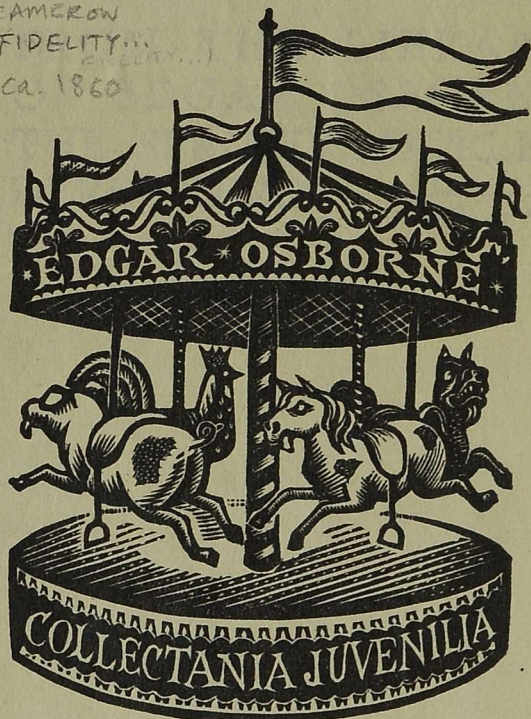


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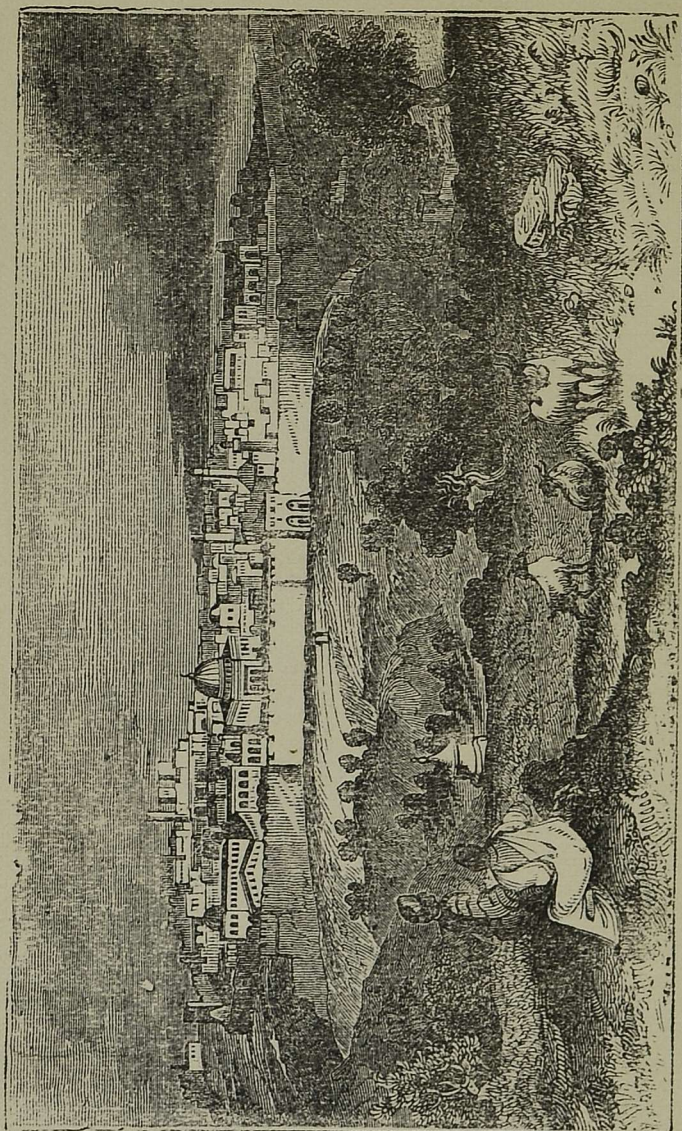


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# FIDELITY AND PROFESSION

AND

## THE CASKETS

BY MRS. CAMERON

AUTHOR OF "THE RAVEN AND DOVE," "THE TWO LAMBS," ETC. ETC.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
*Fidelity & Profession.*

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ONCE upon a time, there lived a certain King, who had very large possessions in a distant part of the world; but on a particular occasion he sent his son to dwell in a small island, which that Prince had, in a measure, subdued to himself from the hands of a wicked and cruel tyrant. The inhabitants of this island

were exceedingly numerous and very active, and of a smaller size than the race of men.

After remaining some time in this island, the King's son was called away to his distant possessions. But before he went he gave many orders to his servants. Among these were two boys, to whom he had shewn extraordinary kindness, and who had always professed great attachment to him.

The names of these two boys were Fidelity and Profession. The Prince called them to him as he sat in the hall of his palace, which opened into a garden, or



rather, I should say, into two gardens: for a winding brook ran through the centre of the ground, in front of the palace, and separated it into two equal parts; and as each part was laid out exactly in the manner of the other, I shall content myself with describing the one, as the Prince led the two children through it.

He first took them to a dark recess in the garden, where, from a rock overgrown with moss, dropped a small spring of very cold water. Dark trees and shrubs overhung the rock, and shut out every ray of sunshine: a few pale flowers hung their

pensive heads over the water. A cold and damp feeling chilled the boys as they entered the place, and they seemed glad to get out of it, particularly Profession; but Fidelity noticed that the grass near the water was particularly green, and many lilies of the valley scented the air with their perfume, at a very small distance from the spring. And when he had moved a few yards from the spot, he saw a very bright light playing upon the water, as it ran from the rock into the brook which bounded either garden. "That light does not come from the sun," said Fidelity, "for it is hid behind a cloud."

Then the Prince bid him look up; and he saw, opposite the rock, a grassy mount, upon which stood a cross. Round the top of this cross there rested a light brighter than the sun at noon-day. At the foot of the mount several lambs were lying asleep. Every kind of sweet and refreshing flower grew on the sloping side of the mount. At its foot opened a well-cultivated wilderness, where shrubs from every climate of the world were planted, and grew in luxuriance. Vines and fruit-trees were here loaded with fruit; flowers of spring, and summer, and autumn, were scattered irregularly on the soft velvet turf; and



paths innumerable wound among the trees. These paths again met in a little delicate lawn, which, by the easiest and most agreeable ascent, led to an eminence where was planted a delightful arbour.

Fidelity and Profession were charmed with the appearance of this garden. "Surely, Sir," said Profession, "you are not going to give us these gardens?"

"We are not worthy of them," answered Fidelity.

"I am willing to hope," replied the Prince, that you are so sensible of your obligations to me,

that you will prove your love by taking care of these gardens, if I entrust them to you."

"The task is too easy," said Profession.

