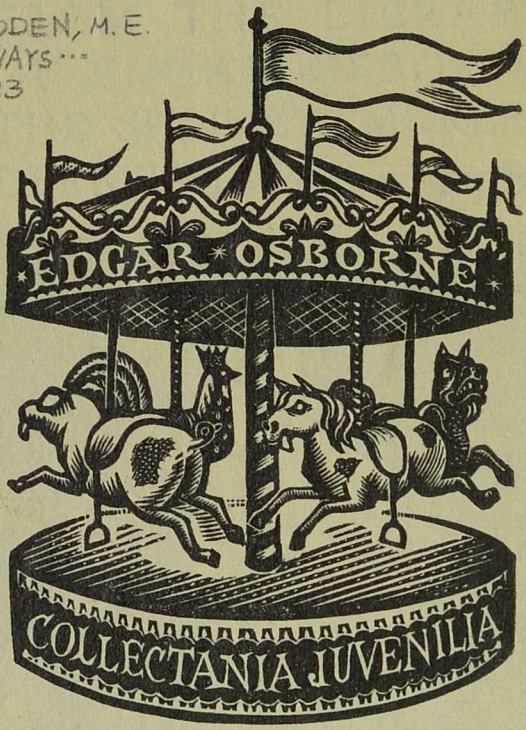

Mary. S.- Woolnough

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1824

FRONTISPIECE.

"The hand of Felix was instantly in his Pocket." p. 79.

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ALWAYS HAPPY!!!

OR,

ANECDOTES

OF

FELIX AND HIS SISTER SERENA.

A TALE.

WRITTEN FOR HER CHILDREN,

BY A MOTHER.

FIFTH EDITION,

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:

J. HARRIS AND SON,

CORNER OF SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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DEDICATION.

In the winter of 1812–13, a little circle of young children were accustomed to be amused by short tales, made at the moment, for their amusement and instruction.—The beneficial effects these little stories produced in the conduct of the young listeners, first gave the idea of writing the following Tale; thus hoping to impress a more permanent advantage.—In this hope an anxious Mother dedicates this little work to her six beloved Children.

Devonshire,
April 20, 1814.

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ALWAYS HAPPY,

A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—*A Cure for Discontent.—The Mischiefs of silly Fears.—Courage always amiable.*

IN the neighbourhood of a small country town lived Felix and his sister Serena. They loved each other tenderly, and were happy in having kind parents, who were always attentive to their improvement and happiness. The father of Felix was not rich, but he was contented with what he had His name was not

graced with any title of nobility; he was neither a lord nor a duke. He was simply an honest man, a title self-earned, and placing its possessor amongst all good men. He was compassionate, he was pious, and all his neighbours loved and respected him.

Felix had many good qualities, but he had also many faults; he was sometimes passionate, sometimes idle, sometimes self-conceited. Of these faults he knew he could cure himself, for his father had told him so; and though he was not remarkably clever, he had sense enough to resolve to conquer his faults. In the end, as might be expected, he succeeded; and you will hear how by his constant endeavours he grew up to be almost as good a man as his father.

Serena was younger than her brother; she was not a pretty little girl, but she looked so clean, so good-humoured, and

so cheerful, that she was loved by all who knew her; nobody ever thought whether she was handsome or not.—Yet Serena, like her brother, sometimes did wrong. She was apt to cry about trifles, was very careless and forgetful, and in short, like most little children, had many faults to correct. Yet by minding all her mother said to her, and every day trying to improve by little and little, I assure you she became a very amiable, sensible woman.

Though faults can be certainly, they cannot be easily, cured. Those who have the greatest faults to correct, must of course have the most merit when they do conquer them. When Felix in the midst of a sulky fit reasoned himself into good temper, and instead of sullen looks turned to his sister with a good-humoured smile, his heart always told him how properly he was behaving. And when Serena

in the midst of her tears recollected for what a silly trifle she cried, the moment she wiped her eyes and became cheerful, she felt a kind of pleasure which all must feel when they heartily try to do what is right.

Now the methods by which this little boy and this little girl learned to improve in knowledge and in virtue, and the happy life they led, will, I think, make a very pretty story, and amuse us all, I dare say, very much.

It was Winter—the snow lay thick on the ground, the frost had hardened the water, and the cold was very severe.

"Oh! how cold it is, how very cold," said Serena, and her little face seemed drawing up into a cry.—"True, my love," said her mother, "we are all cold, and we must bear it patiently." Serena looked as if she would not bear it patiently—her mother went on—"Think, my Serena,

how many poor little children, besides this severe cold, have other evils as great as the frost to bear, and those in addition to it—Without clothes, without food, without fire,—think what they must suffer."—"But, mamma, to think they are worse does not make me better."—"It ought to make you more patient, since you have so much less to suffer; it ought to make you thankful, since you have so much more to enjoy. Look at this warm gown, this blazing fire, this bowl of smoking bread and milk; are not these comforts, Serena?" "Oh! yes, mamma, great comforts,"—smacking her lips as she tasted her nice breakfast.—"And are you particularly good, that you should possess such advantages above hundreds of little starving girls?"—Serena blushed and put down her spoon. "I fear not, mamma."—"Well then, my love, try to thank a good God who has been so bounteous to you,

by gratefully and cheerfully enjoying the many blessings he has showered upon you; and since your own lot can produce only smiles, let the next tear I see twinkling in your eye come there for the real sorrows of another, not for the fancied ones of yourself." As her mother said this, she kissed her little Serena, and the happy child felt in her heart that she had indeed a great deal to be thankful for.

Felix now entered the room with a glowing face, and running up to his mother, "Oh! mother," said he, "here is a poor shivering old man at the door—may I give him something?—you know I was the best child yesterday."—"Well then, take your reward—here are some halfpence, go give them to the poor shivering old man." Felix joyfully executed the commission, and when he returned, told his sister that the old man had said "God bless you, my dear."—"I hope," answered

Serena, "that I shall behave the best to-day, and then to-morrow somebody shall say so to me."—"What is all this?" said their father. "I thought, my dear," turning to his wife, "I thought you never relieved common street-beggars, such as this man was."—"Nor do I," replied his wife, "at any other season of the year; but at Christmas I find it is a general practice for every housekeeper to contribute his mite, by which means an useful sum is collected—I therefore add my little offering to the store."—"And whichever of the children behaves best you make your almoner?"—"I do."—"Then, my love, be assured you make the best possible use of your mite." The breakfast was now over. The children flew eagerly to their books, reading, writing, and spelling, each came forward in turn. Felix and his father devoted half an hour to Latin grammar, whilst Serena bringing her stool

sat down to work by her mother; she was hemming a handkerchief for her brother, and as her fingers swiftly passed over her work, her little tongue was equally busy. —"Pray, mamma, when shall I learn music?"—"I do not think, Serena, you will ever learn it."—"Never learn music! why, mamma, I thought every body learnt it; you know you have."—"Yes, my dear, because I had a good deal of leisure."—"And so have I, I am sure."—"And yet, Serena, though you have so much time, I do not find that your brother's handkerchief is finished yet."—"But that is such tedious work, the same thing over and over again."—"And do you think you could learn music without going over and over again?—Nothing, you know, requires more perseverance than learning to play on a pianoforte. Did not Miss Wood tell us she had practised six hours a-day for many years?" "Yes, mamma."

"And what else did she say?"—"I remember, for it surprised me very much, she said that now she did not open her instrument once in a month."—"But yet she had time."—"Oh! yes, because she said she made all her father's shirts, which he would have had made out of the house, but she preferred doing them."—"Then, I suppose, having tried both, she found needlework one of the most amusing as well as the most useful employments."—"Then shall I never learn any thing but needlework?"—"I hope you will, but you must learn that well first, for it is necessary. Music, drawing, and dancing, are unnecessary, and must therefore be only thought of as amusements; as such, should your taste dispose you to any of these acquirements, I shall very willingly allow you to follow them."—"But French I shall certainly learn?"—"Yes, French is now almost become a

necessary part of education, and I hope you will not only read, but speak it."—"I am sure I shall never have courage to speak it."—"Do not be sure, Serena; suppose yourself in company with a Frenchwoman who could not speak one word of English; would not you be happy to relieve her distress, and address her in her own language?"—"Yes, if I had resolution."—"You must never want resolution to do what is right—As soon as you have determined what is most proper for you to do, you must steadily perform it, whatever exertion it may cost you. I would not have my Serena thought bold or forward, but I hope I shall always see her possess a modest confidence. However, your work is finished; we will therefore talk more of this another time—now bring your bonnet and coat, and we will take our morning's walk."—"In the snow?"—"On the roads the snow is

trodden down, and we shall find a good path."

The walk did not prove so unpleasant as Serena expected, and she returned home with an excellent appetite for her dinner. The day closed in early, and the family drew round their cheerful fire.—"And now, papa," said Felix, "do tell us a story—you know we dearly love stories, and this is just the time to enjoy them." His father smiled—"Will you then promise to be quiet? I do not like talking in a noise."—"Indeed I will be very still," cried Felix. "And I too," exclaimed Serena: "I will be as still as a mouse."—"A mouse is not always still, Serena: and I can tell you a tale where a mouse frightened two little girls most terribly."—"A mouse frighten girls! nay now, papa, you are only joking."—"No, I assure you I read it in a clever book, and I dare say it was true."—"Pray then,

dear papa, let us hear how a mouse could be so terrible."—"You are mistaken, Serena; the mouse was a very pretty mouse, and, except in nibbling bread and cheese, perfectly harmless; it was only the girls that were silly: but you shall hear. One fine moonlight night two tired girls went to bed; they had been spending the day with a kind aunt, who had given them a nice plum-cake. Now this cake was too large to be eaten at once; it was therefore deposited in a box, that stood on a table in the chamber. The lid of the box had been broken: it could not therefore be properly shut. The little girls, tenderly locked in each other's arms, soon fell sweetly asleep. Silence reigned around, and their slumbers remained long unbroken; at length a poor little half-starved mouse crept from her hiding-place in the wainscot, and began peeping about in hopes of finding something to satisfy

her appetite. It was not long before the smell of the rich cake directed her to the box on the table; she carefully crept into it, and with rapture devoured its contents. A slight noise in the adjoining room, and the distant mewing of a cat, alarmed the timid plunderer; she attempted to spring from the box, but in her fright she drew it to the edge of the table, from whence it fell to the floor with a loud crash, and turning over in the fall, secured the poor mouse beneath it. The unusual noise awakened the sisters. 'Bless me,' cried one, almost breathless with fear and surprise, 'Bless me, Ann, what can that noise be?' 'It was very terrible indeed,' replied Ann; 'I cannot account for it, but I dare say it will do us no harm.' 'No harm! Oh! it must do us harm.' 'Why, Mary, I never heard of a noise hurting any body,' said Ann, laughing at her sister. 'But it may be robbers, dear Ann;

what shall we do?' 'Be quiet, certainly, if it be robbers we shall hear more, they cannot long keep still.' 'Dear me, how you talk, and I am so frightened.' 'But pray do not be frightened, for, depend upon it, thieves do not break into houses to steal little girls.' 'Indeed, indeed, I cannot lie still.' 'But, dear Mary, what shall we do?' 'I don't know; you are the eldest, you must advise me.' 'I advise you to go to sleep, for why should we disturb the servants, who are all comfortably asleep? and indeed there is nothing to fear.' As she said this, the kind and sensible Ann drew aside the curtain, and the moon shining clear into the room, they quickly perceived the box overthrown. At this they both laughed; and in forming various conjectures how it could possibly have fallen from the table, they again fell asleep. Early the next morning, their mother as usual entered

their chamber, and was immediately informed of their last night's wonderful adventure. She was much amused by the conjectures each had formed respecting this magical overthrow, and very frankly declared she thought it had been occasioned by a mouse. 'No indeed, mother,' said Mary, 'you must be wrong, a mouse could not possibly move this great box.' 'I do not say a mouse could move this box to any distance, but I think by its endeavour to get to the cake, it might so shake it, as to draw it to the edge of the table, and then you know a slight touch would cause it to fall.' 'Oh! but the noise we heard was so great, it was greater than a hundred mice could make: I am sure it could not be a mouse.' 'You are very positive, little girl,' said her mother; 'however, we will take up the box, and the scattered cake.' She did so, and instantly the poor imprisoned mouse rushed

across the room, and darted into its hole. Mary screamed. 'My dear child, why that scream, will it preserve you from danger? or is it only to show how very silly you can be?' Mary blushed. 'Do you think yourself, or the poor little animal that has just escaped from us, has most cause for fear? You, whose single hand could not only seize the body, but crush the life of the unprotected feeble mouse. Fy, Mary, you make me ashamed of you; but perhaps you would wish to be pitied for your delicate weakness.' 'No indeed, mother.' 'I say no indeed, too, Mary, and beg of you to try, and rather be respected for your resolution, than despised, as you surely must be, for such contemptible fears.'"

"Papa, that is indeed a droll story," said Serena. "I am thinking," cried Felix, "if this had happened on a dark night, no moon to show the box on the

floor, what then Mary would have done." "I suppose, alarmed all the family," said his mother. "Yes," added his father, "and then, after having caused all the confusion, behold the poor mouse discovered as the cause of her unfounded fears." "How they would all have laughed at her," exclaimed Serena; "yet, mamma, I have seen grown-up ladies frightened at less things than a mouse. I remember a spider frightened Mrs. ——." "Hush, my love, never remember the silly or improper actions of your friends. Spiders certainly are a very insufficient cause for fear; and since we think so, let us endeavour to conquer all such weaknesses. By the exertion of a little sense, this may easily be done, particularly by young people. And one of the best means of conquering fear is, instantly to investigate its cause. A friend of mine going at night into her chamber, by chance extinguished

her candle; in attempting to grope her way to the door, she was startled by something that appeared, though very indistinctly, like a white figure standing near the window. She paused for a moment, but instantly recollecting herself, walked boldly up to the object; and what do you think it was? Nothing more or less than her own long white dressing-gown, which she herself had hung there, and on which the dim light from the window shone."— "That was laughable indeed." "Yes; and I myself had also an equally curious adventure. Your dear grandmother was often an invalid. In one of her illnesses I was her nurse, and often during the night had occasion to go into different parts of the house. One night something was required from the closet of our common sitting-room. I descended slowly down the creaking stairs, and entering the room, soon found what I wanted: hastily

returning, I was a good deal surprised by observing a strong light play on the opposite wall after my candle was removed into the passage. This I could not account for, as the fire was out, and myself the only person moving about the house." "Dear mamma, what are you going to tell us?" "I put down my light on the stairs, and resolved on discovering whence this phenomenon; and boldly returned into the room. The miraculous light still beamed. What could it be? That was soon explained, for turning round, I found that the light from my candle, entering through the half-opened door, gleamed on a large mirror, which reflected the rays to the opposite wall. This was a plain and simple effect. I was satisfied, and quickly returned to my expecting invalid." "Have you no more such charming stories?" "I do not remember any more just now; besides your supper-hour is arrived." "Oh!

but we do not want our supper now, we would rather have more stories." "Every thing in its proper place, we must never jostle out one business for another; we must now attend to our evening occupations; yet let me, before we quit the subject, entreat you to bear these little stories in your mind; and never by want of resolution, hoard up for yourselves the misery of groundless fears. Be assured, courage is equally amiable in woman as in man, and that the moment we begin to pity the fancifully timid, we also begin to despise. Fear nothing but to do wrong.

