her usual vivacity, enjoyed the eulogiums bestowed upon her 'want of capacity,' as she called it; but, having a great regard for her, I took the liberty of pointing out the disingenuousness of the practice: she was soon convinced; and from that time has never permitted her attempts in drawing to be touched-up by her master."

Pleased with this defence of her friend, Frances exclaimed with energy, "Charlotte loves *you* better than anybody; she told me so."

"And I am very fond of Charlotte," said her ladyship, smiling; "she is a very amiable girl."

Frances sighed : she wished she could find herself included in the list of those her ladyship thought amiable,—but she felt *she* had no claim to the good opinion of Lady Jane ; and the pain this gave her, was augmented by the recollection of the weakness by which she had so lately been led to unite in the sarcasms levelled at her by the Miss Wiltons. It might have been expected, that a mind so open to conviction, so conscious of its departure from right, would not hesitate to adopt a happier line of conduct. Yet Frances Austen was not singular in the tardiness here displayed. It is but too true, that a certain portion of false shame will frequently prevent the best purposes of the unsteady character ; and they who do not blush to do wrong, will, from a feeling which they denominate *shame*, defer the effort that would bring peace to themselves, and confer happiness on all interested in their welfare.

A mistake more palpable, more self-



evident, cannot be adduced. Nor can that really be called *shame*, which deters the erring from embracing the path of virtue. It is pride of the worst kind ;— a pride condemned in every page of that Volume which was written for our learning. The Scriptures are not more infallibly the rock on which our hopes of future happiness must be founded, than the sure and certain guide for our conduct in this life. To what page of Holy Writ, then, must we refer, for a precedent favourable to pride of heart ? for a decisive proof that we may go on in our sins, without endangering more than the present hour ?

A mere infant could refute so unwise an inquiry, — from the hymn lisped in the nursery, to the prayer selected, when reason dictates its suitableness to our hopes or fears ; all, and each, bear the same character, and decidedly assure us that we must “depart from evil,” before we can hope for the favour of a just God.

The Miss Wiltons, mindful of their

mamma's commission, endeavoured to ascertain the engagements of Lady Jane; but, unwilling to appear too solicitous on their own account, they judiciously suggested it, and as occasioned by their mamma's wish to amuse their cousin. "And, as the poor child had few opportunities of dancing, and was not well taught, they hoped her ladyship would oblige them by joining a small party any evening on which she might be disengaged."

"I cannot have that pleasure," replied Lady Jane; "we are going a visit into Kent; and, I regret to add, I am not to dance any more this season, by advice of Dr. ———."

"How provoking!" poutingly said Caroline; "what a bore it must be to you to give up dancing. I am sure you look very well; but those odious doctors always contrive to make us miserable."

"I am not angry with Dr. ———," returned her ladyship, laughing; "he knows my constitution much better than

I do myself; and my father thinks I have danced enough for this year."

"Frances, you will lose your ball," said Marian, turning to her cousin; "*we* were anxious you should have a little hop, but you see it is not practicable."

Frances was a stranger to the whole plan; so she had nothing to say. Lady Jane laughingly declared it was improbable to suppose, her being unable to accept the invitation of Mrs. Wilton would spoil the projected ball.

Mr. Austen said, "he feared he should be classed with Dr. ———, and ranked with those who liked to make people miserable; for he must be in London in three days, and Frances could not, consequently, partake in the proposed enjoyment."

Thus disappointed in their object, the Miss Wiltons grew impatient to return. "The air was chilly: they hoped Frances did not think of finishing her sketch that day; their mamma would be lonely; and



they begged a servant might order their carriage.”

Mr. Austen gave the necessary orders. The party returned to the house; and, while partaking of some refreshment laid out for them, Lady Jane addressed herself to Frances. Marian saw the box which had excited her curiosity in the hands of her ladyship: she heard Frances express her willingness to take charge of it; and when, on taking leave, Lady Jane called a servant to convey it to the carriage, she saw her cousin step forward and decline his interference, saying it was small, and she would carry it herself. Marian's anger was roused: she scarcely knew why; but with a sneer she remarked, “that Frances was quite a child, and of all things liked to be employed in any thing that looked like business.”

“It is so natural, at least, it is what I always enjoyed at her age,” replied Lady Jane, “that I can understand her feelings.”

“Your ladyship appears to entertain that respect for the feelings of others, which is the best test of the correctness of your own,” said Mr. Austen; and bowed as he attended his party to the carriage.

“Shall I guess the mighty mystery contained in this?” said Miss Wilton, roughly shaking the box Frances had placed in her lap. “It is some present to your Miss What’s-her-name, your governess, is it not?”

Frances replied in the affirmative; and at the same time requested her companion not to overturn the box, as she believed it contained articles that would be injured by her doing so.

“Don’t be frightened, child,” cried Miss Wilton; “I would not expose you to the anger of that lady; *we* know she can be magnificently grand upon occasion: but tell me, Frances, does she not place Lady Jane before you as a model for your imitation? Dear me, how you

colour, child! don't despair; you may in *time* reach that height; so have courage."

"Miss Colville never said anything of the kind to me," replied Frances; "but, since I have seen more of Lady Jane:" — she paused; for her father's eye was steadily fixed upon her.

"Why do you hesitate, Frances? What would you say, my dear," said Mr. Austen.

"Why," replied Frances, "that I am sure Miss Colville must wish me to resemble one who appears so truly amiable and accomplished; but do not suppose I have the vanity to think *I* could ever compare with her."

"Thank you, my dear girl," warmly exclaimed Mr. Austen; "you anticipate my wishes: to see you appreciate worth in your own sex, is highly gratifying to me; and, though nature may have denied you that clear understanding, and those general abilities, with which her ladyship is so eminently endowed, be assured, that diligence and perseverance



will effect much. No doubt there are persons who will tell you, that, to endeavour to form *your* character upon a plan purely imitative, is bad; that the *natural* character will in such case lose its genuineness, while the acquired one will want originality. Such reasoning is erroneous: education either improves or deforms the natural character; its influence must eradicate the imperfections inseparable from unassisted reason, or, by its injudicious application, confirm our ignorance. Who amongst us reaches even adolescence, without undergoing some change of character and dispositions."

"But I hope we are not all obliged to be fictitious characters?" said Caroline, pertly: "I hope there are persons who possess feelings and principles of their own."

"These are general attributes, my dear Caroline," returned Mr. Austen. "It is of the good principles, the kind feelings, I am speaking. You disclaim all idea of imitation, Caroline; yet, it

might be easy to convince you, that you are no stranger to this practice in trifling matters? Then why should it be derogatory to your feelings, to copy that conduct which in itself is amiable, and procures to its possessor so much internal satisfaction?"

"People," said Miss Wilton, "see with different eyes; perhaps, what you admire, sir, may be very far from my ideas of goodness or excellence, or whatever you please to call it."

"I do not wish to find young ladies able in argument," returned Mr. Austen, smiling; "on the contrary, I rejoice, when, like yourself, they betray the weakness of their positions. It is true, our stricture refers to an individual; yet you, my dear child, are giving the subject a point, exerting an energy, which I regret to perceive. You will say I am presuming: had Frances been absent, I might not have said so much; as it is, I am so persuaded of the universality of *imitation*, that I should have thought

myself criminal, had I permitted her to listen to opinions so ill-supported and dangerous in their tendency."

"What change this box may have produced in your sentiments I know not?" said Marian, turning to her cousin; "but you did *not* think so very highly of Lady Jane; indeed, you agreed to all we said and thought of her."

"I have been wrong, very wrong," said Frances, while the tears streamed down her cheeks; "but, indeed, if you will recollect, I only laughed at your descriptions of Lady Jane; I did not speak disrespectfully of her. I think Caroline will allow that I acknowledged I had been much mistaken concerning her ladyship; and I then told you how completely Miss Colville accounted for my not understanding her character."

"Do not make yourself uneasy," said Caroline, taking her hand; "really, my dear Frances, we are all much to blame for wasting our time in this way. Come,



dry your eyes, mamma will be alarmed if she sees you look pale.”

Mr. Austen reserved his remarks for a more convenient opportunity ; so, by the time they reached Mount Wilton, no traces of the late scene were visible in the countenances of the party.

A slight relapse had nearly been produced, when the Miss Wiltons announced their ill success in arranging the projected little ball. Mrs. Wilton declared it was insufferably rude in people to hold back as the Bloom-Hill family always did ; for her part, she had often said she would not ask them again ; now she was determined *they* should make the first advances.”

Mr. Austen spoke of his departure ; and begged if he could be useful in executing any commissions that Mrs. Wilton would command him.

“Are we then to lose you so soon? this is sad intelligence,” returned Mrs. Wilton ; “and really, for your dear girl’s sake, it is a great pity. It may be

conceit; but I positively think she is much improved since she came among us;—she has caught Marian's manner."

Mr. Austen almost started. "She has, I can assure you," continued Mrs. Wilton; "a mother's eye, you know, is wonderfully acute." Mr. Austen did not seem to acquiesce in this assertion.

"So you *must* go! Well, then, now about the masters; you will find the persons I recommend very superior in their respective departments; in fact, they are the only people employed by a certain rank; and" —

"My dear madam," said Mr. Austen; "such persons cannot want *my* patronage. You must excuse me, if I decline your well-intended recommendations; I have no idea of making any alteration in the plan at present in progress for the advantage of my child. I shall return home, more than ever convinced that the kind friend to whose care I have committed my daughter, is admirably qualified for the charge. If

I meditate any change at all, it is that of yielding her up to Miss Colville entirely. That lady has often told me 'that I am prone to make Frances a holiday pet, while it was her object to make her my rational friend.'

"You are wrong," returned Mrs. Wilton; "and you will repent placing implicit confidence in a person of that description. The dear child's spirits too;—you have no idea of the hazard to which you expose my poor little Frances:"  
——and Mrs. Wilton kissed her young relative, and whispered her to "beg papa to let her stay with them till Christmas: he could then come for her."

Frances was placed in an awkward dilemma: she could not prefer a petition; she had no wish left to attain. She had been long enough at Mount Wilton, to feel all the value of the home to which she was returning; and, though no actual unkindness had been done her, the volatility of her cousins had led her into faults she was ashamed to acknowledge



—even to herself. She hoped to unburthen her heart to the friend, whose advice at parting now seemed almost prophetic. “She had *not* thought before she spoke;” “avoided the fault of hasty judgment;” “refrained from talking of the concerns of strangers;” or “remembered how lately she had lamented her defalcation on these several points.” As this review passed through her mind, her courage rose; and, with a manner firm but respectful, she confessed “she should not be happy, if separated from her father;” adding, that “she likewise wished to return to her regular lessons.”

“You have frightened the child,” said Mrs. Wilton, addressing Mr. Austen; “such sentiments are not at all natural at her age. I believe few mothers (though I ought not to say so in their presence), have more reason to be satisfied with the attainments of their children than myself; yet, I confess, we have had many thorns in our path,—many difficulties in our progress; but

you see *what has been done?* Indeed, my dear sir, we must allow, that our present enlightened mode of education necessarily imposes much fatigue, considerable mental effort: that children should shrink from a system, which in some particulars seems to abridge that personal liberty so much prized in the season of juvenile health and spirits, is quite natural. *We* know it is for their good, therefore we persevere; but that a *young* person can really take *pleasure* in the system, is certainly out of the question. My sweet love," continued Mrs. Wilton, patting her young relative on the cheek; "we do not expect *you* to *like* your lessons; you like them, because you know it is dear papa's wish that you should be clever and accomplished; but you know you would rather play, and dispose of your time according to your own pleasure: would you not, Frances?"

"I have nothing to do at home but

what I like, ma'am," said Frances; "I have as much leisure as I desire."

"Astonishing docility!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilton: "mark that, girls!" addressing herself to her daughters. "Well, if this lasts, I have nothing to say; but, my dear Mr. Austen, you must be vigilant. I suspect there is some negligence in the plan at present pursued; remember mere mediocrity will not do in these times: being an only child, much will be expected from her."

"I hope not," said Mr. Austen, laughing; "happily, there is no danger of my daughter's being conspicuous in any way: did I conceive it possible that she should disappoint my expectations, and become the sort of being you describe, it would give me real concern; nay, I believe I should make her retrace her path to childhood, and adopt some other system, that would make her effectually unlearn all she had imbibed."



“Understand me, my good sir,” returned Mrs. Wilton; “I do not wish our dear Frances to be a wonder. Oh, no! I have seen enough of that sort of thing, to dislike it as much as you do; our neighbour Lady Jane has surfeited me in this way; and, between ourselves, there is something vastly unfeminine in a girl’s professing a predilection for studies that belong exclusively to the other sex. No, it is not the study of algebra or geometry that I would wish your daughter to pursue;—she must be a musician, an artist, a linguist; and the accomplishment of dancing must not be omitted. Now all this is a very arduous undertaking, and necessary, if she wish to equal those of her own rank.”

“But, suppose my daughter has neither taste nor talents for the acquirements *you* deem essential,” returned Mr. Austen; “would it not be a deplorable waste of time and money, to compel her to learn these things? admitting it

to be fair that she *should* attempt what is usually thought requisite in female education. I consider it unfeeling as well as useless, to make mere embellishments compulsory. I might regret the deficiencies in her natural taste, which made her indifferent to pursuits which, if *moderately* pursued, are pleasing and harmless; but, if she evinced a desire to learn those of a more abstruse kind,—if she preferred figures to music; I see no objection to her devoting a portion of her time to algebra. Geometry might also in the same way employ some of her leisure hours, while the pursuits of a female are quietly followed: so long as we can believe she is interested in them for themselves, and not with any view to their placing her above others of her age; so long they are innocent, and claim our respect. Every intellectual exertion repays the diligent inquirer. The returns are not immediate. I grant it is in after-life that the treasures of a well-stored mind remunerate their pos-



essor ; and believe me, my dear madam, we do well when we apply education to the pupil, in place of expecting a general system to be of use with creatures as various in their capacities as their features."

"I have done," said Mrs. Wilton ; "I perceive this dear little treasure is to be reared upon the Milner-plan ; but nothing can be more erroneous, and you *will* yet find *I* am in the right."

"The Milner-plan, as you are pleased to call it," returned Mr. Austen, smiling, "can only prove efficient where similar intellect is discoverable. Frances gives no promise of being able to vie with that charming and elegant young person. On the contrary, I see much that requires correction. She must learn to feel and act correspondingly, before she can be classed with any other than the most frivolous and unthinking of her age."

Frances stood abashed : her heart was full. Her father saw her distress ; and, as



he drew her affectionately to his side, said: "It may appear harsh to tell you thus much before your cousins, but they have witnessed your errors. Your friends here consider you with indulgence, and will, I trust, place your foibles in the most favourable light; and, though I cannot accuse myself of any intentional neglect as a father, I look back with shame on numberless omissions, which my mistaken fondness led me to believe were proofs of affection. Henceforth we will be guided, Frances; the means are in our power, and we will avail ourselves of them."

The conscious Frances was soothed by this appeal. Uncertain as are all our projects for the future, the human mind as gladly grasps at the promise it holds out, as it fearfully shrinks from all unpleasant reminiscences.

The Mount-Wilton family now looked forward to the departure of their visitors as a period that would release them from a fatiguing restraint. The young

ladies were infinitely amused when alone in talking of their quizzical relative. They agreed it was a pity Lady Jane should remain ignorant of Mr. Austen's good opinion; but they did not promise to be the bearers of his sentiments. For poor Frances they felt the utmost compassion, more especially as she was *not* a girl of talent; and they readily concluded the child would be *bored* to death with study, if not sent to a premature grave.

That the Miss Wiltons really thought as they said, is questionable; for Caroline, in her cooler moments, had more than once pronounced Frances "a sensible girl, and by no means so unmodern as she had expected to find her."

While they were engaged in a new reading of their cousin's character, Frances was employed in apprizing Miss Colville of her father's resolution to return home. As she took her pen for this purpose, all the awkwardness attendant upon epistolary delays pressed on her mind. She had promised to write



frequently—*voluntarily* promised; for Miss Colville had not exacted it of her; and yet she had only written once since her arrival. After some uncomfortable thinking, and a trifling waste of writing-paper, she expressed herself thus:

“MY DEAR MISS COLVILLE,

“I am quite ashamed of myself; and, if you had not the best reasons for doubting my word, I would *promise* never to make a promise again. But I know you disapprove engagements in girls; so I will only say I am sorry for it. We shall be in Harley-street on Friday; and I hope to find you as willing to overlook my neglect, as I am sincerely delighted at the thought of seeing you again. I have much to tell you; pray be prepared to hear that I have been *very, very* faulty since we parted; and, what grieves me more than I can describe, I am sure my papa is not satisfied with me. He has looked so grave, and spoken to me in such serious terms, that I never felt so



unhappy in my life. You shall know all when we meet. Lady Jane is at Bloom-Hill. I have seen her, and she was extremely kind to me. Will you have the goodness to order dinner for us: we hope to reach town by six o'clock. My papa presents his best compliments; and I am,

My dear Miss Colville,

Yours affectionately,

FRANCES AUSTEN."

*Mount-Wilton; Sept. 17th.*

Indefinite as was the confession contained in this letter, Frances felt more satisfied with herself when it was dispatched; and, when her cousins joined her, she was able to meet their raillery with cheerfulness.

"So you have been writing to your governess," said Caroline; "what could you say to her? I suppose she expects you to express great pleasure at returning to your studies;—is not that the word, Frances?"

"Not the word she likes," replied

Frances; "for she laughs at it, and says it is almost affectation when applied to girls."

"Then your duties!" interjoined Marian; "am not I excellent at a guess? But really, child, you *will* write remarkably well," looking at the superscription of Frances's letter; "and without lines too: why it is only very lately that *I* could scribble a note without ruling my paper."

"Miss Colville objects to letters being ruled," returned Frances; "she said it was only by practice I could conquer the habit of writing uneven, and I could not begin too early."

"How provoking it must be," said Marian, "to have one's writing torn up, which I suppose was your case at first, Caroline? If poor Marsden had proposed such a plan to us, how black we should have looked."

"I think so, indeed," observed Caroline, laughing; "but, to do her justice, she did not trouble us much with plans, which was all the better; for your syste-

matic people are very fatiguing,—great bores. Don't you think so, Frances?"

"If I understand the meaning of the word *systematic*," replied Frances, I think people may be very pleasing, though they may think it necessary to pursue a regular plan in their habits and conduct."

"How like an old woman you talk," exclaimed Caroline, laughing; "but I see you are pleading the cause of your governess. It is quite unnecessary with us, my dear; we know her to be a great quiz."

"It is so impossible to please you by any thing I can say," retorted Frances, "that I shall not attempt to set you right respecting Miss Colville. *She* must know *you*; yet I never heard her speak of you; though you say you never took any notice of her from the day Lady Jane declined your ball-invitation."

"She could expect nothing else from us, after such rudeness," returned Miss Wilton; "and I think it would have been



rather presumptuous, had she ventured to give an opinion concerning us, more especially to you, who are our relation."

Frances looked as though she regretted the reserve Miss Colville had adopted on this subject; yet she had the good sense to understand the liberality which dictated it. Greatly as the Miss Wiltons relied upon their talents for ridicule, they were not satisfied that Frances was affected by their wit. They had tried her in all ways; had laughed at those she esteemed,—misrepresented one she was inclined to admire; and, though they had brought her to laugh with them upon more than one occasion, it was evident she soon receded from their dictation, and was ashamed of their temporary influence. Such a girl was more likely to humble them, even with their mother, whose mind was by no means so easy on their account as her parental gentleness too often represented it to be. On the contrary, Mrs. Wilton was beginning to find

her system of education somewhat imperfect: her authority was frequently opposed, and her partial praises of them as often adduced in argument as proofs of her *internal* satisfaction; though she thought it judicious to stimulate them to exertion, by affecting her disappointment.

On one of these occasions Frances had been present; and, upon Marian's pertly denying that more money had been expended upon them than upon most girls in their station of life, she exclaimed, "Oh! Marian,—it is your mother that speaks!" Convinced of her error, she instantly apologized to her cousin, and ran out of the room. Mrs. Wilton was touched by this trait of just feeling; and, in all her subsequent views for the improvement of her young friend, was heard to say "that Frances was a child of excellent sense and good feeling, and that her anxiety to see her *finished* by a certain polish of manners, &c. was greatly increased since she made her out:" as she termed it.



Mr. Austen was firm. It really appeared that his visit to Mount-Wilton had given a new bias to his judgment. He saw the fallacy in suffering *fashion* to influence or guide education;—that two girls, whom nature had destined to be the comfort of their widowed parent, were, in reality, the causes of much silent anxiety; and, while he exonerated Mrs. Wilton from any intention of leading him into a similar mistake, he was compelled to wonder how she could continue to prize things unessential in themselves, and in their result so unsatisfactory, in her own family.

“Good sense and good feeling,” exclaimed he one day when Mrs. Wilton had so designated the character of Frances; “my dear ma’am, we must not decide too hastily; what more is requisite to form a perfect character? Good sense is reason adorned by industry and reflection; and the good feeling which such training must produce, is that species of equity which teaches its possessor



to do as they would be done by. Is not this the perfection of human nature ;— that the point to which it is wisdom to aspire, but presumptuous to claim ?”

The inconsistencies which mistaken tenderness will lead too-ductile parents into, instantly led Mrs. Wilton to press the necessity of making Frances accomplished, according to the fashionable interpretation of the word. “She trembled,” she said, “lest the dear child was only to be made good and amiable ; and she entreated that her studies might be diversified :—so many hours given to music, so many to drawing, &c. Let her study history in all its branches ; without that, you know, a woman now appears a Hottentot in society.”

“I will consult her future happiness no less than her capacity,” returned Mr. Austen : “she shall read ; and I shall hope to see her acquire that taste for the highest of all intellectual enjoyments, that may ultimately make it a source of pleasing reflection and certain profit. A

late excellent divine\* has remarked, that 'man's wisdom hath filled innumerable volumes; the Gospel is comprised in one:' it shall be my endeavour to make her comprehend the value of *that one*. I will, if possible, teach her from it to feel her obligations as a Christian; and, if afterwards she *can* depart from its precepts and the practice it enjoins, who will then dare tell me that she possesses sense and good feeling?"

To dissent from opinions thus seriously avowed, was impossible; nor did Mrs. Wilton attempt it: her heart told her it was a system that lay open to all, and could not conscientiously be disregarded. She sighed, as she allowed that the earlier years of her daughters had been directed by a female of an erroneous faith: her plan had retarded, or delayed, the religious part of their education. She supposed all children were alike; for she had not found them fond of

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\* Dr. Gilpin, prebendary of Salisbury.

serious reading, as they might have been, had they applied themselves to it early.

With sentiments that *appeared* to be so diametrically opposite, though they were in reality more in unison than one party felt inclined to allow, there followed a visible restraint on their behaviour. Mr. Austen was unwilling to urge opinions that glanced at the oversight of a fond but mistaken mother; while that mother evidently shrunk from an analysis of her feelings. They parted. Frances returned to her home; and Mrs. Wilton seriously proposed to herself the adoption of the very plan she had recently avowed to be unsuccessful with her daughters.

Frances met Miss Colville with unfeigned warmth. A brief but faithful account of all she had said and done was poured to the ear of her governess. Miss Colville, smiling, declared she must take time to separate the chaff from the wheat.

“Oh! I have been wrong altogether,” said Frances; “yet believe me, dear



Miss Colville, I had no sooner erred than I discovered my fault."

"I do believe you," observed Miss Colville; "for conscience is an active monitor: the heart will condemn us for a wrong act, though all the world applaud."

"It will indeed," returned Frances; "but in *me* it was very wrong; for you know I had previously regretted my prejudices, and acknowledged that they had no foundation in truth."

"Few prejudices are founded in truth, Frances," said Miss Colville; "and it is the conviction of this which adds to our criminality in retaining them. Now observe the contrast. I cannot imagine your manner towards Lady Jane to have been very engaging, yet hear how she speaks of you." Miss Colville produced a letter from her ladyship, and read as follows: "I like your pupil much; she appears intelligent and amiable; I believe I told you so much, after meeting her at my aunt's. I have seen more of her here.

The Miss Wiltons cannot agree with me respecting her abilities: I did not venture, in consequence, to broach the subject; nor was I qualified to do so: for how could I know her dispositions or attainments, from the casual interviews I had with her in London? It was in a morning-visit at Bloom-Hill I discovered her to be a very pleasing, sensible girl. I have asked Mr. Austen's permission to let her accompany you hither at Christmas: he made no objection, and I shall hope to see her with you.'

"How kind, how very good!" said Frances: and the tears stood in her eyes. "Please to read that part again, about judging of dispositions at first sight." Miss Colville complied.

"How liberal!" continued Frances; "so she really thought favourably of me when we met at Mrs. Percival's; and at that moment I was seeking to find out her defects! Lady Jane must indeed be an amiable girl!"

"She thinks and acts properly upon

most occasions, my love," returned Miss Colville; "and is naturally disposed to take the fairest view of things generally. I should have thought her illiberal, had she decided upon your character at a first interview. But only reflect, Frances, had such been her disposition, how disadvantageous the result would have proved to you!"

"She would have despised me," said Frances, "could she have formed an idea of my meanness."

"I hope she is incapable of despising any thing but vice," returned Miss Colville; "your expressions are strong, because your feelings are roused. We must correct this habit, my love; but, while we are upon the subject of prejudices, let me add, that their indulgence, as connected with our happiness in this life, are highly dangerous; and, though we may forget their injustice, there yet is something lamentable in seeing people thus making misery for themselves. What peace can that



mind enjoy which is always judging its fellow-creatures, perverting their thoughts, and misconstruing their actions? An existence so carried on must be wretched; but to see infants in the ways of the world putting themselves forward as censors, calls up the most painful considerations. I am willing to grant that their ignorance, the peculiarity of their judgment, may make the assumption of the task of such criticism appear ridiculous; yet, believe me, habit is a dangerous encroacher; and the girl who sets out by decrying the faults of her sex or fellow-beings, will never render herself estimable to the better part of it."

Among the minor difficulties that marked this period of Frances's life, was the embarrassment she felt respecting her cousins. She knew not how to couch her opinions of their general behaviour, their unrestrained way of speaking of every one; and, above all, the very pointed language they had

used whenever her governess had been mentioned. To be silent on subjects that really occupied her mind, and on which it was so natural she should speak, required more prudence than Frances Austen possessed; nor was it desirable that a reserve so great should exist between persons living in their relative situation. But *how* to begin, was the question. Happily Miss Colville spared her this difficulty, by inquiring if the Miss Wiltons were going to France, as she had heard they intended.

Frances could not answer this; but the opening thus presented was not lost. She wondered her governess had not told her she knew the Miss Wiltons. "They know *you* very well;"—and she endeavoured to translate from the expression of Miss Colville's countenance what effect this information produced. All was calm and good-humoured: her governess seemed to retain no recollection of their rudeness.

Perhaps, after all, they are like me, thought Frances; and can say rude things of people distantly, while they appear very civil in their presence.

“Miss Wilton is very handsome,” said Miss Colville; “and her sister has the finest countenance I ever saw.”

“I think them both beautiful,” observed Frances; “and they are reckoned highly accomplished; but” — She paused. “There is no harm in saying what one really thinks; is there?”

“Not if we think well of a person, or the occasion demands us to speak what we know,” returned Miss Colville, smiling; “ours is only common chit-chat; therefore you have no right to give me an *unfavourable* impression of the party.”

“I hope I did not intend that,” said Frances; “yet I should like to ask you a few questions. Did *you* think my cousins very accomplished when you knew them? Were they polite in their manners? And do you believe that



Caroline's foot is smaller than Lady Jane Milner's?"

Miss Colville could not avoid a smile at the last question; it was one she had heard before contested, but greatly to the discomfort of Caroline Wilton. Her unfortunate shoe-maker had lost her favours for having asserted, and immediately after proved, the impracticability of forcing a short broad foot into a slim well-proportioned slipper. "I did not consider the young ladies particularly successful in accomplishments," said Miss Colville; "they appeared to want the chief qualification to success in any pursuit—perseverance. They tried every thing; but, with the exception of dancing, I do not think they can be said to be accomplished."

"Now then I may speak out," said Frances. "You know as well as I do, that Lady Jane excels them in that art too; but that's nothing. Marian plays the harp prettily; and, since

she has learned to touch that instrument she has entirely given up the piano, though Mrs. Wilton wants her to keep up the practice. She told papa Marian had had more than two hundred pounds expended on her music masters and mistresses : is not that a pity ?”

“It is very ungrateful in a child to resist the wishes of her parent, certainly ;” returned Miss Colville.

“Drawing they neither of them like,” continued Frances ; “yet they make comical sketches sometimes. Do you know they can draw such laughable caricatures, and such likenesses, that you would know the persons instantly. They drew one of Lady Jane, and one of her papa. I was quite vexed with myself ; but indeed it was impossible to help laughing at them ; that is, at the first sight.”

“I pity the girls who can find pleasure in the exercise of a talent so unamiable,” said Miss Colville ; “your

laughing at a design of the kind, is by no means extraordinary ; we are all more or less affected by the sight of things ludicrous ; but I hope you did not partake of their error, by applauding that which really deserved reprehension ?”

“I did not,” replied Frances ; “for I was so sorry at having laughed, that I begged them to shut up their portfolio, and I declared I would not see any more of their caricatures.”

“That was delicate, Frances,” returned Miss Colville ;—“the very best reproof you could have given them. We are all liable to be involved in the mistakes of others ; and the only assurance we can give that our minds are not similarly disposed, is by openly dissenting from the principles we disapprove. You must yet be aware, there are situations in which this may be done without saying a word. The case in question, however, I can readily believe to have been too prominent to



admit of silent dissent; I therefore commend your candour?"

"I am sure you know more of my cousins than you choose to avow," said Frances, smiling; "you understand their dispositions so exactly. You are quite right in saying silence would not do with them; for when I turned away from the caricatures, and was looking at some views in Marian's book, they still kept holding up different likenesses to me, and begged me not to cry at seeing dear Mrs. Musgrave in her Sunday-gown. Many other sketches of visitors I saw; so I was at last forced to say what I have told you."

"Of the Miss Wiltons I had certainly formed a decided opinion previously to your visit, my dear," returned Miss Colville; "but to have impressed you unfavourably against persons to whom you were then a stranger,—a family connected with your late excellent mother, would have been most unjust. Exertion and time might have im-

proved them ; and had I spoken as I really thought of them, should I not have committed the very error I had endeavoured to correct in you? How could you be certain I was not prejudiced? No : I avoided this ; but I prepared your papa to meet two handsome girls, with quick lively imaginations, and an uncommon flow of language, considering their years. I at the same time pointed out those traits in their dispositions most likely to affect a girl of your temper ; and I suggested the necessity of his guarding you against a foible very usual at your age, that of imitating the whims and caprices of a new acquaintance, which, recommended as I knew they would be by the vivacity and personal beauty of your cousins, were likely to catch your attention, if not more."

"How well you know my disposition," said Frances, laughing ; "I own I thought the Miss Wiltons the most delightful girls I ever saw ; in-



deed, I was so much pleased with them the two first days, that I could do nothing but admire them. I almost thought papa unkind ; for, when I spoke of their beauty, and called him to admire their accomplishments, he called me a silly girl, and desired me not to speak of things I did not understand. Now you have explained what you said to him before we left home, I can account for his being so indifferent to my remarks. Indeed, I soon altered my opinion respecting their abilities ; my papa only laughed at me when I said so, and begged me to think again, if I did not mean the *attainments* of my cousins when I spoke of their abilities."

"Your eagerness to speak frequently leads you to express yourself ambiguously, my dear," said Miss Colville. "In the instance you have related, it must be evident you did not express what you intended. But allow me to observe, the Miss Wiltons, in this particular, seldom commit themselves. I do not say that I



like to hear girls give their opinions as they do ; yet I must confess, they seldom use expressions that are not applicable to the sentiments they would impart."

"But you say it is vulgar to call every thing a bore," rejoined Frances ; "and they do that constantly ;—indeed, they make use of many odd phrases. Papa was very angry with me for saying I did not care two-pence about a walk we had projected one morning, but were prevented from taking by a shower of rain. He asked me where I had learned such vulgarisms? I could not reply ; for it was Marian who was always saying so : and more than once she said papa was quizzical, and that I should be a perfect fiddle by the time I came out."