"If they are entrusted to us," replied Fidelity, "we ought to keep them in the most beautiful order."

"The employment," answered the Prince, "which I give to you during my absence, and in doing which you will shew your love to me, would be, in itself, exceedingly easy and pleasant, were it not that the persons who are to labour in it, the inhabitants of

this island, are of so perverse and disorderly a character, that you will find the utmost difficulty in making them obey you: yet I will not leave you comfortless; I will send a friend, and adviser, and helper to you, who will be your director in all your difficulties. But come now with me, and I will shew you what you have to do; and I will tell you the names of the different parts of your garden."

First he led them to the dark rock where the spring was dropping, and the trees were planted in gloomy shade. "This," said he, "is the Grotto of Repentance. This spot your servants will not



love; but you must be exceedingly strict with them, and insist upon their labouring here."

He then led them to the mount where the cross stood; and he told them that it was called the Mount of Faith, or Salvation, and that a certain number of their servants must always wait there, and that if they did so, the friend he promised them would be at hand to assist them.

From thence he conducted them into the Wilderness, or Vineyard, as it was sometimes called, of Charity, whose paths, though so numerous, all lead from the same mount, and again

meet in one spot, the pleasant plain, which took them to the little hill and bower. In this bower the Prince sat down, and bid the boys sit at his feet.

“From no part of this island,” said he, “is there a finer prospect to be seen than from this bower. Look beyond the sea rolling at our feet, and you will behold a part of my dominions with which you are not yet acquainted,—a land that is very far off, a goodly land, where there are many mansions, where the tree of life flourishes, and the river of the water of life flows; where flowers bloom and never fade; where sin troubles not joy, and death contends

not with life. Love me, my children, and keep my commandments," continued the Prince, "while I am away, and when I return I will take you to this land."

Profession answered, that he could not bear to hear of his Prince leaving him.

Fidelity kissed the hand of his Prince, upon which he dropped a silent tear.

"The name of this harbour is Hope," said the Prince, "and your servants will be willing enough to work here; but you must never permit any to be em-



ployed in this harbour who have not laboured in the Grotto of Repentance, the Hill of Faith, and the Vineyard of Charity."

"I understand," said Fidelity, "that our servants in this work are to be the people of this island, a pigmy race in size, but very difficult to govern; active, indeed, in some respects, but in other respects very indolent, they will be continually begging to be released from their work and allowed some rest."

"As to that," replied the Prince, "I know the infirmity of their nature, and have provided for it. In every part of

this garden I have scattered here and there resting-places, where they may sit down and gather the flowers of domestic love and innocent pleasure, and where they may enjoy refreshing sleep when fatigued; and the highest of all pleasures the friend I have provided for you will afford them when it is good for them. He will bring with him one of the harps of Paradise, and they will sit at his feet charmed into calm and silent attention when he touches the strings of it, and sings them the songs of Zion, whispering to them, in words unutterable by mortals, the language of celestial Peace, the language of the **COMFORTER.**"

The Prince paused, and Fidelity hung on his words. At last he said to him, "I have only to ask you one question: Will this friend you promise us never leave us?"

"No," replied the Prince, "if you are mindful of my words, and if you seek his presence, and never grieve him. But," proceeded the Prince, "I have a caution to give you. Beyond these gardens there is a desert land. It is called the Land of Carnal Desire. It is bounded on one side by the uplands of Natural Pride, and on the other by the mountains of Despair. It is an evil land, and reserved for



burning; but your servants are so fond of this land, where they were born, that you will find the utmost difficulty to keep them out of it. Indeed, they will make such excuses, and will bring you such reasons, seemingly so wise and prudent, for going there, as will deceive yourselves, if you are not always on the watch. But remember, that, on no account whatever, are they to visit that country; they are never to leave this garden; here is their place of labour. When I come back, my children, let me find you in these gardens, with your servants around you, at work, and in good order. The task may be hard, but as your

day is, so will be your strength; and, by keeping these my commandments, you will shew your love to me, and you will become yourselves unspeakably happy."

In reply to this speech of the Prince, Profession assured him, in the strongest manner, of his attachment to him; and declared, that it should be the only business of his life to do his will during his absence.

Fidelity looked earnestly at his Prince, and answered, "Thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee, but thou knowest also my infirmity."

The Prince having finished his directions, conducted each of the boys to a little mossy hut, placed at the upper end of each garden, called Watchfulness, from whence might be seen every thing that passed in every part of the garden. Here he took his leave of them in a tender and affectionate manner; first, however, giving into their charge the servants who were to be their labourers.

These servants were very numerous, so numerous that I could hardly count them; very small in size, and so active, that their motions resembled those of the swiftest birds. While the Prince



was in the garden, they hung round him, and they stood perfectly still for some minutes after he was gone; but in a very short time they were all in motion, and, before Fidelity and Profession were aware of it, a great many of the labourers had left the garden, and had settled themselves in a little town called Earthly Melancholy; others were sauntering along the Vineyard of Charity; and all the rest were fast asleep.

I shall, for the present, dwell chiefly upon the history of Fidelity; and I shall, therefore, relate how, when things were in this state, and, indeed, getting worse, the kind friend whom the Prince

had promised to send to assist the boys came, in his extraordinary love to Fidelity, and, gently touching him, brought to his remembrance those things which the Prince had said to him.

Fidelity started up from his seat, and, to his great surprise, perceived that most of his servants had left the garden. With tears in his eyes, he begged his kind friend to shew him where they were gone; and he pointed out to him the larger part of them amusing themselves in a spacious garden belonging to the palace of Vain Hope, which joined, on one side, to the town of Earthly Melancholy.

“ Oh! help me,” cried Fidelity, “ to recal these wanderers. Oh! my Prince, my Prince, what an ungrateful child I have been! ”

The inmost sigh of Fidelity was not uttered before, at the command of his friend, all his servants, with rapid obedience, appeared again in the garden. And, by the direction of this friend, Fidelity took up a little wand, called Diligence, which he found in his hut, and drove all his servants to their proper places. They were none of them permitted, for the present, on account of their late offence, to work in the Arbour of Hope; but were divided among the Grotto



of Repentance, the Hill of Faith, and the Vineyard of Charity. Fidelity humbly and patiently, yet somewhat sadly, followed them with his wand all day, from time to time casting his eyes upon his friend, who stood by strengthening him.

Towards evening, when the sun was setting amidst gold and purple clouds, this friend, who delights in being the Comforter of his people, and who would always be their Comforter, if they would entertain him, led Fidelity and his servants to the Hill of Hope; and while Fidelity sat in the harbour with his servants at his feet, he took his harp

of gold, celestial gold, and played to them one of those melodies which the ears of the worldly-minded cannot hear,—one of those melodies which tune to peace the soul of the patient sufferer, which call to laborious action the pastor labouring in foreign climes,—one of those melodies which turn pain into ease, death into life.