CHAPTER II.

A Remedy for Peevishness.—Active Assistance better than useless Sympathy.—Fine Clothes often troublesome.—Wishing very foolish.

In a few days the snow had disappeared, yet a keen frost continued to bind the earth. The sun shone cheerfully, and Felix, after his morning's avocations, had been enjoying with his sister the beauty of the weather. Tired at length with play, he stood watching some labourers at work in an adjoining field, till the cold seized on his hands and fingers. Shivering and cross, he returned to the parlour, where his mother sat at work. The fire soon relieved his chilled fingers, but a discontented gloom hung on his countenance. The watch pointed at

twelve. Felix wanted his dinner, and was angry the time did not pass quicker. His sister, in endeavouring to reach the fire, very slightly touched his elbow; this he called beating him, and he was altogether so peevish, that at last his mother asked him what was the matter? Felix did not answer, for he really did not know what was the matter with himself. "Are you cold, my dear?" "No, mother." "Are you hungry?" "No, mother." "Yet you wish for your dinner." "Yes, because that will pass away the time a little." "Pass away the time, Felix, 'the precious time!' for every moment of which we are to be accountable to God. Surely, my dear boy, you do not think of what you say. Can time be recalled, that thus you would throw it away? It was only yesterday you wished the morning had been an hour longer, and to-day you are going to throw an hour

away." "Ah! but yesterday I was happy." "And are you unhappy to-day, Felix?" "No, not quite unhappy, but very uncomfortable." "Are you sick?" "No, mother." "Are you in pain?" "No, mother." "Neither sick nor in pain, neither hungry nor cold, and yet very uncomfortable. Ah! Felix, I see what is the matter with you, you are discontented, and by giving way to your ill humour, you are making both your sister and me suffer from it." Felix looked down. "Now, as it is always my wish to remove all your complaints, and teach you by being good to be always happy, I will show you what I think will prevent your ever again being discontented. Go and ask the cook for that mug of gruel I bade her make; you, Serena, shall carry this parcel of soft linen, and we will visit the poor woman who lies sick in the village." The gruel was brought, and

Felix carrying it, walked silently beside his mother. They soon reached the cottage: on entering it they were met by an old woman, who, in spite of age and infirmity, was busily occupied in washing; a young girl of ten years old, the eldest of six children, was cleaning potatoes for their homely dinner. The other children were playing in different parts of the room. The father was absent, having left his cobbler's stall to fetch some medicines for his wife. Felix followed his mother up a broken staircase, which opened into the only chamber the cottage afforded. Here, on a low bed without curtains, lay the suffering invalid. By over-exertions for her young family, she had by some means strained her arm, which from mismanagement had gathered to a sore. The wound was become exquisitely painful; and though

she uttered no complaint, the large drops that trickled down her pale face, proved how great was her suffering.

Serena was affected to tears. Her mother kindly addressed the poor woman, "I fear you are in great pain." "Yes, madam, indeed I am." "But you do not complain." "No, surely, madam, that would do no good, and only distress my family." Felix looked at his mother, whilst his heart severely smote him. The woman continued, "Alas! madam, my greatest pain is to be such a trouble to all around me, such an expense to my husband." "Be comforted, good woman, your patience deserves our best assistance, and be assured you shall have it." "God bless you, madam! God reward you for what you have already done for me!" The scene was now beginning to be too affecting; Serena's tears were accompa-

nied by half-suppressed sobs; her mother took her hand, and, promising to call again, hastily left the cottage.

As they walked home, she asked Felix what he thought of the scene he had just witnessed. "Think! oh! mother, I *feel* I should never be discontented again." "Let the resolution sink in your heart, my child, and teach you not only to pity the sorrows of your fellow-creatures, but also to remember the many blessings by which you are surrounded; you see, even in the greatest bodily anguish, patience can lessen the suffering; but when enjoying, as you now do, health, youth, and vigour, it is wicked to have your brow clouded by glooms." "Indeed, mother, I do think I never shall be gloomy again."

"I hope not; it is our duty to be cheerful, it is our duty to enjoy the good bestowed on us, and if you try, depend upon

it you will find something or other that can always cheer and enliven you. But, my gentle Serena, pray wipe away these tears. I do not blame you for having felt so much; sympathy is due to distress; but shall I tell you what is even better than weeping over the miseries of another!" "What, mamma?" "Endeavouring to relieve them." "Ah, if I could do that!" "Dry your eyes then, and think if there is not any thing you can do. Whilst you continue to cry, you may hurt yourself, but you cannot benefit the object of your commiseration." "There now, I have wiped my eyes; now tell me what such a poor little weak child as I can do." "You are little, certainly, and not very strong, yet I believe you have as much use of your fingers as I have." "Mamma, I know what you mean, work for her." "Yes, my love; did you not observe how much her bed-

gown was tattered, and her cap worn out?" "Oh! yes, yes, dear mamma; let us go directly home, and set to work." "Though I am not fond of doing things in a hurry, yet in so good a cause we will set aside common rules, and make all the haste in our power." "I can do nothing," said Felix, sorrowfully. "Indeed, brother, you can; if papa will let you, I mean." "What, Serena?" "Why, have you not a shilling in your box?" "To be sure I have, how glad I am it is not spent; and see, papa is coming to meet us. I will directly ask his leave to give my shilling to the poor woman." His father not only assented to his request, but added another shilling to the store. The evening was happily spent, Serena worked very fast and very well, a new cap and bed-gown were completed by her and her mother. The next morning the party again visited the cottage. With a beat-

ing heart Felix made his little offering; with sparkling eyes Serena produced her handy work. As she assisted the woman in putting on the bed-gown, her mother in a whisper asked if this was not better than only giving her useless tears to the poor sufferer. "Better indeed, mamma; ah! how much better!" "Learn then, my dear little girl, to check, rather than encourage that sensibility, which renders us useless to those for whom we feel; and grave it on your heart, that one active exertion of our power, however small or humble, is worth a whole age of indolent unassisting pity."

They now returned home, and Felix hastened to find his father, and inform him of all that had passed. His father was in the parlour chatting with some visitors. Felix knew this was not the time to speak, he therefore waited patiently till he should be alone. He heard how-

ever with surprise, that his father in a mild but firm manner declined subscribing to some charity which was spoken of, and which was to be advertised in the newspapers. As soon as the guests withdrew, "Do tell me, my dear father, why you did not subscribe to that charity just now." "I could not afford it." "And yet you have always money for our poor neighbours, and last week you know you gave soup to every cottager." "Very true, Felix, that certainly cost money, and because I have done that, I cannot give money now. I am not able to subscribe to both public and private charity. I prefer the latter, because I have the objects immediately under my observation. I wish I could do both, those are happy that can, but I will never draw from the hoard sacred to my obscure neighbour to place my name in a public print, and leave the helpless villager unnoticed, that I may

ostentatiously blazon my charity to the world. Do you understand me, Felix?" "Perfectly, papa, you approve of charity in any form, and for any motive, but you think private charity the most beneficial." "Exactly so, and now tell me the history of your morning's adventure." Felix very feelingly described what he had seen, and being soon joined by his mother and sister, they all continued talking some time on the subject. Serena lamented she had nothing to bestow. "You have given your time, my dear; and what other gift could be equally valuable from you, or equally useful to them?" replied her mother. "But, mamma, shall I never have money to give?" "I hope you will; as soon as you are old enough, your papa and I intend to allow you a certain sum, for your clothes and other expenses." "I shall be glad of that, because then I can be very, very

careful, and save something for the poor, and do as you often have done, mamma, go without a new cap or a new ribbon, and give the money they would have cost to the sick and needy. How much I shall like that!" "I am glad, my little girl, that your wish for riches is so connected with the intentions of benevolence. I hope it will always be so. As long as you dress neat and clean, and do not require me to make up the deficiencies of your wardrobe, I shall think you quite at liberty to give away what you please." "Oh! mamma, I will take care never to want things that are necessary to make me neat, for if you were to have to buy shoes for me, it would be your money, and not mine, you know, that was bestowed in charity." "I see you understand the rights of property, Serena," said her father smiling: "As it is now my turn to speak, I will

tell you something that will, I am sure, give you pleasure. You are going to spend to-morrow at your grandpapa's: you will meet your cousins there, and I hope spend a very happy day together." "We shall be sure to be happy, for grandpapa is so kind, and we shall have plenty of play, for my cousins love play dearly," said Felix. "Yes," said Serena, "and they are always smart, so smart! Pray, mamma, what dress shall I wear to-morrow?" "The same as usual, Serena, a clean white frock." "And no sash, mamma, no pretty blue shoes like my cousins." "No, my dear, a sash is perfectly useless, and as for blue shoes, they are too expensive." Serena sighed. "Will your grandpapa love you less in plain clothes?" "No, mother," exclaimed Felix, "I am sure he won't, for we all think Serena is his favourite." —"What can that be for, I wonder?"—

"I suppose because she is the best tempered."—Serena smiled. "Or do you think, my love, you will be more comfortable in blue than black shoes?"—Serena looked at her brother. Felix laughed, and said, "I understand your looks, Serena.—Do you know, mother, that at our very last visit, my cousins could not go with us to see a beautiful new peacock grandpapa kept in the yard, because they were afraid of dirtying their pretty blue shoes—and cousin Fanny cried for an hour because she had stained her sash with preserves." "So much for the joys of a smart dress; besides which, let me remind you that your uncle is much richer than your papa; and, therefore, your aunt can afford with propriety to do many things that I cannot."—"Yes, I know she has a carriage and horses: ah! I wish you were

as rich, mamma."—"Thank you, my love, but I am very happy with what I have, and I could only be happy if I had more."—Serena paused.—"But, mamma, when we see so many *richer* than ourselves, we cannot help thinking—" "Of how many are *poorer*," said her mother, interrupting her.—"But that I did not recollect just now." "Yet now is the very moment you ought to think of it—you are not very rich, and, therefore, free from many vexations attendant on money—you are not poor, and, therefore, secured from the miseries of want—placed in a middle station. Thank God for the unembittered blessings he has given you." "Yet still, mamma, I cannot think money brings care, as you say. Now what care can there be in riding in a coach." "I cannot enter more into the subject now, Serena; and,

therefore, only beg you will exert your own sense. Observe what happens around you.—I may one day find you acknowledging, that even riding in a coach is not always a pleasure."

CHAPTER III.

The Pleasures of Walking.—The Inconveniences of a Coach.—Change produced by Ill humour.—Greediness punished.

EARLY the next morning Serena sprang joyfully from her bed; the sun was just beginning to beam; the robin redbreast was twittering its solitary, yet sweet notes; all nature looked cheerful, and the heart of Serena danced with joy. Felix met his sister in the parlour, and they talked over the pleasures of the coming day.—They had each dressed themselves with the greatest neatness.—Serena's frock was white as snow; her cheeks, just washed with clear cold water, bloomed like two roses; her hair was nicely combed, and

hung in easy curls on her clean forehead, and her eyes sparkled with good humour. Felix, as he kissed her, could not help thinking, that all the fine clothes in the world would not have made her look better than she now did. Their kind parents indulged their eagerness, and the breakfast appeared somewhat earlier than usual. When it was over, Serena put on her warm coat, and her father taking her by one hand, and Felix by the other, they set off for the house of their grandfather. —The frost had dried the roads, and hung glittering on each spray. Felix often stopped to observe the grass and leaves, that shone as if gemmed by diamonds. The air breathed fresh, and though they had a mile to walk, they very soon found themselves at their grandfather's door. Indeed, almost too soon, for they had discovered so much to admire—the ponds adorned with fantastic piles of ice that

spread out into a variety of shapes, the boys skaiting on the surface, the whistling of the distant woodman, the stroke of his axe as its sound followed its sight.

"Papa," said Felix, breathless with surprise, "how is it that we can see the blow before we hear the sound? both must happen together." "Both do happen together, but sound travels so much slower than sight." "Sound travels, papa!" "Yes, my dear, the progress it makes whence it issues to our sense of hearing, I call its travelling.—Does not thunder follow lightning at a greater or less interval?" "Yes, papa." "Yet they are both emitted together. Thus by the time that elapses between the thunder and the flash of lightning, its distance from us can be calculated.—However, this subject is too difficult for you at present; and besides, we are arrived at the end of our walk." Grandpapa

received his guests with his usual kindness and affection; scarcely were they seated by the blazing fire, when a handsome coach drew up to the door, and Felix saw his aunt and four cousins alight from it. Here were new greetings—every body was talking, and all was joy and hilarity. Serena, in the gaiety of her heart, described the beauty of their walk.—"Dear cousin, did not the ice look beautiful, like stars and spears, and I don't know what pretty things? and were not the leaves shining with a thousand diamonds? the grass too, edged with such a silvery fringe!"