"Then I fear your cousins have not acquired steadiness of character since I knew them," said Miss Colville. "Eloquence, like any other natural gift, may, by bad taste or vanity, lose its value. The phrases you adduce are certainly inelegant ; and, though you may perchance

hear them repeated in the society of grown persons, you must avoid contracting a habit of imitation. They cannot be justified; though I allow they prevail where better things might be expected. There is a sort of fashion in all cant words, which may for the most part be traced to the stage. There, however, they are assigned to some prominent personage, some character that is to be conspicuous from its affectation or its ignorance. In private life, no such motive can or ought to be observable. If a man fall into this error, he becomes a mimic, a buffoon; while a female, who adopts this sort of language, loses sight of that delicacy which should be distinguishable in all she says. It is, in fact, masculine; and, whatever bears that character, must be unfit for women."

"I agree with you," said Frances; "my cousins do express themselves very well sometimes; and I almost

envy them in one particular,—they have such excellent memories.”

“The Miss Wiltons have been unfortunate in being brought forward so early in life,” returned Miss Colville. “When mere infants, they were permitted to give their opinions upon subjects that could neither improve their intellects, nor give real satisfaction to those who listened to them. I think they would have been intelligent girls, had their understanding been cultivated; as it is, I fear their poor mamma has yet to experience the disappointment usually consequent on all cases of extreme and undeviating indulgence.”

“But, is it not very wrong to indulge children so much?” asked Frances.

“Were you to put this question to your cousins, Frances,” returned Miss Colville, “they would deny that they had been indulged more than other girls; nay, you have adduced one instance in which Marian Wilton said



something similar respecting her music. Does this contradict my assertion? or is it not favourable to what I have often told you, that indulged children are seldom grateful to those who, through mistaken fondness or affection, certainly intended to make them happy. This, however, cannot soften the deep, the complicated guilt of those who, forgetting their obligations to their parents, presume to blame the conduct of their early guardians. Yet I have known many who have

“O’erstepped the modesty of fearful duty.”

I pity them: the hour will come, when they will deeply lament the breach of a commandment, which *never* yet was broken without ultimately producing the most poignant grief in the transgressor.”

“Suppose a girl was to perceive that her parents indulged her too much,” said Frances; “I mean a grown-up girl: what ought she to do, if she feels their

tenderness does harm in place of good?"

"I can scarcely imagine such a case, Frances," returned Miss Colville; "if by tenderness you would signify an anxious parent, one who devotes herself to her children; if such a mother meets in her daughter dispositions that are not soothed by her kindness, and grateful for her care, I should say that the mother perhaps erred in bestowing her affections so unreservedly; but the child must be deficient in common sense and common feeling, if she did not value the attentions of a mother; her heart must be insensible, or her temper unamiable."

"Yet I am almost certain Caroline Wilton," said Frances, "thinks her mother has been too indulgent to her. She said as much; but, for all that, I know she loves her mamma; and, when she looks pale, and has those terrible head-achs she is subject to, I never

saw any one more wretched than Caroline.”

“I consider this very possible, my dear,” returned Miss Colville; “for it is then Miss Wilton is conscious that she has failed in her duty; and this, added to the alarm which the indisposition of a parent must always excite, makes her unhappy.”

“Might not a daughter try to improve herself, and strive to correct the foibles which indulgence had occasioned?” asked Frances.

“Safely; and such an attempt would do her honour,” replied Miss Colville; “provided that vanity, an opinion of her own method and plans, did not suggest the effort. I do not expect young persons to be blind or indifferent to what is passing before them. We are constantly calling upon them to exercise their reason, and correct their judgment, by detecting the fallacies, and pursuing the real ornaments, of existence. For, contrary to your maxim,



Frances, life is one scene of imitation ; and happy are they who select the best models ! But, in this laudable endeavour, we must guard against that pride of heart which self-correction is too apt to inspire. Nor must he who has seen the evil of his ways erect himself into a judge of others. By departing from what is erroneous, we prove our desire to amend. It is not possible to look back upon mispent time, errors of temper, or want of duty, without regret. But the radical improvement of a mind thus awakened must be doubtful, if, in his new character, he throws all the blame of his past life upon his advisers. There must have been something in our own breast which aided the impression given,—a something that suited the then temper of our mind.”

“I think *I* shall not be spoiled by indulgence,” said Frances, with a languid smile ; “I only hope papa has not seen any thing so very wrong in my behaviour as to lessen his love for me.”

The tears rose in her eyes as she ventured to express a fear so wounding to an affectionate heart. Miss Colville quieted her doubts; and, while she expatiated on those points in her conduct which had justly excited alarm in the mind of Mr. Austen, she did not allow her pupil to feel too certain of herself. "From false indulgence, my dear child, I trust I have saved you," she continued; "yet who will dare to say the motives of your papa were not such as he thought would conduce to your happiness? Your situation, as a motherless girl, imposed an arduous task upon your remaining parent; deeply sensible of his own loss, your father beheld in you a little helpless being, whose claims were enhanced by the deprivation she had sustained: and while you grew into power, and usurped rights it had not entered his mind to confer, he unconsciously ministered to that self-will, which would, in time, have made you arrogant, if not ungrateful."

Conversations like these, resumed as circumstances favoured their introduction, produced the best effects on the mind of Frances Austen; for, though she had been successively treated as a woman and an infant, during her visit at Mount Wilton, she was of an age to be pleased by those appeals to the understanding, which are too often withheld from a fear of damping the spirits of youth, or wounding their sensibility. The spirits of children are generally in proportion to their health; and reproof, however offered, seldom makes any lasting impression.

Of sensibility, in its true acceptation, children possess very little;—simply because this quality of the heart embraces a much wider field of action than can attach to the half-formed mind of youth. It is allowed, that the *seeds* of this “gracious quality” are *sometimes* found in children; but it is asserted, that they are often



choked in their growth by the injudicious culture of too indulgent friends. How common is it to hear obvious selfishness thus miscalled! and the child who displays the deformity soothed, and almost persuaded to continue the practice. The memory of childhood, as connected with external circumstances, is, for the most part, brief and indefinite. Let *self* interpose, and their acuteness is wonderful! The whim that has succeeded; the humour that proved effective in procuring the object for which it was adopted; how readily do they suggest themselves at the moment of need!—and the young adept, clad in his fearless armour, opposes himself to the veteran in years.

It may be said this language is harsh, and inapplicable to children; it is maintained to be just, that even infants will elicit this species of address; and that we are all in the habit of encouraging them to pursue a system,

which, if equally prominent in after-life, would render them artful and hypocritical.

Human life, that brief tale, so often told and so constantly forgotten, is but the record of commissions and omissions; and, while the former are held up to view, as partiality or malice shall dictate, the latter escape the notice of the commentator; when, in truth, it is our omissions, those minor oversights which our pride deems too insignificant to deserve consideration;—it is these which poison the sources of human happiness, and render us unworthy of our calling as Christians. Temper, which, like the current coin of the realm, is the medium through which most of our comforts are procured, is so little cultivated at that season when improvement is easy, and success almost certain, that it is needless to wonder that we prove “light in the balance,” and become counter-

feit, when we might have been sterling and real.

Were the young from infancy taught to love virtue for its own sake,—were they strangers to rewards for well-doing, by which those bribes which inculcate avarice are meant, and which set a price on things that should have their source in innate principle; much that disfigures our nature would be never seen.

Mr. Austen, though delighted to perceive the mind of his daughter expanding, became cautious in his commendations: her society was now his solace; and, while her cheerfulness charmed many an hour that had formerly been passed in solitude, he was vigilant in detecting all approaches to levity, either in her language or manner.

The peculiarities of age, the infirmities or deformities of her fellow-creatures, if Frances imitated or derided either, his displeasure was marked and serious; nor was he less particular in



regard to that custom now so prevalent—quizzing.

“That you are liable to the insult you offer, is no excuse for its practice,” would he say; “the indulgence of a taste of this description is particularly unbecoming a female: it occasions her to talk more than she should do;—her language must be suited to her subject; consequently, it becomes mean; and from such habitual volubility the mind easily descends; so that the female who had given promise of something better, will, from adhering to this habit, sink into a common trifler.”

In the latter part of the autumn Marian Wilton announced the intelligence Lady Jane had partially intimated. Mrs. Wilton proposed passing the winter at Paris; and Marian detailed her anticipations in this trip with all imaginable warmth. Her postscript, however, which was somewhat diffuse, gave Mr. Austen some alarm.

“Is not Caroline a great quiz?” said the giddy writer. “She *was* in extacies at the idea of our trip; *now* she wishes we were not going; and complains of her side, and *fancies* she has a cough. Fortunately she has enjoined me to secrecy; for, as mamma is as pleased at going as I am, she is afraid it might delay, if not do away the project altogether, if mamma thought her at all indisposed. You may be sure *I* shall keep the secret.”

“You see *how far* a thoughtless disposition may lead those who really love us!” said Mr. Austen, as he returned Marian’s letter to his daughter. “These girls are warmly attached to each other; yet one consents to keep a secret, that may prove fatal to the other. I will not say that a selfish feeling influences your cousin; but I consider her not only wrong in the concealment, but faulty that she does not immediately impart all Caroline has said of herself, with such particu-

lars as she may have observed connected with her sister's health."

"But would it be right, sir, to betray a secret?" asked Frances.

"Poor Caroline erred in making such a request of her sister, my dear," returned her father; "her motive for so doing evinces self-denial; but it is committing a second fault to keep a criminal promise; and affection should have dictated to Marian the propriety of apprizing her mother of a fact so serious.—I must take that upon myself," continued Mr. Austen, "since Marian is so imprudent."

Frances started; and, after a moment's pause, said: "If you look at this part of the letter, sir, you will see Marian hopes I shall keep its general contents to myself."

"In which she was extremely absurd," returned Mr. Austen, smiling; "my daughter's correspondents *must* be *well* known to me;—*she* can receive no letter that I ought not to see;



and, when a juvenile correspondence becomes mysterious, it ceases to be desirable. In the present instance, Marian has unintentionally explained enough for me to act upon; and, as I see a prospect of bringing my plan into action, I will spare your feelings upon this occasion. I shall invite Mrs. Wilton and her daughters to pass a week with us, preparatory to their trip; I shall make my own observations on the health of Caroline; and offer an opinion accordingly."

Frances was greatly relieved by this arrangement: she dreaded the raillery of Marian, who, she well knew, would consider this breach of confidence as one of those lamentable weaknesses connected with her character of "a primitive little quiz."

That our modes of expression are not always applicable, or illustrative of the ideas we would convey, must be obvious to all who attend to the common run of conversation. But

certainly there cannot be a greater solecism than that of calling Frances Austen “a primitive little quiz.” Habits of order, an attention to her language, or that preciseness in her personal appearance, which might have procured a designation of this description, were not to be found in Frances.

It was rather by contrasting what she had been, with those gleams of just thinking and gentle forbearance which were beginning to shew themselves in her manner, that led to the distinction here described: and, as it is the province of the witty to see trifles in that point of view that shall make them conspicuous and absurd, Frances had upon numberless occasions borne the character of a quiz, when, really, she was only the selected victim of a quizzer.

With all her knowledge of the Miss Wiltons’ talent for ridicule, Frances felt sensible pleasure in the idea of receiving them as her guests. Change is always

agreeable to the young: she had many curiosities to shew them;—her cabinet of shells was allowed to be valuable;—her specimens of stones considered rare: and in her hours of leisure she was actively employed in arranging her treasures to the best advantage.

Mrs. Wilton accepted the invitation; and the party were expected in a few days.

On the evening previous to their arrival, Mr. Austen was surprised by a visit from a young gentleman of the name of Douglas. He was the son of an officer on service in the East Indies. His guardian, an Irish baronet, had accompanied a party to Paris, and wholly forgot to make any arrangement for the disposal of Charles Douglas during his absence. He had left him at a public school; but a vacation, always a season of joy to the young scholar, had occurred. Douglas repaired to the house of his guardian; and with feelings of dismay



learned he was absent, and his return uncertain.

In this dilemma he waited upon Mr. Austen, and, with an air as unembarrassed as he could command, requested his protection for one night; as it was his purpose to return to —— the next morning. Mr. Austen received the overture with readiness, applauded his application, and with hospitable warmth proposed his remaining in Harley-street during the holidays. Douglas blushed, and hesitated: he was ashamed to confess how congenial such an arrangement would be to his feelings.

Mr. Austen saw the struggle, and decided that it must be so. “I will make no apology,” said he, “for lodging you in an attic; it would be an affront to a school-boy; who frequently rejects comforts, that he may enjoy life according to his own irregular taste.”

Douglas, laughing, declared “he could sleep any-where; but at the same time hinted his fear that his present ap-

plication looked so much like seeking the invitation proposed, that he believed he must reject it, however agreeable."

Mr. Austen silenced the scruples of his young friend ; and Douglas was immediately established in Harley-street for the vacation.

Late in the afternoon of the succeeding day, the Mount-Wilton family arrived. The greetings of the young people were lively. Caroline seemed in good spirits ; and Mr. Austen hoped his fears for her would prove groundless. In the first interchange of How-d'y's, it could not be expected that a person in Miss Colville's situation should be remembered. Marian, however, after examining the drawing-room, and admiring all she saw, whispered an inquiry, "Where is your governess? will she dine with us?"

"Miss Colville prefers her own room," replied Frances. "She declines mixing with company whenever she can do so conveniently ; and papa begged she

would do as she pleased while our friends were with us."

Marian smiled at her sister, and in a subdued voice said, "How *we* shall all grieve for this lady's absence." Caroline shook her head, and begged her sister to remember what their mamma had said upon that subject. "Oh, Frances, come here," continued Marian, "I have great news for you; Caroline is getting so good, you cannot think. She calls me Madcap, and I call her Goody Graveairs; so we are even." It was agreed that Frances should pass her mornings with Miss Colville, as usual; after which, if the reports of her governess were satisfactory, she was to join her cousins.

Marian disliked this arrangement; and with her usual aptness decided that the fastidious governess had projected this mode of depriving Frances of an enjoyment that would otherwise have been permitted. She appealed to Mr. Austen whether Frances might not have



holidays while they were in Harley-street.

“Frances has no time to lose, Marian,” said Mr. Austen; “consider, my dear, she was at Mount Wilton three weeks: her afternoons shall be at her own disposal while you favor us with your company; but even this indulgence she must earn. She knows the terms; and I am persuaded thinks them equitable.”

Disappointed in her object, the undaunted Marian soon found an opportunity for facilitating an association which she greatly desired, viz. a meeting with Miss Colville. The motives which influenced her, would not, if explained, do much credit to her heart or understanding; as such, their delineation will not be attempted.

Miss Colville and her pupil dined at the usual hour. Marian begged permission to take her luncheon with them. Mr. Austen assented; convinced that this volatile and incorrigible girl would in Miss

Colville meet that firmness and amenity of manner which must for the time silence the mere babbler. He apprised Miss Colville of this little arrangement, and begged her to endure it no longer than was perfectly agreeable to herself.

Poor Marian imagined that Miss Colville's recollections of the Mount-Wilton family must have left certain impressions of awe; and an unwillingness to mix with persons who *had* evinced their contempt for her must be the consequence.

Such were *her* prepossessions. Had Miss Colville been called to give her sentiments upon this knotty point, the case had been reversed. She might have hoped to perceive an improvement in their understanding, and perhaps imagined that a better knowledge of themselves must by this period have taught them, that politeness is not made for any particular rank of life; that all persons whom we meet in respectable society have a claim to our civility; and

wherever this is dispensed with, the defaulter is the degraded party.

Unswayed by such principles, because a stranger to those niceties by which polished intercourse is distinguished, Marian rushed into the eating-room at the appointed hour ; and, nodding a sort of half-recognition, took her place at table. Frances blushed, and seemed ready to apologize for her guest ; but contented herself by saying, “Marian, what an odd girl you are :” at the same time glancing at Miss Colville.

“I intended to bring you another oddity, my dear,” returned the volatile girl ; “but Caroline is grown so shy, I could not persuade her to come.” “What excellent potatoes !” the intruder exclaimed, taking one from a dish at some distance from her, and dipping it in the salt she had elegantly strewed upon the table-cloth.

Frances was all eye ; and, between her desire to reconcile Marian’s actions to that “oddness” to which she had



alluded, and her wish that Miss Colville might see it in the same point of view, became so embarrassed as to excite the attention of Marian.

“Ah! Frances, I see you are shocked at my *gaucherie*; but recollect, my dear, our forefathers did the same. For my part, I should like to revive some of the old customs; it is certainly quite natural to use one’s fingers, and much more safe. Don’t you think so, ma’am?” The latter sentence was addressed to Miss Colville, with an ironical expression of countenance.

“That the practice is *natural*, does not admit a question,” returned Miss Colville, smiling; “for, wherever man is found in an unenlightened state, the custom obtains. That it is worthy of imitation, is not so certain.”

“Oh! then, I suppose I am very naughty,” said Marian; “but I won’t spoil Frances, if I can help it.”

“I do not fear your influence in this particular,” said Miss Colville; “but,

will you allow me to send you some chicken, ma'am."

"If you please," said Marian; "but positively, Frances, if it was not that I have an amazing affection for you, I should be tempted to take this bone in my fingers; it eats so much sweeter; and, at a luncheon, you know, one does not attend to the graces; at least, it is not of consequence. Are you quite sure you can resist such a naughty example?"

"Marian, you are so ridiculous," said Frances gravely; "Caroline may well call you Madcap."

"I dare say *you* will permit Miss Wilton to enjoy *her* luncheon, my dear?" said Miss Colville; and, taking it for granted, turning to Marian she added, "I beg, ma'am, you will use your pleasure."

Marian was rather disconcerted; she had hoped to vex Miss Colville: it did not appear that she had succeeded. A new attack must be made; and her

fertile disposition suggested an infallible specific for the purpose.

“At what hour, Frances,” she asked, “did your papa say we should have the carriage? You *know* we are to have yours to-day; ours is gone to the coach-maker’s to be made ready for travelling. Can you tell? was it at two or half-past?”

Frances did not know.

“I hope mamma,” continued Marian, “will call in Portman-square. I am dying to see Lady Jane. It is true, I assure you; so you need not look so full of wonder, child. Would you believe that such a pattern-lady could condescend to follow us in any thing?” Miss Colville could not resist a look of incredulity. “Yes,” said Marian, “she actually has done so; she has had a dress made after one of Caroline’s, and a pelisse exactly like mine.”

The smile with which Frances received this important information dilated into a downright fit of laughter, as she caught the countenance of her governess;



for even Miss Colville seemed to put some restraint upon herself, to guard against the error of her pupil. But the half-imploring look she directed towards Frances, as if entreating her to spare the giddy babbler, so completely deranged the mortified Marian, that, with some asperity, she inquired "what she had said that was so very ridiculous?"

"I must deprecate your indulgence for Miss Austen, ma'am," said Miss Colville: "her expectation was somewhat raised; and, unfortunately, the *denouement*, as I imagine, reminded her of a circumstance somewhat similar; one with which we had both been greatly amused."

Nothing could have been more vexatious than this apology; which, to the irritated Marian, seemed invented to mortify her. The very idea of such an insult from a person she considered so much beneath her, roused all her resentment; and, with a bitterness she could not controul, she said, "Of course; none

but an idiot can be surprised by a common occurrence; it is the contempt one feels for the people who set themselves so much above others. I detest such affectation; but I always knew she was a great quiz."

"If such be the case," returned Miss Colville; "I think it must be satisfactory to you to find your prediction so fully verified: for, *next* to the pleasure of giving certain attributes to particular persons, must be the conviction that our judgment is correct."

Marian stared: this was not like a vindication! What could she mean! perhaps the party was mistaken. To place this beyond a doubt, was now her purpose; yet there was a something in the manner of Miss Colville that led her to distrust the efficacy of her ridicule. It is probable she would have paused here, had not the features of Frances seemed to express satisfaction at her temporary defeat. This was not to be endured; so, rallying her spirits, she half-

smiling, observed, "Indeed, I am not so illiberal as to increase the eccentricities of the lady in question: all who know Lady Jane Milner must know she is a great quiz."

"May I ask you to define the meaning of this fashionable expression?" said Miss Colville calmly: "I have heard it applied variously; but, perhaps *you* will illustrate it so as to convince me of its fitness in the present instance."

"O dear; well, I declare I had almost forgotten that you lived with Lady Jane," returned Marian. "Of course, it cannot be pleasant to you to hear her laughed at; but indeed she is a very strange girl: every body thinks so."

"Ah! that indefinite mischief-making phantom 'every-body,' who is indeed nobody," cried Miss Colville, laughing; "I have not the least respect for his talents: he is cruel as a flatterer, because his praise is injudicious; while, as an enemy, his prejudices, though contemptible, are dangerous."



“I do not quite understand the expression,” said Frances; “though I often hear it used.”

The word ‘every-body,’ my love,” observed Miss Colville, “is sometimes used to convey the praise or censure of a small number of persons who *may* have flattered or debased an individual; but it is more frequently adopted by an individual as a vehicle for disseminating his own *private* sentiments, which are favourable, or the reverse, as his disposition suggests.”

“You are much wiser, Frances, for this explanation,” interjoined Marian, with a saucy sneer; “but, whatever this lady may say, you will find that ‘every-body’ will stand its ground.”

“I am sure you are right, ma’am,” said Miss Colville; “for the expression is convenient as an ally, and formidable as a subterfuge.”

“How warmly you espouse the cause of Lady Jane,” exclaimed Marian, smiling. She ought to be much obliged to

you. To be sure, I might have expected you would be angry at my finding fault with your favourite pupil; but I never *can* think before I speak; it requires more tameness than I possess."

Miss Colville made no reply; but an expressive glance at the speaker, seemed to imply that she did not give implicit credit to her statement.

Marian felt this; and was meditating how to extricate herself from a predicament she had not anticipated, when the entrance of a man-servant checked her eloquence.

"Lady Jane Milner is at the door, ma'am," said the man, addressing Miss Colville; "and, if you are not particularly engaged, would be glad to speak with you."

Miss Colville bade Frances dismiss the dinner according to custom; and, slightly curtsying to Marian, followed the servant to the carriage. There we will leave her, and attend to the occupants of the eating-room.

If ever Frances Austen felt satisfied with herself, it was at this moment: her feelings were new, but delightful; she had no thought she wished to hide; and, with that openness so natural and pleasing in the young, she approached the window, desirous of catching a glance of recognition from Lady Jane.

Not so Marian: her mind was agitated; all was tumult in her bosom; and, (such is the meanness of the merely proud,) she half-regretted having suffered Miss Colville to depart, without requesting her silence respecting the freedom of her opinions connected with Lady Jane. It was now too late; and for a few minutes she seemed absorbed in her own reflections; till, hearing the window thrown up, she turned, and saw Frances kissing her hand with all the cordiality of a familiar acquaintance.

“Do pray put down the sash,” said Marian petulantly; “you think only of yourself; it is a cold wind;—do you hear me, Frances?”



“I do,” replied Frances; “but, indeed, I cannot put it down just now; Lady Jane is looking this way; when she turns, I will. But you had better go nearer to the fire.”

“Come here, Frances,” coaxingly said Marian; “I want to speak to you; I have something very particular to say.” Frances felt at liberty to accede; for her ladyship had intimated by the motion of her hand, that she had better avoid the keen air.

“Well, Marian, what have you to say?” inquired Frances. “Why,” returned Marian, “do you think Miss Colville is the sort of person who would repeat what I have been saying of Lady Jane? You know one says a thousand things without thinking;—at least I do, because I am naturally giddy; yet, of course, one would not like such trifles to be told to the party.”

“Miss Colville is too kind to do any thing ill-natured,” replied Frances; “but indeed I must say, Marian, you behaved

very rudely to her. However, I am sure she pities you; nay, I saw she could hardly refrain from laughing at you more than once."

"Indeed! really!" returned Marian; "I should not have thought of that; I admire the idea of *such* a person laughing at her su——." She paused; for Frances, anticipating her words, with a good-humoured laugh begged her to desist. "Now, my dear Marian, do not talk nonsense," said Frances; "I was very sorry for you; but indeed you looked foolish when Miss Colville asked you to explain yourself. Yet she did it politely; but I know so well how uncomfortable one feels when a sensible person presses for an explanation, that I was quite vexed you had brought it upon yourself."

"Why I never heard such nonsense as you talk, Frances!" returned Marian warmly. "Do you suppose I am to be awed by your governess? You shall see I am not afraid of her or any body."



Mamma said you were in a way to be spoiled; and I am sure she is quite right."

The entrance of Miss Colville abridged the acrimony of the young reviler; who, with an address lamentable in one of her age, assumed an air of indifference, and began to lament the non-arrival of the carriage. Frances proposed adjourning to the drawing-room; and, as she followed her visitor, she, in a fearless voice, "hoped Lady Jane was well?"

"I never saw her look better, or in better spirits," replied Miss Colville. "She offers her congratulations to you on the important change in your hair; and begged me to say she saw the tortoise-shell comb; and, judging by herself, could imagine your happiness on this great event."

As they reached the drawing-room, Mrs. Wilton, followed by Caroline, crossed the stair-head.

"Indeed, mamma, I should be quite satisfied by Marian's choice; I am not



particular about the colour," said Caroline. Mrs. Wilton did not seem disposed to yield: on perceiving the dinner-party, however, she advanced. "My dear Marian," she exclaimed, "I hope you have made a good luncheon. Ah! sweet love!" and she kissed Frances. "I hope you are well, ma'am;" and she curtsied distantly to Miss Colville. The latter was so much surprised by the alteration in the looks of Miss Wilton, that for a moment she could only confine her observation to one object. Mrs. Wilton took the direction of her eye; then, suddenly addressing Miss Colville, she asked permission to speak with her in her own room. Miss Colville led the way: "I entreat you, madam," said Mrs. Wilton, "to tell me candidly what you saw in my daughter that made you regard her with so much earnestness?"

Miss Colville hesitated: the alarm of the mother was evident in her countenance; yet she felt, that insincerity might prove injurious to all parties. Thus

occupied, though unwilling to give pain, she inquired "if Miss Wilton was not out of health? I perceive a delicacy in her complexion, ma'am," said she, "and an expression of languor in her features, which certainly did not belong to the young lady when I saw her at Mount Wilton."

"Mr. Austen has nearly destroyed me by his observations this morning," said the agitated parent; "but, if you see it too, there must be something in it! Did you ever witness the earlier symptoms of decline? but yet don't tell me, if you have; I believe I shall lose my senses. Still, if the dear child was ill, she would complain. Some people give way to fancies; I never was one of those persons; the little tour I propose will divert her spirits. The only change I perceive in her, is an unwillingness to take her usual exercise."

Mrs. Wilton, though she appeared to discredit the fears of others, was really anxious to hear something that should



disperse those that were actually taking root in her own mind. This sort of self-delusion is confined to no particular disposition ; and is as often found in the well-constructed mind as in the frivolous ; and, while under an influence so distressing, the heart must be callous that does not sympathize with the sufferer.

“I am glad to hear you say your spirits are not easily depressed, ma’am,” said Miss Colville ; “I do not offer advice ; but, as Miss Wilton is less disposed to exertion than formerly, it would be satisfactory to consult some man of eminence, before you take a tour that must be attended with some fatigue.”

“Well, that might be as well ; it can do no harm,” said Mrs. Wilton ; “perhaps you would assist me in contriving some little plan for introducing a physician without her knowing his profession.” Miss Colville thought such a stratagem unnecessary ; and she said so. Mrs. Wilton persisted in declaring it was indispensable with Caroline ; for, “two years



since, she had been ordered to wear flannel; and the poor child was made quite nervous and irritable before they could bring her to conform to the advice of the doctor consulted." It was at length agreed that Mr. Austen should undertake the arrangement; and the ladies parted.

Miss Colville was soon summoned to the drawing-room. Mrs. Wilton had gone out alone; and Mr. Austen requested her presence, not choosing to leave the young people alone.

Marian and Frances were at one of the windows, when Miss Colville entered; Miss Wilton sat with the book in her hand, but it was closed. Mr. Douglas was drawing at a library-table. The latter, with Frances, offered her a chair. Miss Wilton bowed politely; but the bow was half suspended by a reproving shake of the head, which the ill-concealed gestures of her sister appeared to have called forth. Miss Colville took out her work, and pursued it in silence. Frances,



Douglas instantly presented it: it was a Copy of one of Westall's Illustrations of \_\_\_\_\_ Poems, done in an excellent style.







now as much alive to any thing she considered rude as she had before been indifferent, approached her governess.

“You do not look comfortable here,” said she; “I must settle you in your right place:” and, taking a small work-table, she moved it nearer to Caroline, and begged Miss Colville would “oblige her by removing to it.”

“Willingly, my love,” said Miss Colville; “you know I do not exact attentions; but I am very amenable to civilities.”

“Will you excuse my going on with this drawing?” said Douglas: “I want to forward it to my sister.”

“I beg you will pursue your study, sir,” replied Miss Colville; “perhaps you will favour me with a sight of your sketch, before you inclose it.”

Douglas instantly presented it: it was a copy of one of Westall’s Illustrations of — Poems, done in an excellent style. Frances was all admiration. Miss Wilton asked to look at it; and

Marian glanced over it: each gave their opinions with freedom.

“Drawing must be a great delight to you,” said Miss Colville to Douglas; “there is some satisfaction in using a pencil to such effect. I think Mr. Austen has some Views you would admire; we will get them ready for your inspection to-morrow.” Douglas expressed himself grateful for the offered attention, and resumed his pursuit.

“Come here, Frances!” said Marian; “now look at this man; he is a tradesman; I see it in his walk. See how he carries his arms, and how fearful he is of splashing his boots. There, that man is a teacher of some kind or other; I know it by his umbrella. See how he looks at his watch; he must walk by time: what a bore that must be!”

“Scratch the Tenth,” said Douglas, laughing; “that is the tenth liberal opinion you have vended since you took your stand at that window. I am taking notes for you.”



Miss Colville was scarcely more surprised at the flippancy of Marian, than the freedom of Douglas's observation.

"You know I always was a great chatterer," returned Marian; "you used to laugh at Roche and me, and say we were scandalizers."

"Not quite so bad as that," said Douglas; "at least, whatever I might say of Roche, I certainly could not mean to infer that any lady could resemble him."

"Roche is extremely clever," said Miss Wilton; "I am sure I never heard a boy more generally admired: he has so much to say upon every subject."

"I do not deny that," returned Douglas, smiling.

"What illiberal creatures you boys are," said Marian; "we have the advantage there at least;—girls never depreciate each other. I wish" ——— She paused; for Miss Colville looked up; and, as her eye passed from Marian to Frances, the native blush which crim-



soned the cheek of Miss Austen, seemed to carry a silent reproof to the vain boaster.

“O dear, I suppose you are condemning my preaching, as inconsistent with my practice,” said Marian, undauntedly; “but really, my poor Frances, if my stricture on Lady Jane is to be brought against me, I shall not be very miserable; for I am not singular there, as I have before told you.”

“Marian,” said Miss Wilton; “I thought mamma had spoken definitively upon that subject; but your spirits carry you away.” Miss Wilton looked towards the party, as if offering an apology for her sister. No one appearing to accept it, she then turned towards Miss Colville; and in an under-voice, added, “though my sister does not appear to have it, I can assure you she has a great deal of sensibility.”

“Indeed!” said Miss Colville. Caroline felt mortified: her opinions had always been received with deference;

consequently the 'indeed!' of the governess, spoken as it was in a dissenting tone, was peculiarly offensive. It seemed to impugn her judgment where *she* did not think she could err. "Perhaps you think liveliness incompatible with sensibility?" she asked. "I know many people entertain such an idea; but it is quite erroneous."

"On the contrary," said Miss Colville, "I consider cheerfulness an essential attribute of real sensibility; for I do not speak of this quality as a weakness but a virtue; and, to form the character of pure sensibility, there must be the union of benevolence, gentleness, principle, and that necessary spur to all useful exertion—an active mind: this is seldom discoverable where cheerfulness does not preside."