After this sweet evening, many days and weeks passed away most delightfully: for while Fidelity kept his servants at the Hill of Faith his friend never left him; and while *he* was with him all went well. By his direction he constantly used the wand of Dili-

gence, and kept his servants working in their proper places. And their friend and Comforter not seldom ravished them to joy with his heavenly melodies; and at all times he whispered to them peace,—peace like that pleasant feeling which we taste when, in spring, we feel the beams of the warm sun, and hear the buzz of the early bee as he visits the fresh primrose and violet.

One evening, as Fidelity was sitting in his hut at his evening meal, Profession, whom he did not very frequently see, called upon him, and brought with him a basket of apples. They were



exceedingly fair to look at, and Profession immediately offered one to Fidelity.

Fidelity ate it, and commended its flavour very highly, and being hungry he helped himself to another. "You have excellent fruit in your garden," said Fidelity.

"These apples do not grow in my garden," answered Profession. "My servants bring them for me out of an orchard called Sensual Pleasure."

"That orchard," answered Fidelity, "is in the Land of Carnal Desire. Surely, you do not

suffer your servants to go there? I begin to repent of eating those apples. I thought they came out of your garden."

"As to that," replied Profession, smiling, "you need not disturb yourself, for I eat of them daily; and, provided they are eaten in moderation, they will do you no harm, and your credit will not suffer by it."

"Ah!" said Fidelity, "but I shall grieve my Prince; for he has forbidden our having any thing to do with that country, or ever permitting our servants to go there. Our work lies in our garden."

“It is very true,” replied Profession, “that we must have our gardens in good order when our Prince returns: but it will probably be some time before he comes; and, so that our work is done, we may surely have a little enjoyment in the mean time. Besides, I always make my servants do something in the garden every day; at least, I shew them every part of the garden, and give them directions about what is to be done, and talk to them upon the excellency and beauty of a well-ordered garden: so that when we begin to work in good earnest, they will know what to set about. And in general, they are pretty willing to



listen, provided I let them have their liberty afterwards."

"Indeed," said Fidelity, alarmed, "I think you are in a very dangerous state. If you let these servants of yours have so much liberty, you will never get them into order, and it is quite uncertain when our Prince may come back. Besides, you cannot govern your servants yourself, and perhaps, if you never ask the kind friend that was promised us, to come to your help now, he will not assist you at last."

"As to that," answered Profession, "I am not afraid; for I

do not think so ill of my servants as many people do. They have, certainly, their faults; but I think there is a great deal of honesty and good-nature among them, and I do not doubt, that, even without the help you speak of, I shall be able to bring my garden into good order when I set about it. And in the mean time, I am far happier without the constant presence of that person; for, between friends, though I think it right, in order to keep well among the King's servants, to say a good deal in praise of the King, and his Son, and this Friend, who is as himself, yet I think their laws and commandments rather grievous, and their

company has always been a burden to me."

"Indeed," replied Fidelity, "I am quite of a different opinion. Ever since the King's son shewed his love to us, in so wonderful a manner, while we were rebels, I have loved him with the tenderest love, and found his company sweeter to me than honey and the honey-comb; and for his Friend I can truly say, that he is rightly named the Comforter, and when he is away from me my soul refuseth rest."

"And yet," answered Profession, "he requires you to give up a thousand pleasures: these



blooming apples, which are my daily food, you do not dare to taste." Then he archly raised up his basket towards the face of Fidelity, and he, having allowed himself to taste them, felt such a desire for them that he could not help sighing.

Profession now laughed loud, and, wickedly mocking him, he said, "Since you dare not send for more, I will, at least, leave you these, and so farewell." With that he left him in haste.

Fidelity, though he had talked well to Profession, yet, as is sometimes the case on these occasions, had received more harm than he

had done good. When Profession was gone, he sat silently musing on what he had heard, and the poison entered into his soul. He felt exceedingly unwilling to look for his friend, and tell him what had passed; and though every night he spent some time with his servants at the Grotto of Repentance and the Hill of Faith, he now persuaded himself that the hour was past, and that his servants were too weary for the purpose, and he laid himself down on his bed to sleep. And here, what with the effect of the fruit he had eaten, and what with musing on the words of Profession, he tossed about sleepless and uneasy. He

was hot, and feverish, and intolerably thirsty. He got up to drink some water. It would have been well if he had gone to the water in the Grotto of Repentance to assuage his thirst, but, alas! he smelt the fruit in the basket which Profession had left, and persuading himself that it was too late and too dark now to seek for any thing cooling in his garden, he greedily devoured the apples, and reeled back to his bed, for they intoxicated like wine, and here he fell into a feverish and disturbed sleep.

A little after his usual time of rising, he awoke, though not refreshed, and he got up to see if



his servants were at work; but he found only a few in the garden, fast asleep at the foot of the Mount of Faith. And looking further, he perceived that all the rest had escaped into the Land of Carnal Desire, and were all feasting upon grapes, which one named Self-Indulgence was giving them out of a hot-house.

Fidelity knew well that his servants loved to be in this place, and that he could not, without the utmost effort and difficulty, drive them from it; and as he felt exceedingly drowsy, he allowed himself to think that it would be better to finish his sleep

before he set about a business so difficult.

So he lay down to sleep once more. He awoke again about noon; but he persuaded himself it was too hot to do any thing with his servants: so again he lay down, and dozed away a few more hours.

Evening, at last, came on. "Before the sun sets," said Fidelity, "I will take a view of my servants, and see where they are; and in the morning I will collect them together. We shall not be the worse, I hope, for one lost day."

So saying, he walked along

every part of his garden. It was desolate; without one inhabitant, except the few who still lay sleeping at the foot of the mount. A thousand little employments had been neglected: the flowers had not been watered, the withering blossoms had not been cleared away, the ripe fruit had fallen unplucked, Fidelity thought of his Prince, and sighed. "Well," said he, "I shall soon see my servants: they are, no doubt, still eating the grapes of Self-Indulgence." Fidelity looked for them, but they were gone from thence.

At last, he saw a few of them straggling about at a little dis-



tance from the hot-house, handcuffed, however, and driven along by a cross-looking fellow, called Sullenness.

“ You may look after those servants of yours,” cried the man, seeing Fidelity, “ but you will never have them to work for you in your garden: for I took them prisoners while they were eating grapes in yonder garden, and I have delivered most of them up to my king, and these I am taking up to him.”

“ And where are they ? ” asked Fidelity.