"Why, Serena," answered her cousin, "how could we see all these charming things? you know we were boxed up in the coach." "I had forgotten; but then you heard the birds singing; and, cousin, did you observe the woodman on the opposite side of the river? I have something clever to tell you about him." "How

could I hear any thing but the rattling of the wheels?" Serena was confounded, she turned her eyes upon her father; he smiled, and taking her hand, softly said, —"You find, Serena, walking has some pleasures which a coach cannot indulge." He then rose to return home, as his wife was alone and would expect him. "Do not send for your children," said their aunt, "I will see them both safely home in the coach."—This was a most welcome proposal to Felix and his sister, who with added alacrity bade adieu to their father, and now followed their cousins into a large room prepared for them.—Here grandpapa distributed to each of them some new toys; then bidding them be merry, he left them till the dinner hour. A scene of much merriment ensued, many games were played, many stories told, many songs sung. Now they danced, and now skipped; good humour reigned amidst

them, and they were happy. By degrees they began to tire; some complained of hunger, some of cold, ill humour was creeping into their hearts, and of course turned all their good to evil. The room was equally warm, the toys equally pretty, yet the first appeared uncomfortable, and the last were thrown by in disgust. Felix could not help recalling the words of his father, that much pleasure would cease to please, and that by a mixture of labour and of amusement, there was the greatest enjoyment of both: he also considered their murmurs as highly ungrateful to their kind grandfather, who had done so much to make them happy. Very earnestly, therefore, he endeavoured to prevail on the little party to resume their sports: with his sister he quickly succeeded, but his cousins were quarrelling amongst themselves about their respective toys. Felix offered to exchange

his own with them; Serena did the same; they were willing to do any thing else their cousins chose. But no—Felix found to his sorrow, that when children are sullen and quarrelsome, nobody can oblige them. Afraid of making them worse, he drew Serena to the other side of the room, and amused her and himself with a book given him with the toys. The four cousins became more cross every minute; they scolded each other for what was the fault of all; and at last, their passion made them so forgetful of themselves, that from words they proceeded to blows. What sight can be more shocking! Four brothers and sisters fighting and beating each other! Poor Serena turned pale with fear, and throwing her arms round her brother, seemed to cling to him for protection. Felix tenderly kissed her, and holding her firmly in his stouter arms, assured her

nothing should hurt her. The noise of combatants soon brought grandpapa to the field of action. When he entered the room, how was he affected!—On the four violent fighters he looked with anger and disgust; but the tender attitude of Felix, and the trembling Serena, melted him to tears of admiration; he fondly clasped them in his arms, and exclaimed —"My own two dear children! God bless you! God will bless you, for he looks down with benignity on each family of love."—The mother of the rude quarrellers now appeared—how was she shocked, how did her heart ache when she viewed these four children, for whom she had long felt an equal affection, long beheld with equal anxiety, now distorted by rage, and vociferating with ill humour! But we will not dwell on such a frightful scene—convinced that our young readers, with one voice, must resolve never

to give a cause of equal complaint to their own parents, but like the affectionate Felix and his sister, prove through life the comfort and joy of all who love them, and the dearest and firmest friends of each other. By the friendly interference of Felix, his aunt was prevailed upon to forgive this most distressing outrage. His cousins were somewhat calmed; but how different did every thing appear to them now, than when at first they gaily entered the play-room. In vain they declared every thing was changed—poor children! the only change was in their own hearts. Dinner was announced, and the party sat down with excellent appetites. The beef and the plum-pudding were both highly extolled. Serena, indeed, found the latter so good, that she was just going to send her plate for a second slice of it, when Felix reminded her how rich it was, and, like a good sensible child, she imme-

diately determined not to have any more. Her sense was here rewarded; for one of her cousins, who would eat a great deal more, in spite of the admonitions of her mother, was taken so very sick, that she was obliged to be carried from table, and lay upon a bed most of the afternoon.—The rest drew round the cheerful fire, ate biscuits and apples, and heard some entertaining stories from their grandpapa. —Tea now followed, and soon after the coach drove up to the door that was to convey them all home. Felix and Serena had spent a most happy day; they loved their kind grandfather, yet they very cheerfully bade him good-bye. For they knew they were going to return to a happy home, where they should meet their affectionate parents; and by describing all their past joys to them would enjoy them a second time. With light hearts, therefore, they skipped into the carriage, their

grandpapa calling out to them that they had been such well-behaved children, he should be very glad to see them again whenever they had leave to visit him.—The coach rattled merrily along. It was a dark night, and as nothing could be seen, Serena did not regret being boxed up, as her cousins called it. At first she was very merry, but by degrees her little tongue ceased to prate, and soon she was quite silent; she, however, did not complain, and her quietness passed unnoticed.—In half an hour they reached home, for the carriage-road was much longer than the path across the fields. Felix sprang out of the coach, and found his parents at the door waiting for them; Serena slowly followed, and both thanking their aunt, the coach proceeded home, and our little party entered the house. "We have had a charming day," exclaimed Felix; and he rapidly described their various

pleasures, carefully avoiding only the account of his cousins' misbehaviour. This he knew would pain his parents; besides, he remembered that excellent command in the Bible, 'do as you would be done by,' and would not expose faults in another, assured that he himself often did things that wanted excusing.—Serena was all this time still, and often leaned her head on her hand. The eye of a mother is quick in watching the alterations in the looks of her child. Serena showed that she was ill, and her mother tenderly inquired what ailed her?—"Indeed, mamma, I do not know, but my head aches—oh! how it aches!" "My poor girl, I fear you have eaten something that has disagreed with you." "No, I did not; for according to what you always desire, I dined on one meat dish, which was roast beef, and I took only one piece of pudding; besides, I am

not at all sick." "I think I know the cause," said her father, "it is the ride home." "Ah! papa, I do think it was, for I was so merry when I got in, and presently every thing seemed turning about, and I could not hear plainly, nor see plainly, and then this terrible pain came on." "It is a very common effect, my dear; I know many people who are always sick and ill if they ride only a very short distance." "Papa, little did I think a coach could give any pain." "So it is, my love, with us all. We wish for something we do not possess, without considering whether it is worth our wish. Perhaps after many endeavours we gain our wish. Then, it is only then, we are convinced of its insufficiency to make us happy; but I must not talk—it will hurt your poor head." "It is better already; sitting still, and holding it upon dear mamma's shoulder, has almost cured

it." "That is a proof then that it has really been occasioned by the closeness and noise of the carriage; however, you have had a long day, and had better go to bed. Remember only never to wish for any thing till you are perfectly assured it is really valuable: and even then it is better to discover how we can be happy without it; so pray never wish again but for wisdom and virtue." "Indeed, papa, if I ever catch myself wanting what I have not, I will remember the coach." "Do so, my love; and now good night."—The recovered Serena and her brother, after kissing their parents, retired to their chambers; there they knelt and thanked a good God for the many blessings he had given them, and then jumping each into their own snug bed—soon fell into a sweet sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Sorrow useless.—The Pleasures of School.—The Advantage of speaking Truth.—The best reward for a good action is self-approval.

THE days were now becoming gradually longer. Serena watched their increase with sensations of mingled pain and pleasure; for with the lengthened days Easter approached—Easter, that was to rob her of the society of her brother. Her mother observed her distress, and very kindly led her to different occupations; assured that constant employment would not only stamp value on her time, but also draw her mind from the contemplation of the approaching separation.

Serena was more industriously occupied in preparing for her brother's future comfort. His neat new handkerchiefs were of her hemming, his silk purse she had netted, and with her own hands fresh lined the deal box that was to contain his books. How much better was this active kindness, how much more useful these proofs of her affection, than if she had blinded herself with weeping, or with sickly *sensibility* denied herself, and all around, every source of pleasure!

The day at length arrived; Felix with firm yet affectionate heroism prepared for his journey. The chaise was at the door, his father waited. Serena with an aching heart vainly endeavoured to suppress her tears. Her mother felt for her, but knowing the mischiefs of indulging in sorrow, she urged her to exert herself.—"Come, my love," said she, "I know you love your brother, I am sure you do

not wish to pain him."—"Indeed, I do not," feebly articulated Serena.—"Yet you must be assured this grief must pain him; rouse yourself, Serena, let not your brother recall your image clouded by this distress. Let him only remember his happy smiling Serena—your memory will then serve to cheer and enliven him."—Serena sprang from her seat, her eyes still glistened with tears, but a smile played on her lips; she made an effort to check her sobs, and succeeded. "Good-bye, Felix," she exclaimed, with a cheerful tone.—"We shall soon meet again," answered Felix, "in less than three months!—Think of that, Serena!" "Oh! how joyful will be our meeting!" "My dear boy," said his father, "it is thus that all our sweetest joys must be purchased! We must pay for them by some greater or less inconvenience."—"But to part with those we love!" said Serena. "It

is painful, I know, my dear, but after absence to meet with those we love!" "That must be joy, indeed, papa." "That joy will, I trust, be one day yours, but you must buy it by a present deprivation.—Come, Felix, all is prepared." Felix hung a moment on Serena's neck, and her innocent tears wetted his glowing cheek. His mother fondly blessed him. Afraid of trusting himself any longer, he tore himself from their embraces, and rushed into the chaise, where his father was already seated—it instantly drove off.

As the view of his home disappeared, Felix sobbed aloud, and, overcome by his feelings, threw himself into a corner of the carriage. For a few moments his father permitted him to remain unnoticed. He then took his hand, and said to him, "My dear boy, these tears are due to the most excellent

of mothers and most affectionate of sisters. —I would not have you part from them with indifference. So far from it, I would have you bear their remembrance incessantly in your heart. The recollection of their virtues will soften and improve your character, whilst the claims they have upon you will keep you steady in the path of rectitude. Your name is theirs, do not, therefore, forget, that by staining your character, you will also cloud theirs." —"Ah! papa, I hope I shall never dishonour either them or you." "I anxiously hope not; but as you are now going for the first time to stand alone, to act from your own judgment, I must entreat you to think well how much depends on yourself. To your schoolfellows prove ever kind and obliging. Do not expose their faults, nor cause their punishment; it will be enough for you to guard your own conduct, and not disgrace yourself by

being a spy on others. Keep strictly to truth. Let no disgrace, no entreaty, urge you in any one instance to be guilty of falsehood; a liar is the most contemptible of mortals! When you have done wrong, own it—instantly own it—acknowledge your fault, and be sorry for it. Take my word that such is the only honourable mode of behaving.—What prevents a boy from confessing he has done wrong?—a fear of punishment. Falsehood belongs only to *cowards;* they commit a fault, are afraid of correction, and try to hide it by a lie. A brave boy may be guilty of mischief, but he cannot be guilty of falsehood.—You, I hope, are no coward."—Felix's cheek glowed with an honest blush. "No, father, I hope I am neither a coward nor a liar!"—"Be careful, therefore, and prove your truth and your courage. You may be tried; and remember, I charge you, whatever tempta-

tions arise, never conceal your faults; and after this warning, mark me, I will forgive any thing but a *lie!*"

Felix and his father travelled nearly the whole of the day; towards evening they reached the town where the school was situated. The master, a very worthy and sensible clergyman, received them with great kindness; he introduced Felix to his playfellows, who were numerous, amounting to more than a hundred. They gathered round Felix like so many bees; — it will be strange, thought he, if among so many, I shall not pick up two or three I shall like, and who will like me. His father spent the evening with the master, and after an early supper, withdrew to the inn from whence he meant to set off homewards the next morning. Felix felt a pang as he saw him depart; but when he remembered how much he might please him, by his improvement, when next

they met, he soon recovered himself, and with tolerable composure retired to the chamber allotted for him. Here he found a boy of nearly his own age expecting him, who kindly promised to teach him all their rules. Felix gratefully thanked him; and filling his mind with earnest resolutions of taking the greatest pains to be all his father wished him, he quickly fell asleep.—Serena, in the mean time, was nearly overcome by the loss she had sustained of the society of her ever kind brother. Her mother, however, soon roused her, and reminded her of the pleasure of their hoped-for meeting.—"Ah! mamma, but that is so distant—three months, twelve weeks, what a long time!"—"Do not be calculating how long, my dear Serena, merely to distress yourself, but only think how the period had best be occupied—not in murmurings, surely."—"How then, mamma?"—

"Why, suppose you endeavour to do something that will prove an agreeable surprise for your brother on his return." "What can I do, mamma?"—"Let me consider—what do you think of undertaking the care of his garden? The season is arrived when weeds grow rapidly, and will require constant attention. The young plants, as they increase, will need sticks to support them, the strawberry-roots must be watered, and the rose-trees pruned." "Thank you, dear mamma, this is a charming thought; how pleased Felix will be!—and may I also feed his favourite rabbit?"—"Yes; and now, I think, you will have plenty of employment, time will not hang heavy on your hands, and Midsummer will be here before we think of it." Thus roused from her sorrow, Serena with recovered smiles entered on her various duties—amusements, I may say, for her parents made

every thing a pleasure to her, and as she was neither obstinate nor sullen, it was easy to make her happy.

Felix was soon acquainted with his playfellows. He found his master somewhat stern, but yet so reasonable in all his commands, that he felt he could not disobey him. Although not a remarkably clever boy, as we have already said, yet by steadiness and perseverance Felix made a rapid progress in his learning—his attention gained the good opinion of his master, and his obliging disposition secured him the love of the boys. School soon became very pleasant to Felix; and though he often thought of home, he ceased to regret his absence from it.

One day he heedlessly threw a ball against a window. A pane of glass was smashed in pieces. "How unlucky!" said one of the boys, "but never mind, I'll keep the secret, no one else is here, and

if inquiry is made, you can say the cat did it."—"I can say no such thing," replied Felix, "for that would be a lie."—"If it is known," continued the boy, "you must pay two shillings for the glass, and perhaps be flogged into the bargain." "I will not tell a lie to save me from twenty floggings. I have already done wrong, and must have courage to bear my punishment."—"Do not say I was with you then, master courage," said the boy sneeringly.—"Be not afraid," answered Felix, "I will not expose you to any blame." He then turned towards the house, that he might have an opportunity of seeing his master. It was some time before this occurred; at last he saw him coming out of his parlour, and modestly approached him. "What do you want, Felix?" said his master, a little sternly, at least Felix thought so; but though his heart beat quick, he was a

boy of true courage, and never feared to do his duty.—"I am afraid," said he, in a timid voice, "I am afraid, sir, I have done very wrong, but I hope you will forgive me."—"What have you done?" cried his master, in an angry tone.—"I have very carelessly broken a pane of glass in the school-room window," answered Felix; "I was playing with a ball there."—"That is against the rules," said the master, "you must pay the value of it." Felix produced his purse, and paid the two shillings.—"Do not let this happen again," continued the master, in a kinder tone; "I excuse you from further punishment, because you have so honourably acknowledged your fault."—Felix bowed, and with a lightened heart sprang away to his business. It was true he had thus lost two shillings, and he was not very rich; but by his honesty he had gained the good opinion of

his discerning master, who ever after this accident was observed to treat him with peculiar kindness.—The elder boys also began now to notice him, and were so much pleased with this instance of his spirit, that they often admitted him into their parties. This was a great gratification to Felix, for he always preferred the society of boys older than himself, as from them he expected to gain information.