"When I speak of sensibility, I include of course all this," said Caroline: yet she spoke doubtfully; and as though she was not disposed to pursue the argument.

“My feelings are wonderfully interested for this poor man,” giggled Marian; “positively he has been disappointed in getting an order;—here is my tradesman trudging home again!” Douglas approached the window. “Is that the man you have tied to a trade?” said he. “It is Colonel ——, a brave officer, and a man of very high family.”

“You must be joking,” said Marian; “there, that man *is* a gentleman; you see it in his carriage.”—“That is my dancing-master!” exclaimed Frances, laughing.

“You are conspiring against me,” said Marian. “Now here is an old quiz of a woman. Oh dear, she’s spying out the numbers; I declare she is crossing over. Is she a friend of yours, Frances? I cannot say much for her elegance. Hark,—a double knock! Well, I declare I should have expected to have seen her go down the area.”

Footsteps were heard; the door open-



ed; and a servant announced "Mrs. Cox—to call upon the Miss Wiltons."

Caroline started from her seat; Marian stood aghast.—So complete was their surprise, that, had not Miss Colville offered a seat to the stranger, the young ladies would never have thought of such an attention.

"So my cousin is out, I find," said Mrs. Cox. "Poor dear, I arn't seen her since your pa died. You don't remember me, loves; but I should have known *you* any where. Yes, Miss Carry is the very moral of what my cousin was at her age. Well, dear, your mother did very well by her pretty face; I hope you wont do worse. Yet you look puny too. So I hear you are going to France.—I'm sorry for that;—but ma knows best, I suppose. She was a monstrous 'cute girl. How long have you been in Lunnun?"

"Only three days, ma'am," said Caroline.

"And this is Marian!" continued

Mrs. Cox. "I declare you are taller than Carry. How could you be so undutiful as to outgrow your elders?" And so saying, she drew the shrinking Marian towards her: "when do you expect," she went on, "ma back. I am afear'd I mus'nt stop for her; for you see I have taken my place in the stage; so my time's not my own; but, however, you must tell her what I say; will you?"

Marian muttered something, but it was not intelligible. Mrs. Cox continued: "Well, tell ma that her cousin Cox called to see her; that I heard of her being in town by the merest chance in the world. I went to my dress-maker's; and there I saw a bonnet that I liked. So I told her to make me one like it; so then she said, it was odd enough I should take a fancy to that, for she had just sold it to a relation of mine." Caroline groaned audibly. "What's the matter, love?" Mrs. Cox exclaimed; "for certain you are not well; I must persuade ma to let you come and stay at High-

gate, and breathe the fresh air. I'm a capital nurse—though perhaps I ought not to say it. But I was telling you about the bonnet. Mrs. Parsloe is an old school-fellow of mine; so she knew the moment ma gave her address that we were relations; so I thought I would just ask her how she did. Tell her I shan't be in town till next Friday, but I hope she will spend a day with me before she sets off on her tower."

"I will deliver your message, ma'am, punctually," said Marian, with an ill-concealed sneer.

Mrs. Cox rose. "I ought to ask pardon for the freedom I have used in calling here," said she; and she curtsied to Miss Colville; "but I could not resist such a convenient opportunity of seeing my cousin." Miss Colville replied politely; and Mrs. Cox took leave.

A silence of some minutes ensued: it was with pleasure Miss Colville saw Frances take out her work, and seat herself quietly at her side.



“I wish I had followed that woman down stairs,” said Marian; “I am convinced she is an impostor; nor should I wonder to hear she had purloined something in her way out.”

“I do not agree with you,” said Caroline; “she *is* what she represents herself I have no doubt. I wonder we never heard of her. Do *you* think she is an impostor?”

This latter sentence was addressed to Miss Colville, who, uncertain of its application, hesitated; and Miss Wilton repeated her question.

“I see no reason for discrediting the lady’s assertion,” replied Miss Colville; “her appearance bespeaks that degree of independence which makes imposition unnecessary.”

“We are vastly obliged to you, ma’am, for this very conclusive mode of settling our family connexions,” returned Marian; “but I trust you will find yourself mistaken. I dare say the woman thought we should pay her stage-

hire, or give her a meal;—though, to do her justice, she does not look as if she was starved.”

“What are you laughing at, Douglas?” she continued; “come, confess, is it not my cousin Cox?”

“It is not,” said Douglas; “I was laughing at Mrs. Cox’s cousin—Miss Marian Wilton.”

“Really, you are too civil, sir,” returned Marian; “I wish the woman had had more tact—as Miss Edgeworth says; but such low creatures never think of any body but themselves. She might have written to mamma, and asked if she would receive her;—that is, if she is the person she says—but I doubt it altogether.”

Douglas smiled, but said nothing. Marian, like all angry persons, could not bear even the silence of the less interested party; she would have been more satisfied had some one argued with her; nay, she almost desired to hear Miss Colville’s sentiments more at large. A

new and happy light broke in upon her at this moment;—if Mrs. Cox was *really* connected with them, she must be similarly so with Frances. Charmed with this discovery, she asked Frances “how she relished the idea of her new-found cousin?”

“That’s true, Marian,” said Frances; “I wonder the lady did not say something of our connexion.”

“The *lady!*” echoed Marian; “what a farce; I wish mamma would come—I long to hear what she will say.”

Marian did not wait long: Mrs. Wilton arrived, and was followed into the drawing-room by a servant with a milliner’s box.

“Oh! my bonnet, I suppose,” said Mrs. Wilton; “put it down; no, take it to my maid.”

“I must see it,” said Marian, taking the bonnet from the servant. She dismissed him, saying “she would take charge of it.”

Marian now pretended to examine it



minutely; then said, "this may become you mamma, but really it is too juvenile for your cousin Cox: and she gave an arch glance at the company. I cannot reconcile myself to her coarse features under a costume like this."

"Has Mrs. Cox found us out?" asked Mrs. Wilton, with calm indifference. "Well, we must be civil to her, girls;—she is immensely rich; and, I believe, I am her nearest relation."

Then she *really* is a connexion of yours?" asked Marian. "I was positive she was a swindler; but, dear me, it cannot be necessary for us to notice this person."

"I beg your pardon, Marian," returned her mother; "I shall call upon her before we leave town. Her appearance, I grant, is not very elegant; I know she is illiterate, but her heart is good; and, as I said before, she is rich;—we should none of us object to a share of her property. These unreflecting girls attach so much consequence to ex-

ternals," Mrs. Wilton continued, addressing Miss Colville; "but none but those acquainted with the world, would suppose I should be indifferent to a matter which involves the interests of my children."

"But I should suppose this person considers Frances Austen her cousin as well as us?" asked Caroline.

"No, my dear," replied her mother; "Mrs. Cox is *my* mother's niece; and I can only account for her ignorance and very vulgar manners, by imputing it to the marriage of her mother; who, when advanced in life, became the wife of a rich old citizen. Mrs. Austen was my father's connexion;—our fathers were brothers. But do not be depressed, Caroline;—a rich vulgar connexion is infinitely preferable to being tormented by proud paupers—whom one never can please."

The Miss Wiltons did not appear to be convinced by the reasoning of their mother. Their consequence was

wounded where they were most amenable; and not the least part of their vexation was that which exonerated Frances from a participation in their degradation.

“These things are quite common, my loves,” resumed Mrs. Wilton. “By the way, Douglas, your friend Roche, (who is certainly one of the cleverest young men I ever saw,) amused me excessively one evening, by trying to persuade a very eccentric old man that he did not spell his name right. Yes, he almost prevailed upon the credulous man to believe that his name was Roche, and that they must be connected. I whispered to him that Mr. Rochet *had* been in trade; though his riches procured him his present place in society. This only increased his desire to please Mr. Rochet; and I really believe your friend would have made a sensible impression upon the old man, if Roche had not touched upon his descent from the monarchs of Ireland. Poor Rochet had an antipathy



to the Irish ; and he became intractable from that moment."

"Roche is just the fellow to venture in such a hoax," said Douglas. "His effrontery is extraordinary ; but, having no wish to be included in his frolics, I cut with him some time since."

"He has so much spirit," said Caroline ;—"I wonder any young person should dislike him ; indeed, I heard he was a favourite with every body."

"He was not much liked at ——," returned Douglas ; "*his* spirit was not to our taste."

"You surprise me," said Mrs. Wilton ; "there is something so attractive in vivacity, especially in the young. I cannot understand how such a disposition could fail to please those of his own age."

"He is by no means cheerful," returned Douglas. "Roche was the only fellow at —— whose fits of gloom used to annoy us ; he never was lively, but

when he had some joke in hand, or some practical hoax to play off."

The entrance of Mr. Austen caused Douglas to pause. "Who is this hoaxer?" said he; "I hope you are not a patron of this sort of wit, Douglas; for it cannot be effective but at the expense of some one's feelings; and certainly always to the degradation of those who profess the practice."

"My dear Mr. Austen," said Mrs. Wilton; "what can you expect from boys? For my part, I love their little tricks; nay, I am persuaded that most of our great men were 'Pickles' in their youth."

"Great men," said Mr. Austen, laughing; "ah! there's the rub. What do you mean by great men? I know the ladies are fond of superlatives; so I say that he is the greatest man who unites goodness to intellectual superiority. Now such a man cannot delight in wounding the feelings of others, simply because he would not do that which

is unjust. His own sensibility will always dictate what is correct; for he knows exactly what he himself could bear."

"Sensibility!" reiterated Mrs. Wilton; "who desires to see too much of this in your sex? Indeed, I cannot bear to hear the word applied to a man."

"Indeed," said Mr. Austen, smiling; "that is because you do not take the word in its true acceptation. Believe me, my dear madam, sensibility is not a feminine attribute, but a quality designed for all reflecting creatures. Marian smiles—but yet so it is. Come, be ingenuous," added Mr. Austen, taking the hand of the incredulous Marian: "you understand sensibility to be a tearful young lady weeping over fictitious sorrow, tenderly alive to every thing connected with self; sensitive upon all occasions in which timidity is becoming. In short, you know her in her holiday garb; which, after all, is a borrowed one. I do not deny that under the



disguise she does not sometimes pass current with slight observers; but these are not the real characteristics of poor insulted sensibility."

The eyes of Frances had more than once glanced towards Miss Colville, as Mr. Austen thus expressed himself. Caroline Wilton looked disconcerted; the sentiments of Mr. Austen seemed too like those she had recently attempted to combat; and she rather dreaded any farther development of his opinions.

"So much for the unreal, the *ostentatious* semblances of a quality which we are all prone to *think* we possess;" continued Mr. Austen. "Marian is weary of my prosing; but I owe it to you, Frances, to say something more:" and he threw his arm round his daughter. "A case in point presents itself. A young lady was this morning making purchases at a superior kind of grocer's, where certain luxurious sweets are to be had. She was buying articles for her father's table, and might be supposed to be too

much engaged to hear what other customers were requiring. This however was not the case. A meanly-dressed female asked if they had any genuine arrow-root; the answer was in the affirmative. The price was the next question: the answer seemed to give the inquirer surprise; but, after a little hesitation, she ordered an ounce to be put up. The young lady, who had been attending to what passed, leaned across the counter, and spoke to the shopman;— a rather large quantity was put up, and presented to the humble customer. She then, with an expression of meek astonishment, turned to thank the lady. ‘You have some sick friend, I fear,’ said the young philanthropist? ‘I have a sister, ma’am, who has been confined to her bed nearly two years,’ said the stranger. I saw the young lady undraw her purse, and afterwards heard repeated some broken expressions of thanks. Something was said about a court in Oxford-street. The young lady retreated from



the gaze of those persons present;—begged her carriage might be called, and was hastening away, when I stepped forward, and seizing her hand, led her to it—proud of announcing myself as worthy of her acquaintance.”

“O! it was, I am sure it was, Lady Jane Milner!” said Frances, grasping the hand of her father.

“You are right,” returned her father, fondly pressing her hand; “it *was* Lady Jane; and mark, my dear girl, the decisive character of genuine sensibility: it is totally abstracted from self; it has an eye to see, and an ear to hear, where the *ostentatious* and insensible are both blind and deaf. It shews itself in all situations; and, as you know how naturally animated and lively this charming young creature is, you will understand that the offices of pure sensibility are suited to the young and happy; and though, in the exercise of this gracious quality, the feelings are occasionally depressed, be-



lieve me, they ultimately confer a self-satisfaction, a peace of mind, which the world cannot give."

Frances whispered a few words to her father.

"You say truly," returned Mr. Austen; "Miss Colville must feel proud of her work; there cannot be a more enviable distinction than that of feeling that she has helped to form a character so inestimable. — "I do not deny the satisfaction your little relation has afforded me, sir," said Miss Colville; "for, though convinced that where Lady Jane is best known she will be most esteemed, I am not always so happy as to hear her supported with the *liberality* she deserves."

"I begin to think there must be more in the character of this young person than I have yet made out," said Mrs. Wilton; "though I am sure I have tried to understand her; perhaps I shall be enlightened on this subject at some future period." There

was a sarcastic expression in the features of Mrs. Wilton, which did not promise any very favourable result from her subsequent observations.

“My friend General Monkfield, who lives opposite, would not be flattered, were you to decide on the costume of his drawing-room as it is seen through the fog now floating between us,” said Mr. Austen, laughing, and at the same time directing the attention of Marian and Frances to the state of the atmosphere. “Nor must we hope to draw a just analysis of the human character, while our vision is deformed by those impenetrable fogs raised by prejudice.”

“Poor defenceless woman!” said Mrs. Wilton, shrugging her shoulders; “we are always represented as the slaves of prejudice. We could retort; but I spare you. Come loves,” turning to her daughters; “we must dress; it is getting late.”

“The Miss Wiltons followed their

mother, glad to escape from a group in which their talents were so lightly estimated. Mr. Austen now inquired how long Douglas had known the Wilton family.

“I met them first at General ——’s: I danced with Miss Wilton. The General was very kind to the —— fellows; and, as it was at the time of a vacation, he invited four of us, who had not friends in London, to take up our abode at the Lodge. Roche was of the number; and he made himself so agreeable by his tricks, that the rest of us were for some days quite in the back ground. However, we all enjoyed ourselves excessively.” Miss Colville smiled, and said, “I believe Mr. Roche has not since visited at Carrow Lodge?”

“He has not,” replied Douglas; “do *you* know the General?”

“Perfectly, sir,” answered Miss Colville; “I have the honour to be distantly connected with the General. But, though your *liberality* induces you to be silent



respecting Mr. Roche, I am not disposed to shield this very delightful and amusing young gentleman from the censure he merits. You have done justice to the hospitality of Carrow Lodge; and I may venture to add that few persons of good taste and feeling but would agree that the General is an amiable and accomplished man?"

Douglas answered in the affirmative; and continuing, said, "Well, having given a ball for the amusement of his young visitors, he arranged to have a little music the next evening. The General plays upon the violoncello; a few neighbours were added to the party; and the concert, if not numerous, promised to be excellent. It appears Mr. Roche disliked the idea of a musical evening; he had, in my hearing, voted it 'a great bore.' The party most interested in the meeting were however strangers to the distaste of Mr. Roche, and adjourned to the music-room. A disappointment wholly unexpected awaited them.

The violoncello of the General wanted a principal string ; and the case in which he usually kept a supply of these articles was missing. A strict search was made, but unsuccessfully. I confess, that the overacted zeal of Mr. Roche raised some suspicion in my mind, yet I did not hazard an opinion. After some delay, a new selection was made ; and the General, always happy when he can make others so, contented himself as an auditor. I was rather pleased when the amateurs in this later arrangement discovered so many beauties in the music as greatly lengthened the duration of the concert. It seemed a just mortification for him who had selfishly designed a very different result. ‘ I am completely bit,’ said Mr. Roche, in a half-whisper to one of his school-friends. His observation was no less conclusive of my surmise than offensive to him to whom it was addressed. ‘ I hope you will be able to fight your own battle,’ returned the other ; ‘ for I warn you that I for one

will leave you to your fate.' Mr. Roche laughed immoderately; and declared he should like nothing better than a court-martial at which the General should preside. In short, he was as eloquent as people of his disposition usually are when courage is talked of in perspective."

Douglas smiled. "You understand him perfectly, I perceive, ma'am," said he.

"Why it does not require much discernment to make out a character like Mr. Roche's," returned Miss Colville; "it is too prominent not to force itself into notice. The General, on the next morning, as you may remember, preserved the same urbanity of manner towards his young visitors. I knew he attributed the mischief of the preceding evening to the right party; but he stood in a relation which called for the exercise of feelings it would be most difficult for him to forego. As the entertainer of a juvenile group, he was in a manner



pledged to mix in their enjoyments, or at least contribute to them. I must think there are few beings who could have withstood a kindness so unmerited.

“I really looked forward with a hope that a lesson so benignly given would have its weight with Mr. Roche; and lead him voluntarily to apologise for his insolence. I was mistaken: he certainly comprehended the bearings of the General's politeness, but he had no faith in its continuance; and in a day or two withdrew from the Lodge. About a fortnight afterwards, a friend of the General called; and, in the course of conversation, inquired respecting the family and connexions of Mr. Roche. The General explained as far as he knew; when the gentleman declared that though always pleased to countenance youth, and shew civility to such as he knew deserved it, he had yet been somewhat annoyed, (as indeed had most of the gentlemen who met Mr. Roche at Carrow Lodge,) by that young gentleman's

attacking them with obtrusively civil recollections of their late meeting at the General's; and his obtrusions had always ended in their being compelled to invite him to their tables. 'My good lady,' said Sir Edward Gosport, 'is much pleased with the boy's address, and declares he will make a shining character.' 'We all know that brass will take a certain polish; nevertheless, it is still but an inferior metal. No; *I* can make allowance for the vivacious mirth of the untried spirit; but give me the ingenuous boy whose *thoughts* we can read. A bold forward youth is odious; so, unless it would please you to shew him courtesy, *I* shall dispense with his future visits.' The General begged Sir Edward would use his own pleasure upon this occasion; adding, that he 'had no present intention of receiving Mr. Roche at the Lodge.' Yet he took the trouble of calling upon this young man with the benevolent wish of guarding him against a conduct that must prove disadvantageous

to himself and injurious to his family. What effect this intended kindness might have produced, is uncertain; for, upon the General's arrival at ———, he was unexpectedly ushered into the study of Mr. Roche. The first object that attracted his attention was a well-executed caricature of the concert-party, in which my relation was a principal and most ludicrous figure.

It appears that Mr. Roche was overcome for a moment; and in the next strove to place himself before the obnoxious sketch. The General took his glass, and, putting the artist on one side, examined it minutely; and then said, 'You have some talent for *this sort* of thing; its tendency, however, is dangerous.' Roche was beginning an apology.—'A few words, and I have done, sir;' resumed the General. 'A boy-caricaturist can only excite the contempt of those he presumes to satirize;—at least, such would be the opinion of most persons upon this occasion. However,



as one who knows the world, and has been accustomed to observe those rules of civil life which can alone enable man to live in fellowship with man, I warn you that this habit, if indulged, may lead to the commission of a crime of the deepest turpitude;—an insult of this nature, at a more advanced age, would expose you to a challenge from your equal in society; and, though it is not quite clear to me that the professed satirist is really a courageous person, he of all men should avoid such a contest. For of this I am assured, that whoever pursues a practice so void of *liberality*, must be deficient in those benevolent feelings, that just temper of mind, which can make a mere mortal regard the *future* with becoming humility.’

“Thus ended,” added Miss Colville, “General ——’s acquaintance with Mr. Roche. I have been too prolix, perhaps; but it really grieved me to hear a boy eulogized for practices so truly presumptuous; and, indeed, knowing

how much young persons are caught, if not fascinated, by description of 'Pickles,' I was desirous of convincing my pupil that such characters are not exactly as inoffensive and undesigning as they are represented."

Mr. Austen avowed his disgust for a character so void of principle. "I can conceive," said he, "nothing more unamiable than an effrontery of this kind in a boy. Roche wants the sensibility of a man, and ignorantly mistakes impudence for courage. We are obliged to Miss Colville for this clear view of a very common but often flattered portrait. Vivacity, thoughtlessness, and good-humour, to a casual observer appear to be a natural connexion;—nothing can be more problematical. Uniform vivacity can only belong to the naturally cheerful. Thoughtlessness may deform a well-meaning but unsteady character; while good-humour, though an attribute that must pertain to the persons we esteem, is frequently the so-



litary recommendation of a character that may claim our notice, but can never engage our respect. Good-humour, however, is always valuable; so do not mistake me, Frances. I repeat, it is indispensable as a part, but is not of itself sufficient to raise us in the opinion of persons who know the capacities of the human mind, and what should constitute the character of creatures so highly gifted. Douglas has said that Roche was subject to fits of gloom that annoyed his companions; his vivacity is therefore remote from that genuine hilarity elicited by the really cheerful heart. Indeed, I have often heard the charming spirits of such a person admired, when their conduct to me appeared nearly allied to insanity. Again, those dear thoughtless beings who speak without thinking, are to be judged leniently! Why so? If they have no regard for their own reputation, they are yet to be told that a want of deference for those with whom we converse, is a strong



mark of a mean mind. It is true, the impertinent babbler cannot bring his hearers down to the level of his unrestrained eloquence; but, in presuming to think that coarse bluntness can be mistaken for openness of character, he insults the understanding of his auditors, and betrays that love of self, which is the sure accompaniment of an ill-regulated and shallow capacity."

With the liveliest respect for the father of her pupil, Miss Colville had often regretted that Frances was so much in the habit of hearing the sentiments and opinions of grown persons. She thought it injurious in many points; and more especially as tending to form a factitious character. "Intelligent girls," she would say, "are quick in perceiving what is approved. They adopt expressions and imbibe opinions, as it were mechanically; and, what is worse, they frequently act upon them without being conscious of their error. Thinking thus, her situation was one of great de-

licacy. Frances had not, indeed, in her presence displayed this imitative talent; yet Mr. Austen had more than once, in confidence, declared his high approbation of the clearness and justness with which his daughter had expressed herself.

There is something apparently ungracious in destroying an illusion so delightful to a fond parent; nor must the person whom integrity thus actuates always expect to make her motives satisfactorily evident. Even Mr. Austen, who had learned to value his child more appropriately than at any former period of his life, felt sensible disappointment at the manner of Miss Colville, on a subject which, he had persuaded himself, must greatly interest her.

“I am not unjust, sir,” said the governess, smiling; “I trust, and really believe, your daughter will make an amiable and intelligent woman. The commendations you are now bestowing upon her, strictly speaking, are not her due.

She has used a little of that *ostentation* which is often displayed in the world; but which, to me, is far from allowable. I mean that of adopting such oral, or written maxims, as she has heard admired, or been directed to observe. I will this evening place the matter beyond a doubt, by sending you the Exercise Book of Miss Austen; you will find the observations you have so particularly noticed.”

Miss Colville did so: she made Frances the bearer of the book—not from any desire of humbling her charge, whom she believed to have acted without considering the deception she was practising; but in the expectation that Mr. Austen would seize a moment so opportune, for explaining the danger and humiliations to which such a habit must lead into.

She was disappointed;—the highest encomiums were passed upon the handwriting of Frances. The good taste of Miss Colville, in the general arrangement



of the selections, met similar praise; but not one word of reproof to the young lady who, like a parrot, had repeated what she had learned. What could the governess do? simply this. She changed her plan; and, in place of giving her pupil selections, which she had hoped to make subservient to the formation of an intellectual enjoyment at some future period, she now confined her to grammatical and historical subjects. It so happened, that this book had not been seen by Mr. Austen since the evening to which we have referred. Frances, now perfectly tractable and obedient, after a few regrets, pursued the new adoption of her governess; but, as no explanation had been required by the pupil, Miss Colville rather imagined that Frances felt the reproof. She therefore delayed all discussion of this subject, trusting that some suitable opportunity would occur, when it might with propriety be introduced.

While the mornings of Mrs. Wilton were occupied in purchasing articles for which she could have no possible occasion when she had crossed the straits of Dover, Caroline, whose reluctance to the projected trip was hourly increasing, suddenly entered the apartment of Miss Colville one morning, and requested Frances to allow her a few minutes' conversation with her governess, at the same time flinging herself into a chair. Miss Colville was alarmed; there was an agitation in the manner of Caroline Wilton, and a languor in her whole appearance, which called forth the liveliest sympathy.

“Let me give you a glass of water,” said Miss Colville, rising; “you have hurried yourself. Pray sit quiet for a few minutes; it is a great way from the breakfast-room to this floor.”

“You are very good,” returned Caroline; “but that is not the cause of my agitation. I have a favour to ask of you, ma'am!” and she blushed. “You look surprised; it is however true. O, will

you persuade my mother to leave me here? I mean in this house." She paused.—"I am sure Mr. Austen would agree to it, if he knew how much I desired to be with Frances,—to be with *you* I mean:" and she burst into tears.

Miss Colville was affected by the earnestness of this appeal, and the too-evident debility of the speaker. "You, my dear Miss Wilton," said she, "are aware that my situation in this family gives me no right to say who shall or shall not become an inmate. I can have no objection to suggest to Mr. Austen your wish of remaining in Harley-street; but *I* have no idea that any thing I could say to Mrs. Wilton would meet with concurrence."

"You think not," said Caroline; "you are justified in believing this, and more; but *I* know better. It was only last night my mother regretted she had not engaged you for us when you quitted Lady Jane. Will you make the experiment? I am not equal to the proposed



journey; indeed I dread the thoughts of going. Yet I should grieve if Marian was to be disappointed; and I know my mother anticipates great pleasure from her French visit."

Though greatly at a loss to account for this change in Miss Wilton, it was not possible to decline an interference thus solicited. Miss Colville assented; and, after many apologies for the liberty she had taken, Caroline withdrew.

In this short conference, however, Miss Colville had with real concern observed the flushed cheek and quick respiration of the young petitioner. She silently wondered that symptoms so obvious and alarming should so lightly impress those connected with her. In the interview she had promised to demand, she was determined to speak explicitly on the state of Miss Wilton's health.

END OF VOL. I.

# OSTENTATION AND LIBERALITY.

A TALE.



MISS COLVILLE was unfortunate: Mrs. Wilton received the proposal with marked coldness; was excessively displeased that her daughter should have appointed a comparative stranger to interfere in her arrangements; and concluded by declaring the girl was the most altered creature in the world, or she never could have exposed *her* to such a solicitation.

Wounded as Miss Colville was by the language and *hauteur* of Mrs. Wilton, she did not suffer herself to be influenced by them to forget what she considered her duty. "I agree with you, ma'am," said she; "Miss Wilton's spirits, and I might add her dispositions, must have undergone a very considerable change before *I* could be *called* upon

to address you in her name. It is this very change that induces me to speak unreservedly. So far as *I* am concerned, it cannot be believed I am anxious for Miss Wilton's remaining in Mr. Austen's family; but I am fully persuaded such a request could never have come from your daughter, had she enjoyed the health and expectations usual at her age. She is ill—very ill. If you, ma'am, are not prepared to hear this, you may condemn my sincerity, but I stand acquitted to myself."

Leaving Mrs. Wilton, the governess completed her embassy by repairing to Mr. Austen. She imparted all that had passed between his visitors and herself.

Mr. Austen, with the anxiety of a parent, entered into the views of Caroline; and, though really alarmed for the health of his young relation, he gladly took comfort in that dawning of humility, which had led her to confide in one she had so recently appeared to overlook.

"I see a great deal of promise in



this," said he; "poor Caroline! I wish we had you to ourselves for a few months." He looked at Miss Colville with some curiosity.

"I almost wish such a thing could be, sir," said Miss Colville; "unfortunately, Miss Wilton made her appeal through an unaccredited channel. I cannot regret having complied with her request, though I may deplore the mistaken feelings of the party to whom I addressed myself."

"Mistaken feelings!" echoed Mr. Austen. Unhappy woman! she is, she has long been at war with herself. Alas! madam, no woman feels more acutely than Mrs. Wilton all the inutility of her plans as a mother. Like all those persons who mistake *ostentation* for *liberality*, she blindly imagined that having denied her daughters none of the advantages that money could procure, she had done all that was necessary. Her error now stands confest! But poor Caroline!—I must talk with Mrs. Wilton." Mr. Austen proceeded to the

library, purposing to depute Marian as his messenger to her mother. Here, however, he found Mrs. Wilton in a state of mind nearly allied to madness. Two or three notes, addressed to physicians of eminence, only wanted sealing. With eyes swoln, and a manner that sufficiently betrayed her anguish, she besought Mr. Austen not to confirm the cruel doubts of that horrible Miss Colville. "I never can forgive that woman," she added; "I am convinced she has alarmed the dear child, or she would not have frightened me as she did a few minutes since."

"Of whom are you speaking? who has alarmed you unnecessarily?" inquired Mr. Austen.

"Then you have not heard," said Mrs. Wilton, "that Caroline in one of her low fits, begged this Miss Colville to hint to me her dislike to our intended excursion? Not content with doing as she was required, this officious lady must suggest to me the very great weakness and debility of my daughter. You know my susceptibility: no



sooner had this harbinger of ill retired, than I hastened to Caroline, and implored her to describe all she felt. I am afraid my feelings led me too far; the dear child caught the infection; and for the first time declared herself unequal to the proposed journey: but, with her usual *liberality*, would not hear of Marian's being disappointed. Of course I have not made up my mind upon this point; but I have written to Dr. P. Dr. K. and Dr. W. I will not lose a moment; so I shall have nothing to reproach myself for?"

"If you except the alarm you may give Caroline, by allowing her to see your fears in the precautions you are adopting," observed Mr. Austen.

"I am the most unfortunate woman in existence," said Mrs. Wilton; "what am I to do? will you direct me?"

"I will assist you with my whole heart," replied Mr. Austen; "for, believe me, I am deeply interested in the health of your child, which I regret to perceive is so delicate. These notes,"



taking up Mrs. Wilton's scarcely legible performances, "these I will commit to the flames ; we must neither depress nor agitate the dear girl. Yet we will treat her as a rational creature. I will invite one of the gentlemen you have selected to take dinner with us ; we will introduce the subject carefully ; and Caroline *must* be allowed to decline accompanying you, (if you are still resolved on a foreign trip,) should my friend W. sanction her so doing."

Mrs. Wilton appeared to assent. The plan was too reasonable to be opposed in its present stage ; yet, from her personal knowledge of the latitude she had ever allowed where the nerves could be made accountable for whims, bad spirits, &c. she entertained strong hopes that the event might prove favourable to her wishes.

Here, however, she was a most unfortunate mother ; for Dr. W—— not only saw a necessity for considering Caroline an invalid, but his principles led him to add that she required the utmost

care and attention; and, while he recommended such relaxations as would amuse her, he interdicted all strong excitements or personal fatigue.

Mrs. Wilton talked of the south of France, of Pisa, Naples. Dr. W. wished she was there; but he thought the season of the year very unfavourable for the commencement of such a route. It was argued that more than one of her friends had quitted England in November, by order of their physicians. The Doctor smiled: he was accustomed to the reasoning of ladies; and therefore quite a stoic under such polite assaults; but he reprovngly asked, "You have known some who *quitted* this for a warmer clime, madam? Did you hear of their arrival?"

Mrs. Wilton started;—the very reverse was the case. One had died at Geneva, —another reached his destination; but it was to die in the arms of strangers.

"All men think all men mortal but themselves," the Doctor continued, as Mrs. Wilton retired. "I much ques-

tion the recovery of this poor girl, under any circumstances; but it is certain she has no chance if they hurry or agitate her. You must use the privilege of a relation, my dear Austen; and tell this too susceptible mother all the risk to which she will expose her daughter, if she persist in her travelling scheme. Above all, persuade her to consult some one else; it will be more satisfactory to me, and may lead her to conform to what is right."

Mrs. Wilton consulted another physician; the result was similar: with this difference—he recommended her to proceed immediately to Devonshire, there to remain during the winter: he would then talk of future plans.

Marian heard this intelligence with vexation. So entirely was her mind fixed upon the Parisian visit, that she who had never appeared deficient in sisterly love, now accused Caroline of caprice, and her mother of weakness, in yielding to a parcel of quizzical beings, who



wished to make others as stupid as themselves.

