



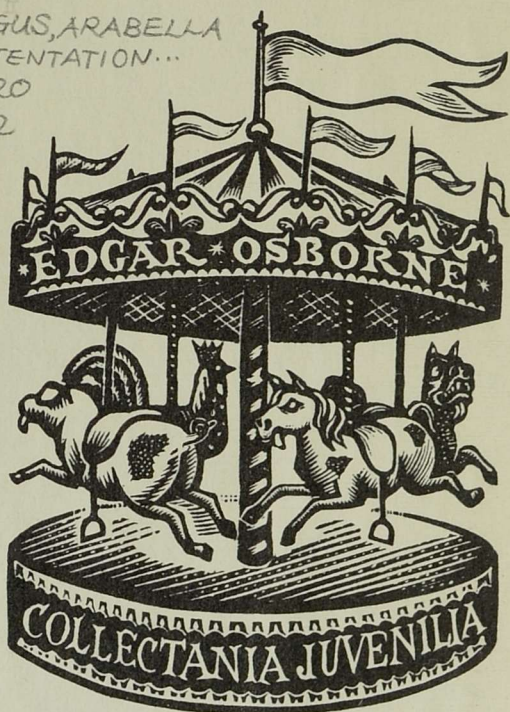
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ARGUS, ARABELLA

OSTENTATION...

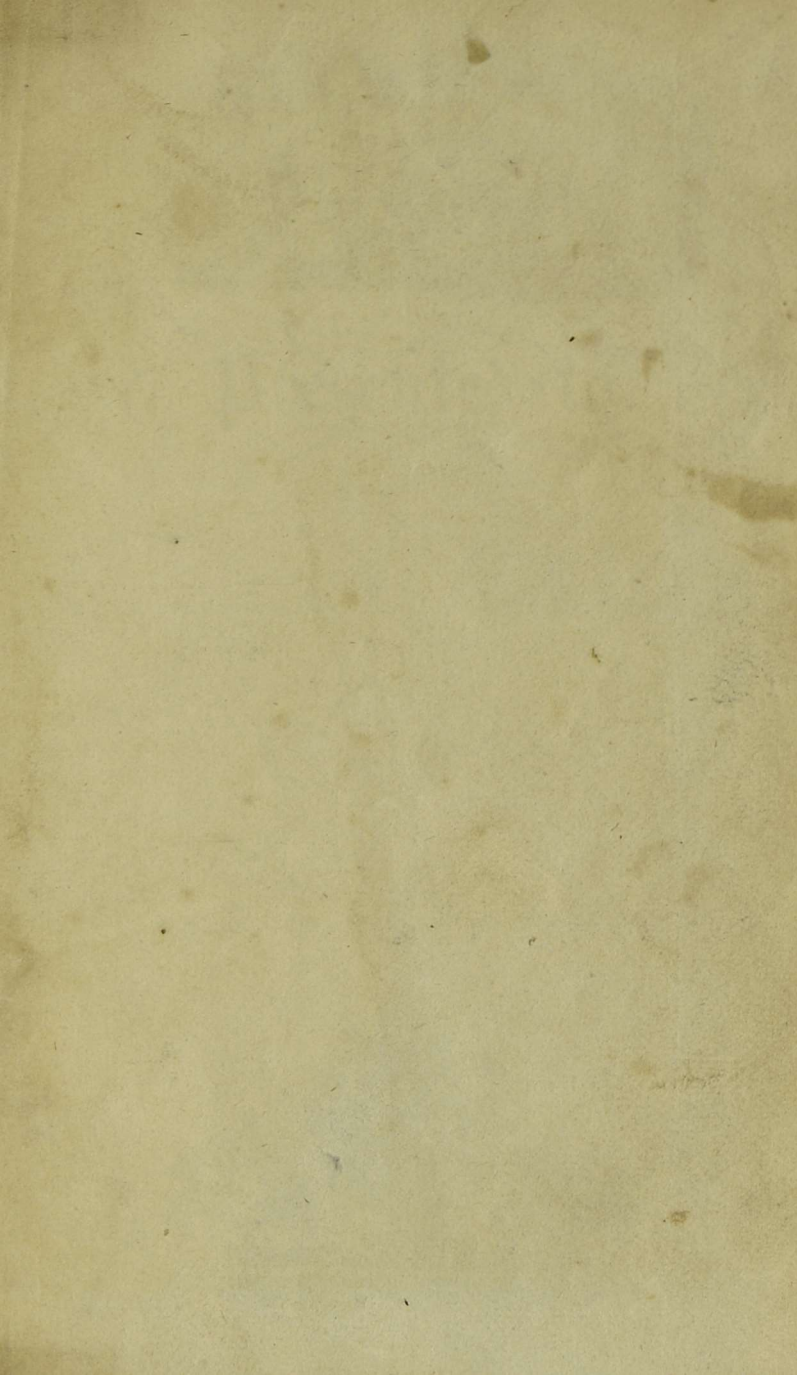
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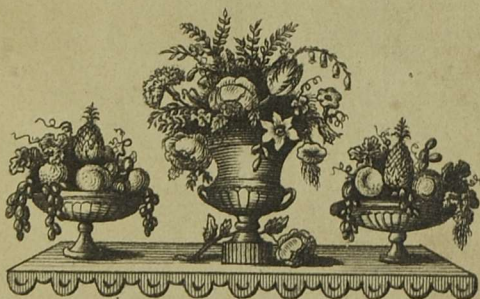