Soon after this event, another occurred, which threatened to be attended with more serious consequences.—One fine evening some of the boys had leave to take a walk, but they were ordered not to go beyond a certain distance, and to return at a certain hour. Forth they joyfully sallied, Felix in the number; and traversing some beautiful fields, came at last to the river. Here a few of the party proposed bathing; but this was

opposed by the rest, as contrary to all rule. Felix was one who peremptorily refused, although particularly fond of the amusement. One of the boys sneeringly told him he was afraid of the water; another, that he dreaded the flogging attendant on this breach of the law. Felix only laughed at them, and having in vain attempted to dissuade them, strolled into a neighbouring wood that skirted the river, and in search of wild flowers, soon lost sight of his companions. After rambling about some time, he sat down to rest himself, and form his flowers into a nosegay. As he was thus occupied, a distant shriek struck his ear—another succeeded—he threw down his flowers, and rushed forwards, directed by the sound—in a few seconds he found himself at the edge of the river, and beheld one of the boys vainly endeavouring to reach the bank—he seemed

exhausted and faint. Felix, with a happy presence of mind, drew a long pole from the hedge, and holding one end firmly himself, presented the other to his sinking playmate. A reed can save a drowning man. The boy caught the offered help, and was thus easily drawn on shore. Felix supported his dripping form to a bank, and then flew in search of his clothes. These were left at some distance further up the river. Felix at length found them, and though he made all the haste in his power, much time was spent.—His companions hallooed out that they were going home. Felix would not leave the poor half-drowned boy, who looked piteously upon him.—In assisting him to dress, he wetted his own clothes; and having used his handkerchief as a towel to dry his shivering companion, he returned it soaked with water into his pocket.—"What will

become of me!" said the frightened boy, "what will become of me! I shall certainly be flogged, I that am already half dead with fear and fatigue." "Do not be so alarmed," said Felix, "I will do all I can to excuse you. "Dear Felix, do not say I have been in the water." Felix shook his head.—"But do you know I had not leave to be of the party," continued the boy. "Indeed!" exclaimed Felix; and he thought, but he did not speak his thought, how one fault leads to another.——"So, Felix, if you will keep my secret, I can, perhaps, get unobserved into the house," added the boy. "See how pale I am—how sick—save me from punishment." Felix looked compassionately upon him. "If it is in my power, I will save you." "Then do not mention me." "Not unless I am asked." "Do you promise that?"—"I do." And they began slowly to re-

turn homewards. The rest of the boys had reached the school; their bathing, in disobedience of all order, had been discovered, as all faults must be sooner or later. The master instantly punished every one who had been in the water. The name of the absent Felix was resounding through the play-ground, as pale and dejected he entered the gates. His companion was a few steps behind, and taking advantage of the confusion that reigned around, waited some minutes, then slipped in unobserved, and crept up to his chamber.

Felix with a palpitating heart obeyed the summons of his master. As he approached the school-room, he heard of the severity with which the disobedient boys had been treated. His master looked sternly upon him. "You, sir, to disobedience have added insolence, for you are nearly an hour beyond your

appointed time." Felix could only feebly articulate, "I have not been in the water." "How then comes your dress so wet?" Felix drew out his handkerchief to conceal his tears. Its dripping condition attracted the master's eye. He held it up in his hand.—"If Felix himself has not been in the water, which of you have used this handkerchief; it has evidently served the purpose of a towel. Which of you have so used it?"—"Not I,"—was repeated from every mouth. The master turned again to Felix. "Recollect yourself," said he, "are you very sure you have not been in the water?" "I am very sure, sir." "Perhaps he washed his hands," said one of the ushers, kindly wishing to excuse him. "Did you wash your hands?" asked the master.—Here was an opportunity for Felix to have escaped, but it would have been by equivocation, a crime equal to a lie; he

scorned such an unworthy refuge, and replied, with a firm but modest tone, "No, sir, I did not wash my hands." "How then came your handkerchief so wet?" Felix deeply blushed. "If you command, sir, I know I must tell you—but pray, pray, sir, excuse me—do not command me."—"This is very extraordinary," said the master, "why cannot you answer me?"—"Because, sir—" and his voice faltered: "forgive me, but I have promised."——A murmur of applause sounded through the circle of boys. The excellent and sensible master continued:—"Your former truth and candour lead me to believe you now, Felix; as a proof of my regard, I will not command you to speak now." Felix bowed his thanks, for his heart was so full of gratitude that he could not speak.—"I give you, however," said his master, "the same task, for having out-staid

your allotted time, as I have given the other boys, who have, like you, been truants." Felix respectfully took his lesson, and with great diligence learnt it.—His schoolfellows treated him with new marks of esteem, not a few reminded him of the advantage of having established a character for truth. It had saved him not only from disgrace, but also punishment.

Some days after this, the real fact began to be rumoured in the school, the boy himself having whispered it to his intimates. Felix appeared with added honour; all loved the kind-hearted boy, who, at the risk of himself, had saved his fellow. The secret by degrees reached the master's ear; and though he took no particular notice of it, yet Felix could observe that he was ever after a great favourite with his master, and treated with many proofs of kindness and dis-

tinction. "I do not think," said one of the boys to Felix, "I do not think you have got much for your good temper and forbearance."—"Then you know nothing about the matter," answered Felix: "I have got all that I expected." "And what may that be?" asked the boy.—"A self-approving conscience," replied Felix.—"Besides, is not my master kinder to me, and are not all you boys more obliging? What more could I expect?"—"Well, you are a fine fellow, but, as they say virtue is always rewarded, I should have expected some great good for my great virtue."—"Pshaw! nonsense! in the first place, I do not think I have performed any *great* virtue; and in the second place, as there are now no fairies," added Felix laughing, "I did not suppose I should find either Fortunatus's purse, or Sinbad's valley of diamonds!"

CHAPTER V.

Money only valuable according as it is used.—Stinginess described.—Perseverance conquers great difficulties.—The nobleness of acknowledging an error.—Returning good for evil, the only Christian Revenge.

THE observation with which the last chapter concluded, was a very proper one, and ought to be remembered. By the reward that follows good actions, is meant that self-satisfaction which our own heart bestows; and people would be very silly, if they were always expecting some wonderful benefits to follow their just actions.—Besides, if they did so, they would destroy the merit of what they had

done. What virtue is there in performing an act for which a full return is expected? No, we must do all the good we can, from a sense of duty, and if it pleases God to make our own breasts reward us by a secret whisper that we have done well, we shall be paid beyond all worldly praise.

The father of Felix, as I said before, was not a rich man, but he made his son a regular allowance of pocket money, which, though much less than most of the other boys, Felix managed so well, that it supplied him with all he wanted.

Going once into his bed-room for something he had left there, he was surprised to observe a boy in the corner of the room, but, knowing it was wrong to pry into what others were doing, he turned his head another way: it was a rule that no boy should visit his room in the day, except to fetch any thing; Felix, therefore, was hastily returning with what he

had come for, when the boy called him back. "Felix, don't tell what I was about." "I did not see what you were about." "Not see, not hear my money?" "No."—"Well then, step here, and I will show you how rich I am." Felix approached him, and perceived a little heap of money — sixpences, shillings, and crowns. "You lucky boy, how did you get all this cash?" "Saved it, to be sure; this is all I have received this last half-year." "And what have you saved it for?" — The boy looked confused. — "Saved it—why," and he stammered, "to keep it, to be sure." Felix laughed heartily: "Saved it to keep it!" repeated he, "what a valuable use of money!" "Why," said the boy, "what can I do better?" "Spend it, to be sure."—"Spend it!—no indeed; if I had spent it, as I got it, how do you think I could now have had all this treasure?"—"Don't call it a trea-

sure," cried Felix, "it is rather a plague, I think." "Why, yes, to be sure, it does make me uneasy sometimes, for I am afraid of losing it."—"Oh! pray don't be afraid of that; if you do lose it, it won't signify."—The boy looked aghast—"Not signify!" said he, breathlessly. "No, certainly—If you do not spend it now, nor intend to spend it by and by, pray would not copper counters be as well as this good money? Come, I'll rid you of all the trouble at once; give me the money, and, like the man in the fable, I'll give you a famous bag of stones. This no one will rob you of, and you will be freed from anxiety." So saying, and laughing as he spoke, Felix left this unhappy little miser, feeling for him a mingled sentiment of pity and contempt.

Not long after this, an annual fair occurred. The boys were allowed to attend it: the younger ones under the care of

the ushers; the elder ones in small parties of ten or a dozen. Felix, amongst the rest, issued joyfully from the school-gates, and enjoyed all the various sports of the scene. The jostling of the crowd took something from his pleasure, and a good deal confused him. Ah! thought he, this is not so pleasant as a fine scamper in the open fields. Here I can scarcely creep along, and the noise is so great, it almost makes my head ache. I am glad a fair don't come often; and a walk in the country is always in our power. The best joys, I think, are the easiest to be had! Felix thought very properly: a good God, in placing us in this world, intended us to be happy in it, and graciously contrived that every true pleasure should be easiest to be attained.

If my young readers will stop for a moment, and think of this, they will find it is indeed so.

Felix had not forgotten to put his purse into his pocket; he now produced it, and bought a very neat red morocco housewife for his sister. It was well stored with needles and thread, and contained besides a small pair of scissors. This purchase made, he next laid out some money in a paper of gingerbread, part of which he gave to the boy he walked with. They continued strolling along, and arrived at a very smart stall, adorned with every kind of cutlery. Some handsome knives looked very tempting; one was presented to him as particularly good. Felix looked at it; it was certainly very complete; "What was the price?" The man informed him; the sum was very little less than the whole contents of his purse. "It is too dear," said Felix, putting it down, "show me one cheaper." His companion exclaimed, "You are a stingy dog. I will have the knife, although it will

cost me all my remaining cash." Felix only laughed, he knew he was not stingy, and was determined to keep steady to his original intention. Just let it be observed here, that children should never be *laughed* out of their resolutions, for that shows a weak and silly mind. The boy bought the handsome knife, and laid out all his money. Felix chose a cheaper one, but strong and equally useful, and by this means saved two shillings. "You don't want that two shillings," said his companion. "I do not at this moment, but I may by and by," answered Felix; and they walked on. A variety of amusements occupied their attention, and, highly entertained, the time slipped insensibly away. "Let us remember our hour," said Felix, and drew his companion towards a respectable shop, the master of which very obligingly informed them what o'clock it was.—"Let us go home," cried

Felix.—"It wants half an hour to our time," said the boy. "We shall spend that half hour in getting along; the crowds prevent our moving quick." Felix was firm to his decision, and his friend consented. They turned homewards, and had not proceeded far, when they were arrested by a groupe of people. They pushed among them, and found a poor black man, lame, and covered with rags, recounting his story, and asking charity. The hand of Felix was instantly in his pocket. "You will not give your money to a common street beggar," said his companion.—"No, not to common street beggars, because I believe they are generally idle cheats; but this is no common beggar; he is a stranger, distant from his native land, and without friends; disabled too from working. I will share the contents of my purse with him:" so saying, Felix presented a shilling to the poor

cripple, who blessed the generous English boy. "Ah! massa, if all your countrymen were like you, I should not be here a poor, despised, helpless beggar!" This appeal softened the hearts of many of his hearers; they followed the example of Felix, and as he withdrew he had the secret joy of feeling he had not only himself assisted a suffering fellow-creature, but had led others to do so too. His companion walked sorrowfully along. This Felix stingy! thought he; ah! he is truly generous. I wish I had not spent all my money so idly. Felix was also silent; but his looks were so gay, his heart so happy, his step so light! His knife too, that plain unadorned knife, was a source of one of his sweetest recollections. He never cut a stick, or mended a pen, but the thought of the black man rushed into his mind; and he almost loved his cheap knife, that

by saving his money, had given him the power of being charitable!

It has been already said that Felix was not a remarkably clever boy; his lessons often appeared very difficult to him. By great patience and perseverance he had conquered these difficulties. One day, however, he had a Latin lesson to learn, which very much puzzled him. He almost cried as he read it, but knowing this would not do him any good, he wiped away his half-formed tears, and again set to learn his book; again it baffled his exertion. Assured that it *must* be learnt, he began to consider what he had best do; he thought, if he could prevail upon some one to read it over to him and explain it, he could more easily learn it.—Thus determined, he took up his book, and with a melancholy air approached one of the ushers. "What makes you

look so sad, Felix?" said the usher, "you that are always so merry and contented." "Sir," said Felix, very respectfully, "my Latin lesson for to-day has quite puzzled me; will you be so kind as to explain it to me?"—"That I will, readily," answered the good-natured usher, and taking the book, he showed Felix where he had made some mistakes. "Thank you, sir," said Felix, "though it is still very difficult, yet now I believe I can master it."—"That I do not doubt," replied the usher, "but suppose I had not been here, what would you have done?" Felix considered a little, then said, "Asked one of the elder boys."—"But they might have been too busy, and your lesson must be learnt."—"I think then," said Felix, "I should have begun all over again, and tried, and tried, till I had discovered my blunders."—"You would then have done right, Felix,"

said the usher, "and, by taking such means, be assured you can conquer greater difficulties than this.—Never forget that by patience and perseverance all knowledge is attained, and without these the cleverest boy in the school can never make any progress."—Felix bowed, and retired. With renewed attention he took up his book; by degrees all difficulty vanished, and before the school hour he was prepared with his lesson. Thus, though a boy of very moderate talents, he made a daily progress in all useful knowledge, and was respected by the bigger boys. The younger ones loved him sincerely, for he was so ready to please and oblige them. He always, however, took care to choose his friends from amongst the elder and superior boys of the school, as he not only preferred their company, but he thought it would do him good, as, being

cleverer than himself, their conversation would improve him, and their superior characters would be useful examples for him to copy. Felix would not have been admitted as a playfellow to the higher classes, if he had not gained, by his good behaviour, a respectable name in the school. When the boys found that he was never guilty of a lie; that he was not a miser; that he never performed mean actions; never told tales either to the master or ushers, they began to esteem him, and very readily admitted him among them.