Marian was decidedly her mother's favourite. To disappoint her, was grievous; yet something was on this occasion due to the world. But while Mrs. Wilton hesitated what that something should be, a very dear friend crossed her path, on the wing for France. She had a son in a weak state of health, and being a woman of immense fortune, her suite not only embraced all that was essential to *ostentation*, but she carried in her train a medical man of great, if not extraordinary, skill. Lady Fanshaw pressed Mrs. Wilton to join her;—they could travel together, and finally fix in the same neighbourhood. Lady Fanshaw visited Caroline; pronounced her complaint to be mere nervousness;—that nothing was wanting but change of scene. Lady Fanshaw was so sanguine as to declare that Caroline would, before a month elapsed, laugh at her present lowness, and be found amongst the most laborious of the quadrille dancers.

Mr. Austen listened to the new arrangement of his visitors with profound astonishment. It appeared impossible that a mother who had so lately been warned of the danger of her child, could thus yield her feelings to the judgment of a comparative stranger.

Mrs. Wilton was now impatient to be gone. That she was quite satisfied with herself, is not probable; but it is certain that delay would not increase her happiness, though it might appear to be essential to her daughter's health. Caroline resisted the plan altogether; adducing not only the weakness of which she had complained, but a distaste to the excursion. Mrs. Wilton expostulated; laughed at the bad taste of the silly girl; and was proceeding to rally her in terms somewhat reproachful, when Mr. Austen joined them.

“The girl is incomprehensible!” exclaimed Mrs. Wilton; “pray, what is it you desire, ma'am? You must have some wise scheme of your own, or you

would not presume to oppose mine thus."

"I wish," said Caroline:—she hesitated. "But I know," she continued, "you will be angry; yet indeed, my dear mamma, I do *not* feel equal to travelling just now; and, if it is *quite* convenient to Mr. Austen, I should prefer remaining in his family while you are away. It would make me happy, that is—as happy as I can be, separated from you."

"Most gladly will I take charge of you, my dear Caroline," said Mr. Austen, "if your mother is resolved to leave us." He looked towards Mrs. Wilton with an expression that was not lost upon that lady.

"As dear Lady Fanshaw was observing," returned Mrs. Wilton, "I have moped myself so long in the country, that I have absolutely anticipated old age. You know my plans are fixed, child; so let me hear no more of your whims."

Mr. Austen dismissed Caroline upon some pretence, and then boldly ap-



pealed to Mrs. Wilton's feelings; and neither disguised his own fears nor the opinion of Dr. W.

With that ease with which persons resist conviction who are pre-determined in their own mind, the lady refuted all that militated against her wishes.

Mr. Austen now changed his ground; and at length wrung from her a reluctant assent to the petition of Caroline.

Marian heard this decision with real concern, and for a few hours seemed ready to resign the promised pleasure, in order to be with Caroline; but Lady Fanshaw arriving, and reading part of a letter from Paris, in which so much was said of its gaieties and the charming English residents, Marian gladly took shelter in the delusion now generally accredited by their gay friends, viz. "that Caroline was self-willed; and it would be absurd to support her in her caprices."

Marian secretly ascribed much blame to Miss Colville. She believed her to have influenced Caroline in opposing

her mother. Under this impression, she resolved that that lady should not suppose she could be imposed upon.

Circumstances appeared to favour the design of Marian. With pleasure she listened to the delighted Frances as she read a note from Miss Percival, announcing her acceptance of an invitation to take tea in Harley-street. The age of Charlotte Percival would give Marian an advantage she hoped to improve. She remembered her as a lively chattering little girl; and, overlooking the period that had elapsed since she saw her last, persuaded herself she should be able to play her off against the odious governess.

The hour of attack arrived. Miss Percival reached Harley-street just as the dessert was going into the parlour.

“We had better detain Miss Percival,” said Mr. Austen as he heard the carriage draw up, “and send for Frances.”

“It will derange all Frances’ plans,” replied Marian eagerly. “Suppose I

take their fruit to the school-room; I am quite longing to see Charlotte; and, indeed, I promised to be of their party." Mr. Austen acceded; and Marian hastened to the school-room.

The ungrateful Charlotte met the warm salutations of Miss Wilton with politeness, but with less sprightliness than Marian anticipated. Time had corrected the extreme giddiness of Charlotte, without destroying her naturally cheerful disposition. "How you are grown!" exclaimed Marian; "why you are as tall as Frances. Do you remember how we used to enjoy meeting at the academy on dancing-days? What a little wild thing you were then."

Charlotte's recollections of these wild days were not so vivid as Marian's. Three years deducted from a life of twelve, must necessarily leave a remainder rather unfavourable to strong impressions.

"I think there were two Miss Wiltons who used to dance with flowers," said



Miss Percival ; “ but I quite forget what dance it was.”

“ Pray forget the thing altogether, my dear,” returned Marian ; “ we abhor show-dancing ; and mamma would be shocked to recollect we had ever exhibited,—she dislikes it so much.”

Charlotte was silenced ; but she looked towards the young dictator with some surprise. “ What a horribly cold room this is,” resumed Marian, seizing the poker ; “ come, let me make you a good fire :” and she proceeded to accomplish her purpose with great effect. “ Now then,” she continued, “ draw-in, and let us have some charades or riddles, which you like best.”

Frances and her visitor declared they were warm enough ; and, with all the awkwardness young people feel when their plans are frustrated by the presence of those who cannot enter into them, sat looking at each other without a purpose.

“ That is the worst of a school-room party,” said Marian ; “ there are so many rules. I suppose the rug is your

limit, Frances ; you must not approach nearer to the fire. Well, I am fully sensible of my happiness in this particular, and most gratefully acknowledge my joy at having survived all the nonsensical formalities that are imposed upon us as children."

Charlotte glanced towards Miss Colville for a moment. Her colour was heightened ; but, with a smile that conveyed all its intended meaning to one party, she said, "Miss Colville knows that I always enjoyed a visit to her room ; and I am sure this is a very comfortable one."

"I think so too," said Frances ; "indeed, Marian, I will not allow you to find fault with our apartment."

"What good children !" exclaimed Marian, laughing ; "you remind me of the Misses Allworthy, and the dear little Goodchilds, that one reads of in the nursery. But what do you mean to do ? Do fix ; for I cannot stay long ; I am going to beat Douglas at chess."

Frances proposed eating their dessert ;

and she would then show Charlotte her shells, which she had brought from the drawing-room for that purpose. Miss Percival expressed her liking for these natural curiosities; and in the course of conversation asked Frances if she had ever seen her cousin Jane's collection? Frances replied in the negative. "How beautifully she has arranged them," said Charlotte, addressing Miss Colville; "but, as my mamma says, Jane does every thing so thoroughly, and is so clear in whatever she undertakes to explain, that it is quite a pleasure to listen to her."

"Miss Colville has given me Burrows's Conchology," observed Frances; "and I am beginning to class my shells by it. Lady Jane did hers at first by that book."

"I never could understand what pleasure people can find in this sort of study," said Marian, taking up a shell;—"it is such a stupid employment." This was addressed to Miss Colville, but so indirectly as not to claim attention.



“Can you think conchology a useful study?” repeated Marian.

“It may be made as useful as it is interesting, ma’am,” replied Miss Colville; “for, in contemplating the variety, minuteness, and beauty of shells, it is scarcely possible not to refer to the Great Author of all things, whose wisdom and care are seen in all his works.”

“You will never convert me to such a fiddle-faddle employment,” said Marian with a sneer.

“I am persuaded I shall never make the attempt,” rejoined Miss Colville; “I merely replied to your question.”

“Oh! but you ought not to despair,” retorted the incorrigible Marian; “for you have managed my sister completely;—she is quite eloquent in your praise.”

“While Miss Wilton, or any other young lady, preserves the language and manners of a gentlewoman,” returned Miss Colville; “they will from me meet the civility they command. I am not however disposed to listen to the ill-disguised rudeness of a young lady who, mistaking words for eloquence,

becomes troublesome where she might be amusing."

"Dear me! I see you are quite serious!" said Marian. "I never could be serious but upon great occasions; so you must excuse me if I do not comprehend you."

Frances and her visitor, who felt all the shame of the offending party, stood in mute astonishment; till the latter, with a *naivete* that somewhat startled the hitherto-undaunted Marian, said, "I believe a lady who once lived with you is now with the Miss Tobins."

"We had so many ladies," drawled out Marian, "that it is impossible to guess which you mean."

"The lady I mean is called Marsden or Marshall, I think," said Charlotte.

"O, I remember her," returned Marian; "yes, she was well enough in her way. But come, do you intend to play or not; for Douglas expects me?"

Frances begged she would not disappoint Mr. Douglas.

"Mr. Douglas! what a formal little

quiz! Child! speak like other people; it looks like affectation to hear a girl like you giving such old-fashioned appellations to boys."

"My papa does not like me to call any person by their surname only," returned Frances; more especially one I have known so short a time."

Marian shrugged her shoulders, and hummed a tune. After a pause, she turned to Miss Percival, and said, "Pray, is it not very odd your cousin Lady Jane should go out shopping alone? I was quite surprised when I heard it; but she has been educated on a *particular* plan I know, so of course she cannot act like common people."

"I don't know that she has been educated differently to other girls," returned Charlotte; "but I am certain she never goes any where without my aunt Mercer."

"I beg your pardon, Charlotte," said Marian; "Mr. Austen saw her at a shop very lately, and alone."

"She might be in a shop that my aunt



knew," observed Charlotte; "but even that does not often happen. Aunt Mercer is lame; and, as it is not convenient for her to get out of the carriage when she can avoid it, Jane prevents it whenever she can.'

"Oh! that is the case, is it?" returned Marian; "I suppose you are bored to death about the excellencies of your cousin. Ah! you blush; well, I pity you; for nothing is so prosing as that sort of thing."

"I do not understand you, ma'am," said Charlotte with some warmth; "I never till now heard my cousin mentioned but with respect:" and, turning from her bold interrogator, she took a seat by Miss Colville, who undesignedly threw her arm round the offended girl. Frances put in her claim to the attention of Miss Colville; and, as she seated herself at her side, half-laughing, exclaimed, "Do pray, Marian, go and beat Mr. Douglas; we will not detain you in the school-room."

"In other words, you desire my ab-

sence," returned Marian. "Well, Frances, I am not offended; it is more like ingenuousness than any thing I ever heard from your lips."

Frances Austen possessed quick feelings; and there was in this speech an implied censure, that she could not hear unmoved.

"You are very cruel, Marian," said she, her eyes swimming in tears; "if I have said any thing rude to you, I beg your pardon; but indeed you say such very strange things yourself, that you ought to make allowance for others. I am sure, if Charlotte Percival were to judge me by the speech you have just made, she must think me very unamiable."

Charlotte whispered something, which compelled the tearful Frances to smile. Marian thought Miss Colville had caught the infection.

"Excellent little dears as ye are!" exclaimed she, laughing; "you would not venture to avow what causes your present mirth."

Frances looked towards Charlotte, as though she wished to refute this assertion : Miss Percival hesitated, and seemed confused.

“Come, speak out, Frances,” said Marian; “I see you are going to be quite a miracle of candour.”

Frances said “I was silly to be vexed at what you said, for you were angry; and all angry people talk nonsense.”

Even Marian blushed at this unexpected exhibition of herself; but she tried to feel calm, and might in part have succeeded, had she not met the steady gaze of Miss Colville, who, with an expression she could not misunderstand, seemed to warn her from tempting the reproof of two mere children.

“I never could understand looks,” said Marian, in a haughty tone; “so, ma’am, if you have any observation to make, I beg you will not be afraid of giving it utterance.”

“I am not even afraid of the severities of Miss Marian Wilton,” returned



Miss Colville, "nor awed by her dictatorial manner; but I may and do sincerely deplore that a girl of her age should have adopted sentiments, and indulged a habit of sarcasm, which must embitter her own existence, while they obviously lessen her in the esteem of those with whom she associates."

With a countenance in which anger was strongly expressed Marian seized her taper, and, as she half-sarcastically dropped a curtsy, said, "I shall not again obtrude my sentiments upon *your* notice, ma'am."

"I thank you, ma'am," returned Miss Colville; "you will, in that case, spare my solicitation of Mr. Austen for a security from all such interruptions in future."

Marian rushed out of the room: her resentment would have led her to complain of the insolent governess, had not her last sentence assured her that the tale might be told in two ways, and she, perhaps, not allowed to be the first narrator. Under this impression, silence

was her only refuge ; but, while she made this compromise with herself, and allowed its necessity, her feelings, untrue to their former bent, keenly accused her. She had been reproved, it was true, but it was with calmness and politeness ; conscience told her that had not Miss Colville possessed great forbearance, she had long before smarted under the reproof that now wounded her. Yet, that stubborn pride which clings to error, and makes its victim slow in admitting conviction, forbade her immediately making any concession to the injured party.

The evening was not to pass without her feeling all the distinctness of the disposition that unwillingly gives pain, and that which prominently seeks occasion to offend. Miss Colville, with Frances and Charlotte, joined the party in the drawing-room. Marian had been defeated by Mr. Douglas at chess ; and was sitting listlessly turning over a book of prints, but with which she did not appear to take any interest. Caroline had

taken her sister's place at the chess-board; and, as she saw Miss Colville enter, beckoned her with a silent smile to look over the game.

Miss Colville stood for some time, pleased to perceive the animation with which Caroline pursued the game. On her quitting the chess-table, to the surprise of all present, Marian presented her a chair; it was the one from which she had just risen. Miss Colville observed this. "Oh! pray take it," said Marian; "I am tired of sitting." Miss Colville smiled, but accepted the offered seat.

"Why do you smile?" asked Marian; "is it at my negative compliment."

"I believe I must plead guilty," replied Miss Colville good-humouredly; "yet we are told that our virtues are negative, by which I understand that they are involuntary;—your civility was of that class, though you do not think so."



“Suppose I were to allow that you were right, what would you say?” returned Marian.

“Why, I should feel pleased,” replied Miss Colville, “that Miss Marian Wilton permitted such a conviction to rest on her mind; persuaded as I am that it would add greatly to her happiness.”

“You are excessively odd!” said Marian. “I expected to be talked at; in short, I thought you would be full of resentment; instead of which I find you more civ—, that is, more inclined to talk to me than you have ever been since I knew you.”

“There you are wrong; it is not I, but you that are changed,” returned Miss Colville, laughing.

“How very provoking,” said Marian; “cannot you yield for once? I see you are of an obstinate disposition. But, pray did you tell Charlotte Percival to apologize for what she said to me?”

Miss Colville admitted that she had desired her to do so.

“How incomprehensible,” said Marian; “for I am sure at the moment you thought the observation applicable.”

“I *now* think it was perfectly suited to the occasion,” returned Miss Colville; “and it was on that account I more particularly wished to check Miss Percival’s addicting herself to a habit of saying smart things. I know her mamma, and am convinced she would thank me for setting her daughter right.”

“This does not help me in the least,” said Marian; “then you think the reproof was appropriate, and you only noticed it because it might be detrimental to Charlotte. I declare I think her a very clever girl; and I can assure you she did not offend me.”

Miss Colville shook her head. “You were not, you could not, be pleased,” she said, “that a mere child should expose your feelings! The thing is

out of nature; and you now defend her against your own judgment."

"Well, if you *will* understand my feelings better than I do myself," returned Marian in a cheerful tone, "it is useless to argue with you; but why you should blame poor Charlotte, is to me an enigma, as you insist that her observation possessed fitness; which, *entre nous*, is not very civil to poor me."

"I cannot recede," said Miss Colville; "it is always in the power of a lively girl to utter flippant observations. I grant that these things are often overvalued and injudiciously admired by those who should condemn them. This, however, does not alter their tendency; they are unamiable, as connected with the wounds they inflict, and dangerous in every point of view to her who indulges their practice."

"Then you are no friend to wit?" asked Marian.

"Wit," replied Miss Colville, "to



be effective must be genuine. As I understand it, it is the union of cultivated intellect with a lively imagination. Of course, we do not expect to meet it in the young. I believe the talent to be most rare; and even where it does exist, I never heard that it added to the happiness of its possessor, or increased the number of friends."

Frances and Charlotte, who had been silently observing the altered manner of Marian, now approached. They had a petition to prefer, viz. "that Miss Colville would oblige them by playing a quadrille." Mr. Douglas had promised to join them, if he were wanted. They made sure of Marian. Caroline had declined their invitation, but expressed a wish to see them dance. The arrangement was soon made, and the party enjoyed themselves for nearly an hour. During the time the card-players from the adjoining room had stationed themselves as spectators of the cheerful group.

Mrs. Wilton pressed Caroline to exert herself, and dance one quadrille. The looks of Mrs. Wilton assured Miss Colville that the invalid had endeavoured to excuse herself.

In the next moment, to her surprise, Caroline said she would try. She stood up, and made the required effort, but had not gone through one figure before she fainted, and was carried to her room in a state of insensibility. All was confusion; and the loud lamentations of Mrs. Wilton proved not the least part of the embarrassment. Miss Colville would have followed the mother and daughters, had not her recollection of Mrs. Wilton's former incivility deterred her. She was soon however summoned thither, and this at the instance of that lady. With many flattering expressions she declared she believed Miss Colville had fascinated dear Caroline, &c. The governess took her station by the invalid, and Mrs. Wilton hastened to impart the tidings of the complete con-



valescence of her daughter. Marian would have remained with her sister, but at the desire of Caroline she retired.

“I hope my mother has not been much alarmed,” said Caroline; “if I could be sure of this, I would rather rejoice that I have proved my inability to exert myself; which has, I know, been questioned.”

It was not easy to settle this point; for, with Miss Colville, it was an invariable principle that the commands and authority of a parent, if they could not conscientiously be enforced, should never be censured. She therefore parried this appeal, and rather attempted to persuade Caroline that she had fatigued herself in the morning by packing the dressing-case and work-boxes of the intended travellers. Caroline felt the full force of this delicate forbearance; and, as she pressed the hand of Miss Colville, she exclaimed, “What an erring prejudiced girl I have been! I know where the grand fault lies, however; and it is from





Her auditor reclined on a sofa, deeply intent upon the subject.



this that I hope to prove myself worthy of your continued kindness."

"You remember what was said by an eminent philosopher," observed Miss Colville smiling; "Know thyself!"—it is indeed the grand secret of all wisdom; for it is certain that, unless we form a tolerably accurate idea of our own hearts, we shall be very ill qualified to judge of others. But, shall I read to you, or are you disposed to rest?"

"Blair's Sermons are upon the table," said Caroline; "you will find a mark in it: will you finish the sermon on 'Gentleness?'"

Miss Colville complied. Her auditor reclined upon a sofa, deeply intent upon the subject; at times interrupting, to admire the benignity with which the author recommends the virtue he so amiably delineates.

"Gentleness, according to Dr. Blair," said Caroline, as Miss Colville closed the sermon, "is particularly expected from the young; but I think there are



trials, even in childhood, which will affect *some* dispositions more than others."

"That cannot be disputed, my dear," returned Miss Colville; "the trials of children, however, are chiefly those of temper: that they at the time prove formidable, and inflict a pain proportioned to the physical strength of the erring, I readily admit; yet I am not disposed to regard the selfishness, violence, or perverseness of children, with the leniency that many persons do. If children want that nicety of judgment which distinguishes the mature in years, there are few of them of common capacity who cannot readily decide between right and wrong. You will smile, my dear Miss Wilton, when I say that it is the want of sensibility which produces all the miseries of childhood; and yet that is a word I would never use to a child, nor attempt to define its meaning by even remote allusion; for I should then probably inculcate affectation while I was simply endeavouring to make them Christians."

Caroline looked inquiry; and begged Miss Colville would explain.

“That sublime and always applicable precept, ‘Do unto others, &c.’” replied Miss Colville, “contains the essence of all moral virtue, and the rule for our conduct from the cradle to the grave. The habit of submitting, of reflecting, on what we have done, and simply asking ourselves if we would like to suffer the pain we have inflicted, of bearing the taunt, the unkind expression, the unfeeling laugh, or the churlish withholding of any happiness we could have conferred. These perfectly intelligible questions, addressed even to a mere infant, will have their weight; and, could we divest ourselves of their importance, as connected with the future conduct of those we love, it is undeniable that the happiness of infancy would be greatly increased, were the cultivation of the temper more seriously considered.”

“I more clearly comprehend your definition of sensibility now,” returned

Caroline, smiling; “yes, I allow the full force of all you have said.”

“It is not *my* definition, my dear,” said Miss Colville. “I merely point out for your observation the real character of a quality which is often mistaken. Much has been said and written upon the subject of Sensibility. I would recommend you to read Mrs. Bowdler’s Essays; you will there find one devoted to this particular subject; and it is well and pleasingly delineated. There is also a beautiful little poem by Mrs. Hannah Moore, on sensibility, written with much truth and feeling.”

“Tell me,” said Caroline, “and do not fear to wound me, do you think Marian wants this virtue or quality: I know not which to call it?”

“Why, in truth, I doubted her possession of a particle of sensibility till this evening,” replied Miss Colville; “and now I can scarcely venture to denominate what I see from her such. The trait was slight; but it having some



affinity to humility, she may perhaps deserve more credit than I at this moment can conscientiously give to her.”

“I am afraid you judge by her volatile spirits,” said Miss Wilton; “but I can assure you she *has* excellent feelings.”

“Then she has been most unjust to herself, my dear,” returned Miss Colville; “for never were these ornaments of the human character more completely hidden than in Miss Marian Wilton.”

“I am sorry you think so, and indeed you wrong her,” said Miss Wilton; “for even where she has appeared most culpable, I know she was secretly disposed to pursue a different conduct, had not false shame prevented her. I allude to her pertness to you:” — and Caroline blushed immoderately.

Miss Colville would have declined further conversation; but Caroline so earnestly assured her that it was her wish

to converse with her concerning her sister, that she could not refuse.

“Well, then, my dear Miss Wilton,” said Miss Colville, “let me ask you what evidence of good feeling can there be seen from a young person adopting presumptuous language and a froward manner towards one who never gave her offence? And if, as you believe, she really assumed these airs against the conviction of her better reason, can such a girl be ingenuous? Does it not rather argue an address truly lamentable in one so young? As to the false shame you ascribe as the motive for her continuance of self-deception; it is an apology that is too often accepted, while, in justice, it should be denounced.”

“Poor Marian!” exclaimed Caroline; “you must, you shall know her better. *Indeed* she has a very affectionate heart. Did you see how frightened she was when I fainted?”

“I did not say she wanted natural affection,” returned Miss Colville,

“that would shock our feelings. She has no *real* sensibility; it is for this I contend. For instance, her behaviour to Mrs. Cox: could any thing be more undisguisedly rude, more painful, if that lady could have understood her looks? I suspect that the recollections of Mrs. Cox have helped her to estimate her reception properly.”

“Mamma thinks so,” returned Miss Wilton; “and is vexed at it; but you must allow, my dear Miss Colville, that one cannot like such people when they intrude uninvited.”

“I will allow,” said Miss Colville, “that a very silly sort of pride will often lead us to feel ashamed where we ought to show compassion; and I venture to add, that your sister thought the lady but a better sort of pauper. Had she known she was rich, I am persuaded she would have observed a different deportment;—for, though Miss Marian has *some* prejudices against *rank*, she values money.”

“Yet in her heart she admires



Lady Jane; I can vouch for that:" said Caroline.

"Miss Colville smiled, and said, "How invaluable is an ingenuous disposition! This is perhaps one of the happiest illustrations of your natural character that can be elicited.—I do not allow false shame to obtrude here," continued Miss Colville, taking the hand of the blushing Caroline. "Why should you regret being just? To hear you *avow* a liberality of feeling so suited to your age and sex, gives me great pleasure; yet, believe me, I have never been blinded by the sentiments the same object has frequently called forth. No, my dear, there is an acrimony in the language of those who condemn indiscriminately, which always occasions us to arraign their motives."

"Then you think it was envy?" asked Caroline, in a subdued voice: "I fear you are right. But I confess we were so often taunted with the praises

of Lady Jane, and when we failed in any thing we attempted, were so persecuted and tormented by our masters, who always spoke so flatteringly of her, that we disliked her before we saw her; and I am afraid the very circumstance that should have corrected our folly served but to confirm it, for we found her superior in every respect."

"There is only one observation which I do not exactly understand," returned Miss Colville;—"your being taunted with the praises of Lady Jane'. Is not this weak? Where is the being who does not feel his or her inferiority to some more highly-gifted fellow-mortal? "Do not we point out the mean capacity, and the vicious character, as objects of pity and contempt? and with similar purpose, are not the informed and amiable placed before us, as points to which our ambition should be directed?"

"Ah! this *should* be the case?" replied Caroline, sighing; "I wish I had

considered it in *this* light, I should then have been a happier girl."

"I hope there is much happiness yet in your power, my dear," observed Miss Colville. "To me it is evident you will deserve to be happy, for your feelings seem perfectly under control; and I know nothing more conducive to peace of mind, than dispositions well regulated. But you must be cheerful! I am an enemy to gloom of all kinds; nor must you dispirit me. Remember, I am to be the responsible person during your mamma's absence; and, though I will not allow young ladies to have nerves, yet it is possible I may be guilty of such a weakness, if you teach me to distrust my matronly qualifications."

Caroline declared her willingness to submit to the opinion of her new friend in all things. With animated expressions of regard, they parted for the night.

If Caroline reflected with surprise upon this newly-formed compact with



the woman she had so lately overlooked, Marian was equally astonished at herself. She had, in the course of this evening, insulted and courted the notice of the same person. Marian had prided herself upon her consistency, and had always thought it mean to yield her opinions; yet she had now done so unsolicited; and, as she reviewed the last few hours, it became a question in her mind, whether it would not be derogatory to follow up a conduct that so decidedly gave the advantage to her antagonist.

But the morning brought its accustomed bustle: tradespeople and packing-cases alternately occupied her attention; and it is probable she would not have thought of Miss Colville for some time, had not Frances and she resorted to the drawing-room for the purpose of the music-lesson. Mr. Douglas, who had been patiently disentangling the twine for the hasty Marian, half-smiling, declared "they

wanted harmony ;” and proceeded to open the piano for Frances.

“ You are so awkward and provoking,” said Marian. “ I wish you would leave me to myself ; it is such a bore to have stupid people about one ! Do ring the bell—I want my maid.”

Douglas obeyed ; and a footman was ordered to send Foster directly. Foster made her appearance : Mr. Douglas rose :—nay, Miss Colville for a moment was deceived ; for the dress of this person was so highly fashionable as to make her station in life uncertain.

“ You are talking a great deal, Marian,” said Mrs. Wilton from the adjoining room ; “ positively, child, you have made me write perfect nonsense.” Mrs. Wilton entered the drawing-room, tearing the note she had spoiled. “ Mr. Austen will think us very troublesome, I fear,” she continued, looking around her at the disordered state of the apartment ; “ I must beg you will finish your packing in your own

room. Foster, remove these things as quick as possible." Foster proceeded to obey her mistress; and, with two large bonnet-boxes, was making her egress as Mr. Austen entered. "Douglas," said he, "where is your gallantry? Can you suffer a *lady* to carry these things?" Taking one of the boxes from the confused domestic, he bade Douglas assist in conveying them according to the direction of the lady.

Douglas was prompt in attending to the wish of Mr. Austen, and, after some little altercation with Foster, departed with the boxes. Upon rejoining his friends, he found Mr. Austen laughing immoderately. "So this very gay-looking personage," said he, "is your servant! Upon my word, madam, these mistakes, though ludicrous in some points, are highly injurious to the party thus mistaken. Her feelings may be momentarily wounded by my error; vanity, however, will soon set all to-rights; and she will triumph in being mistaken for her superior."



“But who ever heard of ladies carrying boxes?” inquired Marian; “at best, she might have been a dress-maker; or something of that sort.”

“Admitting this, Marian,” said Mr. Austen, “I hope you do not class such persons with your domestic servants? Young people should learn to discriminate. It is highly necessary you should know, and endeavour to adopt the manners and language suited to the various classes in society.”

“I am persuaded yours was a wilful mistake,” said Mrs. Wilton, laughing; “you wished to lecture us upon our too great indulgence of poor Foster; but she is a useful creature. You should recollect, my dear sir, that persons in her capacity must necessarily make a good appearance from the perquisite of our wardrobes.”

“My poor Clara had the best notions on this subject,” returned Mr. Austen; “she acted like other ladies in allowing them what belonged to their situations; but never engaged an attendant who

would not agree to dress *like* a servant. The consequences of this arrangement were soon seen: more than one of her attendants have settled respectably; and to all of them I have occasionally had the pleasure of being banker. This can never be the case, where the pride of appearance above their station is allowed to exist."

"Clara was a very superior woman," said Mrs. Wilton; "I always looked on her with wonder; she did every thing so quietly, and yet did so much. But then, she was not much in the world; you should allow for that." Mr. Austen shook his head, and turning to Douglas, said, "I suppose I ought to apologize to you for claiming your service in behalf of Mrs. Wilton's maid. This, however, I should call absurd. It is a part of the manly character to shew civility to woman, let her station be what it may; and if at any time you can spare her fatigue, or by a little effort prevent any personal inconvenience, rest assured you are doing right. Indeed,

this is a part of the sensibility which should distinguish the stronger sex."

Douglas, with truth, declared all apologies to him were unnecessary.

"If Douglas is as awkward," said Marian, "in carrying boxes as I have found him in the packing department, I shall tremble for my poor bonnet."

"*Mr. Douglas*, if you please, Marian," said Mr. Austen; "I have often wished to correct you in this particular. Pray remember it is unpolite in a female to omit the proper appellations when speaking to gentlemen. How long have you known my friend Douglas?"

"Above a year, sir," replied Marian, haughtily;—"we were on a visit at the same house."

"At General ——'s," said Mr. Austen; "I recollect; at your relation's!" addressing Miss Colville.

"Then I am right," observed Marian;—"I told Caroline I was sure it was you." She took a seat by Miss Colville, and added, "What a delightful time we had at Carrow Lodge. Oh!



you must know Roche! Is he not a pleasant creature? How sadly we missed him, when the fidgetty old General's concert party drove him away: it grew very flat from that moment. But it is so odd you never reminded us of that meeting!"

"Why, I am not exactly certain that you saw me at Carrow Lodge," returned Miss Colville, smiling; "I had no reason for thinking it probable, for I do not recollect exchanging one word with you."

"Hem!" said Marian; "I suppose you are right. I did not know it was quite so bad; but I am getting into a new dilemma, for I think Mr. Austen said you were related to the General! Well, you must allow he was in fault; for, if he had introduced you by name, we must have recollected you."

"He did not neglect this necessary etiquette," said Miss Colville, good-naturedly; "yet Mr. Roche should be charged with *your* part of the oversight; for you were at the moment listening to

some wonderful details of his success in frightening old quizzes with detonating balls."

"If Roche is eccentric," returned Marian, laughing, "I am sure you are not less so: who could have imagined you knew us so well? But you seem to infer that Roche's stories are wonderful! Now that is suspicious;—do you think he exaggerates?"

"Most certainly I do," replied Miss Colville; "nay, he cannot hope to be believed; for his anecdotes insult common sense."

"How cruel!" exclaimed Marian, hastily; "pray, say no more. I see Douglas is enjoying this attack upon the reputation of his friend: it is truly illiberal!"

"I must beg to contradict you, ma'am," said Douglas; "Roche is no friend of mine; and what Miss Colville has said, is only what all who know him are in the habit of saying."

"So you are a connexion of General ——," said Mrs. Wilton, rising

from a writing-table, where she had seemingly been engaged; “a most agreeable man, a little fastidious perhaps, but quite the gentleman. I cannot account for our not recollecting you. The General is said to be rich,—I hope he will remember his friends.” Mrs. Wilton smiled readily, as she suggested the idea of *liberality* in another.

Miss Colville smiled too, but it was from a more liberal feeling; she did not desire the posthumous remembrances of one whose life flowed on in a constant course of benevolence.

“We have been very troublesome this morning,” said Mrs. Wilton; “I fear we have interrupted your music-lesson, Frances? but, as this is our last day, perhaps papa will give you leave to go to the Bazaar with us.”

Frances looked anxiously at her father; and, as she received his assent, in a half-whisper to Miss Colville said she should use more judgment in her purchases than on the last memorable day.