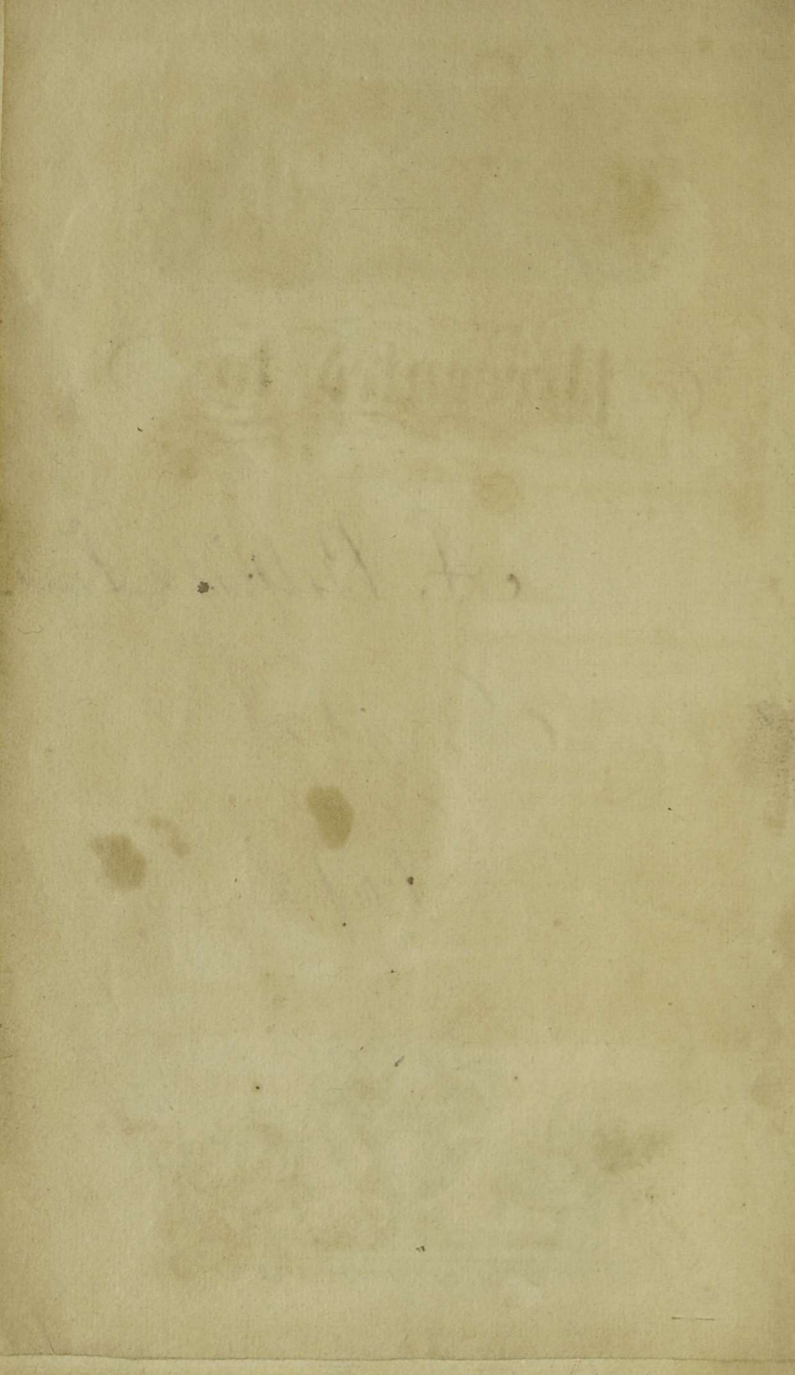
Presented to

A. Belfried Lowe

By

Papa.