Felix was happy in a very noble way of thinking; and as all stories of spirited behaviour are generally admired by children, they shall now hear one of true spirit.—Felix dined out one day with one of the day scholars; many other boys were also there, and several ladies and gentlemen. The party was large; they

sat down to an excellent dinner, and were all very merry. Felix and a younger boy that sat opposite to him at table, entered into a dispute about something that had happened the day before. No one had been present at the circumstance but themselves; each was positive in his own opinion; at length the eyes of the company were drawn upon them, and they seemed disposed to believe Felix, as being the elder boy, was most likely to be right. At last, the little boy remembered a particular circumstance which till then they had both forgotten. This was decisive. Felix blushed for having been so positive, and instantly exclaimed to the little boy,—"You are right, and I am wrong. I remember it all now, and beg your pardon." What a noble boy! said most of the company; with what true spirit he acknowledges his mistakes; with what true spirit asks pardon for

them. To do wrong is common; to acknowledge it is the virtue of a superior mind.

Another time Felix showed the great command he had gained over his faults; for he had faults, and if he had not conquered them, he never would have been the superior character he now appeared. —The boys were all playing in parties on the play-ground. Felix had a favourite bat and ball, which his father had given him; in the course of the game, one of the boys was often vanquished by Felix;—this made him angry; he became passionate, and seizing the favourite bat and ball of Felix, he cried, "I'll be revenged," and instantly shattered them both into a thousand pieces. Felix, vexed and mortified, had nearly lost his patience, but happily recovering himself, he calmly said, "If you are so ungovernable I will not play with you,"

and walked away. Some days afterwards another of the boys, by chance, obtained the passionate boy's bat and ball; he instantly took them to Felix, and, presenting them, told him this was a charming opportunity for revenging himself.—"It is indeed," said Felix. The boy waited to see the bat and ball destroyed. Felix continued, "Do you give me these? May I do what I please with them?" "Certainly," answered the boy. "Then," said Felix, "I will show you what I will do with them;" taking the bat and ball in his hand, he ran up to the passionate boy, who was searching for them about the play-ground:—"Here," cried Felix, "here are your bat and ball." The passionate boy looked surprised;—"Have not you broken them?"—"Broken them!" exclaimed Felix, "no, I should be ashamed to have done that; they are quite safe—take them—let us be friends

again—for now I am revenged." Felix good-humouredly held out his hand. The passionate boy eagerly seized it.—"Ah! you have returned good for my evil."

This same passionate boy was under another obligation to Felix. The master one day discovered that one of the most valuable school books had been greatly injured. The book had been lent to this boy; and his master, sending for him, very severely reprimanded him for his carelessness, and, as the book was stained with many blots of ink, the boy had a long task given him. Felix heard the whole of this affair, and stepping up to the master, he modestly said, "Sir, I am afraid I have been guilty of this mischief."—"You! how could you have done it?"—"I came into the school-room last night to put away my ink-bottle; it was dark, I had no candle, and felt my way by the stools and forms; in moving along,

I stumbled against something, which I found, at the moment, had shook some ink out of my bottle, but the usher calling me to go to bed, I did not wait to pick up what was in my way, which I fancy, Sir, was this book." The master was silent a moment—then said, "I think it is very probable that what you say has been the case."—"As it was my fault, may this boy be excused?"—"He had no business to leave the book carelessly on the floor; however, I will excuse him, and let him thank you—your frankness has saved him."

CHAPTER VI.

Accuracy in Spelling essential to Writing.—Accuracy in Language essential to Truth.—Patience in Sickness and Pain.—Time found for every useful Business.—The Evils of Procrastination.—Dreams.

SERENA, deeply occupied with her various avocations, thought of Felix with mingled sensations of joy and hope. In feeding his rabbits, and arranging his garden, she felt she was preparing a pleasure for her dear brother.—As she was fond of writing, she wished to send him a letter every week, but her mother would not permit her. "Why not, mamma?" said Serena.—"Because, my love, it is getting into a bad habit to be always

scribbling, and I fancy Felix will depend upon your loving him, and thinking of him, without your being obliged to tell him so every week."—"But, mamma, I do so love writing!"—"And do you think, little girl, you can write so well, or spell so correctly, as to render letter-writing easy to you?"—"I can spell tolerably, mamma; I seldom make mistakes, only one letter here or there." "And do you not know, that even one false or misplaced letter will entirely alter the meaning of a word—sometimes of a whole sentence?" "How can that be, mamma?" "I will tell you,—suppose you wished to inform your brother that the chief magistrate, the mayor of our town, called here last week, and you were to write, the *mare* was here a few days since; this would be making it appear that an animal, not a man, was the subject of your letter.—Thus again, if, wishing to describe the

young hare your papa gave you yesterday, you were to say my *hair* grows very pretty, and will, I think, be a beautiful brown—what would your brother imagine, but that his little Serena was grown vain, and was boasting of her curls?"—"Ah! mamma, I understand; how ridiculous would be such mistakes!" "And yet they are very slight ones, though so important in their effects. Judge, therefore, of what consequence is a close attention to accuracy in spelling; and before you attempt to write, learn perfectly how to spell."—"Mamma, what do you mean by that hard word, accuracy?" "I mean nicety, exactness, without defect; accuracy in spelling, denotes that every word is correctly lettered, there not being one letter too much, nor one too little, nor one misplaced."—"Thank you, mamma, I understand; but sometimes you say, be accurate in speaking—that has nothing

to do with letters." "No, my love, that implies rather the use of words than letters. For instance, when you say you are ready to *die* with the heat, you are not accurate; you use a wrong word; you well know you are not likely to die, and you would be correct to say, you are faint or exhausted with heat." "Oh! yes, I see now."

"This inaccuracy of speech is not simply inelegant, Serena, it is often highly faulty." "Indeed, mamma! how can that be?" "Why, in describing the actions of our acquaintance, a trifling inattention may produce serious consequences. Thus, I once heard an otherwise well-meaning woman speak of a neighbour of hers as the stingiest creature in the world, when, in fact, her neighbour, as she well knew, had so small an income that she was obliged to use the greatest possible care in her expen-

diture." "What should she have said, mamma?"—"Had she called her neighbour very prudent, very economical, she had been accurate; but by using the expression very stingy, she gave an unfavourable impression of her neighbour's character." "That was very ill-natured, mamma."—"I do not imagine it was intended to be so, my dear; but this lady had long indulged herself in a great latitude of speech, and used words without considering the full extent of their meaning. Thus, when she tells me she is in an *agony* of pain in her head, I simply understand that she has a head-ache; or when she declares she had not a wink of sleep all night, I merely imagine she did not sleep as much as usual; so you see that these inaccurate speakers lose themselves very much in the estimation of others."—"Mamma, I will always try to speak correctly."—"Do so, my love;

by such an endeavour you will acquire a habit of precision that will attend you through life, and give a consequence to all you utter."

Not very long after this conversation, Serena became much indisposed; her disorder was the measles,—she was very ill, and for some time it was doubtful whether her life could be saved. Now it was that this little girl felt all the happiness of possessing a kind and affectionate mother. If, after a slight doze, she drew aside her bed curtains, what did she behold? her mother, her watchful mother, sitting by her, silent and motionless!—Who held her throbbing temples? Who hung over her midnight slumbers? Her never-wearied mother!—Ah! thought she, can I ever repay all this kindness, this patience, this forbearance? She turned her eyes upon her mother, who, pale and wearied, sat still

beside her. "Dear mamma, go to bed, pray go to bed, you see I am better." "My child!" said her mother, instantly assuming a look of cheerfulness, "I thank God you are better; it rewards me for all my anxiety." The tears filled Serena's eyes.—"Ah! mamma, but all this watching! I fear it has made you ill!" "No, my dear Serena! I am not ill, I am only a little sleepy; but this is the hour for taking your medicine, I will give it to you." She arose and prepared the medicine. Serena took the cup, and though the contents were nauseous, instantly drank off the draught. Her mother smiled, and said,—"You are a good child, you take physic well." "Oh! mamma, I should be very wicked if I were to add to your trouble, and be perverse. How easy for me to take a few mouthfuls of physic; whilst you, night and day, pass your life in this dull room,

and scarcely eat or drink.—Mamma, shall I ever forget this? Can I ever cease to remember what you have done for me?" "I am sure you will not, my child; I am sure my Serena will repay all my cares, and prove ever gentle, ever affectionate. But we must not talk, the doctor will soon be here and scold us, for he bade us keep you quiet." The doctor came; he found Serena better; she gradually recovered, and in another week was able to come down stairs. Her mother, however, continued thin and dejected. Sometimes Serena thought she looked as if in pain, but when this was observed, her mother always smiled off her fears. At length, Serena was perfectly recovered; her eye was again bright; her cheek again rosy. She bounded with joy over the fresh lawn; she felt the value of existence, the charms of recovered health. "I never thought," said

she, "how happy it was to be strong before; how charming it is to breathe this fresh air, to smell these sweet flowers, to listen to the warbling birds; if I had not been sick, I should not have tasted all the pleasures of health."—"True, Serena," said her father; "be grateful then for the recovered blessing, thank a good God who has restored you to health and enjoyment." "I do, papa! I do!" cried Serena, as she turned her eyes to heaven; whilst her little heart breathed a prayer of ardent gratitude. Her father folded her clasped hands in his, and joined in the silent ejaculation.

"But, mamma," said Serena, first recovering herself, "mamma is, I fear, ill." "She has sprained her arm, my dear," said her father tenderly, "but it is getting better,—it will soon be well."—"Sprained her arm!" repeated Serena sorrowfully, "when did that happen?"

"In your illness." "Yes, I dare say with holding me so many hours; but she never complained." "No, my love, it would have grieved you; your mother *seldom* thinks of herself,—*never*, when another is to be thought of." "How good she is, how very good!" "She has a firm mind, Serena, which conquers self, and makes her feel only for others. Copy her fortitude, my dear child; fortitude will give value to all your other virtues." Her mother now approached, Serena threw herself into her arms, and sobbed out her love,—her gratitude. Her parents tenderly embraced her. It was a happy scene, such as we all of us have in turn felt, but which we can never properly describe. Serena now became the nurse, and with daily care attended to her mother—the sprained arm was restored by her good nursing. How happy did she feel when rubbing it

in the morning, when watching and aiding it through the day. Her mother had but to look, and the prompt Serena executed the unexpressed command. What a blessing to be useful to those we love! Serena felt this every day, and every day saw her happy and contented. Her mother was again well. Serena again took her accustomed seat by her side, and produced her work. "Mamma, I should very much like to knit Felix a pair of worsted socks—you have taught me to knit, you know, and I think I could do them!"—"By all means then, my love, begin them!" "But, mamma, I have no time—you see I have as much to do in the day as I can possibly get through." "Still I think you could accomplish this matter, without neglecting any other duty."—"How, mamma?"—"At what hour do you rise in the morning, Serena?" "Soon after

seven, mamma."—"The sun is up much earlier than that?"—"Oh! yes! the sun now rises at four." "Suppose then you were to get up at six instead of seven?"—"That would only give me one hour."—"How long does it want to the holidays?"—"Six weeks, mamma---and there are six working-days in a week: an hour a day would be six hours a week---six hours a week for six weeks would be thirty-six hours, mamma?---Oh! that will do. I can easily knit a pair of socks in thirty-six hours. I wonder I did not think of that before." "You find, Serena, how easy it is to contrive to find time for whatever we really wish to do---by arranging our hours for every day, we discover what we are capable of undertaking---thus with a little reflection and a little calculation you have made yourself the possessor of thirty-six unoccupied hours." "You found it out

for me, mamma, I could not think of any other way but of putting off my French, or needlework." "That would not have been a good plan, Serena." "No, mamma, this is much better."

Serena kept her resolution---she regularly rose at six---the socks rapidly proceeded, and Serena used to laugh and say, that she now knew even how to make time.

We have already said that this little girl had faults; one of them was an idle habit of postponing, putting off, any business that ought to be done to-day until to-morrow.---To-morrow arrived and brought its own occupations;---again Serena postponed, and again found that opportunity lost cannot be recalled. "My dear Serena," said her mother one morning, "have you fed the rabbits?" "No, mamma, but I intend to do it by and by," replied Serena. "Why by and

by, Serena?---Why not do it now?" "Because, because, mamma,"---and she hesitated.---"You are at leisure now!" ---"Yes, I know, mamma, but---"--- "But what, Serena? You know it *must* be done—and what time better than the present." "Oh! just now I intended to go into my garden." "Is that necessary?"---"No, mamma, not at all necessary; only for pleasure." "Then you set aside a positive duty for a pleasure ---is that right, Serena?" "Indeed, mamma, I will not forget the rabbits." "Well, my dear, act by your own judgment, I have already given you my opinion." Serena stood a few moments uncertain what to do; at length she thought she would take a short peep at her garden, and there still would be time to feed her rabbits. She went to the garden, tied up a carnation, weeded the mignonette bed, and was so deeply

engaged, that she forgot time would not stay for her.---Dinner hour arrived; after dinner a walk was proposed by her father; Serena joyfully accompanied them, she returned just time enough to eat her supper, attend to her evening lesson, and then retired to bed.---No sooner, however, had she laid her head upon her pillow, than she began recalling the events of the day. The poor starving rabbits! The remembrance struck to her heart---but it was now too late, at such an hour they could not be fed. They will all be dead in the morning, thought Serena. What a cruel girl I have been---had I taken mamma's advice---Oh! I think, I am *sure* I will never put off any necessary business again for pleasure. With such thoughts Serena tormented herself for some hours; at last she fell asleep, but her dreams continued her waking thoughts. The

rabbits continued to harass her, and she awoke early, unrefreshed by her slumbers. The sun was shining brightly; it was six o'clock. Serena hastily arose, dressed herself, and crept gently down stairs. With a trembling hand she filled her small basket with lettuces and parsley, and then hastened to her rabbits. With joy she beheld the two old ones run towards her; they pressed through the pales of their box, and greedily devoured the offered food. "But the two young ones, —where are they?" exclaimed Serena, "I have lost my two pretty little rabbits."—One of the maids heard her lamentations. "What is the matter, Miss?" said she, approaching her.—"My young rabbits," cried Serena, "they are gone."—The maid examined the box,—"I do not see how they could go," said she, "it is certainly impossible.—You are so attentive, Miss, or I should have thought—"

—"What would you have thought?" exclaimed Serena.—"Why, Miss, that the old ones had been hungry, and eaten their young." Serena shuddered. "Do not say so," she cried, "pray do not say so; how shocking, how wicked!" "It is a common case, Miss, when rabbits are not well watched; but as that cannot have happened now—"—"Oh! yes, yes, it has happened," cried Serena, "I have neglected them—and now I am punished for it." The maid looked surprised.—Serena resolved not to add another fault to the one she had already committed.—The socks, thought she, shall not be neglected—and as for the rabbits, I will tell Felix the truth, and he, I hope, will forgive me.