“Reflect, if you really want any thing just now,” said Miss Colville; “it is not absolutely necessary *you* should expend money, as you are going with those who will. I do not wish you to be niggardly; but, pray look into your account-book before you decide, and reflect that you have half promised to give some assistance to Betty’s mother.”

“I think I did not promise it,” returned Frances thoughtfully; “if you recollect, I only said that I should like to pay a quarter’s rent for her.”

“It was said in the presence of Betty, my dear,” said Miss Colville; “and with this additional clause,—that you could easily afford it out of your allowance. You have therefore raised hopes which you would be scarcely justified in disappointing.”

Frances looked abashed; the subject was incontrovertible; but, believing she might yet keep her promise, and indulge her taste to a certain extent, she assured Miss Colville she would

think of all she had said ; and she then hastened to prepare for her expedition.

“ Douglas departed upon some business of his own, leaving Mr. Austen at liberty to inquire how far the late addition to his family had interfered with his daughter’s usual habits.

Miss Colville was satisfied that the pursuits of her pupil had not been materially injured ; but with candour avowed her fear that Frances was likely to be influenced by the conversation and too mature manners of Marian Wilton. — “ She sees the faults of her cousin,” said she ; “ nay, I might add, she plays them off with too much truth, not to make me anxious that she should be spared a contemplation so injurious to a girl of lively spirits. It is difficult to direct a child under such circumstances ; one would not make her a censor of the conduct of others, nor is it desirable that she should be indifferent to the prominent foibles of a character like Miss Marian’s. I already perceive my charge more prone

to ridicule than formerly; she detects blemishes, and imagines peculiarities in persons she used to respect. Yet her feelings, generally speaking, are infinitely more *liberal* than they were. The striking difference I perceive, is a strong desire to justify her little flippancies, by ascribing her errors to youth. This I will not allow to be a general principle. The mistakes of youth must take rise in ignorance of what is right; and for such omissions I make due allowance. But when a mere infant utters the sarcasm of an ill-timed jest that too often deforms the experienced, I must reprove the imitator, however successful, and treat the attempt with the severity it merits."

"Perfectly correct," said Mr. Austen; "I leave my child in your hands; do with her as you think right. I think Caroline will not prove troublesome."

"On the contrary, sir," returned Miss Colville; "I expect much advantage from Miss Wilton's residence in your family, if she preserves the same



teachable dispositions she shews at present."

Delighted at the report of Caroline, Mr. Austen tried to persuade himself that the young invalid would disappoint the predictions of Dr. W. and, by a life of useful and well-directed exertion, acquire that tone of health, which contrary habits and irregular exercise had so greatly deranged.

This last day in London was to be a gala-day to Frances: she was permitted to dine with the family. Miss Colville, during the absence of her pupil, employed the morning in making a few visits, promising to join the party at the tea-table.

Frances was inconceivably disappointed upon her return to find the school-room vacant. She had much to say and to explain; and she felt that though she could be eloquent at that moment, it might not be so easy to go into detail a few hours more. She spread her purchases before her, pronounced them all useful, if not necessary to the

parties for whom they were designed. She had some idea of settling her accounts, but Marian entered the room, and she knew such an employment would excite her ridicule. So, placing her treasures in a basket till she could display them to Miss Colville, she gave the hour before dressing-time to her cousins.

While society imposes upon grown persons such restraints as prevent the well-bred from saying or doing any thing unpolite, it is observable that young people frequently err in this particular; and, though tractable and civil in their ordinary habits, no sooner find themselves in company, than they throw off these real recommendations of youth, and become noisy, talkative, and intrusive. The mistake is unfortunate, for it proceeds from an idea that cheerfulness must be *heard* in place of being *seen*; and that none but ridiculous old-fashioned people preach about being 'merry and wise.' These must be the motives by which their conduct is influ-

enced, or they could not fall into the error here described. Yet their understandings are appealed to, and that acuteness with which they seize upon the foibles of their seniors in years: how readily they point out the lady who talks too much, the grammatical mistake, or the awkward habit! Are these things selected for imitation, or are they subjects of amusement.

If the former, it is certain they sometimes prove successful mimics; but the latter is the actuating principle. Let it sink deep in the mind, that ridicule and mimicry are common and universal talents, not confined to wit and genius, but the weapons with which the merest driveller believes he can amuse, if he cannot wound.

And, though it is easy to declare that *you* do not heed these attacks when applied to yourself, the assertion must be received with limitation. It is not always that courage befriends in the moment of need; nor is it ever seen that those who indulge in these practices



are quiescent under the retaliation they had tempted.

Upon Miss Colville's return she proceeded to the drawing-room, and found the young people had assembled. Two ladies, particular friends of Mr. Austen, were in conversation at one end of the room. Marian and Frances, with boisterous mirth, were daring Mr. Douglas to snuff the candles with his left hand. "The attempt has been made already," said he, "with some damage to the table; so I shall not make the experiment."

"See here, Douglas, I will do it this time," said Frances; and she proceeded to execute her purpose; but, failing, extinguished the light, and threw the wax upon the table.

"Here is Miss Colville I declare!" exclaimed Marian, half-pleased at having led Frances into a predicament, as she called it.

Frances ran to welcome her governess. "I was so sorry not to find you

at home when we returned," said she ;  
 "I wanted you particularly."

"That was unfortunate," said Miss Colville, laughing ; "but I think you wanted me when I arrived?"

"O! I will clear up the wax directly," said Frances, rubbing the table with her gloves. "There now, it is all clean again. Douglas, put the chairs in their places : papa cannot bear to see them in disorder. So now, all is right : come, sit down, and tell me where you have been ; have you seen Lady Jane?"

"I have," replied Miss Colville ; "but I have not yet spoken to Mrs. Vaughan or Mrs. Wilton : " and, whispering a few words in the ear of Frances, she advanced to those ladies.

"Poor Frances!" tittered Marian, "you have had a brief lecture, but unquestionably a very potent one. Come though, look cheerful, this is *my* night, and I am determined every body shall be as ridiculous as I please."

Struck by this avowal, Frances felt

that she had been acting wholly under the direction of her giddy friend. The words that had fallen from Miss Colville, and which had appeared ill-timed even to her ear, now seemed appropriate.

“I am not behaving properly,” thought she; “but Miss Colville shall see I attend to what she says.”

“So you will allow us to see each other at last,” observed Mrs. Wilton, advancing to the table. “We have been in darkness two or three times; and I believe your attempts did not succeed, did they?”

“Douglas is so clumsy,” replied Marian; “he could make nothing of it; I have seen it done very adroitly.”

Douglas laughingly declared that “the plot, with all its darkness, rested with the young ladies.”

“Roche would have taken such a thing upon himself with the greatest good-nature,” said Marian; “but you want tact.”



“So he does, Marian!” echoed Frances.

The ladies regarded Miss Austen with surprise, while Miss Colville could scarcely believe it was *her* pupil who thus freely used a term she scarcely comprehended. Frances saw her error; and, covered with confusion, muttered something about the Bazaar and her purchases, and hastened out of the room. She returned in a few minutes, followed by Miss Wilton and her mother. She found Miss Colville with her work-box before her, and the visitors similarly employed. With her usual prominence of manner, Marian seized the property of Frances, and was on the point of explaining their designation and price, when Frances, with some pettishness and a slight struggle, regained possession of her property.

Miss Colville looked on in silence.

“What do you think this cost?” asked Frances rather timidly, presenting a plaid silk handkerchief for Miss

Colville's inspection. "Only four shillings! the cheapest thing in the world. This is for Betty,—she is so fond of a plaid handkerchief;" and she put it on one side. "Well, here is the most complete thing I ever saw; a little case, with a gold bodkin, a pair of scissors, a pencil, and a knife. I think I shall give this to Charlotte Percival; but I am not quite certain. Oh! dear, where is the puzzle I bought for nurse's little boy: here it is; see what a very curious thing! Do look, Miss Colville, it is the Chinese puzzle."

"It will prove a puzzle to the child," said Miss Colville; "for I believe he can scarcely articulate a word."

"But his mother can take care of it for him," returned Frances; "really it was so ingenious, I could not resist buying it."

"They are as common as possible, child," said Marian; "only you have not happened to see them."

"It is very odd that you who live in the country," returned Frances,

“should know so much about every thing that I mention.”

Miss Colville regarded her pupil steadily for a moment; then gently reminding her that her knowledge of what was, or was not common, must, from her age and usual habits of life, be very limited, bade her express herself with less vehemence. “Marian is very teasing,” said Caroline, making room for Frances to sit by her; “but you recollect she declared she will make us all as ridiculous as herself to-night; so we will not mind her, Frances.”

Marian now produced her Bazaar purchases, which consisted of fancy rings, scent-bottles, &c. One of the former she presented to Frances as a peace-offering; and it appeared that the present was effective; for Frances was rapturous in her admiration, and thanks for the “dear little ring.”

“Were you not premature in making purchases of this description in London, Marian?” asked Mrs. Vaughan. “Baubles of all kinds are so cheap in France;



and a present from Paris is so highly valued, I wonder you did not wait till you had visited that great city."

"I shall buy things like other people, of course, when I get there," returned Marian; "but one need not be shabby here, because one is going where they are to be had cheaper. I like making presents; I always did. Mamma knows I never could keep any thing that was given to me whenever any one admired it; I was sure to give it to them."

"I know you are foolishly generous, my dear, upon all occasions," said Mrs. Wilton. "She was so from an infant," turning to the company. "She would give away her toys a few hours after they were given to her. It is astonishing to see the difference in children! Caroline would part with her money readily; but the merest trifle that was given to her, she held sacred. I believe there is not a greater curiosity than Caroline's cabinet at Mount Wilton; she has all her treasures arranged in the greatest possible order."

“Not forgetting Nurse Downe’s famous mittens of her own special knitting,” said Marian, laughing. Caroline looked distressed at this exhibition of her habits; she seemed to implore the silence of her sister.

“I am an old-fashioned woman,” said Mrs. Vaughan; “and never say (before young persons especially) what I do not think: thus I pronounce Miss Wilton’s to be the *liberal* disposition, and Marian’s the ——— *ostentatious* one.”

Marian stared at the unvarnished speaker; while Frances exclaimed, “O no, she is very generous!”

“I am right, nevertheless, Frances,” returned Mrs. Vaughan, laughing. “Yes, in spite of that pretty ring now glittering upon your finger, the thing is indisputable. Marian gives away what she does not value; which is neither liberal nor generous. Caroline retains what is not in itself valuable, but from a feeling of liberality towards those who wished to shew her respect, she gives them

value, and thus convinces us that she is grateful as well as generous."

Mrs. Wilton was not exactly easy under this analysis of her daughters' dispositions; yet she would not argue the point, Mrs. Vaughan being an old friend, and a woman whose good opinion she was anxious to retain.

The arrival of the gentlemen, it was hoped, would check the strictures of the candid Mrs. Vaughan. Mr. Austen, however, soon did away this hope, by inquiring respecting a charity conducted by that lady.

Mrs. Vaughan spoke with animation of its success, and enumerated some instances of the good that had been effected since its institution.

"Have you any young ladies amongst your subscribers?" asked Mr. Austen. "It appears to me very desirable that girls should appropriate some part of their pocket-money to a charity of this kind, as it is one that admits of their attending and following up the plan. For it is only by seeing how useful they



may be, that some dispositions are roused to what they ought to be."

"We have a number of young subscribers," replied Mrs. Vaughan; "but we do not accept more than a guinea from the juveniles. This we consider fair, as it enables many to join us who might be excluded such a gratification, were the sum larger." Mr. Austen explained the nature of the institution to his daughter; and, in conclusion, asked if she would not like to become a subscriber? "Very much indeed, papa," said Frances; "I should like it excessively."

Mr. Austen produced his purse, but, happening to glance at Miss Colville, he understood the look with which she regarded the action; he corrected his first intention, and begged Mrs. Vaughan would place his guinea in her funds. "In your name, of course," said Mrs. Vaughan.

"In Miss Colville's name, if you please," was the reply.

Frances could not conceal her disap-

pointment; she had persuaded herself that the guinea, superadded to her name, was to place her amongst the young philanthropists of the day. Miss Colville made some observations upon the institution, and expressed her sense of the *liberality* of Mr. Austen, in placing her name where she wanted no stimulus to place it, saving her sense of justice.

This explanation was not necessary to Mr. Austen, who knew the principles of the woman, and the motives which led her to pursue her present mode of life. Miss Marian Wilton, however, could not understand how justice could apply to the person who declined assisting a cause she appeared to approve.

“A guinea is such a trifle,” said she; “I declare, if I had not packed-up my money, and determined not to spend another farthing in England, I would myself subscribe.”

“It is a pity you have deprived yourself of such a pleasure,” said Miss Colville; “as a guinea is to you such a trifle.”

“Why, I should suppose,” returned

Marian, "there are few persons that are respectable people, who could not command a guinea!"

"They might possess such a sum without feeling at liberty to dispose of it, even for a purpose of charity," said Miss Colville.

"Well, this may be very true," returned Marian, laughing; "but I cannot say I understand you."

"Yet, what Miss Colville has said is not difficult to be understood," said Mr. Austen: who, while addressing Marian, was anxiously regarding his daughter, for whose embarrassment and tardiness he could not account. "You look grave, Frances," he observed; "of what are you thinking?"

"I can hardly say, papa," replied Frances; "I believe I was thinking of what Miss Colville has said about justice."

"Then you were well employed, child," said Mrs. Wilton. "Miss Colville is right: we must be just, or we cannot conscientiously be generous. Come



here, love!" Frances obeyed. "There," continued Mrs. Wilton, "you *shall* subscribe; I know the dear child spent her little pocket-money at the Bazaar:" she put a guinea into the hand of Miss Austen.

"No, ma'am, indeed I cannot take it," said Frances, returning the present; "I never accept money; and you know it would not be *my* subscription, if I did."

Mrs. Wilton entreated her not to be silly. Frances was firm, and declined it civilly.

Mr. Austen, though pleased with the conduct of his daughter, forbore to *bribe* her to persevere in what was right; he neither praised her self-denial, nor made this effort of principle nugatory, by laying down the required subscription for her. "You will find," said he, "that management is essential in all our worldly transactions. We must endeavour to balance our real with our imaginary wants; and common sense will soon lead us to decide equitably. But the habit

must be uniform, or the result will prove us frivolous."

Caroline, who sat near Miss Colville, put a small folded paper into her hand, and said significantly, "It is the charade *I* mentioned."

Miss Colville glanced over the paper, and, as she unfolded it, observed, "There is taste and delicacy in the design."

The party begged to share the beauties of the admired composition. Miss Colville, looking towards Caroline, declared "she could not act without Miss Wilton's permission."

"No, no, it was only for Miss Colville," said Caroline, in real agitation.

The request was not repeated; but, though it was withheld from view at that moment, Mr. Austen afterwards did ample justice to the feelings which dictated the few following words:—"After what has passed, it would be impossible to come forward as a subscriber to Mrs. Vaughan's charity; will you, my dear

madam, give the inclosed one-pound to that lady for the institution."

The conversation had taken a more general turn. Frances, though thoughtful, and rather subdued in spirits, listened to what passed; when Marian, whose quick eye discovered every thing, exclaimed, "A rat, a rat!" Some of the company started; others laughed. "What does she mean?" was the general inquiry. Douglas alone looked disconcerted. "Let the rat alone,—it is quiet enough, Miss Marian," said he, with some warmth. "What! and frighten poor Miss Colville out of her senses!" returned Marian. "No, sir, *I* am not so inhuman;" and, starting up, she with affected fear raised the lid of Miss Colville's work-box. A small red case claimed her notice. She opened it, and found its contents to be a superb gold thimble. "How very magnificent," she continued; "I declare I never saw such a handsome thimble: where did you buy it, Doug—Mr. Douglas?"

"Where you rejected the scent-bot-



ties," replied Douglas, laughing, "and told the woman her assortment was not worth looking at!"

"What a sly animal," returned Marian. "So you were at the Bazaar, and we never saw you? It is very true, I did say so to the woman; but it will do her good; she will improve her stock, and gain greatly by my advice."

"I am afraid you will not convince her that your taste is infallible," said Douglas; "for she gained two customers through your observation,—myself and a young lady, to whom I saw Miss Austen curtsy."

"It was Lady Jane Milner," observed Frances; "I saw her go to the stand as we quitted it."

"Why did not you say she was there?" said Marian; "I had something particular to ask her."

"How could I, Marian?" returned Frances. "You may remember you dragged me away to go up-stairs."

"Did I?" said Marian; "I dare say you are right; the woman annoyed me

so, I was glad to get to a distance. So you bought this pretty thing out of pure charity?" added Marian, twirling the thimble upon her finger. "What a compliment to Miss Colville!"

Caroline involuntarily exclaimed, "Oh! Marian." Even Mrs. Wilton looked displeased. Mr. Austen turned to Douglas:—"You have too much sense to heed this giddy girl," said he; "you must be aware that ridicule, however vague or ill applied, has the effect of placing the most meritorious actions in an absurd light. If it were necessary, you could, no doubt, answer Marian satisfactorily; but I think this would be conceding too much."

"I think so too, sir," said Douglas; "so if Miss Colville will do me the favour of using this thimble," presenting it to her, "the awkward circumstances under which it is offered, will, I hope, appear unavoidable."

"I can only quarrel with it as being too expensive," returned Miss Colville, smiling; "be assured I shall value it, Mr.

Douglas ; but it is not too late. I think we might add it to the Edinburgh parcel ; and something less expensive would do for me, if I must receive such a mark of your respect."

Douglas would not hear of this ; his parcel was on the road ; and he assured Miss Colville that his sister was not as yet sufficiently expert at her needle, to make her thimble of any consequence.

"Why, do you know Miss Douglas?" asked Marian and Frances in a breath. Miss Colville replied in the negative. "How very odd then," said Marian: "do you know what the parcel contained? if you do, pray tell us; I dare say there were some pretty baubles, and I am so fond of them!"

"But is this quite essential to your repose?" asked Miss Colville, laughing. "I think not ; and, as you have really caused Mr. Douglas one of those awkwardnesses which it is not easy to describe, though their effect is trying, we must punish such curious young ladies ; must we not Mr. Douglas?"



“I answer for him,” said Mr. Austen. “You say right, Miss Colville; to have a good-natured plan, or an intended surprise, defeated by the interference of a third person, not interested in the *denouement*, is provoking. So we leave these inquisitives to puzzle over what they are not to be told.”

Neither Marian nor Frances received this reproof with temper. The former, by the warmth with which she disclaimed *all* wish of knowing any thing about a thing which *could* not concern her, evinced her real disappointment; while Frances, unused to reproof, and vexed with herself, took a path usual with the erring, and threw all the blame upon those around her.

If she admitted that Marian had led her into the adoption of manners and language new to her, she yet thought they were hardly used: every body seemed determined to tease; no one could bear to be constantly thwarted. Even her papa, who was always lenient to her, had spoken crossly.

What could poor Frances do: she scarcely knew what; but, while she endeavoured to hide the rising tear which she thought would betray weakness, her countenance became gloomy, if not repulsive.

Thus passed Marian Wilton's last evening in London; that evening which, by procuring for Frances a greater portion of liberty than she usually enjoyed, *was* to have been eminently happy.

We will pass over the departure of the travellers; and simply state, that the unbridled feelings of Marian greatly depressed her sister. Mrs. Wilton, though evidently distressed at the separation, still clung to her former assertion, that "Caroline did not contend against her little maladies, or she would have been able to join them." The poor girl submitted in silence; her heart was too full for utterance. She watched the carriage with anxious eyes until it turned into Cavendish-square. A flood of tears came to her relief; and, yielding to the arm of Miss Colville, she



threw herself on a sofa, and for some minutes indulged her grief.

Mr. Austen announced his intention of walking with Frances; thus considerably leaving the young sufferer to acquire composure.

Miss Colville did not break in upon her sorrow, but in silence awaited that calm which generally succeeds all strong emotions.

The parting words of her mother had made a deep impression on Caroline: she believed she had erred in resisting the wishes of her parent; and, with the irresolution of debility, she at one moment wished she had accompanied her mother, and in the next expressed her dread of exertion generally.

“I will not permit you to dwell on your mother’s observation,” said Miss Colville; “it was natural that she should desire your company in a party designed for your pleasure. Mrs. Wilton, however, was aware that Dr. W. advised your deferring it till the spring!”

“Till the spring!” said Caroline, mournfully.



“Yes,” returned Miss Colville; “till that period all your friends unite in thinking it would be injurious to expose you to fatigue; and pray remember, my dear, that Mr. Austen has undertaken to convey you to France himself, whenever Dr. W. gives him permission.”

“Dr. W. may deceive my friends, but he cannot deceive me,” said Caroline.

“He would not deceive any one,” returned Miss Colville; “he is a man of principle. But, have you forgotten that I am agent or deputy for the Doctor,” added Miss Colville, smiling; “and, like all subordinates, I think myself of the profession from the moment I am permitted to assist, however humbly! So, by way of a beginning, allow me to inquire if you have adhered to what was recommended for you some time since—flannel under-clothing?”

Caroline with deep confusion acknowledged she had found it uncomfortable; and, with the assistance of Foster, had destroyed the articles provided for her.

Greatly as this fact disappointed Miss

Colville, she forbore all observation, being tenacious of exciting any alarm in the thoughtless sufferer. With active zeal she instantly dispatched a servant for some flannel; and, upon its arrival, employed Caroline in preparing it for immediate use. Whatever reluctance the invalid felt, she was too well persuaded of the kindness of her friend to resist her advice.

This point gained, and Caroline somewhat relieved in spirits, Miss Colville produced some letters, and prefacing "that she believed no apology was necessary," read a portion from each. They were from Lady Jane. "In one, she lamented the indisposition of Miss Wilton, sympathizing in the disappointment she must feel in relinquishing the travelling plan." In a second, "she hoped, if her library contained any thing that could amuse Miss Wilton, Miss Colville would command it." In a third, it was asked "if Miss Wilton would object to seeing her: she knew there was a state of the feelings which made company irksome; but, if Miss Wilton had escaped this



*English* malady, she would promise to bring nothing but smiles into her presence."

"How amiable, what a liberal-minded girl!" said Caroline, bursting into an agony of tears. "Indeed I could not meet her; I think it will be impossible ever to see her again."

"This is your first view of the subject, my dear," said Miss Colville; "you will think differently I am persuaded. Shall I say you would like to have a list of Lady Jane's books? They might entertain you, though their owner is not permitted to do so."

"You do not know what I feel at this moment," returned Caroline; "I should be too happy to see, to know Lady Jane; but forgive me, my dear Miss Colville, I must believe I am more indebted to her compassion than her esteem! How is it possible she should feel any interest for one who has often, yes, very often, treated her with great rudeness."

"I will speak to you with freedom," returned Miss Colville. "I cannot deny that on more than one occasion



Lady Jane was deeply wounded by the scrutinizing and very arrogant manners of your sister. Nay, I once saw her so much distressed, as to be reduced to shed tears in consequence. This occurred upon her meeting you at Mrs. Musgrave's; you will recollect the circumstance. I had too much regard for my charge to trace your conduct to its source in her presence. Thus, though convinced she was an object of envy to those who had given her pain, I willingly attributed all to want of sense, and a total disregard of those habits which distinguish the truly well-bred. Yet, even at that period, she did you justice, and insisted that Marian alone was in fault."

"That day I shall ever remember," said Caroline, sighing: "Marian certainly behaved very ill. I did not take any part in the attack upon Lady Jane, it is true; but, when I found every body was against Marian, I foolishly defended her because she was my sister. Mamma has often wondered at the coolness of Mrs. Musgrave, who has scarcely visited

at Mount Wilton since. Marian entreated me to say nothing about it; and I, in consequence, have been silent."

"Which is to be regretted," said Miss Colville; "but you will no longer wonder at my seconding the wishes of Lord ——, and as much as was in my power preventing Lady Jane from being exposed to a repetition of such unkindness."

"It was quite right, quite proper," said the subdued Caroline; "and I hope you will allow that I could not with propriety accept the offered friendship of Lady Jane."

"On the contrary, my dear Miss Wilton," returned Miss Colville, "justice, principle, nay morality, demands that you should not only accept, but meet the wishes of Lady Jane Milner; whatever humiliation you may feel in such an effort, recollect that she can have no conception of it; thus your pride, if you allow it to have place here, can in no way be wounded. Lady Jane has given you credit for good feelings; she has



heard you are unwell, and hastens to assure you of her respect. Then, believe me, it is your place to prove her right. Suffer no false pride to deprive you of an association which, I am persuaded, will tend greatly to your advantage. You cannot know, without loving Lady Jane; nor can you live on terms of intimacy with her, without discovering that an accomplished mind capacitates its possessor to be as useful as well as an entertaining companion."

Caroline promised to reflect upon the proposal of Lady Jane; and, on the return of Mr. Austen, Miss Colville retired with her pupil.

The zeal with which Frances pursued her accustomed studies, the anxiety she displayed to occupy her time so as to prevent all reference to the preceding evening, did not escape the penetration of her friend. The day passed on smoothly; she deserved, and attained the approbation of her instructress.

Frances felt somewhat self-assured, yet her mind was not quite at ease; there



was a weight on her spirits : that confidence she now found it impossible to withhold from Miss Colville, made every thing valueless in which she did not share. She had indeed no new matter to impart, except her own view of the last day might be considered of importance. How to broach the subject she knew not. Miss Colville was writing. Frances unlocked her desk, and busied herself in arranging her papers. The account-book attracted her eye : she opened it ; and, seizing her pen, began to write. She was soon so intently engaged in calculations, as to be unmindful of every thing but her employment. She added and carried, became puzzled, spread the contents of her purse upon the table, was sure she must be wrong,—again added and subtracted ; and at last concluded by declaring she had “lost a one-pound note.”

Miss Colville was silent. Frances resumed her task, but seemed to gain no light from her application. At last, she begged Miss Colville would look at her

book, and see if she had made any mistake in her arithmetic.

“I hope not,” said Miss Colville, as she received this memorial of her pupil’s *ostentation*; “for, to fail in calculations so simple, but so necessary to your future character as a principled woman, would greatly disappoint me.”

“If I am right in this page,” said Frances timidly; “I have certainly lost one-pound.”

“Your calculation is perfectly correct,” returned Miss Colville, giving the book. “I suppose you have omitted to insert some of your purchases.”

Frances was *quite* sure she had put down every thing; and, as she made this assertion, her recollection seemed to revive. “O no!” she exclaimed; “there is the puzzle; but that is only seven-and-sixpence! Dear me, now I remember I gave two shillings to the street-band the other day, to the woman who sang the French air that you admire!” This was addressed to Miss Colville.

“I recollect the circumstance,” said



Miss Colville ; “and I think I pointed out the uselessness of your giving any thing at that time, as your cousin threw them half-a-crown.”

“I wish I had taken your advice,” said Frances with a sigh ; “it was indeed useless, but Marian said I was afraid to give away my money.”

“So you threw it away,” continued Miss Colville ; “in order to shew Miss Marian how little *you* valued money?”

“I shall be quite poor till my next quarter comes round,” said Frances ; “I declare I have only half-a-guinea ; and it will be six weeks before I get my allowance.”

Miss Colville looked up.

“Do you think the woman at the Bazaar would take back the puzzle and the little case, if I promised to lay out my money with her in future ?” asked Frances, in some confusion.

“Such an idea would never have suggested itself to a girl who thought justly,” replied Miss Colville. “It is true, you cannot understand the nature of trade



accurately, but you must know people do not keep shops for pleasure. They provide goods for their customers; but, though obliged to bear with their caprices and irresolution, they are at liberty to reject a proposition like that you have mentioned. Nor can I believe you would really like to do as you say. With what face could you make such a request, or offer terms so degrading? No, Frances! you have acted without thought, and must bear the consequences of your folly. Indeed, I should pity the Bazaar-woman if she had acceded to your accommodation; for your promises are not to be relied upon."

"You mean what I said to Betty about her mother's rent," said Frances, sobbing; "it is that I am thinking of: Betty will think me so mean, I shall be ashamed to see her."

"Your view of this subject is erroneous," returned Miss Colville; "Betty may, and will be, disappointed; but she will consider you thoughtless, and perhaps wonder that you could forget a

matter of such feeling importance to herself. I, who know you better, must lament that you have thrown away a sum in frivolous and *ostentatious* purchases, which, if judiciously managed, would have afforded you the pleasure of performing an act of *liberality*."

"And I might have subscribed to Mrs. Vaughan's charity besides, if I had only bought what I really wanted," said Frances, sighing. "How I wish I had not gone to the Bazaar."

"It is not the going to the Bazaar, but that want of firmness which makes you unable to resist doing as others do, that you should regret," returned Miss Colville. "Do you imagine that I was insensible to the utility of Mrs. Vaughan's excellent institution because I did not lay down my subscription? Such was not the case. In me such an act would have been unjust as well as ostentatious, for I have private claims to adjust, which will not permit of my always following the impulse of my feelings."



“I certainly will be more careful in future,” said Frances, in a sorrowful tone; “I hope Mrs. Vaughan will not think me selfish, or niggardly;—do you think she will?”

“Mrs. Vaughan, I fear, saw you under great disadvantages last night, Frances,” returned Miss Colville; “you know to what I allude; but I trust you have felt the mistakes into which that evening of liberty led you.” Frances, blushing, avowed her papa had pointed out the impropriety of her behaviour during their walk. “I hoped as much,” continued Miss Colville. “Now let me set you right in another particular. You appear very tenacious of what people will say or think of you: this is laudable to a certain extent; for instance, our manners and personal habits must be regulated by the rules prescribed to our station in life. These things fall under the public eye; and every person will make their comments upon them. But there are a thousand actions in the life of women in particular, which are valu-



able in proportion as they are retired. The idea of a female seeking applause, courting popularity, is repugnant to the character which should belong to her sex. You fear your servant thinks you mean;—she, happily, as unacquainted with appropriate terms as yourself, will call you thoughtless; while I, who knew how far you pledged yourself to serve Betty's mother, might, if indisposed to view your conduct leniently, call this defection a want of principle. That I do not do so, proceeds from my thorough knowledge of your disposition; yet I confess it will require some effort on your part to convince me that this unfortunate want of firmness is not a part of your character, and beyond my power to correct."

Frances would have promised all and every thing that a subsued spirit at the moment of conviction is so ready to admit. Miss Colville checked her. "Your desire to meet the wishes of those who love you," she observed, "will be best seen in your conduct, my dear.

I know not the temptations to which you may be exposed: plaid handkerchiefs and Chinese puzzles, are very formidable things to some young ladies." Miss Colville smiled.

"Indeed I never should have thought of the handkerchief," returned Frances, "if Betty had not said she liked them so much; and I asked her why she did not buy one, and she said she could not afford it."

"The action was good-natured, Frances," said Miss Colville; "no one can doubt your intention in the purchase. But, reflect for a moment: was it either necessary to Betty's appearance, or conducive to her happiness, that she should possess such a thing? I think not; and you must be convinced that four shillings would have been something towards the one-pound you promised to her mother. Nor can I omit observing, that you act contrary to my wishes in being familiar with the servants; civility, kindness, and any aid you can give to such of them as require as-



sistance, — these are your duties ; but, in entering into their plans, or encouraging their desire for dress, you do them a serious injury, and yourself no service. Perhaps this is of all popularity the most objectionable : their good opinion is easily attained ; but it does not necessarily follow, that their applause is founded upon principles that can exalt you with more judicious observers of your actions. I would not depreciate a class of persons so justly entitled to our sympathy and consideration, in all that is connected with their personal comforts and moral improvement ; but I repeat, we may fulfil our duties towards them without familiarity ; and, in most cases, I have observed that, where servants are treated with a certain respect, they are uniformly more correct in their duties, and more lastingly attached to their employers.”

Frances settled her desk ; and was replacing her almost empty purse in the drawer, when Miss Colville asked “ what sum was wanting to make up the



promised one-pound note?" "Nine-and-sixpence," was the reply. "I will accommodate you with the silver," said Miss Colville; "I cannot bear the idea of the poor woman's being disappointed, nor should I like to have your want of stability made the subject of animadversion. In future, my dear girl, avoid all promises of this nature; for, unless you feel confident in yourself, and are steadily determined to perform what you promise, you will place your character in a very unfavourable light; and people will disregard your word, even where your means seconds your inclination to be punctual."