“ Look,” said the man, “ to

that common, beyond which lie those dark hills. Do you see yonder towers?"

Fidelity looked, and saw many high and narrow black towers.

"Those are prisons," said Sullessness; "and the keepers of them are the children of the king of our land himself: they are named Unbelief, Enmity, Mistrust, Despair, Pride, Malice, Hatred; sturdy young men as you would wish to see. And I will venture to say, that you, with all your strength, will never get one of your servants out of their hands; so you may as well sit down contented without them."

Fidelity was like one in a palsy when he heard these words. He sat himself down on the ground, saying to himself, "What good will my life do me? Oh! that I had never been born!"

Now Fidelity did not sit down near the Grotto of Repentance, nor the Hill of Faith, but as near as could be to the boundary of his garden; and his eyes rested on the mountains of Despair, at the foot of which his servants were imprisoned.

How long he would have sat here is uncertain, had he been left to himself; but his kind friend, his Comforter, his Helper,



of whom, indeed, he had scarcely bethought himself since he had tasted the fruit, mourned over him, and tenderly pitied him. He had, it is true, withdrawn himself from Fidelity, for he had grieved him, and he is not wont to stay with those who do not love his presence. He had retired to the thickest part of the garden, where Fidelity could not see him; and now he was preparing to leave the garden altogether, yet, before he went, he determined to make one attempt to recal Fidelity to the remembrance of the things that make for his peace. He had, over and over again, acted this kind part by Profession in vain, yet his

long-suffering was not worn out. Unseen by Fidelity, (although the moon had risen,) he drew near to him, and while his fixed eyes rested on the mountains of Despair, he whispered in his ear, "Awake your servants who are sleeping at the Hill of Faith and the Grotto of Repentance."

Having said these words, he withdrew; but they had reached the heart of Fidelity. He arose in haste, like one awaked from sleep by the cry of the enemy or of fire, and, without delaying a moment, he ran to his servants and awakened them, and bid them watch at their post, while he cried aloud for mercy himself,

lying prostrate on the earth. The moon was gone, and the rain fell fast, but Fidelity was quite regardless of it. His friend had drawn near to him again the moment he had awakened his servants, and had raised his voice in prayer; but owing to the darkness of the night he did not see him.

With the first ray of the morning light he caught a glimpse of him, but it was but an imperfect one; for he had hid himself in part behind the thick shade of an olive tree, not choosing, at present, that Fidelity should discover all the tenderness of his countenance. Yet to see but the skirt



of his garment was joy unspeakable to Fidelity. From lamentation his voice changed to thanksgiving: he called out, "*Thy loving-kindness is better than life; my lips shall praise thee.*" But soon afterwards he added, "May there yet be hope for a sinner like me?"

His friend recalled to his mind, in reply, these sweet words of his Prince: *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*—But my story becomes too long.

The tender and merciful friend of Fidelity was entreated by him, and he kindly promised to recal

his servants. His power opened the prison-doors, and set the captives free; and once more they appeared in the garden. Yet they looked dull and unfit for work; and while Fidelity fell at the feet of his friend, and thanked him for his kindness, a secret feeling of sadness stole over his heart.

His friend, in reply, half hiding his face with his mantle, said to him, "You will find very great difficulty in setting your servants again to work: the fetters with which they have been confined, have so cramped and injured them, and your own frame is so enfeebled by that pernicious food

which Profession gave you, that another wand, as well as that of Diligence, will now be necessary to enable you to keep your servants at work." With that he stretched out to Fidelity a little black wand, by children usually called Correction, but by older people Affliction.

Fidelity felt his flesh creep, and his servants turned pale at the sight of this rod ; but he stretched out his trembling hand and took it, as a token of his Prince's love, saying, "*Both thy ROD and thy staff shall comfort me. But, Lord, how long ?*"

When he received the rod, his



friend answered his last question with a smile.

And now Fidelity, with the rod of Affliction, led his servants to the Grotto of Repentance and the Hill of Salvation; and often, as he looked at them working, and remembered his late deliverance, he would, when faint and trembling, kiss his rod, and say, "How far sweeter is this rod to me than the enticing fruit of Sensual Pleasure!"

In a little time the long-suffering friend of Fidelity took his rod from him; and after his servants had laboured well in the Grotto of Repentance, the Mount

of Salvation, and the Vineyard of Charity, he took them again to the Arbour of Hope, and played them once again the melody of Zion.

Thus was Fidelity restored to the ways of peace and obedience. But from time to time his friend put into his hand the rod of Correction; for he found that it was an extraordinary assistance to him in governing his servants.

After this event, Fidelity felt great uneasiness on account of Profession. He had tenderly loved that boy in former days, and he still earnestly desired his welfare: but he feared to trust

himself again in his company. He sometimes sent him messages of love, affectionately exhorting him to prepare for the coming of the Prince. And he was exceedingly urgent with his friend to rouse and admonish him. But nothing could be obtained from Profession but general expressions of attachment to his Prince, and fair promises that his garden should be found in excellent order at his return.

From time to time reports were spread abroad that the King's son was returning. The reports were sweet to Fidelity; but spread confusion and disorder among the servants of Profession, who,



however, soon returned to their former state of self-indulgence and indifference to the Prince's commands.

Some time had now passed away since the Prince had left the island. By means of his kind friend, and the rods of Affliction and Diligence which he had given him, there was great peace in the garden of Fidelity. All the servants knew their posts, and, in general, loved them.

Fidelity, leaning on the arm of his beloved, and walking from one part of his garden to another, visiting each in its turn, or, as occasion required, exhorting

and disciplining his servants, tasted a peace which the world can neither give nor take away : yet he rejoiced with trembling ; he remembered his infirmity, and was humble.

Profession, on the other hand, vainly boasted of his love and attachment to his Prince ; yet he cared not that any should see his garden, for it was empty and desolate. His servants were now entirely settled in the Land of Carnal Desire and Natural Pride.

While things were in this state, early one morning after Fidelity had been watching with his servants at the Hill of Faith and the

Grotto of Penitence, he passed through the Vineyard of Love, and, ascending the hill, accompanied by his friend, he sat down in the Arbour of Hope. After taking a view of the lovely prospect seen from thence, and delighting himself with the idea that that heavenly country, the skirts of which he saw, might soon, through the love of his Prince, be his, he thought he saw something moving at a great distance upon the sea. It came from the dominions of his Prince. It drew nearer. It soon appeared to be a fleet of ships. It approached the island. It was soon near enough for Fidelity to perceive that it was a large fleet, formed



in the shape of a crescent. In a little while there appeared in the middle of this crescent a single ship, helm and prow gilt with gold, sparkling like the sun. On the helm appeared a canopy, studded with precious stones; beneath it, no doubt, sat the Prince himself. Round this ship were numerous boats of different colours, with rowers variously clad. From these boats proceeded sounds of shawms and trumpets, harps and cymbals; so that they seemed to be filled with musicians.