At breakfast, Serena told her parents what had happened. Her father was much displeased—her mother greatly lamented the sad effects of procrastination.

—"Well may procrastination be called the thief of time," said she, addressing Serena; "but I hope this will be a lesson to you, never to put off till to-morrow what may be done to-day." "Indeed, mamma, I will take care in future to do every thing in its place, and not neglect a duty for a pleasure, I ought not to say pleasure, for I have had a great deal of pain—all night I dreamt of my poor rabbits, mamma: was not that strange?"—"No, my dear, dreaming is only a kind of thinking, and if your mind has been engrossed with any particular subject during the day, it seems natural that the same image should occupy your thoughts in sleep." "Mamma, this seems all very simple, but dreams I thought were something wonderful?" "The vulgar and uninformed think so, and contrive very often to frighten themselves, but people who think properly, consider dreams, as

I have told you, only sleeping fancies." "But, mamma, I have heard of dreams coming true." "We may certainly so twist about dreams, and so interpret them as to make them appear ominous; but this is the weakness of feeble minds. My Serena I hope will indulge more useful thoughts." "Yet, mamma, some dreams are very frightful."—"When people go to bed, Serena, with full stomachs, with disordered heads, or fatigued bodies, the mind, confused and agitated, is apt to produce wild and distorted images; but, surely, there is nothing miraculous in this." "No, not as you account for it, mamma. Yet is not the night-mare something very shocking?"–"The night-mare, Serena, is only a name for an oppression on the chest, produced by indigestion, an awkward position of the head and neck, or some such cause." "Ah! mamma, how easy that is to understand;—I shall

never mind dreams again." "You are right, my dear; let me also beg you will not repeat them. I do not know any thing more silly or fatiguing than the tedious account of dreams. Do you remember that hymn of Watts's, Serena?" "Yes, indeed, I do, mamma.—

"He told me his dreams, talk'd of eating and drinking,
"But scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking."

"In these lines you find the describing of dreams is considered as one of the follies of a sluggard—an idle, consequently an useless mortal; never cease to repeat and consider the useful caution. But breakfast is over—Bring your books, and let us begin our studies."

CHAPTER VII.

Obedience a Virtue. — Vexation most frequently produced by ourselves. — Happiness or Sorrow springs from our own Hearts.

GRANDPAPA sent another kind invitation; Serena was allowed to accept it, and with a joyful heart attended the summons.—She found her grandfather alone; he was not very well, and had wished for the company of the cheerful Serena; he thought it would do him good. Serena was delighted with the hope of cheering her kind grandfather; she brought a stool close to him, and told him all the prettiest stories she could remember; she read to him out of her last new book, then repeated some hymns, and was so eager to please him, that he was quite surprised

when the dinner-hour arrived, not thinking it near so late. He kissed and thanked his affectionate little entertainer. What a reward for Serena, to have pleased one who had so often conduced to her pleasure; to have soothed the heavy hour of pain, and enlivened the gloom of sickness. The dinner consisted of many good things, and grandpapa with great kindness pressed his visitor to eat of them all. But Serena, though alone, and acting for herself, knew what was proper to do—not only knew it, but *did* it. She dined on some boiled mutton and potatoes, and afterwards ate one piece of gooseberry-pie: thus showing she remembered her mother's excellent direction of being satisfied with plain food. There was a charming dessert, plenty of fruit; Serena ate some and enjoyed it, but she begged her grandpapa would not give her wine; she was not accustomed to it

at home, and therefore preferred going without it.—At first grandpapa pressed her to take some, but when he found she really meant what she said, he praised her resolution, and forbore to tempt her any further.—After dinner some company came in, and sat some time chatting; Serena continued silent the whole time they remained, amusing herself with looking at a book of pictures she found on the window-seat.—"This is a quiet little girl," said one of the ladies. "She can be very merry, I assure you," answered her grandpapa—"Come here, Serena, and repeat one of your hymns to these ladies." Serena blushed; she felt afraid to repeat before strangers, she had not been used to it, but she knew she ought to obey her grandpapa. "Pray, my dear," continued her grandpapa, "repeat one of your little pieces—do, to oblige me." Serena's heart beat quick,

but she approached her grandpapa's chair, and leaning on the arm of it, asked him which hymn he would choose?—"Any you please, my dear," said he. "I do not say them well, grandpapa, indeed I do not," said Serena, with a modest fear. "Do your best then, my love," replied he. Serena recollected herself for a few minutes; then began to repeat Eve's Hymn. Her voice was low, and she trembled; but she was resolved to do her best; and as she spoke distinctly, and did not hurry over her words, she got through pretty well. The ladies told her, considering she was so young, she had done very well; but that the obliging manner in which she had obeyed her grandfather was better than the cleverest repeating in the world. They then went away. Serena was rejoiced that she had pleased them, but she thought in her own heart, that she did not love to speak before

strangers. Once more alone with her grandpapa, she continued her gaiety, chatted, danced, and sang. When tired, she climbed on his knee, threw her arms round his neck, and as her cheek rested on his, told him how much she loved him, and how happy she was.

The tea came in, accompanied by some rich cake; Serena ate very sparingly of the latter, as she feared it might not agree with her. Her grandfather approved of her moderation.—"This cake is certainly not very proper for you, but the peas we had at dinner were very wholesome—why did you take so few?"—"I had enough, thank you, grandpapa," said Serena.—"I suppose you thought," added her grandpapa, "that it was a very little dish-ful—but you know they are a great rarity at this early part of the summer."—"Yes, I know they are a rarity. They were the first I have seen," said Serena.

— "Do you not like them?"— "Indeed I do, grandpapa, very much."— "Ah! you cunning little girl, I see now the reason of your taking so few peas; you thought them a rarity, and though you like them very much, you left them for your poor old grandpapa!"— "Was that wrong?"— "No, my dear child, it was perfectly right; it was very considerate, and I thank you; I am glad to find you are not a greedy, selfish girl."—Here the conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the servant, who was come for Serena.—"You shall stay a little longer," said her grandpapa. "If you please to let me go now," cried Serena; "mamma will expect me." — "You are tired of being with me then!"—"No, indeed I am not, grandpapa; I dearly love to be with you, but I promised mamma I would return soon, before it was dark." —"Go then, my dear Serena, and tell

your mamma I am much obliged to her for sending you to me; you have been a very good girl." Serena tenderly kissed her kind grandfather, and then giving her hand to the maid, she merrily tripped homewards.

The weather was very fine; the sun setting behind the hills, tinged the purple clouds with a golden glow. The air was soft and perfumed with wild flowers —Serena gathered a charming nosegay.— She recounted the pleasures of the past day; her heart warmed with gratitude; she thought of the comforts of to-morrow, and her bosom glowed with hope. Happy child! blest with health, with peace, with freedom, she knew and felt the blessings. She cast no discontented looks on richer or prouder mortals, she asked for no joys beyond her grasp. She came into this world to be happy, and by her virtues to make others so; she ful-

filled her destiny, and the eye of heaven beamed on her with benignity.

Serena met her parents a short distance from the house; they had strolled that way in expectation of seeing her.—"Ah! how glad I am that I did not stay, (thought Serena,) I should not then have met my dear father and mother—I should have disappointed them—I should have disappointed myself." She ran eagerly towards them, they each took a hand, and thus happily placed, Serena doubly enjoyed the rest of her walk. She informed them of all she had seen or heard described; among other things, a new foot-cushion one of her cousins had worked and sent her grandpapa; it was done in worsteds, neatly shaded and finished. "How much I should like to do such a one for you, mamma!" said Serena.—"I suppose, my love, it is not difficult?"—"No, mamma, perfectly easy, and very pleasant work."—

"If you think so, I will cheerfully get the materials for you."— "Thank you, mamma, I shall be so glad, and when I have a little time I will begin it."—"A little time, Serena! what do you mean?" —"I mean, mamma, that at present so much seems on hand, that I had better wait for a day of leisure." "By a day of leisure if you mean a day without any occupation, Serena, I must say, I think you will wait in vain."—"Then, mamma, shall I never do it?"—"I hope you will, you have only to begin the work, and then it will always be ready for you to take up at every opportunity; thus by degrees it will be completed, and no other business neglected."—"That is charming." "It is thus, my dear Serena," said her father. "that many extensive works are perfected. Dr. Johnson, a writer, whom, I hope, you will one day read with equal pleasure and profit, remarks, 'that it is

by small efforts, frequently repeated, that man completes his greatest undertaking, to have attempted which, at one continued effort, would have baffled his ability.'"—Fix this remark on your mind, it will be very useful to you in future life; and when once you have determined on the propriety or necessity of an undertaking, set about it with patient perseverance, assured that in time it will repay your exertions. Perhaps this conversation is above your present comprehension, but it forcibly struck me as very apposite to your mother's opinion; she will perhaps kindly simplify it for you." "Will you, mamma?" said Serena, with a look of entreaty. "Certainly, my dear," replied her mother; "I will exemplify your father's observation, and that, I believe, in your favourite mode of illustration." "Oh! yes, mamma, I love your short stories." "You remember the lace-veil I sent to

your aunt?" "Yes, mamma, it was thought very elegant, and my aunt said it was a very handsome present." "Well, my dear, that veil was a work of time. I was several years about it." "I wonder you began it, mamma?" "Your aunt had done me great kindnesses, I wished to make her some acknowledgment of my gratitude. I could not afford to buy her any thing sufficiently valuable. I thought of netting a veil, which I knew would be both useful and handsome. This satisfied me on the propriety of so great an undertaking."—"And so you began it?" "I did, with a secret resolution, however, that this employment should not interfere with any of my duties."—"What time did you find then to do it in?"—"I made it the companion of my few visits, both at home and abroad; and whilst the rest of the company played at cards, or sat unemployed,

I produced my netting-case, and though my progress was slow, yet it was certain. —Sometimes an hour occurred free from domestic duties; these also I gave my netting. Thus, by seizing every opportunity, I at length completed my undertaking, and last summer had the inexpressible pleasure of presenting to your aunt this effort of my love and gratitude." "How much it pleased her!" "It did, my love, but my happiness was greater than hers." —"Mamma, I will begin the foot-stool." —"You shall, my dear, but it is necessary first to inquire, whether what you are about to begin is worth finishing."— "Yes, it is, mamma, I am sure, for it will be useful to you, and look very neat besides." "But remember, whatever is begun must be properly completed, and no other business of the same nature undertaken till it is so." "Ah! then I must finish my socks first!" "By all means,

that is the occupation of your leisure now; when finished, I will readily prepare the materials of the foot-stool for you."—"You are very good, mamma!"—"Yes, Serena, let us not forget the old rule—one thing at a time." Thus ended Serena's happy visiting-day.

How many children, with equal means of pleasure, would have spent a day of vexation and disappointment. Serena produced in a great measure her own enjoyment. Her grandfather, though so kind, was an old man, and no play-fellow; yet Serena, by endeavouring to amuse him, found herself amused. The dinner was good, Serena ate of it sparingly, and was refreshed. Had she been less moderate, and eaten a great deal, she would probably have been sick, and incapable of enjoying a merry afternoon. The ladies who called, distressed her for a moment, by asking her to repeat; but their

praise of her obliging disposition more than made up for the momentary pain, and gave her a secret and lasting satisfaction. Had she been obstinate or peevish, she would have been despised; and whenever she remembered her behaviour, her heart would have accused her. She faithfully fulfilled her mother's direction, and returned home immediately when the servant came for her. Had she neglected this direction, she would not only have missed the pleasure of meeting her parents, but probably incurred their displeasure, and thus closed her day with their deserved reproaches. Thus, then, never let us forget that it is in our power to turn every thing to advantage, to make every incident bestow content, if not happiness; and that, when we complain of disappointment, we ought to look into our own breasts, and seek there for the cause; for there we shall

most likely find it. Whilst we are peevish in our own bosoms, nothing that happens can please us. Whilst we are contented in our own bosoms, nothing that happens can make us entirely miserable. Serena always found it so—and so may every little girl, and every little boy, that heartily resolves to try.

CHAPTER VIII.

Happiness to be found every where.—Town and Country have both their own Advantages.—The Charms of early Morning.—The Benefits of Activity.

THE next day Serena accompanied her mother in a walk to a farm at some distance—as usual she chatted as they went along. "Mamma! one of the ladies yesterday at grandpapa's patted me on the head, and said, 'Poor child, these are her best days, she will never be so merry again'—what did that mean, mamma?—Does she think I shall be miserable when I grow up?" "No, my dear, not exactly that, but it is a common idea with many grown-up people that childhood is the happiest season of

life."—"How should that be, mamma?" "How should it be indeed, Serena! for my part, I do not understand it." "Why, mamma, I should think as I grow older, I shall know more, and so be happier?" "True, my child, increase of knowledge must open new sources of happiness. Does not even the knowledge of reading give you many hours of amusement?" "Yes, indeed, and writing too, mamma." "I could name many other acquirements that are sources of considerable enjoyment."—"Have you no pleasures, mamma?"—"Many, my child, very many. Yourself and your brother are sources of many of my sweetest joys; the society of your father—the power of pleasing him and you—these are *my* blessings." "And old grandpapa too, even he can be happy!"—"He can, indeed, Serena, for he has to look back upon a blameless and useful life; he sees his

children and grandchildren rising around him; he feels that he receives, and that he deserves, their respect and tenderness." —"Ah! mamma, I wish I was older!" —"Stay, my child, every age has its cares as well as its enjoyments. Your brother and yourself, in health, are my joy; but in sickness, I think upon you with an aching heart.—Your father's society is my dearest solace, but I cannot without many pangs behold the inroads of a disorder that will too surely one day rob me of this, my best blessing.—Your dear grandfather, feeble with age, feels every day his strength depart from him, and finds himself every hour less capable of enjoying the good that surrounds him:—even you, Serena, you have your cares."—"Ah! yes, mamma, when I lost my brother's pretty rabbits—when I make you or papa angry—when I neglect my lesson, or am disappointed of any

promised pleasure." "Thus then, my dear little girl, we have discovered, we have proved that every age has its good and evil—let us then enjoy each period as it arrives—you are now young and healthy." "Yes! mamma, and have many, oh! how many pleasures!"—"Enjoy them then, my sweet Serena, in thankfulness to Him who bestows them upon you—and do not fear to grow old—increase of age brings no increase of sorrow, whilst you preserve your heart pure and blameless." "I hope, mamma, I shall be as happy when I am old as dear grandpapa!" "You must be as good when you are young then, as he was; you must prepare for age as he did, by useful and virtuous youth." "I will, mamma, I will—I will be happy always, for I will be good always."