The evening brought its relaxation. Grateful to Miss Colville for the arrangement she had made respecting Betty's mother, Frances accompanied her governess to the drawing-room with a light heart. Mrs. Percival had dined with Mr. Austen; and was, on their entrance, in earnest conversation with Miss Wilton.

Miss Colville was sorry to interrupt them ; and, drawing her pupil on one side, engaged her attention to some patterns she wished her to copy.

A few minutes brought the gentlemen ; and Mrs. Percival soon found an opportunity of speaking to Miss Colville. She expressed her pleasure at finding the young invalid so perfectly tractable and reasonable. “ I fear she has but little confidence in her recovery,” added Mrs. Percival. “ This it will be wise to counteract, so long as her complaint is not exactly defined, or while a truth so melancholy might confirm or accelerate its termination ; but I can never allow the necessity for deceiving an accountable creature when the event is certain, and the sufferer possesses the required fortitude to hear it.”

Miss Colville coincided in this opinion, but rather feared the young lady was injured by considering her case hopeless. “ Her mind,” said Miss Colville, “ is wholly bent on redeem-



ing the time she has lost ; she affects me sensibly by the truly pious tenor of her conversation ; and, while I gladly encourage dispositions so suited to *her* situation, I feel it indispensable (in her weak state) to trace her present spirit of inquiry to a desire of knowledge rather than the effect of disease."

"This is wise, my dear Miss Colville," said Mrs. Percival ; "if it please God to restore this young girl, you are assisting her to enjoy the future as a rational being ; and, if it is the will of Heaven that she be called hence, you are fitting her for the joys of a higher state of existence."

In such hands Caroline Wilton found all that could sooth her bodily ailments, while her ardent and *now* aspiring mind met every consolation that zeal and affection could bestow. Miss Colville became so deeply interested in her welfare, and so sedulously attentive to her ease and comfort, that Caroline knew no happiness when she was absent. A sleeping-room conti-



guous to the invalid was fitted-up for Miss Colville; and, as Caroline received the draught from her hand, or unexpectedly met her features bent on her as she awoke from her slumbers, she would break into expressions of the liveliest gratitude, not unmixed with self-recriminations.

“It is my interest to take care of the young,” Miss Colville would say; “for I look forward, and expect to claim their services when I can no longer assist myself.”

Caroline no longer resisted the overtures of Lady Jane. To the surprise of Miss Colville and Frances, they found her ladyship sitting with the invalid one morning when they came in from their walk.

“Miss Wilton was so good as to admit me,” said Lady Jane, as she arose to meet her attached friend. “I have been telling her what an admirable nurse you are. I really think her attack is very similar to the one I had three years since.”

Miss Colville saw at once the motive that dictated this observation, and assented to it. Caroline appeared interested in this avowal, and spoke more unreservedly of her symptoms than heretofore. Her ladyship listened; and, with a cheerfulness highly consoling, beguiled the desponding girl into something like hope.

“What can you do,” she inquired, “by way of amusement? You must not draw, nor write, the position is bad; and reading will not do all day! Do you like work, Miss Wilton? *I* found it a great resource during a tedious illness.”

Caroline declared “she never had employed herself sufficiently in work to say whether she liked it or not.”

“That is unfortunate,” returned Lady Jane; “I recommend your trying it; it will amuse you occasionally; and from its very novelty be pleasing for a time. Miss Colville can vouch that I found idleness the worst of my restraints;

but my eyes were weak, and I was forbidden every thing that could try them."

"Mr. Austen is so good as to read to me for an hour every morning," said Caroline; "and I read a good deal myself: but I will certainly try a little work.—I think I should like the knitting I saw Miss Colville doing one evening. Pray, what were you making? I resolved to ask you, but forgot it till this moment."

"A baby's shoes," replied Miss Colville; "I will teach you with great pleasure; it is light and quick work. I have six pair ready," continued Miss Colville, addressing Lady Jane. "Shall I order them to be put into the carriage?" "I will take them in my hand," replied her ladyship; "my aunt is to call for me in her way back, so you will be troubled with me a little longer."

Caroline expressed her pleasure at the visit being lengthened. Frances, in a half-whisper to her governess, hoped Mrs. Mercer would not come for an hour at least. Miss Colville smiled at



the warmth of her pupil, but declared she had nothing to say in opposition to her wish.

While they were thus engaged in social conversation, Mr. Austen's footstep was heard. "Papa will be so glad to see Lady Jane!" said Frances, jumping up and opening the door. She drew back, and, curtsying as she held the door, Mr. Austen entered, followed by Mrs. Cox.

"My cousin has used me very ill," said that lady; "but that would be no excuse for my being unnatural to her child. Ah! dear Miss Carry, how are you, love? She looks but puny! However, you are in good hands, my dear; and when the spring comes you shall come to me. I have a comfortable cottage, and it is a fine pure air. Do you know Hampstead, ma'am?" addressing Lady Jane. Lady Jane replied in the affirmative. "Well then," Mrs. Cox continued, "I need not say any thing about it, for every body allows it is the most purest air in the world."

Lady Jane “thought it a beautiful spot; but had heard of many persons who had found the air of Hampstead too keen.”

Mrs. Cox defended her favourite retirement with much eloquence: her ladyship attended to her observations with politeness. Caroline and Frances looked in vain for that contempt which they were persuaded Lady Jane must feel for such a person; and that smile, which each might have been ready to accord had they met encouragement, subsided into calm observation:

Caroline only simply observed, “that if she was well enough, she was to follow her mamma.”

“I believe one-half the world is mad,” said Mrs. Cox. “What has old England done, that people are so glad to run away from it; spending their money among strangers, when so many of their own countrymen are starving.”

Mr. Austen indulged her just spleen on this subject; and, greatly to the annoyance of Caroline, protracted her visit, which she had constantly asserted



must be short, until this topic was started. At length, after the warmest expressions of regard, Mrs. Cox took leave.

Caroline felt relieved; yet she was at a loss whether to apologize for the manners of their late visitor, or to get over the thing altogether, by directing the attention of Lady Jane to something new. Even Frances shared this weakness with her cousin, and would have been pleased, had some opening been made which could have placed Mrs. Cox's consanguinity to the *Wilton* family in a distinct point of view.

"You look grave, Caroline," said Mr. Austen; "this is ungrateful to the kind Mrs. Cox; she carries, in her cordial manner and open countenance, an antidote to gravity."

"You must be jesting, sir," returned Caroline, smiling; "Mrs. Cox is one of the coarsest persons altogether; indeed, she is quite a fright."

"O no," said Lady Jane; "the lady has a very fine countenance. I am a



great admirer of an open countenance; and really I had noticed hers before Mr. Austen mentioned it."

Caroline looked incredulous; and Frances could not disguise her mirth at the idea of Mrs. Cox's fine countenance.

Mr. Austen laughed at both of them, and declared, "the unpopularity of Mrs. Cox had nothing to do with her person. Though large and ungraceful, it was in many points handsome. Of her polish I cannot speak so favourably," he continued; "she is ill-bred, and consequently too familiar in her language. Thus I would not recommend her oratory as worthy of imitation; but I care not how soon I see her kinswoman Caroline and my pale-faced Frances with cheeks as indicative of health as our Hampstead friend."

The pale cheek of Caroline was flushed even to crimson at this distinct reference to *her* relationship with so vulgar a personage. Miss Colville saw this false pride in her young convert with regret. She was too wise to expect that the dili-

gence of a few weeks could eradicate foibles that had been years acquiring strength in the mind of Caroline Wilton. With a good-humoured smile she observed, "that it was fortunate we were not involved in the personal omissions or inelegancies of our connexions; for, so few of us possess individual self-command, or are entirely acquainted with our own defects, it would be dangerous, were such power placed in our hands."

Caroline felt she had erred; and, extending her hand to Miss Colville, exclaimed, "This is one of your lessons in disguise: I stand convicted." Miss Colville took the offered hand; and, as she pressed it kindly, added in a whisper, "Ever dismiss pride with this candour, and you will soon free yourself from a cruel enemy."

Mr. Austen looked his delight at this striking proof of self-amendment.

"Did Miss Colville ever give you lessons of this description?" asked Caroline, addressing Lady Jane; "but, why do I ask, you never required them!"



“I beg your pardon, my dear Miss Wilton,” returned Lady Jane; “you know not half my obligations to Miss Colville; if you never heard of me as a spoiled little girl, full of fancies, and requiring the constant check of a firm judicious friend.”

Frances was evidently surprised by this acknowledgment. Miss Colville understood her disposition; and, to prevent that triumph which girls of a lively character so gladly seize when they think they have discovered that which brings others on a level with themselves, said, “But, pray take into consideration the age of this wilful little being.” Lady Jane was in her fifth year when I took charge of her. She was then the pet of a fond but illiterate nurse, who, like most persons in her station, was, by turns, the tyrant and the slave of the infant she pretended to guide.”

“My recollections of that period are lively as possible,” said Lady Jane; “and I am well assured that infancy,



with all its ascribed innocence, is full of glaring and dangerous faults."

"I am almost incredulous," said Mr. Austen, smiling; "there are some characters which, like particular plants, display in their maturity that better fruit which sufficiently attests the native superiority of the soil."

Lady Jane smiled at this compliment; and, as she arose to take leave, said, "But you overlook the prunings, sir, and all the nameless little excrescences that will cling to the human scion, and which constantly require the skilful and improving hand of a friend."

Mr. Austen attended her ladyship to her carriage; and, upon his return, found his daughter and Caroline speaking in enthusiastic terms of their late visitor. Frances declared "she looked quite handsome." Caroline thought "she was so animated, that, though not strictly pretty, she surpassed many who were handsome."

"Just so," said Mr. Austen; "there is a sweetness in her manner, and a li-

berality in all she says, so strikingly illustrative of the benevolence of her heart, that I never saw a young person so well calculated to interest one in her welfare. Even for poor Mrs. Cox," Mr. Austen added, smiling, "Lady Jane could offer an opinion not more remarkable for its discernment than its kindness."

"I cannot agree with her," said Caroline, smiling; "no, that woman really fills me with disgust; she is so coarse and free."

"Indeed, papa, she is a very disagreeable woman," said Frances; "really I wonder Lady Jane could admire her countenance."

"Indeed! this is your opinion," returned her father, laughing; "and it is a most wise one, considering how competent you are to judge, and how much you know of her."

"With all this," observed Miss Colville, "I can assure you Lady Jane thought as she said. She has often made me smile at the facility with which



she discovered the beauty of the peasantry at ———. A profile, nay, a single feature, has caught her eye, when I had scarcely seen the party. And my dear Miss Wilton, as I have unavoidably been present at the time of Mrs. Cox's visits, I may be allowed to add, that the predicament which has caused you some little vexation, is not peculiar to you, nor of a character to have any weight with you. I could instance a situation infinitely less bearable, to which Lady Jane is frequently exposed. I allude to a distant connexion of Lord ———, who, though born to the rank and filling the station of a gentleman, has so completely lost sight of those delicacies in his habits which are usually found in that class of society, that it really requires much self-command to look on unconcernedly. Yet she does this; and, with a seeming deference to the party, spares him from the observations of others where she can; and where she cannot, as often is the case, she checks



the laugh his *grossievete* has occasioned, and places all to the account of his age."

"She is an admirable young creature," said Mr. Austen; "you perceive, Frances, that all parts of Lady Jane's character agree;—it is not by one act alone that she engages our esteem."

"Oh no, papa," observed Frances; "no man who performs one virtuous action alone, however praiseworthy or excellent the motive, is entitled to the appellation of virtuous!"

Mr. Austen started: his eyes beamed with pleasure. "My dear girl," exclaimed he; and he drew the delighted Frances to his side; "now tell me," he continued, "what *does* constitute the character of virtue, since you have so well defined what does not."

Frances added, "the character must be formed by a series of actions, all of the same kind, and proceeding from virtuous affections."

"Charming! excellent!" exclaimed the transported father; and, turning to

Miss Colville, he added, "Are you not astonished?"

"I think Lady Jane gave her authority in the page from which you copied that extract," said Miss Colville, addressing Frances.

"I do not recollect it," was the reply.

"It is from Dunbar's Sketch of Greece," continued Miss Colville; "where this opinion of Aristotle is contrasted with that of Plato, who thought that just sentiments and reasonable judgments were sufficient to the most perfect virtue. Your application of these observations should have been prefaced by saying that you had written some sentences that agreed with what your papa said. A retentive memory, though a valuable gift, requires much vigilance in its possessor; our accuracy must be carried into the minute as well as the general parts of our subject, or the imagination will run riot."

"Bear this in mind, Frances," said Mr. Austen, somewhat convinced by this exposition of the governess. "Yes,

this is absolutely requisite, my child ; or, as Miss Colville observes, your ideas will become confused. I hope she continues the practice of transcribing extracts of this description ;” continued Mr. Austen, addressing Miss Colville.

“Not at present, sir,” replied Miss Colville ; “your daughter’s memory is, generally speaking, clear and retentive ; but, having more than once found her deficient in her references to authors, I felt it proper to lay my plan aside, until she thoroughly comprehended my motive in its adoption. It is not so much to make her ready with quotations, as to teach her that virtue has at all times been valued and desired ; though the ideas of those who pursued it have been variously expressed, according to the periods in which they lived.”

Mr. Austen saw that a reproof was couched under this explanation. Frances felt all its force ; but sought, in the countenance of her father, some intimation of his sentiments. She almost hoped (such is human vanity !) to find



him lean to her side of the question; and we fear, had she been put to the test, greatly as she valued Miss Colville, she would have thought her right application of a selected extract must have compensated for its anonymous introduction. Happily her father had reviewed the subject, and now unhesitatingly avowed his conviction that Miss Colville was right. This coincidence did more towards the correction of Miss Austen's vanity than a thousand private lectures could have effected; for, though Caroline Wilton took no part in the conversation, or by her manner evinced that she entered into the merits of the case, she on a subsequent day admonished Frances to attend and profit by all that was doing for her, and pointed out the advantage she possessed in a friend, always at hand to direct and lead her to happiness. Frances was transiently wounded. Advice from one whose neglected education she had heard her father seriously regret, seemed out of place. Caroline soon banished this fro-

ward feeling; and, as she lamented the very different system upon which Marian and herself had been reared, and with tearful eyes declared she hourly regretted the time she had lost in frivolous pursuits, Frances became not only passive, but ready to allow that Caroline was one of the sweetest girls in the world.

Among other disadvantages connected with the condition of an *only* child, is the absence of that emulation, that, contrasting the powers and diligence of the pupil, which, if judiciously introduced, does so much towards rousing the faculties of the mind. Emulation, it is allowed, may degenerate into envy, in the same way that valour may acquire a character of ferocity. It is the *excess* in either case which produces the evil. No person ever fell into vice by pursuing virtue; it is by diverging from the right line, mistaking the barrier between right and wrong, that the heedless traveller in life's devious path too often finds himself benighted.

When it is considered how readily the ear receives and accredits praise, how flat and insipid all qualified approbation appears to those who have been accustomed to the language of adulation, the folly of the practice must be obvious. Yet how current is this poison! An only child, is a mark at which grown folly levels its barbed shafts. "The wonderful intellect," "astonishing capacity," "numberless accomplishments of an infant," will fill an assembly of *kind friends* with admiration. Cruel, and not more cruel than insincere, is this description of fraud. Is it not cruel to deceive any one? and therefore criminal to impose upon the ignorant? Can childhood conscientiously claim distinctions which tried principles and long experience seldom attain? Human intellect may pause; it may languish altogether; as is too often the case, where any remarkable precocity of understanding has been displayed; but human vanity makes few retrograde movements, and rarely any, until the world has



taught it to unlearn itself. Then comes reflection; and the pampered infant must, in his after-age, learn to think as “a child,” carry himself “lowly,” and acknowledge he “knows nothing.”

This state, (which, after all, is the prescribed condition of mortality,) would be the point to which our ambition would aspire, were the footsteps of infancy trained in the way it should go.

Frances Austen had tasted sparingly of praise, it is true; yet Miss Colville had found much difficulty in reconciling her to calm, sober approbation. Still, as has been seen, the least opening was seized with avidity, and would have produced the usual effects, had not Mr. Austen seconded the views of the zealous governess. Guarded by the recent illustration of his daughter’s vanity, he now grew cautious in his praises, scarcely ever rising above that just commendation which stimulates to exertion without destroying the most attractive charm of youth—modesty. This essential point gained, Miss Colville proceeded with

her work; and most truly may it be called an arduous one, when we contemplate the moral duties, the high calling, and final destination of a creature formed for immortality.

When Caroline with unaffected humility avowed that her earlier religious instruction had not made any lasting impression on her mind; when she acknowledged that habits of piety and serious reading, had appeared to her as more especially suited to persons advanced in life than the young; Miss Colville would gently encourage the discussion: and seldom did they part without the young inquirer feeling comforted, and her principles confirmed.

Frances was necessarily present upon occasions in which this subject was resumed, and the benefit she derived from it was great. Mr. Austen took much interest in explaining and pointing out the insufficiency of all those systems taught in the schools of the ancients; and defined, with that accuracy which a knowledge of the classics gives to the

other sex, the false morality they produced.

“I have always considered the ancients learned and ingenious,” said Frances one evening; “but I really think they were to be pitied; it must have been dreadful for them to be ignorant of the true religion of Christ.”

“To the learning and sublime genius of the ancients we are all debtors,” returned her father. “It is remarkable, however, that while nations differed in their ideas of a Deity, at no time has God left himself without witness among mankind; but that, in every age and country, the great One Cause has been worshipped, though ignorantly, amidst all the mysterious rites and barbarous superstitions of heathenism. I might quote the opinions of various sects; but I will confine myself, and only observe, that when Omnesicritus, the Cynic philosopher, was sent by Alexander the Great, (whom he accompanied into Asia,) to obtain information respecting the manners, lives, and doctrines of the



Brahman philosophers, Calanus, a Brahman, instructed him in the following principles of their religion:—That formerly plenty reigned over all nature; that milk, wine, honey, and oil, flowed from fountains; but that men, having made an ill use of this felicity, were deprived of them by the Deity, and condemned to labour for their sustenance. A clerical friend," continued Mr. Austen, "has made the following observation on this subject: This belief that human nature is fallen from its original purity; that there is one supreme Governor of the universe; that virtue will be rewarded in another state, and vice punished, has been transmitted from age to age, down to the present times, by a general tradition. It will be found to obtain equally among the Hindoos, the Chinese, the natives of Japan, and to influence the conduct of those hordes of savages who are spread over the vast plains of North and South America; and of those also who are distributed among the countless islands of the Pa-

cific Ocean.”—“But none of these people are as happy as we,” said Frances; “they listened to different sects, and knew not which to believe.”

“The Son of God,” returned Mr. Austen, “as you have read, brought peace into the world. By his atonement for sin, he opened the gates of immortality to all who live, breathe, and have being; and, though there are millions who yet remain strangers to the light of the Gospel, I fear we must not yet reckon too much upon the merits of those who *have* received the divine dispensation. Our sense of the blessing conferred upon us, would be best attested by our lives being uniformly consistent with the rules and precepts of the Gospel. Yet this is not exactly our practice.”

Caroline sighed; and with a faltering voice observed, that “though she had attended to the forms of public worship, and read the Scriptures at different times, she was now fully aware she had never entered into the spirit of their import.”

Mr. Austen encouraged her by arguments drawn from that divine source she was now beginning to taste ; and added, "That, while the ignorances and omissions of the young claimed our compassion, it was grievous to think how many, who could offer no such apology for their conduct, yet lived regardless of the religion they professed. You, my Frances, pity the ancients ; the feeling is consistent, if you justly estimate the happier light under which we live. But the real objects of pity, are those who, unmindful of the covenant they have made with the Omnipotent ruler of the universe, absolve themselves from the engagement, while health and prosperity surround them, and yet would renew the contract, when the pleasures of this world lose their value. These are really pitiable objects !"

"I remember a passage in Archbishop Tillotson's Works which treats this subject admirably," said Miss Colville. Taking out her pocket-book, she referred to a memorandum, and bade Frances get



the volume. "It is on Early Piety," resumed Miss Colville, "and it is found in the first volume, page 523." Frances was desired to read it: she obeyed. — "As if Heaven were an hospital founded on purpose to receive all sick and maimed persons, that, when they can live no longer to the sinful pleasures of this world, they can but put up a cold and formal petition to be admitted there. Can any man in reason expect that such a petition will be granted?"

Mr. Austen extolled the extract, and recommended the volume to Caroline's notice.

Frances whispered something to Miss Colville. "You are perfectly correct," was the return: it is the same Calanus."

"What do *you* know of Calanus?" asked Mr. Austen, smiling.

"He burned himself on a funeral pile, papa," replied Frances; "being unable to bear a painful disease. I think Alexander the Great endeavoured to dissuade him from it, but could not prevent him."

“This is well remembered, Frances,” said her father; “I thought you had something to say by your looks. Have you not been meditating the introduction of this observation?”

“Why, yes, papa,” answered Frances; “I was thinking that what Calanus said of the religion of the Brahmans was so like the true history of the Bible, and I wondered such a man should yet commit suicide.”

“The word Brama is supposed to be derived from Abraham,” said Mr. Austen; “and that, in a country where God gave his laws, some remnants of his wisdom and power should remain, is not wonderful. But while this is reconciled by historic facts, it is equally certain that, in the course of time, the pure stream became polluted. Man opposed *his* theories; vanity led him to promulgate them; and, while the real attributes of the Deity *occasionally* received due honour, it was unknowingly. Self-denial, and an insensibility to all bodily pain, was peculiar to one sect of philosophers.

Your friend Calanus seems an exception to this ; but it is questioned whether the desire of being celebrated in after-ages did not influence Calanus. Of a future state they entertained confused ideas ; their lives were in numberless instances blameless. That right they assumed to themselves of terminating existence, when age, or their false notions of honour, made its duration insupportable, appears to us criminal in the extreme. But the world was then in darkness, Frances ! The day-spring from on high had not visited the earth ! From that period when God gave his only Son to be at once a propitiation and a sacrifice for sin, man became expressly accountable for his actions. He can no longer sin from ignorance, for the way of life is laid open to him ; and, if he err wilfully, he knows the liability to which he is exposed. You, my child, may at some future day have occasion to observe how rigidly mankind perform those engagements with their fellow-mortals which can increase their property or further



their ambition! All difficulties seem trivial when opposed to these objects; yet the issue of these things is always uncertain, and even success does not produce content. Now reflect, Frances, and tell me if you have not entered into an engagement infinitely more serious than any the world can exact?"

Frances hesitated. She looked to Miss Colville; and at length said, "You allude to the Catechism, papa; and that part, 'a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.'"

"I do," said Mr. Austen; "and can we really pretend to a character of integrity or honesty, when these Christian obligations are forgotten? They are offered for us in infancy, because those interested in our eternal welfare know all the importance of the engagement they make in our name: we take the responsibility upon *ourselves* in riper years, for it is then believed. We must gladly avail ourselves of promises so eminently merciful. For, is it not self-evident that

we, and we alone, are the benefited party? It must be, it is pleasing to the most high God, that his creatures do him 'true and laudable service.' But yet we can neither exalt nor depress him who is all in all. *He* who knoweth our hearts, in 'whose hands are the issues of life and death;' 'who can at will remove us hence and no more be seen;' he, with tenderness unexampled, exhorts us to turn from the 'evil of our ways,' to 'come unto him, and we shall find rest!'"

Caroline, now as anxious to acknowledge her deficiencies as she had before been unwilling to admit them, inquired respecting the period in which Alexander the Great lived?

Mr. Austen referred to Frances; who, after a little reflection, replied, "Alexander died at Babylon, 323 years before Christ appeared."

"I was thinking," said Caroline, "how long the Bible has been written."

"The early books of the Old Testament," returned Mr. Austen, "were openly read three thousand years ago,

and the latter above two thousand. The New Testament was written and made public more than eighteen hundred years since. Now, my dear girls," continued Mr. Austen, "young as you are, you must have heard, (for it is the fashion of the day,) *much* of the *value* of old pictures, old china, and old books; every thing of this description is now estimated according to its antiquity;—then, upon this principle, how should we value the Bible?"

That the reading of the young requires direction, no one will deny; nor is it too much to say, that females are now generally tolerably conversant with history both ancient and modern. To cavil with the present times, has been the foible of all ages; and it is observed, that the danger we now have to apprehend, though of another character, is equally to be dreaded with that of ignorance.

Female attainments, however respectable, lose their value from the moment they become obtrusive. They do not



learn for exhibition:—a woman's station  
“is retreat.”

The young student may ask, “then, why must we toil to gain knowledge, if it is not to be brought into use?” The question seems fair, but the position is not tenable. Men rise to eminence by their learning; talent often procures for them what wealth, unassisted by knowledge, would fail to secure. It is not so with females.

Thus a cultivated mind in woman should be “*seen, not felt.*” Her attention is well employed, when she *listens* to the discussions of the learned and the scientific. She becomes of high worth, if her previous information is confirmed by their opinions, and her taste for what is good stimulated to continue the pursuit. Farther than this she cannot go with safety; nor is it necessary to her character that she should make the attempt. In the most simple affair that lies unexplained or equivocal, we know how greedily human vanity triumphs while proving the fact; and, were this

eagerness limited to a vindication of the innocent, supporting moral truths, &c. the feeling would be correct. Unfortunately, these are not always the bearings by which the self-opinionated are influenced! When a love of argument, or a desire to display her *little* knowledge, leads a *female* into disputations, she loses all claim to our respect and esteem. For, though the features of the human countenance bear their distinctive characteristic, by which each individual is recognised, and the station appointed them by Providence is equally marked and distinguishable, there is yet one general attribute in the *female* character for which no substitute can be found; and that is—modesty.

This word cannot exist with the arrogant, the vain, or the captious; and, though moral deformities may be disowned even by those who practise them, it requires no extraordinary discernment to prove, that, whoever dispenses with the quiet graces of mo-

desty, will infallibly appoint some unworthy substitute to her post.

It is obvious Frances Austen upon all occasions was disposed to vaunt her little knowledge. The checks she sometimes received may appear too severe to those who regard young persons as playthings rather than companions. There should be consistency in our manner towards children, if we desire them to be rational. Youth is confessedly the most lovely period of existence; its versatility, animation, and thousand varieties, are, to a reflective observer, at once beautiful and affecting.

But, while it is merciful to cherish that predilection for present happiness which so peculiarly distinguishes this season of life, it is by no means necessary to deceive them entirely. Guard them from a too minute knowledge of a world, that cannot be scanned without contamination; inculcate moral principles; and, above all, a scrupulous love of truth. There will occur



in the lives of the young incidents that fully illustrate the advantages of integrity, the value of truth, the necessity of possessing in themselves a right principle of action.

Now the deduction is clear, that it is from one source, and one alone, that these can be drawn. Religion, at once our guardian and our guide, interposes her benign influence; she tells us where to hope and what to fear; and always leaning with merciful tenderness to the imperfect nature of man. Her wisdom is adapted to our capacity; all we have to do, all that is required of us, is to carry that teachable spirit into our religious inquiries which we so readily make in matters of no importance. It is surely very little that is asked of us! We study a language; acquire its pronunciation; attend to its niceties; and the result is—we are more competent to mix in general society; may deserve and receive applause for our industry, and extend our reading.

Valuable as every intellectual resource is to those who use them properly, they are not efficient in themselves to any lasting purpose; they may sooth a languid hour; but will they quiet a troubled mind?—hush the voice of conscience? or bring us comfort, when the world is fading from our view? What these observations contend for, then, is this:—Let the earlier studies of the young be more particularly directed to that wisdom which shall make them “wise unto salvation.”

It will happen with the mind as with the soil we cultivate, that, on some the impression will be less profitable than on others; the labour, however, should not be discontinued. There is an after-age, a resuscitation, as it were, in the human understanding, which almost invariably leads us to revert to our *first* instruction. And it will not be denied that it is much easier to *resume* a neglected study, than to contend

with the difficulties of that which is new to us.

But even here, where knowledge is true wisdom, there must be no vaunting. Our conduct, the most minute action of our lives, if regulated by the principles of the Gospel, *will* shew themselves. In vain shall we look for an example or a precept in the sacred Volume, that can justify *ostentation* under any form; on the contrary, it will be found it met rebuke from Him who was in all things “meek and lowly;” who, in his intercourse with the ignorant and the unlearned, assumed no superiority, but listened to the meanest of his followers; — never reproving where he could spare, and, when compelled to do so, always in mild though impressive language. It is worthy of observation, that, while we speak with enthusiasm of the dignity and grace of the ancients, and see in their actions a something that places them above our imitation, the *real* model of all that is *truly* sublime, is to be found in the life and actions of Our Saviour



during his mission upon earth. Dignified yet humble in his deportment; graceful but simple in his manner; eloquent without art; a willing martyr for the crimes and errors of mankind; feeling as a man, yet suffering as a hero.

In the whole range of those whom ancient history has eulogized, is there *one* among their demi-gods to whom these attributes can apply? Impossible!—the children of superstition must fade before the “light of the world.” Then let us, who live under the “shadow of his wing,” the children of promise, and heirs to immortality, walk steadily in the path that is set before us;—that as He who died, died for all; so all that live, may live to him.

The anxiety Caroline manifested at the infrequency of Marian’s letters, induced Mr. Austen to address her, and enjoin a more punctual correspondence. Only two letters had arrived since their departure; one detailing their weary passage and great suffering in crossing to Calais; and the other expressing

Marian's disgust for the French nation altogether. This last, written two days after their arrival, when she had scarcely walked the length of a street, was but too characteristic of the errors into which young people fall, when they venture to speak without thinking. No mention was made of their fellow-travellers. This surprised Caroline. She had been wearied with Marian's admiration of Lady Fanshawe; but, while Mr. Austen's letter was on the road, a third epistle from her sister gladdened the young invalid.

"This is to make amends for past negligence," said Mr. Austen, as he handed a thick packet to Miss Wilton. Caroline broke the seal; and, as she read, laughed frequently. "Poor Marian, only imagine her indignation," said Caroline; "Lady Fanshawe almost cuts them. Hear what she says: 'We are greatly disappointed in Lady F. who almost shuns us. She has found so many of her *very* dear friends here, that she cannot find time to shew *us* the lions of



Paris. Is not this provoking, after all the fine things she promised. Mamma says we shall do better without her; indeed, she is rather troublesome as a travelling-companion—taxing all the bills, and holding such arguments, wherever we stopped; it was quite shabby!”

Mr. Austen smiled. “Marian’s ideas of shabbiness,” said he, “is, as usual, erroneous. Lady Fanshawe is used to travelling, and knows how necessary it is to check the impositions practised upon all foreign visitors.”

Caroline turned to her letter. In a moment she exclaimed, “Dear me, my mamma is ill, very ill, I am sure!”

Mr. Austen, alarmed at the pallid hue that overspread her features, took the letter from her hand. “Shall I read it to you,” said he;—“you are alarmed, without cause, I trust.”

Caroline begged he would do so; and he began:—“Mamma has not recovered the effects of the voyage, if I may call it such; her head has been poorly ever since. I persuaded her to see Lady



Fanshawe's medical friend, but she does not like him, and thinks she can manage herself better than any stranger. Do not be alarmed, my dear Caroline; she is better to-day; you will believe me, when I say I am going to dress in order to take a lesson from a celebrated dancing-master. So, adieu, till this grand effort is over."

"You perceive I was right, Caroline," said Mr. Austen soothingly.

"No no! go on, look at the date of the next page," returned the agitated girl. Mr. Austen obeyed; but, as he glanced his eye over it, he caught the infection of her fears, and endeavoured to persuade her that it would be advisable to calm her feelings, and not yield to an agitation which must injure her.

"Never mind me," exclaimed she; "what are *my* feelings? think of Marian! O, my dear mother! pray go on!"