The ships which formed half of the crescent had each large white flags, which played in the wind

and shone brightly in the sun. And as they approached nearer, certain words were discerned written upon a white standard in the middle of this right-hand half of the fleet, and these words were, **PEACE.**

The other half of the fleet had black or fiery coloured flags; and on their standard was written, **JUDGMENT.**

When Fidelity clearly saw these things, and understood that his Prince was coming, he felt a secret joy, which he could not express; but in a few moments the remembrance of his ingratitude to his Prince rushed into

his mind, and he trembled, and exclaimed, "Woe is me! How shall I stand before my Prince?"

The friend who was with him bid him call to mind the love he had received from his Prince in former days, and led him with his servants, (all now gathering round him, except a few who still remained in the arbour,) to the Grotto and the foot of the Mount of Salvation; and here they lay, crying, "Mercy! mercy!"

Meanwhile, Profession, who was aware of his master's approach, all hurry and confusion, called his servants together; but, alas! though he called loud and long,



the greater part heard not: for one named Worldly Prudence, a person of great renown in the Land of Natural Pride, had sent them down to dig ore in a golden mine called Covetousness, where they could not hear his voice. Of the few he could assemble together, he set some to prune the trees in the garden with sickles which he had bought from a person in their own country, called Reformation; and the rest picked up some dead leaves in the Vineyard of Charity. But neither he nor his servants bethought themselves of the Grotto of Repentance, or the Mount of Faith, or of the friend whom their Prince had promised should be their guide and assist-

ant. Yet he endeavoured to fill himself with hopes that all would still do well; and looking up and down the garden, he said, "I have seen many gardens more neglected than mine; and, considering how many difficulties I have had to contend with, I think it is in as good order as can be expected."

The fleet was now very near the land, when the Prince gave orders to cast anchor, and sent forward a herald, to proclaim that some of the King's friends were coming speedily to take account of his servants, and to convey such as he judged faithful to the King's own fleet, to

be comforted and refreshed after their labours, and to bind in chains of darkness the idle and unfaithful servants, and carry them whither they would not.

When Fidelity heard the words of the herald, he remembered again his own sin, and the love of his Prince, and his heart smote him; but he called to his servants to draw still nearer to the cross.

Profession secretly trembled at the words of the herald, yet still flattered himself with deceitful hopes.

The herald was soon followed



by the friends of the King. Each of the servants was called to give an account of his stewardship, and their several dooms appointed; it remained only to decide the fate of Profession and Fidelity.

The footsteps of the King's friends were now heard, as they descended from the hall of the palace into the gardens. They approached towards Fidelity as he lay prostrate at the foot of the cross, surrounded by his servants. "We are vile and ungrateful rebels," said Fidelity; "*we are unprofitable servants. We have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight.*"

“Rise up, my son,” they answered. “Your Prince has set his love upon you, and he is your beloved. We see by the employment of your servants *who* has been your guide and director, and your familiar friend; and whom *He* takes sweet counsel with is ever the beloved of your Prince. Your Prince has loved you with an everlasting love. He forgives your rebellion, and sends for you to his own presence.”

Then they raised him up, and led him by the hand to the seashore. His friend also went with him to the brink. A slender boat waited for him, and he was

soon conveyed to the fleet with the white flag.

Multitudes of the King's servants welcomed him on board. Trumpets and shawms, cymbals and harps, sounded with joy; bells, also, were faintly heard from the happy land, the Land of Glory, where Fidelity was to be taken.

When the friends of the King had brought Fidelity to the fleet, they returned to the garden of Profession. He advanced to meet them, leaning upon the arm of one Self-Righteousness, who had come from the Land of Natural Pride to assist him, hearing of his perplexity.



“Where are your servants?” said the friends of the King: “your garden is desolate; the Hill of Faith and the Grotto of Repentance are forsaken; the Vineyard of Charity is uncultivated; and the Arbour of Hope is overgrown with thorns.”

“The work was difficult,” replied Profession, letting go the arm of Self-Righteousness.

“But you might have had assistance.”

“Allow me a little more time,” replied Profession in a faltering voice.

“The acceptable time is gone; the day of salvation is for ever past,” replied the friends of the King: and, binding Profession hand and foot, they led him to the sea-shore, where he was placed in a boat similar to that which carried away Fidelity. But this boat conducted him to the left hand side of the fleet; and that part of the fleet, setting sail quickly, bore him away to a land of unutterable darkness, where the pleasant light of the sun never shineth, where despair casteth out hope, and death’s everlasting agonies consume the inhabitants.

The fleet with the white flag

soon, also, set sail; but not before Fidelity had been brought into the presence of his Prince, and cast at his feet a garland of immortal amaranth, which had been given him. He was clothed with celestial garments, and his countenance glowed with renovated youth and beauty. His Prince received him with tender love, and comforted him with the words of heavenly consolation.

Then the fleet set sail, steering its course to the Land of Eternal Love; and the heavenly symphony of the musicians sounded faintly and more faintly from the departing fleet.



By the command of the Prince, a pillar of white marble was erected in the gardens of Profession and Fidelity, for the benefit of those who might afterwards possess them. On the pillar in the garden of Fidelity was inscribed,

EVERY THOUGHT MUST BE BROUGHT INTO  
CAPTIVITY TO THE OBEDIENCE OF  
CHRIST.

On that in the garden of Profession was inscribed,

EVERY IMAGINATION OF THE THOUGHT  
OF MAN'S HEART IS ONLY EVIL  
CONTINUALLY.

O, ye young ones, who read the story of Fidelity and Pro-

fession, learn hence to restrain your busy, active, wandering thoughts. Teach them to labour at the Grotto of Repentance, the Hill of Faith, the Vineyard of Charity, and the Arbour of Hope. But attempt not the work in your own strength: you have a friend who loves you tenderly, who will help you, strengthen you, comfort you, and who has promised never to leave you; in his strong help go forth, and you will assuredly go forth to success, to victory, to glory.

L.

FINIS.

THE CASKETS.





THE  
*CASKETS.*



IT happened one Saturday night, that when I lay down to rest on my pillow, I pleased myself with thinking that the next day would be Sunday. And I thought how many delightful promises were made to those who keep that pleasant day well. And then I remembered, that I had not made the use I ought to have done of the Sundays which God had given me. And I thought, that, if I had always kept them properly, I should not have been so sil'y and so naughty, as I know I sometimes am. And while I was thinking of these things, I fell asleep. And I dreamt a dream, which I thought so very pretty, that, now it is Monday morning, I have asked my grand-mamma's leave to write it down.