They had now reached the farm, and whilst her mother was inquiring about

some poultry, Serena diverted herself by observing all that was going forward.—In one corner a fine brood of young chickens were picking up the grain, which their mother, the careful hen, scratched up and showed them. The farmer's daughter stood near, watching their motions, for they were her chickens, and she daily fed them. "These are your chickens?" said Serena, addressing the little girl. "Yes, ma'am, they are all my own, and I am so fond of them—and I have a lamb too, shall I show him to you?" Serena asked her mother's leave, and having received it, followed the little girl to the home-field; there snug under the shelter of a hedge lay a fat little lamb and its dam. They both jumped up, and came skipping up at the call of their young mistress. Serena was delighted. "What a pretty creature!" she exclaimed, "how innocent it looks,

how gentle!" "It is very quiet, indeed," said the girl, "you shall see it feed from my hand." She then gathered a handful of fresh grass, which the lamb nibbled from her hand. In the same field Serena saw a young calf that was gamboling about in glee.—"Every thing seems happy here," said Serena. "Sure, ma'am," answered her chubby-faced companion, "we have nothing to make us sad." They returned through the garden; it was filled with various useful vegetables, the fragrant bean, and gay-flowered potatoe, whilst one little patch, alone devoted to flowers, presented clusters of pinks, roses, and heartease. "This is my garden," said the little girl, "father gave it to me, and I work here every holiday." She gathered a charming nosegay for Serena, who thankfully received it. In leaving the garden they passed a clean pig-sty, where a large sow

with her litter of twelve plump little pigs were all nestling in their bed of straw. Serena thought she never saw any thing so comfortable. "What else have I to show you?" said the little girl,—"Oh! the bee-hives." "Will not the bees sting you?" said Serena.—The girl laughed. "No, sure, ma'am, unless indeed I were to plague them, which I never do." The bee-hives were ranged under a sunny wall, over which a vine hung its rich festoons. The cottage casement peeped through the glossy leaves, whilst the hum of the busy bees soothed the listening ear. It was a scene of peaceful industry—it was a scene of rural beauty, of humble happiness. Serena, though young, felt all its charms, and stood gazing with unmixed delight. The voice of her mother calling for her roused her; she thanked her attentive little guide, and hastened to her mother, who having completed

her commission, they both took the way towards home. "Mamma," said Serena, after a few minutes silence—"mamma, how comfortable every thing appeared at the farm, how neat, how cheerful!" "Yes, my dear, I was much pleased with all I saw!" "And so was I, mamma.—Oh! how I wish I may always live in the country!" "The country has certainly many charms, Serena, and there is a variety and gaiety in rural occupations that is wonderfully pleasing." "And then, mamma, the beautiful landscapes, the corn-fields, the rivers, the woods!" "All charming, Serena, all beautiful; all presenting to us the finished, the perfect work of a gracious God." "Mamma, can a town have any pleasures equal to these?" "The pleasures of a town, Serena, are very different from those of the country; yet should you ever reside in a town, it would be your

duty to find them out, and to enjoy them." "Well, mamma, now I cannot find out a single pleasure—no walks, no views, nothing but close streets, and dusty lanes." "You make me smile, Serena, at your description! My dear child, how many thousands of your fellow-creatures fly to towns and cities, as the only spot where enjoyments can be found!" "Mamma, is that possible?" "Very possible, and very true, Serena." "Then do tell me what they find so charming in a town?" "They find society, my dear, a large, polished, and improving society!" —"That's true, mamma, to be sure, that I think must be very pleasant; but I fancy you cannot mention any thing more."—"What think you, Serena, of enlarged means of instruction and improvement.—Extensive libraries for the student—pictures for the painters. Then too, the various masters in every branch

of art and science." "Ah! these are advantages indeed, mamma; how much I should like to possess them!"—"You must seek for them, then, where they can alone be found—in populous cities." —"Ah! I see there are particular advantages for every place and every station."—"There are, Serena; and it is a truth that can never be too frequently inculcated, for it leads to contentment with our lot, and a cheerful resignation to our station in life, be it what it may." —"Let me see, mamma; in the country we have pleasant walks, beautiful views, fresh air, sweet flowers, and liberty to run and frisk about every where we please. In town we should have sensible acquaintance, delightful libraries, pictures, and useful masters!" "Well summed up, Serena." "Mamma, I still love the country best!" "I am glad of it, my child, it is the scene where your

future life will most probably be laid—your education has best fitted you for it, and let us be thankful that our wishes and our fate are thus happily united."

The conversation was here interrupted—Serena saw her father at a distance; he had an open letter in his hand, and seemed coming to tell them some agreeable news. Serena eagerly ran towards him, her mother also quickened her pace; in a few minutes they were all met together.—"What news have you for us, papa?" said Serena, half out of breath. "A letter from Felix," said her father; "his school breaks up next Monday week, and he longs to see us all!" "And how we long to see him!" cried Serena, "dear, dear Felix!" "I hope he is well," said his mother. "Quite well," answered his father; "but when Serena has recovered her breath, she shall read this letter to you." "Dear papa," ex-

claimed Serena, "first tell me when you will go for him?"

"Let me see!" said her father, "his school breaks up on Monday, he says!" —"Yes, and you will go on Sunday, and be ready for him," said the impatient Serena. "Gently, my love," answered her father, "you know I never travel on a Sunday." "Only this once, papa!"— "No, Serena, this is a matter of little importance, and ought not to break into a long-established rule." "But, papa, many people travel on Sunday." "They do, my dear, and may perhaps be able to give good reasons for their conduct—I do not blame them, but thinking as I do, their conduct cannot be an excuse for me. It shall not." "But, papa, is there really any harm in travelling on a Sunday?" "Serena! why was Sunday set apart from all the other days of the week?" "For rest and devotion, papa!"

"Is either of these purposes answered by travelling?—Tell me." "Indeed, it is not, papa."—"Then, my love, do we not oppose the express command of God, when we make Sunday a day of worldly business." "Dear papa! I did not think of that; I see now how wicked it is." "I am sure, my little girl, that you now understand me, and will ever bear in mind that nothing but the most peremptory necessity should force us to occupy Sunday with business unworthy its holy destination." "Papa, I will endeavour always to remember this."

"I think I must begin my journey on the Monday morning, and on Tuesday"—"We shall once more embrace our dear Felix!" "Restrain your raptures, Serena, or you will not have power to read this letter, which I know will give you great pleasure." Serena took the letter—"Shall I read it aloud?" said

she. "Do, my love," answered her mother. Serena thus began:—

"My dear Father,

"How happy am I to tell you that our vacation commences on Monday, 20th instant, and that I shall be ready any hour of that day to return with you to my dear home. What joy shall I have in again embracing my dear mother and sister! The latter I expect to find much grown and improved. Tell her I hope she will think me improved also, for indeed, my dear Father, I have very earnestly endeavoured to attend to all my kind master's instructions. I like school very much; here are several very clever boys, and they are almost all very good-natured.—The ushers too are very kind, and I never was happier in my life. Do not let Serena think from this, that I am sorry the holidays are approaching. Though I like

school, I love home—here I can be very happy, but there I can never be miserable. Good-bye, dear papa, pray give my affectionate love and duty to mamma, and as many kisses as you please to Serena. I remain your ever dutiful and affectionate son, FELIX.

"P.S. I suppose my garden is overspread with weeds, and fancy I shall have a long job in clearing them away."

Serena smiled as she read this postscript —"He will be agreeably surprised," said she, "when he finds his garden without a single weed." "He will indeed," said her mother, "and you, I think, will have almost as much pleasure in describing your industry in his service, as if you had to tell him, that on his leaving us, you had cried yourself sick." "I see, mamma, you are laughing at me," cried

Serena ; " and, indeed, I think I deserve it."—" You would have deserved it, my love," replied her mother, " had you not heeded my advice ; but, as it is, you have two things to remember with pleasure." " Two things, mamma! which are they?" " First, the satisfaction of having served your brother ; and secondly, that you did so in opposition to your own weaker feelings, and in obeying me." " Mamma, you always tell me of some good or of some pleasure." " Happy should I be, my dear child, could my instructions, and my assistance, make your future life one scene of unbroken, unclouded peace!— But we are at the end of our walk, and have now many pleasing matters to arrange."

CHAPTER IX.

The Duty of Exertion.—Indolence a Crime. —How to shorten a long Day.--Anxiety indulged, leads to many Mischiefs.

SERENA spent a happy week in anticipating her brother's return. Every evening she watched the setting sun that closed another day; she watched it with pleasure, for evening was welcome to her. —Every morning she opened her eyes with new glee; the first thought that rushed to her heart was, I shall soon see my brother. She rose, she dressed herself, she wandered through the garden. How charming are the fresh breezes of the early morning! Serena felt them invigorate her frame. "Felix will soon be here,"

she exclaimed, as she wandered along; "he will also say with me, how sweet are these flowers, how green those fields! —We shall again be together!—We shall be happy!—Oh! how happy!"— Thus she indulged herself, until, the hour of breakfast having arrived, she entered the house with a face glowing with health and joy.—"Mamma," she exclaimed, "I have had such a charming walk, the garden is now so very pleasant, every thing so bright and beautiful." "I congratulate you, my love," answered her mother, "on having tasted the charms of this fine morning—it is one of our best country enjoyments." "It is indeed, mamma, I wonder how people can keep so much in bed, and leave the sun to shine unadmired." "I wonder so too, Serena, and can only account for it, by concluding, as they never tried, they are ignorant of the peculiar indulgence of early rising."

—"But why do not they try, mamma?" —"I suppose, my love, they are too idle. Idleness, Serena, is the great bane of human happiness. It palsies the arm, it chills the heart, it deadens the fancy.—Were I called upon to name the greatest enemy to felicity or to virtue, I should, without hesitation, declare that enemy to be idleness." "I am sure of that, mamma, for if I had been idle, my brother's garden would have been unweeded, his socks unfinished, and, instead of being pleased, I should have been discontented, cross, and unhappy." "You will find it so through life, Serena; and every day that you live, will prove to you that activity leads to numerous enjoyments. You will recall my words, and feel their truth."—"I feel that now, mamma, for though I am but a child, I know already that there is greater pleasure in an early morning's walk, than in all the sleeping

and dozing of the lazy sluggard." "Yes, my dear little girl; and as you grow older, I hope you will also discover, that a life of *active duty* bestows joys beyond all that wealthy and luxurious indolence has power to bestow. It bestows, Serena, peace of mind—an approving conscience —those greatest of earthly blessings."— "Exercise makes us healthy too! does it not, mamma?"—"It does, my love; it not only relieves many disorders, but prevents many. Indeed I know more than one instance, where air and exercise alone perfectly re-established a very crazy and shattered constitution."—"How was that, dear mamma? do tell me."—"A lady, my love, who having weak spirits, thought, therefore, she had weak health, and fancied herself unequal to any exertion. She lay late in bed, walked little in the air, took medicine, and so enfeebled herself by this management, that

she was at last what she feared, a helpless invalid."—"Poor creature, how sad!"—"Yes, Serena, very sad indeed, for she was a wife and a mother." "Her poor children, mamma!"—"And her poor husband, my dear, both were to be pitied." "And did she die soon?"—"She would most assuredly, had not a true friend discovered to her her real state, and that nothing but exertion could possibly save her life."—"And what did she do, mamma?"—"She made a good resolution, and very wisely kept it—she altered all her plans—she rose early, she took long walks, she superintended her garden, assisted in the education of her children, and overlooked the business of her house." "And what became of her, mamma?" She is at this moment the healthiest and happiest woman of my acquaintance. With her fears vanished her low spirits, she gained cheerfulness as well as strength, and lives

to be the comfort and support of her family and friends."—"That was a happy end to her story, mamma!"—"It was, my dear, and would be to that of many others. —But we must now attend to our own duties."