With evident reluctance Mr. Austen complied. 'You will be grieved to hear our dear mamma has been seriously unwell; I kept my letter back, hoping I

should be able to say she was decidedly better; but indeed, my dear Caroline, I thought we should have lost her. She was suddenly attacked by a pain in her head, which caused insensibility for some hours; her attendants will not allow me to say she had a fit, but I shall always think so. She has no idea of the time she was ill, and I am ordered to be silent on the subject. She passed yesterday free from pain, but very low, and talked of you whenever she could exert herself to speak. To add to my distress, Foster, without saying a word to us, has engaged herself to Lady Fanshawe; and, though I said all I could to make her remain till mamma was sufficiently recovered to exert herself in procuring a person to fill her place, I could not prevail on her to stay. She quitted Paris this morning with Lady F. who is going to Pisa. What an ungrateful creature is Foster! I have been fortunate in meeting with a kind friend in a stranger,—a Mrs. Cuthbert, the sister of Sir John Clare. You heard Douglar



speak of him; he is D——'s guardian. Mrs. Cuthbert happened to be at the same hotel, and most kindly came to me, when she heard of mamma's illness. Her woman is at present with me, and I find her very intelligent and active. I wish we were all safe at Mount Wilton: this trip has not answered my expectation. God bless you, my dearest sister; you may rely upon my giving you faithful accounts of our dear mamma. Remember me to Mr. A. and Frances; and believe me your

Unhappy, but affectionate sister,

MARIAN WILTON."

Mr. Austen did indeed sympathize with Marian: he contemplated her situation with horror. It seemed more than probable, from the precautions suggested by her medical advisers, that Mrs. Wilton had experienced a paralytic attack, in which case a second fit might be apprehended. To appease his interesting charge, he addressed Mrs. Cuthbert, solicited from that lady her opinion of



Mrs. Wilton's disorder; and at the same time announced his readiness to hasten to Paris, if his presence was necessary, or desired by the party themselves.

All that friendship and affection could devise for the consolation of the anxious Caroline, was spontaneously afforded her by Mr. Austen and Miss Colville. It was now she felt, and gratefully acknowledged, there was a peace "which the world cannot give." Her late reading, aided as it had been by the contemplation of characters whose actions were founded on this "rock of ages,"—this happy association of principle and practice, produced on her teachable spirit the best results. It was not in nature that a daughter so circumstanced could feel at ease; her heart *would* palpitate, and her cheek betray the state of her mind, as the postman's arrival caught her ear. But no petulance, no reproach, escaped her lips. "Marian might not be able to write; perhaps to-morrow

might bring the letter she hoped yet dreaded to receive."

Too much praise could not be given to a young person thus sedulously determined to act up to the rules she had prescribed for herself. Mr. Austen devoted his time to her; while Miss Colville, with affectionate zeal, beguiled many an hour of suspense by cheerful conversation, and such judicious changes of occupation as were best calculated to calm and sooth her mind. Nor did Frances fail to evince her interest for the unhappy Caroline. Her attentions were appropriate and constant. Caroline could not look, but she was ready to execute her wishes. Thus she proved that the offices of sympathy apply to every age; and, where they flow naturally, are evidences of the right bias of the mind.

A third and more satisfactory letter from Marian, led the family in Harley-street to hope that the worst was past. The same humility that had supported Caroline under the most painful of all



feelings—suspense, now led her to express her gratitude in lively but chastened language.

But, in these strong appeals to her weakened constitution, the young sufferer was imperceptibly losing strength. Her physicians, with concern, lamented she should be exposed to such trials. It was therefore planned that, in future, all letters should be deposited in the library;—Mr. Austen taking upon himself the right of opening such as were for Caroline. As she acquired composure, the absence of Lady Jane excited her surprise. “Do you think she can have heard of my mother’s illness?” said she, while listening to an account of a party which Miss Colville read to her, and in which her ladyship was named.

“She has, my dear Miss Wilton,” replied Miss Colville; “and she has called or sent every day to inquire after you. I did not mention it, thinking it might be advisable to avoid every thing that called for exertion in you.”



“I beg *she* may be admitted whenever she calls,” said Caroline; “I would not lose an opportunity of seeing her while I can see any one.” Scarcely had an hour elapsed when this privileged visitor arrived. Seizing the permission so flatteringly accorded, Lady Jane entered the room, carrying in her countenance that pleasant and pleasing exhibition of urbanity which the warm-hearted, and they alone, feel and bestow.

“I have thought of you often, my dear Miss Wilton,” said she, kindly pressing her hand. “May it please God to restore your mother to health! Your last accounts are very favourable. Poor Miss Marian, what a painful situation must hers have been!”

Caroline returned the pressure; and, as she made room for Lady Jane on the sofa, detaining her hand; she said, “You are so good, so very kind to me, I cannot thank you as I should do; but I *feel* your kind attentions, and value them.”

Lady Jane parried these acknowledg-

ments, which, like every effort now made by the emaciated Caroline, produced a sensibility in her frame at once beautiful and affecting.

“We have been very active in your service, my love,” said Miss Colville, addressing Lady Jane, and producing several pairs of lamb’s-wool shoes:—“These are Miss Wilton’s performance; and here are some muffettes of Miss Austen’s.”

Lady Jane was delighted; and assured her coadjutors that their labours would be most acceptable to the party for whom they were intended.”

Caroline, after a little hesitation, asked “if it was fair to inquire who the party were?” and added, “that Miss Colville had declared she was not at liberty to explain without her ladyship’s permission.”

“Why, perhaps it would be as well if I were the narrator here,” said Lady Jane, laughing; “for Miss Colville has a strange way of telling *some* tales. Did you never detect her speaking in the superlative where her favourites are concerned?”



“Oh no,” replied Caroline; “no, indeed you are mistaken; for often, when I say you are quite perfect in every respect, she will not allow I am right.”

“I rejoice to hear she is so much improved,” said her ladyship. “Now, Miss Austen, how shall I open my little story?—One fine summer-evening;—that wont do; for I remember it was a very dull foggy morning, as my poor flounces could have attested, had they been as sensitive as the fingers that worked them: well then, I must simply preface my true story by a common fact. My father had complained that our sugar spoiled the tea; we changed our grocer: still papa complained. I took it into my head that I had seen some very good-looking sugar at a shop in Duke-street, and thither my aunt and I drove. While I was acting Mrs. House-keeper, a person neatly dressed spoke two or three times to one of the men. He took no notice of her, but seemed entirely devoted to his better dressed customers. At length she addressed the man who was attending me, and inquired



the price of arrow-root. *He* would have been equally tardy, had I not desired him to serve her, as I was not in a hurry. The quantity she now named, and the evident shame she betrayed in announcing it, caught my attention. I entered into conversation with her, found her intelligent but under great affliction, procured her name and address; and next morning ascertained that all was correct. My aunt, who possesses some power and every disposition to do good, soon removed the two sisters to a lodging in a better situation, where their front room could be converted into a little shop. My acquaintance, as I call the elder one, is a widow; she lost a considerable sum of money by trusting it in the hands of an unworthy person. For the last three years she had supported her sister, who, from an accident, is nearly bedridden. It was grievous to hear the invalid express her anguish at being a burthen to her sister; who, without such a drawback, was qualified, and no doubt could procure an eligible provision for herself. Since the

period I have named, we have had the satisfaction to see them gradually succeeding. We set all our friends to work; —my aunt Percival has been indefatigable; but I find the babies shoes the most productive commodity. Mrs. Walbrook is active in her shop; and her manners are so good, it is impossible to see her without feeling interested: and her sister is so much improved in health, as to be able to set up in her bed, and employ herself in knitting trifling articles for sale. Now, my dear Miss Wilton, you have had the full, true, and particular account of why I trouble Miss Colville to work for me; and the purpose to which her industry is applied.”

“How happy you must feel in being able to do so much good!” said Caroline, regarding Lady Jane as she spoke with the liveliest look of approbation.

“Think what kind assistants I found,” returned Lady Jane: “I could have done very little myself: my aunt takes the first year’s rent upon herself. It has only cost me a few pounds of lamb’s-wool, and a little wholesome exercise.



But I had almost forgotten a great advantage I have derived from my acquaintance with Mrs. Walbrook; a closet, that was literally crammed with paste-board-boxes, pincushions, card-racks, &c. all useless, and many of them out of fashion, though in good preservation, has been emptied of its contents, and the articles conveyed to Mrs. Walbrook: she assures me they answer very well, and frequently attract young customers. My gain is inconceivable. Papa quite congratulates himself that I have at length found a place of sufficient dimensions to receive my last new bonnet, which he feared would have been lodged at Madame B.'s."

Frances was not more delighted with Lady Jane's story than with the playful manner of the relator. Even Caroline smiled; and, with the feeling of an invalid, envied those spirits which, in reality, were only assumed to divert her. Had she followed this judicious and reflective young person to the apartment of Miss Colville, and beheld the real sensibility she there evinced, the fears she enter



tained of her recovery, and the zeal with which she suggested the kindest little plans for her amusement, it might have increased her admiration of Lady Jane, but would by no means have confirmed her opinion of her ladyship's happiness at that moment.

Sensibility has its joys, and they are pure; but it has its sorrows likewise; and, though it is impossible to deny that the sympathy of the feeling heart is a solace the suffering must receive with satisfaction, it is yet certain we ought to cherish these benevolent efforts to sooth and ameliorate our situation, whether worldly or bodily, with becoming gratitude. It is true, we are told that it is good to "visit the house of mourning;" but, as this is not the general practice of the world, we should prize those who follow the precepts of the Divine Teacher; always remembering that those benevolent persons who interest themselves in the miseries and sufferings of their fellow-creatures, must, and do, feel a pang that the thoughtless and insensible are at some trouble to

avoid. We are bound to meet these gentle offices of Christian fellowship with the liveliest affections of which our nature is susceptible.

Caroline reserved Mrs. Walbrook's story as an amusement for Mr. Austen: she knew him to be much interested in all that was connected with the character of Lady Jane.

Mr. Austen listened with pleasure to the relation; and in the widow recognised a name familiar to him. "If she is the widow of the man I remember," said he, "he was in Mr. Wilton's counting-house as head-clerk, and a most respectable trust-worthy man. I will look into this. I suppose Lady Jane's first meeting with Mrs. Walbrook, was that I witnessed?" Miss Colville confirmed this opinion.

"Admirable indeed," said Mr. Austen, "is the activity and usefulness of such a life! Yet, my dear Frances, I do not express myself thus decidedly merely upon the record of two or three liberal actions performed by this young woman. I have taken



some trouble, and from unquestionable authority;”—and he glanced at Miss Colville;—“and ascertained that Lady Jane’s benevolence is founded on principle. She is an economist, exact in her payments; and is in the habit of *reflecting* before she commits herself even in her charities. It is by this justice she is enabled to be generous. Profusion and generosity are so often confounded by common observers, I wish you to consider them well. The profuse give without thought, and are therefore indiscriminate in their selection; but it is not so clear that *Ostentation* has not some influence on their actions. Whereas the generous mind preserves an equity in all its exertions; and, by knowing what it *can* do, it does it judiciously. Nay, more; whoever habituates themselves to this truly moral self-government, will on principle forego many of those superfluities which the thoughtless have not learned to value at their fair estimate. Thus it is plain, that true *Liberality* flows from that generosity which is founded on justice.”



“I understand you, papa,” said Frances, blushing; “and I wish I had learned to think before I visited the Bazaar. But it is not too late to do something:” and, turning to Miss Colville, she added, “I was ashamed to tell you that I offered the little case to Charlotte Percival in the park yesterday morning, but she told me her mamma never allowed her to accept presents from any one. All my purchases then seemed useless, till I heard of Mrs. Walbrook: may I send them to her? she might be able to sell them in her shop.” Her father approved this plan; and Frances was made happy, by his promise to take her to Mrs. Walbrook’s himself next morning.

“If her husband was in my father’s employment,” said Caroline, “she has an undoubted claim upon us; and, if my dear mother was at home, I am sure she would gladly acknowledge it; for every body *he* valued she always felt a pleasure in serving.”

Mr. Austen hoped it would prove, as he suspected, the same person; it then

would be time enough to consult about any future exertion for her benefit.

The base ingratitude of Foster excited the indignation of Mr. Austen; and, while he with much humour depicted the airs and graces this travelling personage would acquire in her tour, he was at a loss to imagine what the final station of such a woman would be.

Miss Colville thought it highly probable she would become a governess.

This idea was refuted as absurd by all the party; till Miss Colville assured them she had good reasons for what she had said, having seen two instances in which the *ci-devant* lady's-maid had, after a Continental ramble, returned the accomplished governess.

"But Foster is so very illiterate," said Caroline; "she speaks so ill; does not know the use of the letter H, and can scarcely write legibly."

"With all this, my dear, the thing is not improbable," returned Miss Colville, smiling: "I had an application from a person lately; her knowledge of me was very slight; she was servant to



a lady whose daughter I had under my care for a short time ; she wrote to me, and requested that I would be so good as to recommend her as a nursery-governess to a family I knew. It is true, there was a postscript to this letter, which begged me not to say I had ever known her as a servant."

"A nursery-governess is not of so much consequence," said Caroline; "though still I must think there is something very courageous in such people thinking themselves qualified to teach."

"The nursery-governess, on the contrary, is of the first consequence to a child," observed Mr. Austen; "she should be intelligent and well-bred; for the habits and future morals of the woman depend almost entirely on the impressions she receives in childhood."

"Just so, sir," said Miss Colville; "at present, however, a smattering of French, and being able to say they have lived in Paris, is sufficient to procure the patronage of people one is astonished to find so indifferent to consequences."

Frances was greatly amused at the



idea of Foster's being likely to make such an attempt; and adduced many proofs of her illiteracy that made even Caroline smile. The ingratitude of the woman, however, was too flagrant not to deserve the censure passed upon her conduct.

Time fled, and Mr. Austen grew extremely uneasy at the silence of Mrs. Cuthbert. His address to that lady was of a nature to claim immediate notice; and, from her voluntary kindness towards Marian, it seemed improbable that she would neglect such an appeal.

Recollecting that Douglas must necessarily know Mrs. Cuthbert, as the sister of his guardian, he determined to ride over to —, and learn if his young favourite had lately had any communication with Sir John by letter. He had scarcely arranged this plan in idea, when Mr. Douglas was announced. Mr. Austen started, and, perceiving an unusual gravity in the deportment of Douglas, assumed a lively air, and, thanking him for his visit, said, "he had expected him all the week."

Douglas took the hint, and spoke accordingly.—“Did Doctor —— give you a paper for me?” asked Mr. Austen. Douglas replied affirmatively. “Then bring it,” said Mr. Austen, “to the library: the ladies know I am a man of business; you shall attend them afterwards.” So saying, he retired, followed by Douglas.

“I have a letter for you indeed,” said the agitated youth; “but I fear its contents are worse than you apprehend. I got one by the same post.” He presented a packet with a black seal, and withdrew to a distant part of the room.

“Poor dear orphans!” exclaimed Mr. Austen, while tears flowed unrestrainedly, as he read. The letter was from Mrs. Cuthbert, and dated five days prior to its receipt. It detailed a scene of great suffering. Mrs. Wilton had experienced a second attack similar to the first; but had recovered it quickly, to the surprise of her attendants. Her anxiety to reach England had been extreme; and, after due consultation, it was considered that the agitation of her mind would prove more injurious than



to comply with her wish for removal. Mrs. Cuthbert gave up her own plans, and accompanied the travellers. Mrs. Wilton bore the fatigue with wonderful fortitude; and Marian, at every stage that brought them nearer to the sea-port at which they were to embark, felt her hopes renovated. They reached Calais, and made the necessary arrangements; when, a few hours before the packet was to sail, Mrs. Wilton had another attack; and, after two days of extreme suffering, breathed her last. The only intelligible words she uttered, were an announcement that “Mr. Austen was the guardian, and would be a father to her children; and that Miss Colville was to be made independent, previously to taking the entire charge of her orphan girls.”

The letter was written at intervals. Little was said of Marian, except that her feelings were violent, and not to be restrained. Mrs. Cuthbert had, by the advice of her brother, given the necessary directions for the remains of Mrs. Wilton being conveyed to England,



where they would wait Mr. Austen's further orders. This had been a point on which the poor sufferer had felt much inquietude; and the large property of the deceased made its performance consistent in all respects. Mrs. Cuthbert promised to take charge of Marian until she could place her in the care of her appointed guardian. Their departure from Calais would take place as soon as Marian was able to bear the fatigue, &c.

How this intelligence was to be imparted to Caroline Mr. Austen knew not; he had much to perform, and the least delay would justly be considered unkind. To meet and attend the remains of his late kinswoman to Mount Wilton, was an indispensable duty. He therefore determined on quitting London immediately. Again poor Caroline claimed his thoughts. Douglas saw his distress. "I really think, sir," said he, "that Miss Colville might suggest some plan that would relieve you from the pain of breaking this news to Miss Wilton."

"A good thought, Douglas," observed

Mr. Austen; “but Caroline must not see you;—I read the tale in your countenance before you uttered a word.”

Douglas declared he should be happy to avoid Miss Wilton at this moment; and added, “that, greatly as he pitied her, he considered her sister’s situation infinitely more distressing. I know,” continued he, “that Mrs. Cuthbert is kind and amiable; that she will take all possible care of her, and shew her every necessary attention; but poor Marian is not a girl to bear her afflictions with fortitude; and I fear, from Miss Wilton’s looks, that she has still much to suffer.”

“I fear so, too, Douglas,” said Mr. Austen; “yet some favourable symptoms had, in the last few days, rather cheered us: this sad, this truly heavy affliction, will prove a severe trial.”

Douglas arose to take leave. Mr. Austen proposed his waiting till Caroline was apprised of her loss; but he was in haste to depart, having promised Dr. ——— to return before five o’clock.

“How did you get leave to make this visit of friendship?” asked Mr. Austen; “I know it is not easily obtained.”



“Mrs. Cuthbert’s letter to me so strictly enjoined caution on Miss Wilton’s account,” replied Douglas, “that I would not venture to trust yours to the post. Indeed, I felt that you might unguardedly betray your feelings, if suddenly informed of the event; and, upon my submitting Mrs. Cuthbert’s letter to the Doctor’s perusal, he coincided that the only safe way of procedure was by delivering it in person.”

“It was well judged, my dear boy,” said Mr. Austen; “in considering the feelings of others, you have evinced the correctness of your own. Make my compliments to Dr. ———, and thank him in my name.”

Douglas departed; and, while Mr. Austen was hesitating how to withdraw Miss Colville from her charge without exciting the suspicion of Caroline, the ringing of the drawing-room bell with more than usual haste alarmed him. He hastened to learn the cause, when Frances, meeting him on the stairs, exclaimed, “Oh, papa, Caroline has fainted! she saw Mr. Douglas go away;



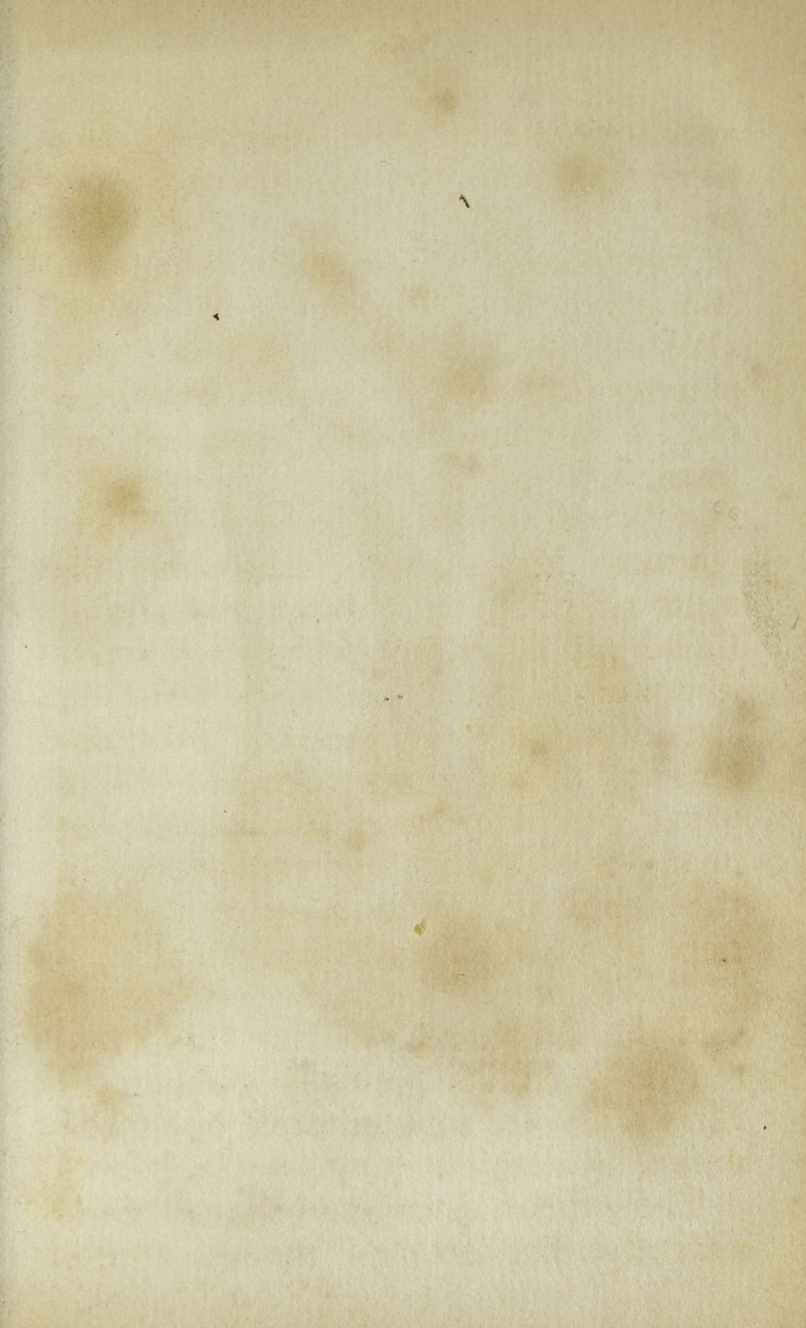
and says she is sure something has happened, and you are afraid to tell her."

The poor girl had revived, and was leaning on the shoulder of Miss Colville. — "Do not be afraid," said she, placing her hand in that of Mr. Austen; — "I know it all, I am an orphan."

"Never while *I* have life," exclaimed Mr. Austen, throwing his arms round her. "I am *not* afraid, Caroline; I will not fear to tell a fellow-mortal that 'the ways of God are not as the ways of man.' He chastens and tries us, it is true; but it is to prove us. He leaves us not without hope—a hope that can sooth even in the depth of affliction,—the blessed hope of a life beyond the grave."

"Tell me all; I can bear it now;" said the weeping Caroline. Mr. Austen resigned his precious burthen to Miss Colville, and entered upon the mournful detail.

The orphan Caroline behaved consistently: her feelings, though acute,





MISS WILTON HEARS THE NEWS OF  
HER MOTHER'S DEATH.



and becoming a daughter under such an affliction, were tempered, and consonant to the dispositions she had been so anxious to cultivate. Religion poured its balm into her wounded heart; and, while she retraced the awful scene, and in imagination beheld the last look of her mother, her gratitude for the protection her sister had found in a stranger in this trying moment, caused a sense of thankfulness, that tended to mitigate the anguish of her mind. Miss Colville seized the favourable opening; and, without exacting more than could be expected in this first stage of sorrow, encouraged the young mourner, by expressing her approbation of sentiments so suited to the occasion.

“Your sister was most fortunate in meeting so kind and useful a friend at such a moment,” continued Miss Colville. “Poor child, we must all endeavour to command ourselves, when she arrives. From you I know she will have an example; it will be her interest to follow it. I speak from a

thorough knowledge of your dispositions, my love," added Miss Colville, as Caroline shook her head; "circumstances have placed you in a situation of great importance; and I am persuaded you will fill it with credit to yourself."

"If I were able, I should wish to accompany Mr. Austen," said Caroline; "but I speak foolishly; had I been in health, I should not have been separated from my dear mother; and perhaps" —

"Had you enjoyed your former health, my love," said Miss Colville, "it is most probable you would have shared that anguish personally which your sister has borne alone. We may infer this with certainty, but farther than this we cannot safely trust ourselves: God wills, and we must submit."

Mr. Austen's departure, which took place early in the afternoon, was sensibly felt by Caroline. His parting words, however, were calculated to sooth and animate her to look for-



ward to his protection with full confidence in his affection and care.

No better mode of breaking this news could have been devised, than that which the quick sensibility of the poor sufferer made indispensable.

Douglas had no sooner quitted the room than Caroline remarked his extreme gravity of deportment; his omitting to speak to any of them; and the haste with which Mr. Austen drew him away. She then inquired whether Douglas knew Mrs. Cuthbert, and proposed talking with him respecting that lady. More than once she expressed her wonder at Mr. Austen's continued absence; but, when she heard the house-door close, and saw Douglas cross the street, the whole truth rushed on her mind, and produced the debility described.

To the surprise of Miss Colville, Doctor W. next morning rather confirmed than diminished those hopes which the friends of the young invalid had allowed themselves to indulge. Aware of her domestic affliction, the Doctor wisely gave her a motive for ex-



ertion, by declaring that her restoration depended greatly upon herself. Caroline looked incredulous: the Doctor was positive. "I must not be contradicted," said he; "my reputation is at stake; and, let me tell you, ma'am, the world expects something from you."

"From me," said Caroline; "impossible, sir."

"It does," returned Dr. W. impressively. "The world expects from every young person whose heart is pure, and whose mind is well regulated, that example which shall help to check the progress of moral disease. So, in order to avoid self-reproach, I shall see you daily while my friend Austen is from home."

Miss Colville expressed her satisfaction at this arrangement. "Yes, yes, *you* will be pleased I know," said the Doctor, smiling. "You are one of my tormentors. I must see or write to Lady Jane in the course of the morning; what shall I say for you, madam?" bowing to Miss Colville. "Her cold is better, I assure you."

“Lady Jane will expect to hear from me, sir,” said Miss Colville.

“No! no,” said the doctor hastily, “she absolves you from that task just now; *I* was to make my report in person, if possible, if not, by note; and I flatter myself I shall carry a more efficient prescription to her warm heart in the report I have to make, than if I were to deface a whole quire of paper in a merely professional style.”

“Kind, amiable Lady Jane!” exclaimed Caroline, bursting into tears. “Tell her; but she cannot understand how much I love her. Say, if you please, sir, that I will see *her* whenever she can with safety do me the favour of calling.”

The Doctor promised to deliver the message, and hastened away. It was not long before Lady Jane availed herself of this permission: many an hour did she sooth which Caroline had in idea set apart as a period when all consolation must be obtrusive. She found it otherwise. The day that saw her parent consigned to the grave was passed in the society of this inestimable young



friend. Lady Jane arrived early, sat with her, conversed on her loss, read to her, and saw her to her chamber before she quitted Harley-street.

Delighted with a friendship so mutually advantageous, Miss Colville frequently left them together; taking these opportunities for talking with Frances, whose usual habits had necessarily been interrupted by past events. The arrival of Mr. Austen and Marian was now both desired and dreaded. Quiescent from all she had seen and suffered, Marian submitted to her guardian's advice; and, upon her arrival at Dover, accompanied Mrs. Cuthbert to her seat in Kent, where Mr. Austen promised to join, and, without loss of time, conduct her to London.

The disinterested friendship of Mrs. Cuthbert had so entirely bound Marian to this excellent woman, as to make the idea of separation painful. The scenes they had together witnessed, and the kind yet imposing manners of Mrs. Cuthbert, had done more towards calming the irritability of her character, than can be understood by those who, mis-



taking strong passions for extreme sensibility, sooth where they ought to reason, if not oppose.

Prepared by this judicious friend to act the part of a comforter to her invalid sister, in place of agitating her by unavailing violence, Mr. Austen, on his arrival in Kent, found Marian calm and tractable; not only able to speak of the past with composure, but, while minutely inquisitive respecting the sad office in which he had been engaged, though appropriately touched by the detail, neither weak nor unreasonable.

While Caroline's health remained as at present, it was not possible to make any arrangements that could break in upon the arrangements recommended by her physicians: but Mr. Austen obtained a promise from Mrs. Cuthbert, that she would, upon receiving an assurance that it was convenient, make a visit to the Miss Wiltons in the spring. They parted with mutual regard, Marian engaging to be her punctual correspondent.

Now fully persuaded that, however

important the guardianship of these orphans must prove in a worldly point of view, it would cease to be a trust of difficulty, from the improved dispositions of the party, Mr. Austen entered upon the task full of hope for the result ; there was no alloy, save in the precarious situation of Caroline.

The meeting between the sisters was deeply affecting. One had so much to ask, and the other so many particulars to relate, had she not been guarded against a too full disclosure of facts, made unavailing by events, that Miss Colville found it necessary to interpose, and restrain the affectionate inquiries of Caroline ; so sparing both of them ; though she did not deny that the time might come, when she should rejoice to see them referring to this epoch with every recollection that could aid their remembrance of an affectionate parent.

The duties that now devolved on Marian were of a character well suited to her dispositions. Brought forward in society at an age when she should have been very differently employed, her man-



ners were more matured than those of her sister, but her mind was infinitely less cultivated.

A common observer would have contemplated the activity and nonchalance of Marian Wilton as the happiest coincidence that could have associated in one so situated ; but Marian was the child of affluence ; and those qualities which now procured commendation, would, had she been doomed to poverty, exposed her to the censure of those very persons most forward to admire her. Prominent in all she did or said, it was usual with mere acquaintance to observe, “What a delightful girl is Miss Marian ! What a pity she is not the elder sister, so fitted as she is to take the lead !”

Mr. Austen and Miss Colville used to smile at these mistakes ; for, greatly as Marian’s foibles were subdued, there was much to be done before she could deserve even a portion of the praise bestowed upon her. Affliction, by teaching us the insecurity of those blessings we so highly prize, must necessarily tend to



soften the feelings, and touch us with a sense of our dependance.

This Marian had felt; but, on her, as on all selfish dispositions, the impression was more violent than durable. This was more particularly observable when the family became settled, and the plan for the future was laid before the sisters. Caroline thought every thing right, and resolved to act up to the wishes of her departed mother. Marian conceived that their age did not make it necessary that so great a stress should be laid upon the employment of their time.

“It was my mother’s dying wish,” said Caroline; “dear Marian, do not breathe a word in opposition. I wish I could look back with more satisfaction than I confess I do at present; but indeed *we* have many causes for regret; we certainly did not *always* attend to the spirit of her injunctions.”

“I do not deny this, Caroline,” returned Marian; “only I take a different view of the subject. I dare say there are thousands more faulty than we ever were, only we happen to have more sensibility, and think more of it!”

“I have learned to use that word more sparingly,” said Caroline; “our sensibility will be best evinced by endeavouring to fulfil the commands of our dear mamma; and, when I see around me friends so competent to aid my attempts, and so willing to devote themselves to my interest, I must think we are fortunate amidst all our trouble.”

Marian forbore to contend; but she was by no means convinced that their situation was so fortunate, or so entirely deserved her gratitude. These opinions were, of course, spoken in confidence; yet Miss Colville, with regret, perceived that Marian could not cordially assimilate with her. She was respectful; but it was a respect that did not court esteem; it was obviously a duty, and not at all connected with her real feelings. Miss Colville, though not deficient in discernment, certainly overlooked the ostensible motive of Marian's conduct. The time now set apart for study, Marian knew would expose her to an ordeal for which she was ill prepared. She would have been content to rest where



she was: what was knowledge to one who continually heard herself extolled as a most delightful young person. Was it necessary she should descend from this enviable height; and, if really essential, why must her mortifications come from one she had treated with too much indifference ever to hope that she could forgive her.

“Marian, you are very unjust,” said Caroline, when her sister, vexed with her own deficiency on a subject that had been proposed, unguardedly betrayed her reason for distrusting the sincerity of Miss Colville; “you do not know the woman you traduce; but she knows you far better than you know yourself. Indeed she does, though you look incredulous. It was but yesterday she observed to me, that, if you would throw aside the false shame that now obscures your good qualities, you would be a happier girl!”

“Poor Miss Colville,” returned Marian; “so she actually thinks I am the victim of false shame!”