I thought, in my dream, that I saw, upon the top of a very high hill, a beautiful palace. It was not built of brick, or white stone, but of such bright and coloured stones, as I have seen in rings and necklaces, which grown up ladies wear. The palace was so very bright, that I should not have been able to look upon it, if it had not been hid, in a great many places, by clouds, not black and dismal, but those golden and purple clouds, which we sometimes see round the sun when it is setting.

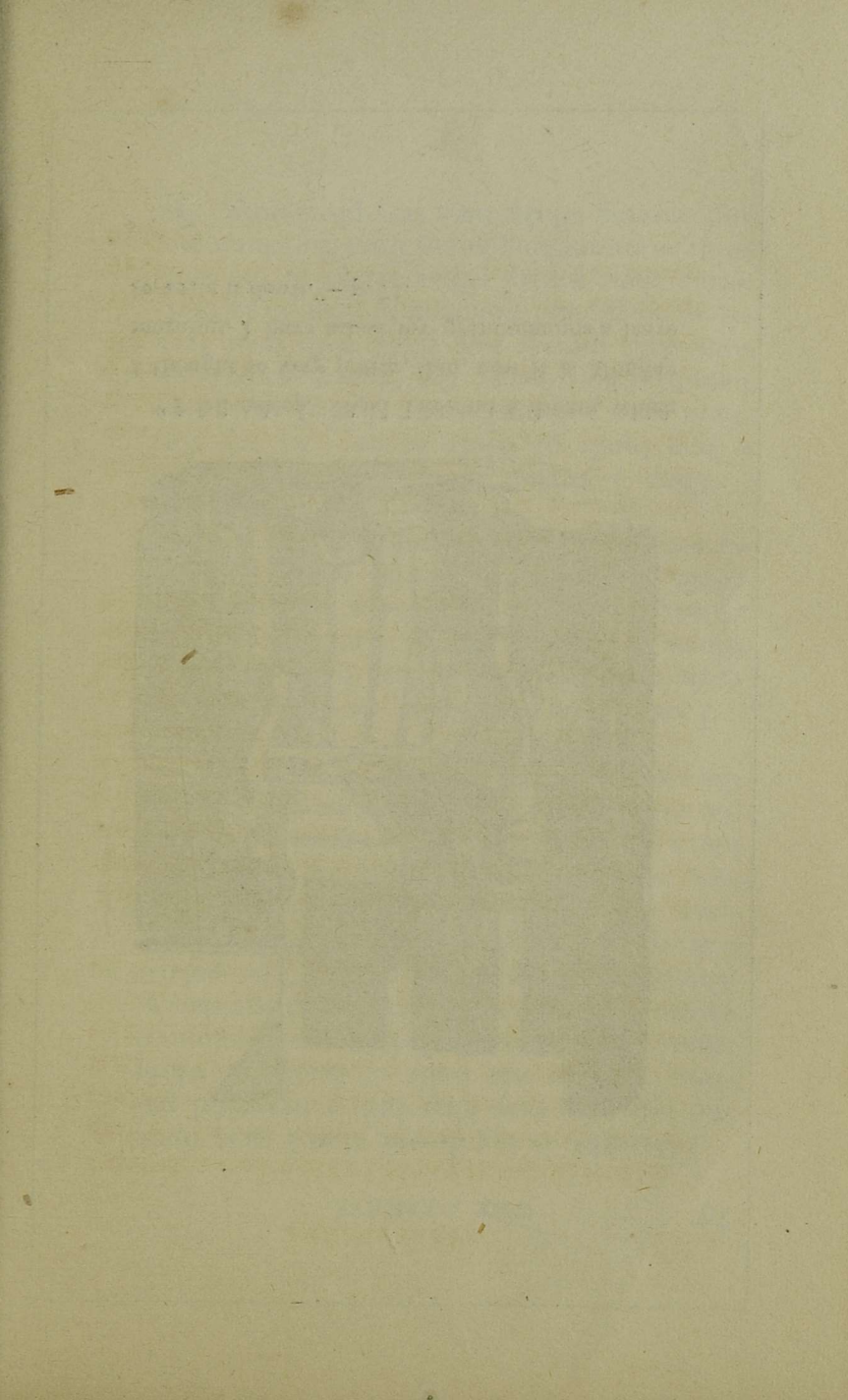
I was, for a long while, so taken up with examining this palace, that I did not know where I was, or what I was doing: but, at last, I began to look about me, to see if I could find any body who could give me an account of the things I saw.

Then I found, that I was sitting upon a low tomb of white stone. At my feet there was a gravel walk, shaded with very beautiful lime trees: the trees were in blossom, and the air was filled with their very sweet smell, and numbers of little bees, fluttering their pretty silken wings in the sunshine, were sucking honey from the blossoms, and buzzing all the time very pleasantly. So





“I fell asleep. And I dreamt a dream, which I thought so very pretty, that, now it is Monday morning, I have asked my grandmamma’s leave to write it down.”—p. 71.



I got up, and walked along this gravel walk, and it led me round a church-yard, in the middle of which there stood an ancient building; it had, in front, a very tall taper spire, and round the sides of it, between the windows, there were twelve statues which appeared to be the figures of the Twelve Apostles.

I said before, that there was a very tall spire to this church; and what surprised me very much was, that the top of the spire looked as bright as if it had been made of gold. But in a few minutes I found out the cause of this, for I saw that this pretty church stood quite at the foot of the high hill where the palace was built, and the light from the palace gave that bright and beautiful colour to the spire.

I walked about for some time under the lime trees, looking first at the palace and then at the church, wondering very much where I was, and what all these beautiful things were which I saw; when, presently, there struck up from the spire a cheerful sound of bells chiming, and my heart felt very glad, for I always love that pleasant sound of bells which calls us to the house of God.

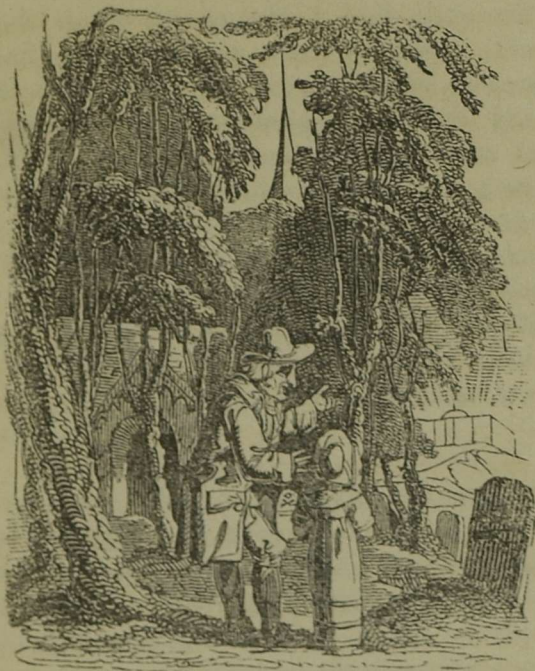


Then I remembered that it was Sunday morning, and I made haste to the church door, which was set open. And I thought that I would wait there, till I saw somebody who would take me into the church, and shew me where to sit.