The long wished for Monday at length arrived. Serena saw her father depart without a sigh. He was going for her brother, that dear friend and companion, whose society she had so long missed, whose presence she was so soon again to enjoy. "This day will seem very long to me, mamma," said Serena. "You have spoken very accurately, my dear; it will *seem*, it will not really *be* longer," replied her mother, smilingly. "That's true, mamma, but if I think so, I shall feel it so, you know."—"You are quite a logician, Serena; however, as the matter depends on your own feelings, the only remedy must be to change them."—

"Change my feelings, mamma?"—"You are anxious, uneasy, unfit for any business—restless." "Mamma, you are a conjurer! you have so exactly described what I feel."—"Well, then, I will continue my conjuration, and put this unavailing anxiety to flight."—"Ah! mamma, if you could do that, you would be a conjurer indeed!"—"Where is your work-basket?"—"I cannot work, mamma."—"Nay, Serena, if you will not make the slightest exertion to forward my plan, I certainly cannot relieve you."—"But work is so tiresome now, when my heart is full of other matters."—"Physic is unpleasant, Serena, and yet often gives ease from pain."—"Mamma, here is my work-basket."—Serena said this with a melancholy air; she sighed often, and looked thoughtful. Her mother, by degrees, drew her to take interest in her work. Serena's

brow became less clouded. When the work was completed, her mother desired her to read her a little story; she did so, and was much amused. They walked in the garden, and when the clock sounded the hour of dinner, Serena started. "Bless me, is it so late!" said she. After dinner, the flower-pots were filled with fresh-gathered roses. This was a delightful employment; Serena exerted all her taste in the disposal of her flowers, and when she replaced them on the stands, her mother highly admired her judicious arrangement. The rabbits were next visited and fed, some fruit gathered, and as Serena and her mother sat under a shady tree, eating it, they had a great deal of entertaining conversation. As a great indulgence, Serena's attentive mother ordered the tea-table to be brought out, and permitted Serena to perform the honours of it.—"How much I enjoy my tea in this bower!" ex

claimed Serena. "Yes, my love," answered her mother, "the balmy air wafting round us, the open view of the surrounding country, the warbling of birds, and the fragrance of flowers, give great zest to our feelings, and invigorate and enliven our thoughts. A room, however airy, cannot bestow these enjoyments, thus pure, thus unbounded." "Indeed, mamma, it cannot — the pleasure of helping you, how I enjoy it too." The sun was now beginning to lose the splendour of its glory, and sinking in milder beauty over the distant hills. Serena and her mother left their bower, and sauntered through the surrounding fields and woods. They mounted the heath, they skirted the river.—Nature, ever charming, ever new, offered them variety of beauty. The village bell chimed eight, as Serena drew towards her home. "Mamma, is it possible—can it be so?"

she exclaimed, "is it indeed so late?"—"It is indeed, my love."—"How swiftly then this day has passed!"—"Yet I thought you expected a long day. Can you account for this, Serena?" "Oh! yes, that I can, mamma; I have been employed — I have been amused — I have not thought of the time." "In future then you will know how to make an expected long day seem a short day, Serena."—"Yes, mamma; and for this knowledge, as for every other, I must thank you." The grateful child threw her little arms round her mother's neck, she kissed her cheek, she felt the pleasure of gratitude, the joy of expressing it. "My Serena," said her mother, as she tenderly returned her caresses—"My Serena, if you feel such gratitude to me for opening your heart to joy, how thankful ought you to be to the gracious God, that gave you a heart capable of feeling

it. If I have obliged you by pointing out to you the sources of happiness, how boundless is your obligation to that great God who *created* these sources of happiness! To Him then let your soul arise in never ceasing praise; from Him springs all your felicity in this world—on Him rest all your hopes of the world to come. My dearest child! never forget the sacred ties that bind you to your God and your Father in Heaven." The heart of Serena was deeply affected; her little bosom glowed with devotion. Her mother observed with transport the sacred impression. They finished their walk in silence; but the moment they entered the house, Serena flew to her chamber, and throwing herself on her knees, breathed out her evening sacrifice of prayer and praise.

It was Tuesday.—"This evening my brother will be here," thought Serena, as she first opened her eyes to the day.

She remembered her yesterday's recipe for shortening a long day. She applied herself with assiduity to her lessons, she worked, she read. Dinner-hour arrived; the afternoon was passed in a variety of lighter occupations; at length the evening began to close. With a palpitating heart Serena listened to every sound, and more than once the gardener's wheelbarrow brought her breathless to the window.—She rejoiced when she saw this teazing wheelbarrow and the gardener retire for the night. All now was still, save the distant whistle of the returning labourer, or the short barkings of his attendant dog. Serena, anxious and agitated, sat silently watching the slow hand of the revolving clock. It pointed at nine. Serena sighed heavily. —"Mamma, I fear they will not come to-night!" said she. "I begin to fear so too, my love." Serena's eyes filled with

tears. "Then, mamma, I dare say some accident has happened."—"No, my child, I trust not, the weather has been fine, the roads are excellent—I cannot think any accident has happened."—"Then Felix is taken ill, or perhaps, papa—" "Let us not torture ourselves with these cruel fears, Serena; we have no present means of ascertaining the truth, and if all proves safe, we shall be uselessly embittering these hours,"—"But if all is not safe, mamma?"—"Then still, my dear, we are wrong to be thus wearing out our strength and spirits; it will render us incapable of giving assistance, should our worst fears be true."—"Mamma! how can you account for their not being here?"—"Many circumstances, my dear, may have arisen to have detained them." —"But then papa would have written." —"He might have been prevented, or perhaps he has written, and the letter

has miscarried, or will arrive to-morrow. When we are in the power of so many events, my dear Serena, let us not fear the worst, but rather hope the best. Hope was given us to soothe the hours of despondency, and never can we better call in its aid than in such a moment as this."—"And do not you fear too, mamma?"—"I will not pretend to say, Serena, that I am as happy as if our dear travellers had punctually arrived."—"Oh! no, mamma! that is impossible."—"It *is* impossible, Serena; yet, at the same time, I think it my duty to make my reason so far master my feelings, that they shall not lead me to ungrateful murmurings, or impious regrets."—"Dear mother, your eyes even now are full of tears."—"Do not then increase my weakness, Serena, by your fears; we must mutually comfort each other, and not mutually harass each other."—

Serena felt the full force of this observation, she saw how much her mother struggled for composure, and resolved to imitate her fortitude. She wiped away her tears, she checked her sobs, she silenced her gloomy anticipation, she even spoke cheerfully to her mother. Ten o'clock arrived. Serena's mother became pale and exhausted; the affectionate little girl forgot her own disappointment; she hastened to her mother, she soothed her with endearments, she enlivened her with hope. The servant entered with refreshments. To oblige Serena, her mother ate some chicken and drank a little wine; Serena did so too. "Thank you, my child," said her mother, affectionately embracing her, "you have been a great comfort to me this evening." Serena felt herself repaid for all her exertion.—"We will now go to bed," continued her mother, "and try to sleep,

that we may gain strength for the duties of to-morrow, whatever they may be." Serena obeyed in silence; and after fervently praying for the safety of the two dear travellers, they both retired to their pillows.

CHAPTER X.

False Sensibility.—The Blessings of Home. —Conclusion.

ANOTHER day was passed in painful suspense—no letter—no tidings of the travellers. Serena was miserable; it was in vain that she admired her mother's patient resignation; it was in vain that she endeavoured to imitate it: her feelings were not sufficiently under her controul, they overwhelmed her reason. "My dear Serena," said her mother in a mild tone, "I hope as you grow older you will gain the ascendancy of your feelings, or they will otherwise be the source of many sorrows to you. Such trials as these are common in life, and we ought to be pre-

pared for them. Should the event be as you fear, will these tears prepare you for supporting distress with fortitude? should it be otherwise, should all prove safe and well, with what self-reproach will you look back on so many hours lost in causeless regrets!" Serena promised patience.—"Come then, my love, let us go to our supper; we made a bad dinner, and must now try to behave better." Serena sat down to the table, but she could not eat; her mother, however, took something.—"Mamma, how can you eat? I am sure I cannot—there is such a choaking in my throat," said Serena. "That is a nervous affection, Serena, produced by indulged anxiety—at your age it may be conquered, hereafter you may try in vain."—"Indeed, mamma, I cannot help it."—"Indeed, my love, you can. Make the attempt, I will ensure success." Serena took one mouthful, it was unplea-

sant to her; she, however, persisted, and soon felt the choaking in her throat removed.—"Mamma, this is surprising—I am better already."—"You see how much we can do towards curing ourselves. I have known many little girls that indulged themselves by allowing every little distress to overcome them, till they became so weak, that their tears would continually be flowing, and they became complete hysteric ladies." "What are hysterics, mamma?" "A violent burst of tears, my dear, indulged without restraint on trivial occasions; so I define it." "But we can stop our tears, mamma." "Certainly, my love; the thinking that they cannot be stopped is, however, the cause that so many are shed by a weak and idle *sensibility*."—"Mamma, you said that ironically."—"Sensibility, Serena, is a word that is so generally misused, that I must confess it never passes my lips

without raising ridiculous ideas; for I have heard the most direct selfishness called an exquisite sensibility." "How could that possibly be, mamma?" "In scenes of distress, Serena, when I see a young lady, regardless of the immediate object of commiseration, throwing herself into an agony of useless tears,—when I see those attentions, that are due to the real sufferer, claimed by the exquisitely sensitive observer, I turn with disgust from such an affected and selfish display of unfelt sympathy." "Ah! yes, mamma, I remember what you said in the cottage —that to relieve is better than to pity." "I am glad you have so well remembered, my dear. It was on the same principle that just now I wished you to eat something, and not continue to exhaust yourself." "Was it, mamma?" "Yes, my dear; for though I know that to eat is

against every rule of *exquisite sensibility*, yet I also know, that without some support, the human frame must sink into uselessness. In attending the sick-bed of a beloved friend, or relation, it is an essential part of our duty to take some care of ourselves. If we do not, what is the consequence?—the invalid, just recovered from sickness, has the painful conviction, that his nurse has suffered by her cares for him, and very probably has in his turn to watch over her pillow, and support her who ought to have supported herself."

The sound of a distant carriage now drew Serena's attention—she flew to the door:—it drew nearer—she scarcely breathed—another moment and a chaise drove up to the door. What a joyous moment for Serena!—she beheld her father and brother—she was locked in their

embrace—she heard their well-known voices.—"Both safe, both well," exclaimed the transported Serena---"Ah! how happy I am!"---"You need not *say* so, my child," replied her mother, "your eyes are sufficiently expressive." "And are you indeed so happy?" said her father, archly looking at her. "Can you doubt it, papa? I am sure you cannot," said Serena. "You feel, then, the pang of parting somewhat repaid!" "Oh! yes, repaid---more than repaid---I never felt such joy before." "Did I not tell you, Serena, that we must purchase our dearest joy by some previous trials?"---"It is so, indeed, papa. But we expected you on Monday." "Did you not receive my father's letter?" said Felix. "No, my love." "I fear, then, you have been very anxious about us," continued Felix. "We will not talk of that now,"

said his mother---"observe only, my Serena, how wrong we should have been to have allowed our fears to have seriously oppressed us." "But there seemed to be cause, mamma." "Let us, then, from this instance, learn to act only from what *is*, not what *seems*. Thus shall we save ourselves many hours of causeless sorrow. We will now, however, speak only of joy and of gratitude." "How much Serena is improved," said Felix; "and, dear mother, how well you look! Ah! certainly, there is nothing in this world so dear, so very dear as Home." "May you always think so, my boy! and may you always possess a peaceful and an endeared home! ---But come, we are very hungry, pray give us something to eat." The supper-table was soon replenished with fresh viands. The happy family surrounded it with joyous faces. Serena often rose

from her seat to press the hand of Felix, and whisper to him the overflowings of her heart.

The next day brought with it new enjoyments. Serena, hanging on the arm of her brother, led the way to his garden. ---"I suppose it is covered with weeds," said he. Serena only smiled, and they proceeded. Arrived at the spot, what was the surprise of Felix, to behold the expected scene of desolation blooming with flowers, the weeds destroyed, the shrubs pruned---all neat, all owning the hand of careful cultivation. "Dear Serena," he tenderly exclaimed, "this is your doing---your industry has been exerted here." "Yes, brother, it was my work, but you are indebted for it to mamma."---"How is that, Serena?"---"I can soon tell you. When you left us at Easter, I, like a silly simpleton, sat crying in a corner, miserable myself,

and useless to others." "And mamma roused you!" "She did, and showed me how foolish my behaviour was; and now, Felix, I feel how right she was, for my industry has pleased you, and I am happy."—"Thank you, dear girl," cried Felix, "you thought of me when I was far away, and worked for me when I could not work for myself." "And now, brother, I am so glad I have done something that would please you, for in one matter I fear you will be angry." "Angry with my little attentive gardener!—that is impossible." Serena then, with many blushes, informed her brother of the sad story of the young rabbits. When she had finished it, "Will you forgive me, Felix," added she, "for my neglect? I suffered so much, that I am sure I shall never put off a duty again." —Felix affectionately kissed her, and assured her of his entire forgiveness;

"and besides," added he, "if this circumstance has cured you of a fault, I shall be almost glad that it happened. So good, you see, Serena, may be drawn even from evil."

Thus happily passed this day, and every day of the life of Felix and Serena. By the advice of their kind parents, supported by their own unceasing exertions, they conquered their faults, and, by doing so, prepared themselves to enjoy the many blessings that surrounded them. In sickness they were patient, in sorrow they were resigned. They knew that riches could not confer happiness, and therefore did not covet them; they knew that titles could not confer peace, and therefore did not ask for them. They discovered that in our own hearts lies the secret of happiness. There then they searched for felicity—there found it. Yet troubles often

assailed them, but whilst their conscience whispered peace, they smiled at the little evils of life, and bowed with humility to its greater sorrows. Were they sick, they looked forward to the hour of health, and bore uncomplainingly the inevitable lot of humanity. But in the days of health and prosperity they remembered the gracious God who thus blessed them, and, so remembering, doubled every blessing they enjoyed.

Felix, without any remarkable share of ability, engaged assiduously in the profession his father selected for him.--- By a course of steady and persevering exertion, he gained an honourable station in life. He was honest, he was charitable, he was pious. His sacred regard to truth remained with him through life, and ensured to him the respect of all who knew him ; whilst the cheerfulness of his manners, and the benevolence

of his heart, rendered him beloved by all. Thus, by gradual improvement, the petulant boy became a worthy and respectable man. The helpless child grew into an useful member of society.

Serena, too, the little, careless, idle, Serena! — Behold her, the amiable daughter, the affectionate sister—the faithful friend. A few years of attentive care has made this wondrous change; has transformed the thoughtless girl into the sensible woman. See her cheering the latter days of her excellent parents, repaying them, by a thousand attentions, their care of her infancy, their instruction of her childhood. She learnt music, but she did not learn it to forget it. She makes a more valuable use of this acquirement, for she exerts it to cheer her parents. When the evening is dark, when the rain beats on the window, and the wind howls through the leafless trees

—Serena gaily flies to her piano-forte; her fingers run lightly over the keys; her voice, feeble, yet cheering, accompanies the note. Now she warbles the sportive tones of glee and merriment, and now swells to sacred melody of prayer and praise!—Who directs the household cares, provides the neat, though frugal meal, regulates the duties of the day, and smiles away its cares? —the active, the useful Serena. Who bends over the sick couch of an aged father, and speaks comfort to an anxious mother's heart?---the gentle Serena.

And is all this possible?---My youthful readers, be assured it is---be assured that you can every one of you prove a Felix or a Serena; that whatever are your faults you can conquer them, whatever are your virtues you can improve them---make then the experiment. For your own sakes---for the sake of all that

are dear to you---make the experiment. It cannot fail of success. The very endeavour will bestow joy. For, bear in your minds, and never let it escape from your memories---that you need only be Always Good, and then you will assuredly be ALWAYS HAPPY.

THE END.

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