MISS WILTON AT HER MOTHERS TOMB.

see Vol. II. page 200.

OSTENTATION AND LIBERALITY.

A TALE.



BY ARABELLA ARGUS,

*Author of "The Juvenile Spectator;" "The Adventures
of a Donkey," &c.*



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

Duchess of Devonshire to Fenelon.



VOL. II.

LONDON:

WILLIAM DARTON, 58, HOLBORN HILL.

1820.

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 civil—, 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-

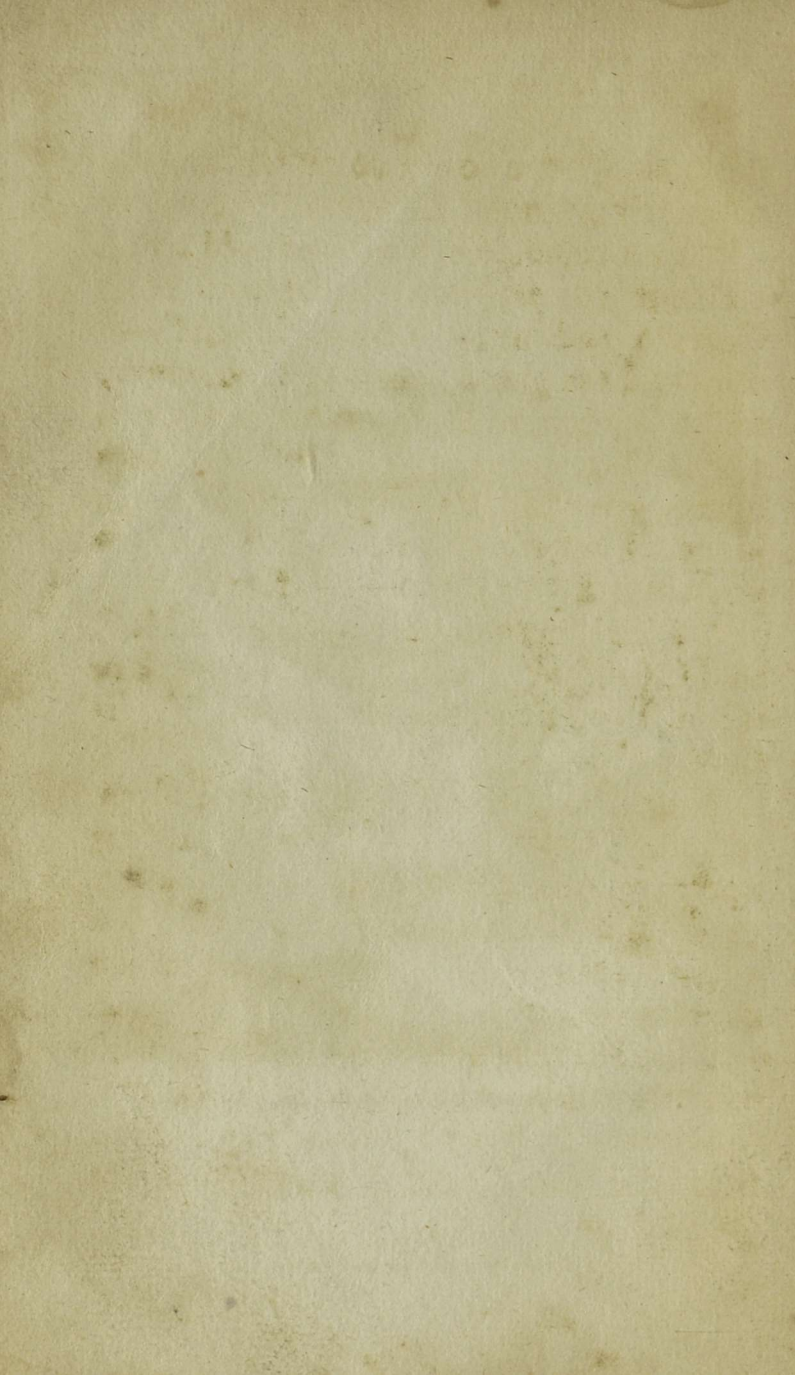
valescence of her daughter. Marian would have remained with her sister, but at the desire of Caroline she retired.

“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 under-standings 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 lefthand. "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 “ whatsum 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 reproofing 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 Douglass

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 expecta-
 tion. God bless you, my dearest sister;
 you may rely upon my giving you faithful
 accounts of our dear mamma. Remem-
 ber me to Mr. A. and Frances; and be-
 lieve me your

Unhappy, but affectionate sister,

MARIAN WILTON."