In a very little while, I saw an old man, with hair as white as silver, coming towards the church; he had a very kind and pleasant look, and I did not feel afraid of him. So I went up to him, and asked him to be so good as to tell me where I was, and to take me into the church.

I thought that the old man smiled upon me, and he said, "There are many wonders to be seen in this place, and, if you will stand by me, I will shew them to you, and you will find them very profitable."

Then he led me a little aside from the gravel walk, to a place where I could at once see the beautiful palace, and likewise all who might pass to and from the church door: and he bid me keep my eye fixed upon the palace, and, in a little while, I saw several persons come out of it; they were clothed in white, and had wings, so that



“I saw an old man, with hair as white as silver, coming towards the church; he had a very kind and pleasant look, and I did not feel afraid of him. So I went up to him, and asked him to be so good as to tell me where I was, and to take me into the church.”—p 76.





I took them for angels. And they each carried something in their hands. They came down the hill very quickly towards the church, and opening a narrow gate, which, I saw, led from the hill into the church-yard, they walked along the gravel walk, towards the church door. Now they passed within a very few yards of the place where we were standing; and when they came near us, I caught hold of the old man's hand, but he bid me not be afraid, but take notice what these persons were carrying.

The more I looked at these persons, the more beautiful did they seem; and I perceived that they had in their hands many small caskets of jewels, of various colours, as bright and beautiful as those stones of which the palace was built; and they carried these caskets into the church. I stood looking after them, till they came out of the church again, without the caskets, and returned back towards the palace as quickly as they came down. I watched them till they entered the palace and I could see them no more.

When they were out of sight, the old man

led me into the church, and bid me look at the caskets, which were set upon a place provided for them. When I looked at the beautiful jewels, of all colours, in the caskets, and remembered from whence they came, and how far they exceeded all earthly treasures which I had seen, my soul was filled with such desires for them, as I cannot tell you of. I thought of that verse in Job which I had learned by heart: *It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.* I did not like to ask the old man any questions in the church, but after I had looked at the caskets for some time, he took me into the church porch, where we sat down. Then I thought that I might speak, so I began to ask him many questions. And I said to him, "Will you tell me, Sir, what those caskets are for, and who those persons are who have brought them, and whether they bring them here every day?"

"The Lord of that beautiful palace which you see upon the top of the hill," answered the old man, "sends these caskets by faithful messengers, the first day of every week; and

he commands them to be given away to those persons who attend with faith and humility to the service performed in this church."

Then I wished that I might have one of these caskets.

"In a few minutes," proceeded the old man, "the congregation will begin to come into the church. Take notice of the behaviour and discourse of the different people who pass you; and then, as perhaps you will be allowed when the service is over to see the caskets given away, you will be able to form some judgment of what behaviour and state of mind the Lord of the palace approves in this holy place of worship."

The old man had scarcely finished speaking, when several persons entered the porch, and went into the church; but I observed nothing very particular in the behaviour of any of them, till I saw a party of little children, who seemed to be a brother and sisters, coming along the gravel walk towards us. There walked first a little boy and girl, and two little girls followed behind. The



brother and sister who were first were talking very loud to each other, and every now and then the brother pushed his sister from one side of the walk to the other, and then burst into a loud laugh; and she complained of his rudeness in a very fretful voice. And then they went forwards again, half running and staring at every body they passed. The two little children behind them stopped to pick up the lime blossoms under the trees: and I heard them each complaining that the other had picked up more flowers than herself. When the brother and sister had got to the door of the porch, the brother called to his little sisters, in a very loud voice, to follow him. He called to them a great many times, before they paid any attention to what he said. At last, they threw down their blossoms, and ran to him as fast as they could. But when they reached him, they were very hot: they pushed aside their bonnets and their pretty flaxen hair, and they said, "Why did you call us, brother, before we had picked up the blossoms we wanted?" Then the brother scolded them, in a very cross voice, for running away; but he did not explain to them that they had done wrong, in playing on their way to church.





“The old man had scarcely finished speaking, when several persons entered the porch, and went into the church; but I observed nothing very particular in the behaviour of any of them.”—  
p. 81.



The eldest of the two smaller children said, that it was his fault that they had gathered flowers, for that they should never have thought of picking them up, if he had not done it first. Then the brother got very red and angry, and all the little children began to dispute and contradict each other, till a person, who appeared to have the care of them, came up, and reproving them for running away from her, bid them all be quiet, and follow her into the church.

Now, as these little children passed me, I thought to myself, "None of you will have a casket of jewels."

After these little children, many other persons went into the church, in whom I observed nothing particular. And then I saw another little brother and sister coming along the gravel walk; and, as they seemed about my own age, I took a great deal of notice of them.

They held each other by the hand, and in their other hands they carried a book. They were dressed very neatly, and had each a nosegay of May roses. They seemed to be talking, but, as they were not speak-

ing loud, I could not hear what they said, till they got very near to us, when they stopped, and the sister said, "If you please, brother, we will stay here, and wait for papa."

"Yes, sister," answered the brother, "and it will be very pleasant under this tree, for it is so shady, and the blossoms smell so sweet."

"Brother," said the little girl, "how pleasant it is to hear those pretty bells ring, and to see so many people coming to church. O how I love Sunday!"

"And so do I, sister," said he. "But we must not love Sunday only for hearing the bells ring, and for seeing the people go to church; but because it is God's day, and because we are going to God's house."

"Yes, brother," she answered, "I think I love God's house very much. Do you remember that pretty psalm which papa taught us, about the swallow and sparrow: *Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay*

*her young: even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."*

"I hope, sister," said the little boy, "that we shall not be so silly and naughty as we sometimes are; but, that we shall say the prayers with all our hearts, and listen with attention to what papa reads and says."

"We must pray to God, to send his grace to help us," answered the sister, "as soon as we get into the church; for, you know, papa tells us we cannot serve God of ourselves."

"And then, sister," said the little boy, "if we do pray, and if we do attend to what is said, you know, God will send us his Spirit to make us fit to go to heaven. And, besides, we shall have such pleasant things given us in this world, as we can hardly think of."