“She does,” said Caroline; “but



not according to your acceptation of the term, Marian! She says you are ashamed to do right, lest it should look like submission to the judgment of others."

A blush of conviction rose in the cheek of Marian. She was thoughtful for a moment; then she observed, "I certainly was beginning to like her before I"—she paused. "To say the truth, I should like her now well enough, if we only associated in the family-party. But I am certain she has such vast notions of what girls might, and ought to do, that I am persuaded she has a contempt for all who are not like her favourite Lady Jane."

"I am quite as tenacious where Lady Jane is mentioned as Miss Colville herself," said Caroline: "reflect, Marian! think what kind attentions I have received from that dear girl. You do not know her yet: I wish you could study her character impartially; it would do you good."

Always alarmed when she thought

she had roused Caroline to exert herself too much, Marian took fright at the earnestness of her sister's manner; and, without consideration, rushed to the apartment of Miss Colville to claim her presence. Upon entering the room, she exclaimed, "I have flurried Caroline, and——" She paused; for Lady Jane was sitting in the school-room. Miss Colville withdrew instantly; and Marian for the first time in her life stood self-accused and abashed before her superior. Lady Jane's inquiries after Caroline were affectionate and minute; but she appealed to one who could not answer her. A stranger to the feelings which now overpowered Marian, her ladyship was persuaded that some new calamity had assailed the orphans; and with lively sympathy besought Marian to compose herself, and take comfort in the known judgment and warm heart of her guardian. Thrown off her guard by the gentle language and kind manner of Lady Jane, Marian burst into tears; and in an inarticulate



voice said, "I do not deserve your sympathy, Lady Jane; if you knew what a wilful creature I am, you would despise me."

"Will you, my dear Miss Austen, have the goodness to inquire how Miss Wilton is?" said her ladyship, addressing Frances. Frances hastened to oblige her favourite; thus effecting the wish of Lady Jane, which was to spare Marian from making a child the witness of her humiliation.

"We are all disposed to wilfulness, I fear," continued Lady Jane; "but the very consciousness you avow, is of itself efficient to your cure. My dear Miss Marian, believe me, you are considered as peculiarly fortunate in the connexions you possess; and, should it please God to restore your amiable sister to health, I think you will agree with me, that few persons can have greater cause for thankfulness than yourself."

"I ought to think so, and I frequently make the best resolutions, and determine to submit to all that is recommended," said Marian; "but my



feelings get the better of me. I wish I was like dear Caroline; she was always more tractable; and now I call her quite perfect."

Lady Jane smiled. "Your sister," she observed, "is an excellent girl; and I am persuaded she has not a friend who more sincerely esteems her than myself. Yet I would not hesitate to tell her that much of her present tranquillity of mind, and happy self-command, might with justice be traced to Miss Colville's watchful and affectionate care of her."

"Certainly; yes, I allow that;" said Marian; "she is *fond* of *Caroline*, and my sister quite adores her; but I need not say to you that *I* do not stand very high in Miss Colville's good opinion."

"I never heard this before," observed her ladyship. If you have taken up this idea, in consequence of her having at any time controverted your opinions, or checked your feelings, which you allow are too quick, surely her motive for so doing ought not to have

been mistaken: we all want counselors at times."

"Ah! Lady Jane," said Marian, half-smiling, "how readily you detect my foibles; yet Miss Colville has not been my enemy?"

"Never, I assure you," said her ladyship impressively; "she is too liberal and too discreet to make the private concerns of any family a subject of conversation. But, my dear Miss Marian, will truth be as offensive from my lips as from those of Miss Colville?"

"I will attend to any thing you say or recommend," replied Marian ingenuously.

"You cannot want *my* advice," said her ladyship, smiling; "you have a sister and a friend able to guide you in all things. I must, however, vindicate my earliest and best friend from your suspicions; but I can only do this by a reference that may perhaps wound you. Forgive me, but do you forget that I have more than once been exposed to the effects of those quick feel-



ings you now lament? could I want information on this point?"

"No! no," exclaimed Marian, in great trepidation; I remember it well; and have felt ashamed whenever we met. You can never forget it; it is impossible you should."

"I beg your pardon," said Lady Jane, "you compelled me to recal the circumstance, by imputing to Miss Colville what is foreign to her disposition. It is *I* who should ask forgiveness; for I have ventured to say more than my acquaintance with you warranted."

Marian extended her hand to Lady Jane, and half-reproachfully observed, "that her ladyship had declared she would not hesitate to tell Caroline of the obligations she owed to Miss Colville."

"I understand your sister's disposition, my dear Miss Marian; and we are in the habit of expressing ourselves unreservedly."

"May I ever hope to be admitted of your party?" asked Marian, in a persuasive tone."



“Why, you may look forward to it,” replied Lady Jane with a smile, “whenever you can confidently assert that those naughty *quick feelings* are in some measure subdued. On your sister they must have a most serious effect; and, as we are alone, I venture to add, that what is called quick feeling, is an infirmity I do not know how to tolerate. There is so much inequality in the manner and behaviour of persons of this description, that I am more disposed to shun than court their society.”

Marian had pledged herself not to be offended by any observation of Lady Jane; but it is certain this inartificial exhibition of her prominent foible startled her. Besides, she did not always call it by so mean a term,—it was an unfortunate *sensibility* that had been conspicuous in her character even in infancy. She now panted to wrest her cherished error from the obloquy attached to it by her ladyship; merely, as she hoped, from her ill-chosen mode of expression.

After two or three efforts, she ventured an observation in defence of sensibility, and declared that, “though its possessor was exposed to pains the unfeeling could not understand, she could not wish herself divested of it entirely.”

“Certainly not,” exclaimed Lady Jane; “sensibility is enjoined as the foundation of Christian perfection,—  
‘Do unto others as you would they should do unto you,’

places this quality of the heart in its just point of view. We were speaking of quick feelings; they are wholly distinct from sensibility: one grieves to wound, and is always guarded in its language; the other is unhappily armed to assault; but, I am fully persuaded, suffers more in the contest than he permits himself to acknowledge.”

Again Marian felt all the folly of defending a bad cause; nor did her usual facility of language help her at this juncture. There was an internal monitor, that strongly enforced the truth of the sentiments she had so



anxiously tempted. The question now was, had she not lowered herself, where she had hoped to make a favourable impression? While her feelings were thus poised, between the fear of having disgusted Lady Jane, and the awkwardness of extricating herself from the dilemma, Miss Colville entered the room. She brought a good report of Caroline, who wished to see Lady Jane. "I will attend Lady Jane," said Marian, rising.—"Then I am not to be of the party?" asked Miss Colville, smiling.

"I will attend you afterwards," said Marian, nodding; "but I have a few words to whisper in your ear before you join Caroline." Miss Colville said "she would await her communication with patience," and Marian departed with their visitor. She returned in a few minutes.

"You have said I am ashamed to do what is right, lest it should look like submission," said Marian, taking the hand of Miss Colville; "you perfectly read my heart when you made the



observation. I have done you injustice ma'am :—conscious that I never tried to deserve your esteem, I thought you must represent me to others as unamiable. This idea has mixed in every thing connected with our present situation, and caused me more anxiety than I can describe. If you will accept this explanation as my apology for the past, I trust, under your guidance, that the future will be more creditable to myself.”

To the surprise of Marian, this unreserved and ample exhibition of her feelings overpowered her auditor: Miss Colville could not reply for some moments. At length, recovering from a sensibility as natural as it was appropriate, she threw her arms round the softened Marian.

“To the future *I* look with implicit confidence,” she exclaimed; “an avowal like that you have just made, is worth ten thousand of those half resolves we are all too apt to make when under the immediate conviction of error. Rest assured, my dear child, that, if I have lamented your foibles, it has been to those whose influence over

you might have some weight. I consider your abilities respectable; to insult your understanding, by saying they are above what might be expected at your age, would justly expose me to your contempt. It remains for us *together* to prove that a well-regulated mind is a mine of wealth to its possessor; this must be our first object. It is easy to please transient visitors, whose opinions are founded upon externals: I wish to see the young person I regard esteemed for what is estimable; most valued where best known."

It was from this memorable day Marian Wilton dated that happy reformation in her character, which subsequently proved so essential to her peace.

Miss Colville's task from this period became not only pleasant, but in numberless instances highly amusing; the natural cheerfulness of Marian leading her on many occasions (in which old habits and favourite opinions would obtrude), to correct her former self



by the principles she now entirely approved.

This conformity in one so much her senior, was an almost necessary corrective to arrogance in Frances ; who, from seeing Marian engaged in pursuits in which she had made some progress, might otherwise have triumphed.

But Marian's ductility, the cheerfulness with which she submitted to the rules laid down for her, the quickness she displayed in whatever she attempted, gave her all the advantage that could be desired. The advanced pupil stood confessed ; and the lurking vanity of Frances was, by the constant evidence of what application could effect, urged to emulate a conduct that deservedly claimed and received the meed of approbation. On Caroline, the altered character of Marian acted forcibly ; her gratitude knew no limits : to Miss Colville and Mr. Austen her language was warm and animated. But Lady Jane's bright example, that almost talismanic power by which she *felt* that her own tranquillity had been effected ;



to speak of this dear friend, was her delight. Yet so fragile was the appearance of Caroline, and so greatly did she suffer from all mental exertion, it was now necessary to restrain these genuine effusions of her affectionate heart.

Though sensibly alive to the dangerous state of her sister, Marian learned to controul her feelings: to Lady Jane and Miss Colville she would pour forth the anguish of her mind; while towards Caroline she preserved a composure truly praiseworthy. Doctor W. was less sanguine respecting his patient; he desired her removal to the country; and the air of Mount Wilton being equally salubrious to that of any place usually recommended, he rather preferred it as the native air of Caroline.

Mr. Austen feared that the spot in which the orphans had so recently shared the protection of a parent, might prove ineligible for both; but more especially for the invalid. From this difficulty he was relieved by Caroline's expressing her wish to go thither.

Upon this occasion Marian evinced a

self-command highly commendable. She had an invincible dislike to re-visiting the scene of their former felicity; and to Miss Colville had declared she never wished to see Mount Wilton again: but, no sooner did her sister decide in favour of this dreaded spot, than Marian yielded; and with a readiness that convinced Caroline their thoughts were in unison.

The actual distinctness of their feelings at this moment was perfectly characteristic. Caroline thought she had a duty to perform; and to visit the tomb of her mother seemed indispensable: while Marian, who had attended the bed of sickness, and witnessed pangs that would yet recur to memory, would gladly have been spared the sight of a spot which would necessarily renew her grief. The value of that sacrifice she now made to fraternal love was *duly* commended: it is said *duly* commended; because, though amiable and deserving of praise, it is scarcely possible that a reflecting creature can contemplate an action of this kind as extraordinary; know-



ing, as every human being must, that life presents so many great occasions in which we are enjoined to "suffer, bear, and forbear," that, when we assent humbly to the lesser inconveniences, they are in truth no farther estimable, than as giving a promise that we shall not shrink from those greater trials by which it may please Divine Providence to prove us.

About this time Lady Jane paid a farewell visit in Harley-street. She was going on a little tour which would occupy a month; after which they were to settle in the neighbourhood of Mount Wilton, as usual. Delighted to find her young friends were to return to their former abode, the most pleasing plans for their frequent meeting were arranged; Marian in all cases being the projector. Lady Jane entered into her views, though each glance she directed towards Caroline seemed to contradict the possibility of their being of any long continuance. Her ladyship, however, in the course of conversation, imparted a circumstance that gave pleasure to all parties. Doctor W. was to be their neighbour. He had purchased an estate, and



was about to take possession of it. Even Caroline owned great satisfaction in this intelligence; while Marian, if any scruples yet lurked in her bosom, was now convinced that nothing happier could have been devised than the plan at which her feelings had at first revolted.

The preparations for their removal were accordingly put *en train*. Caroline seemed interested in all that passed: but nothing that concerned others was now indifferent to her. Mrs. Walbrook, and the inquiries she had intended to make previously to her late loss, recurred to her memory; and she asked the advice of Mr. Austen upon the subject.

“I would not trouble you with the result of my interviews with Mrs. Walbrook,” replied Mr. Austen; “but, since you now desire to hear of her, my dear, I can give you a very satisfactory account. She is, as I suspected, the widow of your father’s worthy clerk. Upon ascertaining this, she did not hesitate to enter into the exact state of her affairs; fortunately she possessed some

papers that have produced a sort of compromise from her treacherous friend; who, finding that she had persons ready and willing to support her in taking legal measures against him, will in time restore the property he has so unjustly misapplied."

"How glad am I to hear this," said Caroline; "but the little shop; does it succeed? does she wish to carry it on?"

"She finds it answer beyond her expectation, my love," replied Mr. Austen; "and is sincerely desirous of continuing in business. With the prospect she now has of recovering her property, though in small sums and at distant periods, I trust it will not be difficult to carry her wishes into effect."

Caroline now consulted with her sister; and the result was their petition to Miss Colville to be the bearer of a small proof of their respect for the widow of a person of whom they had heard their father speak in terms of high commendation.

When Miss Colville found that the sisters had each inclosed a ten-pound



note, she communicated the pleasing fact to Mr. Austen; wishing at the same time to ascertain whether he thought the sum too large.

“It is handsome,” said he, “but not at all too much: the property of these dear girls is immense; and the case which has called forth their sympathy, is one that has particular claim to their notice. A commercial man cannot too highly prize the integrity of a confidential servant; such was Walbrook; and I am delighted to find my charge capable of distinguishing what is appropriate.”

At the suggestion of Mr. Austen, Marian and Frances accompanied Miss Colville on this errand of pure benevolence; Marian promising that she was to remain unknown. To obviate the detection that speaking might produce, Marian begged her sister to write a few lines and inclose the notes.

Caroline took her pen, and in the envelope to the sister's gift traced the words following:—“The Miss Wiltons, with a perfect respect for the laudable exertions of



Mrs. Walbrook, and a lively recollection of her late excellent husband, beg leave to present the inclosed. They must ever derive pleasure from hearing of the prosperity of Mrs. Walbrook; but trust she will bear in mind that the Miss Wiltons possess some power, and can never want the inclination, to be useful to the representative of one for whom their lamented father always expressed the kindest regard.

*Harley-street ; — 1817.*”

Mr. Austen, to whom Caroline submitted these few lines, highly commended their fitness.

“It requires some judgment to address the unfortunate without wounding their feelings,” said he; “had you conversed with Mrs. Walbrook, you would be better able to understand all the value of this truly appropriate address; for she is a well-informed delicate-minded woman. As it is, Caroline, your native good sense dictated the style suited to the widow of the man you had seen filling a station of great respectability. I think,” continued Mr. Austen, putting

Caroline's note into Miss Colville's hands, "this will suit your notions of delicacy and *liberality!*"

Miss Colville perused it with evident pleasure: "it is highly judicious," said she; "every way worthy the writer. Observe, my dear Frances, your cousin properly commends the *exertions* of Mrs. Walbrook: this is judicious; for, where the health of the obliged will permit, those who serve them should always encourage industry. Now, Frances, read this carefully; and tell me the *two* words which completely absolve this offer of *service* from every thing like *Ostentation?*"

Frances fixed upon the words 'some power.' "'Some,' is one," said Miss Colville; "but 'power' is an imposing word, yet happily here softened by the preceding term 'some:' look again." Frances believed it must be 'regard.'

"No," observed Miss Colville; "according to my idea it is the adjective which precedes the word you have selected: by saying that her father always spoke of Mr. Walbrook with the 'kind-



est regard,' Miss Wilton has placed the party she wishes to serve exactly where they should be placed;—she leaves an opening that may safely be embraced, if circumstances make it needful, while she preserves the relative stations of each. Now, suppose she had said her father had the '*greatest* regard' for Mr. Walbrook; this would not have been so strictly correct; because, it is most probable that their lives exhibited the necessary distinctions of deference and kindness. I point this out to you, my love, to inculcate the practice of writing naturally; and, if possible, to guard you against those ill-used and misused superlatives so often pressed into the service of young scribblers."

Marian and Frances smiled at this hint: it applied equally to both; while Caroline, with a faint smile, declared she "had never anticipated that she could receive commendation for her writing, which had been greatly neglected."

The arrival of the carriage separated the family for a short time. Mr. Austen



took occasion, during their absence, to converse with Caroline on some points relative to their establishment at Mount Wilton. It was with difficulty he could persuade her to listen to his arrangements. When he spoke of being her visitor, Caroline looked wounded, and begged him to desist. Mr. Austen represented that "he should take a large family with him; there would be servants, &c. and that his character, as their guardian, made it indispensable that he should observe the utmost precision in all plans in which their interest was concerned."

"Then do so without consulting me," said Caroline, impressively; "let me still feel I am guided by a parent."

Unknown to all, Miss Wilton now addressed Mrs. Cuthbert; apprised that lady of their intended removal, and with much earnestness claimed her promised visit. One passage in this appeal was peculiarly calculated to touch a heart like Mrs. Cuthbert's:—"I am perhaps selfish," said the reflecting Caroline; "indeed I feel it is ungenerous to invite you where you must be exposed to

the occasional contemplation of suffering; but you have made me largely your debtor, madam; and I see no prospect of my ever being able to tell you all I feel, unless you do me the honour to accept my invitation. I have ventured to solicit your presence, where, though I can no longer be attentive as I could wish, you will find a circle devoted to your comfort.”

Mrs. Cuthbert did not hesitate a moment. her reply assured Caroline of her pleasure in the invitation, and her determination to join the family at Mount Wilton on that day sen'night.

This little plan was withheld from all; even Miss Colville was excluded; the invalid pleasing herself with the idea of the surprise she had in store for Marian.

Miss Colville and her companions had been highly satisfied on making their visit of benevolence. Caroline's note, though properly prized, had not screened Marian. Her likeness to her father was detected; and the first but warm eulogium of Mrs. Walbrook so entirely suited the disposition of Marian, that,



instead of checking her eloquence, she sat down, and with tearful eyes asked a thousand questions; and of one who was well disposed to answer her. Nor was Frances denied *her* share in the interest of this hour. Mr. Austen's zeal in her cause, the assistance he had already afforded, and the prospects that his name and authority had opened to her, gave Mrs. Walbrook an opportunity to speak of him as he deserved. They left the widow comparatively happy; while to themselves there remained a satisfaction so calm, so distinct from those mixed feelings with which we look back upon an act of mere caprice, that Mr. Austen could not refrain from pointing out the beauties of benevolence; which, like mercy, "blesses him that gives."

By easy stages the travellers reached Mount Wilton. To the surprise of the party, they there found Doctor W. awaiting their arrival. With an amiable *finesse* he pretended to have been beguiled into admiration of the grounds; and, on learning it belonged to friends, had determined to wait and see them.



The watchful care he took of the young invalid, and the injunctions he gave to those about her, were equally kind and judicious.

Mr. Austen and Miss Colville pledged themselves to act only by his direction.

Caroline looked anxiously towards the assembled group.

“After one visit to a spot not very distant,” said she, “you shall find me passive as an infant.”

“We will talk of that in a few days,” returned the Doctor; “at present rest; perfect quiet is essential.”

Caroline, lulled into security that her purpose would not be opposed, submitted to all that was ordered.

The feelings of Marian were poignant, as she viewed the apartments once her mother's; yet, with admirable self-command she avoided all allusions that would affect her sister. It was suspected that Caroline read her heart; for more than once she observed to Miss Colville, that “Marian would suffer from concealing her feelings.”

The month of April was now some-

what advanced, and milder than usual; Caroline made her petition to Doctor W.;—the air had produced an effect common in cases like hers. She appeared invigorated; her sleep had been more tranquil; and her cough less violent. The Doctor assented; and she was permitted to visit the hallowed spot, accompanied by Mr. Austen and Miss Colville. Doctor W. limited the time, and humanely waited her return. Marian, on the occasion, could not conceal her emotion; and Mr. Austen justly exonerated her from a trial that was not exactly necessary as a duty, wisely making allowance for that distinct construction of mind which causes one to seek, and another to shun, the same objects. It was with deep and heartfelt gratitude, the friends of Caroline contemplated their charge after this mournful visit: her health did not suffer, and the calmness with which she spoke of it rather justified her assertion, “that she should be better now it was over.”

Whatever might have been the estimation in which the Wilton family were







MISS WILTON. AT HER MOTHERS TOMB.

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held, the orphan sisters *now* met the respect their situation seemed to demand; —visitors poured in, but Caroline was spared all intrusions. True to herself, Lady Jane, though absent, had given orders that the most rare fruits should daily be sent to Caroline: this attention pleased her enthusiastic admirer; she was never so happy as when some new trait of character permitted her to indulge her love of talking of “dear Lady Jane.”

Mrs. Cuthbert kept her appointment; and, while all but Caroline were wondering what visitor could be coming so late as eight o'clock in the evening, Mrs. Cuthbert was announced. Her presence diffused a cheerfulness that was wanting; and her easy and polished manners soon made her an object of general interest.

Though the habits of the Mount Wilton family were so arranged as to give Caroline the power of being amused whenever her strength permitted, there was yet in the whole plan an evident design to avoid all that was frivolous. Mrs. Cuthbert saw and warmly applauded the fatherly tenderness of Mr.



Austen. "I see we must resign this sweet young creature," said she one day, while walking on the lawn before the house; "she is perfectly conscious of this, and can even speak of it with a pleased composure; but, would this have been the case if you had kept her in a state of delusion? If, by deceiving her, you had taught her to consider death as so horrible even in idea, that it was necessary she should dream over the few days that remain to her, and die at last like a heathen."

Mr. Austen valued the opinion of such a woman, and frankly confessed his disapprobation of the deceits so often practised; more especially as truths might, from the mild spirit of the Christian religion, be so administered as to sooth without depressing the sufferer. In conformity to these sentiments, the rector of — was a constant visitor at Mount Wilton; but his presence "checked no decent joy;" for him "even the dissolute admired." Caroline frequently detained him, the willing companion of an hour she had pre-arranged as the morning-walk of Marian and Frances. From



these conferences Dr. Marlow always retired with increased respect for her principles: the tear would stray down his cheek, as he related to Mr. Austen the fervent but rational piety of the fading Caroline.

Prepared as Miss Colville was for the result that seemed hastening, her warm heart was sensibly pained at the idea of a final separation from one to whom she was so tenderly attached. So acutely did she feel this in anticipation, that her altered countenance at length attracted the notice of the invalid. "There is something wrong," said Caroline one morning, as Miss Colville closed the book she had been reading at her request: are your friends well? What is it, my dear Miss Colville?" Miss Colville said "she was anxious about a very dear friend:" and then made an effort to turn the conversation.

"Do I know her?" asked Caroline; an expression of almost sparkling intelligence lighting her sunken eye. "I think I do; but this is very weak, my dear, my *kindest* friend! Now think

a little ; suppose I had been so happy as to have received my earlier education from your instruction, and had grown up healthy and strong, would you not have felt a conscious pleasure in presenting me to the world as your work ? I know you would ; for I know your zealous affectionate heart ! Then rest satisfied, my dear Miss Colville, we must part,—that is inevitable. But, whatever is good in me ; if I have attained the composure suited to my situation, or made any progress in that wisdom which shall make me fitted for the world to which I am going, it is to you I am indebted ! *You* first set me in the right path ; do not desert me at the end of my journey. I cannot do without you. It will not be long.” She paused, but after a moment continued ;—“ I know you will not forget me ; but this is cruel : forgive me, it shall be my last weakness.”

It seemed as though Caroline had had a presentiment of what was to follow ; she rallied once more ; talked cheerfully with the evening-party ; di-



rected Dr. Marlow's game at chess, and smiled at Mr. Austen's discomfiture when beaten by his antagonist. Only one expression of regret escaped her lips during the evening. Lady Jane had exceeded the time proposed for her return; and, though she had accounted for it to Caroline, with whom she corresponded, she half-smilingly wished "Lord —— had not been so hospitably received in his tour, as it might have hastened the return of her friend."

As she took the arm of Miss Colville, and was retiring for the night, she reminded Marian that there were some "daphnes in the green-house which would be very ornamental upon the marble tables."

Marian and Frances, as they took leave, promised to see the plants brought in before she came down next morning.

The plants filled the places appointed for them. Marian and Frances busied themselves in arranging and placing every thing according to the taste of Caroline; the hour of breakfast ar-



rived ; they hastened to the apartment in which the family always assembled ; there they found Mr. Austen, his eyes swoln, and his whole appearance betraying the utmost agitation.

Marian stood aghast. At that moment Dr. W. entered the room : he checked the words he was about to utter, and walked to the window.

“ My sister is worse,” said Marian ; and she was hastening away, when Mr. Austen seized her hand, and detained her. “ Better, Marian, beyond a doubt ; better than any of us ;” he observed.

This first shock acted violently on the wretched Marian : for some time she suffered under a strong hysterical affection. As soon as she acquired composure she begged to join Miss Colville.

That kind friend now exerted herself for the comfort of others : her feelings had sustained a severe trial ; she had risen to give the invalid her usual draught, and found the sweet Caroline had escaped from mortal care !

She appeared as if in a deep sleep—it was a sleep—the sleep of death! Mrs. Cuthbert and Mr. Austen were summoned; and a servant dispatched for Doctor W.

It was of no avail; the gentle sufferer had apparently been favoured in her last moments; her countenance was placid, and even wearing a smile, as though rejoicing at her release.

The grief of Marian, though poignant, was in no wise obtrusive: she saw and felt how deeply her beloved sister was mourned. This consciousness, while it claimed her gratitude, was in itself effectual to enable her to restrain her feelings. To talk of Caroline; to hear her commended; was her only pleasure. It became necessary, in order to attain this melancholy satisfaction, that she should avoid every thing that could check the spontaneous tributes of affection which now soothed her wounded heart. This self-command proved salutary, and contributed much to the future happiness of Marian. It was during this



period she was obliged to be present when business was transacting. Mr. Austen drew her attention to this subject, conceiving it to be desirable that one who stood almost alone in the world, and who possessed so large a property, should not only understand the uses of money, but the abuses to which riches are exposed.

Miss Colville, upon reflection, had learned to agree with Mr. Austen, that Lady Jane's absence was in every point of view fortunate.

“We know,” said Mr. Austen, “she would have taken a deep interest in our poor Caroline's situation, and might have been a sufferer in consequence. I do not think it fair, *unnecessarily* to involve young persons in scenes of this nature; where they want feeling, such a lesson may be beneficial; where they do not, it is well to spare them;—for the truly benevolent heart never spares itself.”

The return of Lady Jane was anticipated by all parties with pleasure. She had been apprised of the demise of Caroline, and had written to Miss



Colville; but Marian, who now regarded this beloved friend of her sister as the person from whom her chief consolation was to come, longed anxiously to behold her again. At length Lady Jane arrived at Bloom-hill, and on the following morning hastened to Mount Wilton. Marian, who had been courageous in idea, lost all power as she rose to meet her ladyship.

Lady Jane threw her arms round the poor girl; not a word was said; but from that moment their friendship assumed a decided character. Marian looked up to her friend, most happy to be considered worthy the place her sister had held in the affections of Lady Jane.

Mr. Austen proposed a change of scene to Marian, thinking she might desire it; but, the pang of separation once over, Marian soon learned to value the spot as made sacred by past sorrow.

There were moments when Marian felt she was yielding; and that, in cases where she prided herself on her consis-

tency or firmness: the ease with which she now resigned her opinions would sometimes surprise even herself. At one moment she believed it was the recollection of dear Caroline's example, or some remembered injunction of that beloved sister. Lady Jane and Miss Colville had their due share of invisible influence; but Marian quite overlooked the active principle within; that teachable spirit and meek submission which, by softening her heart, prepared her for the admission of all that was good and desirable. So completely did example prevail, that Marian conquered her dread of visiting the tomb that had so lately received all that stood in near connection with her. She heard that Lady Jane and Miss Colville frequently visited the spot, that Mrs. Cuthbert did the same: an affectionate tenaciousness now clung to her feelings; she was jealous that others should know and speak of a spot, that must be dearer to her than to any of the party. She made the attempt, and succeeded. Frances was her companion; but, though the ef-



fort was attended with pain, and had momentarily awakened scruples she had tried to subdue, Marian persevered ; and soon wholly resigned a weakness that never *stands alone* in any character.

Those encouragements to well-doing usually held out to the young, were now almost inapplicable to her. She had no *immediate* competitor ; therefore emulation was out of the question ; there was no cheating her into her duties ; nor any way of rewarding a girl of her premature understanding.

All this was happy for Marian : she had tasted the real fruits of well-doing in the peace it had procured to her own mind ; she had seen, and felt, how warmly Caroline had approved the late change in her conduct and habits : the inferences therefore were obvious.—“ I am no longer a child,” thought Marian ; “ my former inattentions may make directions and advice more generally necessary with me than with most girls of my age ; but, if I have not learned to love virtue for its own sake, and despise vice upon the



same principle, I have profited little by the zealous kindness of my friends.”

Time softened her grief, without impairing those recollections so suited to creatures appointed to die. Marian attained a place in the esteem of Lady Jane Milner; and Lady Jane continued to be the model by which Mr. Austen hoped to fashion his own daughter. Frances gave some promises that greatly sanctioned this desire of her father's: that Miss Colville entirely anticipated such a result, is not asserted. Lady Jane, according to her nomenclature, might inspire emulation in many, and the desire to reach such a point was commendable; but, greatly as she applauded and encouraged every proof of self-command in her present pupils, Lady Jane had displayed, even from infancy, a singleness of character that shewed itself in her every word and action. In her learning, it produced superiority; because, whatever she attempted, she endeavoured to do as well as possible: to her duties, it gave that active energy which, without officiousness, made her

services doubly delightful. Lively, and full of animation, she was exempt from those giddy interregnums which so often step in *between* good sense and good taste, and, by the introduction of a few smart observations, wound the good feelings of the better regulated mind. She would not lend her voice on these occasions; no, nor even an assenting smile. That love of argument for which Marian had been remarkable, no longer deformed her character; though she would playfully declare to Miss Colville "that she felt a strong inclination to resume her neglected oratory, in order to prove that Lady Jane Milner was perfect." At these times Frances always lent her assistance; and, as their united zeal usually brought the seniors of the party to add something that favoured their cause, they were frequently, as they thought, upon the eve of a triumph, when some unlucky "if" was inserted that discomfited both. "Perfection is not to be found in this life, my dear girls," said Mrs. Cuthbert, one evening when Marian and Frances were debating on the merits of



their favourite. "Let us for a moment imagine that any human being could think himself perfect! the period from which he took up this false idea, would be that in which he would instantly begin to fall from his mistaken elevation. Perfection implies a climax, a point beyond which we cannot advance; and, to pause even in virtue, is to go back. I commend and respect the liberality of your sentiments as connected with Lady Jane; she is amiable, unaffected, and modest; yet I should be sorry to think that she, or any person of her age, possessed not in themselves those aspirings after moral excellence that lead to perseverance in what is right."

Marian sighed, and said, "If you can speak thus of such a girl, what must others think of themselves?"

"When they think and feel as you do at this moment," replied Miss Colville, "good example will always have its proper effect; and believe me, my dear Marian, that while humility is the superstructure upon which moral excellence is founded, so is it the perfection of all attainments. We cannot err in being



just to others; but, even in our praise, we should endeavour to preserve that reasonable tone of language which shall express what we mean, and no more. From me, you might be led to think this caution equivocal, as the object you so highly estimate is deservedly dear to me; but you may remember, I never encouraged you to regard my former pupil above her merits."

"Yet she must be, she is, superior to most girls of her age!" returned Marian.

"This I admit in part," said Miss Colville, smiling; "and, if I were asked what were the advantages she possessed over others of equal ability, I would say it was her uniform desire of knowledge, her conviction that mediocrity was often mistaken for perfection, and her steady rejection of such a term when applied to herself; in short, her just conception of the fitness of words generally. That such a disposition should claim the love of those about her, is natural. But the real triumph of Lady Jane is before me," added Miss Col-

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ville, taking the hand of Marian; "yes, my dear, she has, without a particle of *Ostentation*, won you to imitate what you admired; and, while I highly applaud your *Liberality*, in tracing your happiness to its real source, may I add that,

"There is in virtue sure a hidden charm,  
To force esteem, and envy to disarm."

FINIS.

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