Mr. Austen did indeed sympathize
 with Marian: he contemplated her situ-
 ation with horror. It seemed more than
 probable, from the precautions suggested
 by her medical advisers, that Mrs. Wil-
 ton had experienced a paralytic attack,
 in which case a second fit might be ap-
 prehended. To appease his interesting
 charge, he addressed Mrs. Cuthbert, so-
 licited 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;

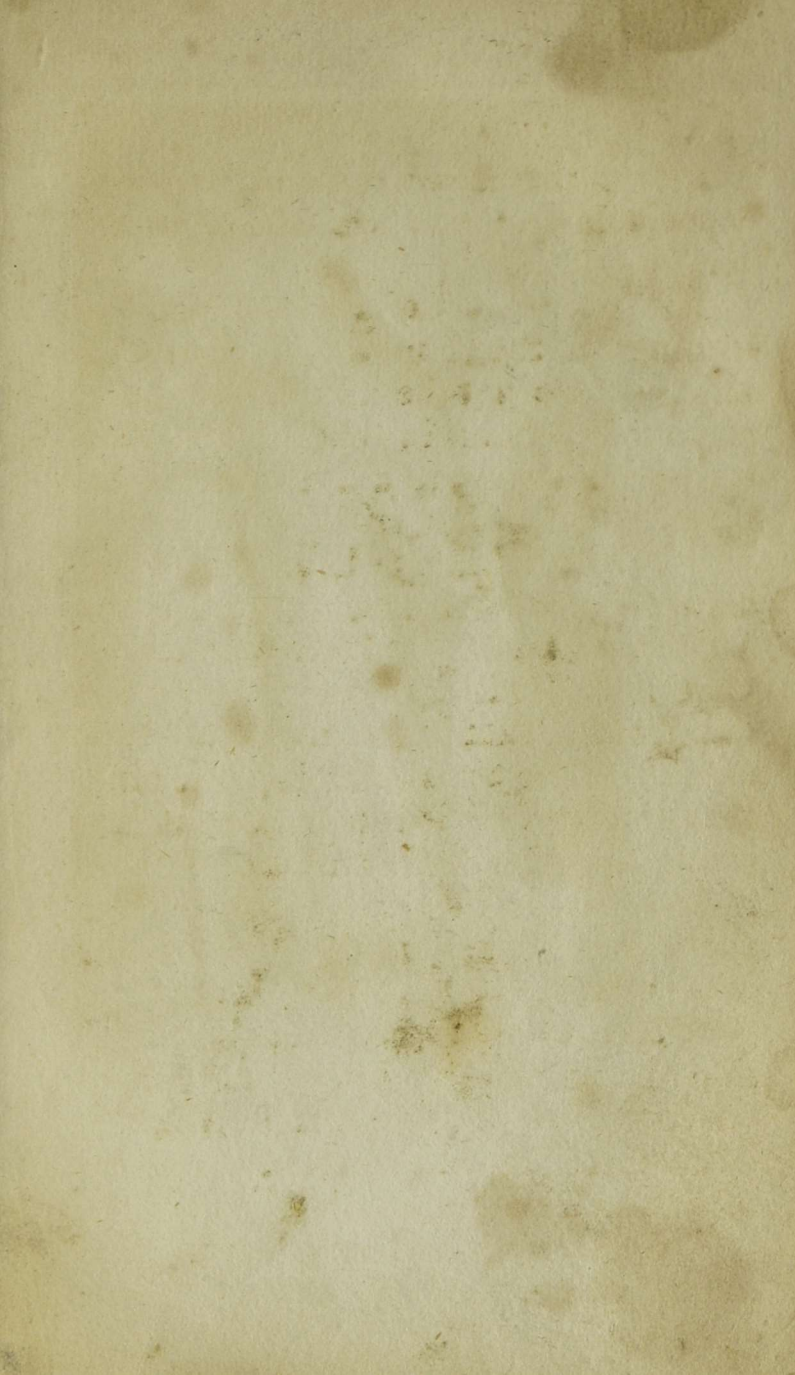
and says she is sure something has happened, and you are afraid to tell her."

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 MOTHERS 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, “when-
ever you can confidently assert that
those naughty *quick feelings* are in
some measure subdued. On your sis-
ter they must have a most serious ef-
fect; and, as we are alone, I venture
to add, that what is called quick feel-
ing, is an infirmity I do not know how
to tolerate. There is so much ine-
quality 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 promi-
nent foible startled her. Besides, she
did not always call it by so mean a
term,—it was an unfortunate *sensibi-*
lity 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*

field, 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-

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.”

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