"Yes," replied the sister, "pleasanter than play-things, and flowers, and dolls; things which will make us happy when we are sick, or when we cannot play."

"Papa says," answered the brother, "that



God gives us good things every day, but more than usual on a Sunday, and in his house: so we ought to love Sunday, and God's house, very much indeed."

"That is what the hymn means, I suppose," said the little girl, "when it says,

'I'll leave my sport to read and pray,  
And so prepare for heaven;  
O may I love this blessed day  
The best of all the seven!'"

Just as the little girl finished repeating these words, the clergyman, in his gown and cassock, came into the church-yard. And when he appeared, the little children walked towards him, and called him papa, and seemed pleased, but they did not make a noise.

Then the clergyman walked into the church, and they followed him. And I turned round, and said to the old man, "I think this little boy and girl will have a casket of jewels."

The old man smiled, and he answered, "It is time for us to go into the church





“The clergyman, in his gown and cassock, came into the church-yard. And when he appeared, the little children walked towards him, and called him papa, and seemed pleased, but they did not make a noise.”—p. 88.



now." So he took me into the church, where we sat down.

Now I remember, that, during the time of the service, almost all my thoughts were taken up with watching the different behaviour of the two sets of children; and I was more employed in noticing their conduct, than in watching my own heart. And this fault of watching other people more than myself is a sin, I am sorry to say, which I have very often fallen into when awake, and in a real church: but I hope that I shall never again fall into it so much as I have done.

The behaviour of these children was such as might have been expected from their different ways and discourse as they came into the church. The first set of children sometimes indeed looked at their books, and sometimes spoke the words; but their eyes shewed that they were not thinking of what was going on, for they were looking up and down the church: and their ears too were not employed in hearing what the clergyman said; for, if there was the least noise, if a door was opened or shut, or, if a book fell down, their heads were turned round in a

moment. I never saw their eyes fixed on the clergyman, nor any of that seriousness in their faces which good little children have, when they are praying, or reading, or singing in the house of God.

But the other little brother and sister were quite different. If their eyes did wander at all, or any sudden noise made them turn their heads round, they seemed sorry for it, and tried to attend better afterwards. While the psalms were read, their voices were heard quite plain; and when the people stood up to sing and chant, they joined too, but not very loud, for little children do not always know how to sing in the right tune; but they sung in low and soft voices. When the lessons were read, they were looking in a Bible which they held between them: but they did not try to pull the Bible from the one to the other, as I have sometimes seen children do, as if neither of them could see without having the book close to their eyes. When every body knelt down to say the prayers, they seemed to join too with all their hearts.

Then I thought to myself, If I were to

give away these caskets, I should certainly let these children have them. But, then, I should not be able to know whether they really attended with their hearts: and the old man told me, that it was only those persons who attended to the service with faith and humility that should have the caskets; and I cannot see the heart.

And now the prayers and sermon were ended; and just as the clergyman was giving the blessing, a person, dressed in white clothing, with wings, like those who had brought the caskets before, only more wonderful to look at, came into the church, and stood by the place where the caskets of jewels were put. When I saw this person enter the church, I trembled, and as soon as the clergyman had finished speaking, and we had risen from our knees, I said to the old man, "If this glorious person is to give away the caskets, we shall none of us have them, for we are not good enough. Surely he can see all our thoughts!"

"That is very true," whispered the old man. "The best of those who come to this house, deserve not only to be sent empty away, but to be punished for their wicked



or vain and foolish thoughts. But the Lord of that beautiful palace has a son, very pitiful and tender in his disposition, who is continually pleading his own merits with his father. And the Lord of the palace is himself so tender and compassionate, that, for his son's sake, he forgives the sins and wanderings of his people, and looks with good-will on all those who try to serve him with faith and humility, and sends them, by this his most choice and excellent messenger, these tokens of comfort and love, these beautiful caskets of jewels. But now," proceeded the old man, "take notice how these caskets will be given away."

'To my great surprise, many persons went out of the church without even looking at the glorious messenger, or asking for a casket of jewels.

Then I looked at the old man full of surprise, and he said, "This is nothing extraordinary: for many persons come here because they have been always used to do so; and others come only to hear the pleasant *voice* of a preacher, or the *sound* of fine music, and do not expect or desire to carry any thing away."

When these persons were gone out, there remained very few behind. All of them went to the messenger in white, to ask for the caskets. He gave them to a few, and the rest he sent away empty. And now there was left in the church only the two sets of children, the old man, and myself. Then the brother and his three sisters came out of their seat; but I thought that they seemed rather careless in their manner. They stretched out their hands for the caskets, but the glorious person in white said to them, "Shall *they* reap the fruit who have not sown the seed? Go, foolish children: your hearts have been filled with vanity; your eyes and your ears have been open only to folly; you have not listened to the word of God; you have not prayed in faith and humility. Your service has been the sacrifice of fools: you have not longed for wisdom as for silver, and sought for her as for hid treasure; and the Spirit of God will never refresh with the tokens of his love those who have never longed for them."

Then the children walked away ashamed: they hung down their heads, and the tears stood in their eyes; so I hoped that the next time they came to that house they



would conduct themselves in such a manner as not to be sent empty away.

Then the other brother and sister went up to the person who gave the caskets, and, as they stood before him, their eyes were fixed on the ground, and they looked as if they thought that they deserved nothing. The person in white smiled upon them, and gave into the hands of each a little casket of diamonds and amethysts; and as he gave them to them, he said, "The Lord of the Palace has seen the desires of your hearts for his good things, and though in many things you have offended, even this day, yet, for his Son's sake, he looks with favour upon you; and he has sent these beautiful caskets to you by me. Take them home with you; they will refresh and strengthen you all the week when you look upon them: and the Lord of the Palace will, from time to time, send these messages of love to you, if you hunger and thirst after them,—if you value them more than all the treasures of the world. Receive them as tokens of his love, and as lovely, though yet but faint, resemblances of those precious jewels which build the heavenly palace of your Lord; for her stones are laid with fair colours, and her





“The person in white smiled upon them, and gave into the hands of each a little casket of diamonds and amethysts; and as he gave them to them, he said, ‘The Lord of the Palace has seen the desires of your hearts for his good things.’”—p. 96.



foundations are of sapphires, her windows are of agate, and her gates are of carbuncles, and all her borders are of pleasant stones. Some time or other, if you walk on steadily in the ways of holiness, your Lord will receive you into this beautiful palace, for his Son, who loves you, is preparing mansions for you there."

Then he stopped speaking; and the children, bowing low before him, and holding their caskets fast, turned away to go home. As they passed by me, I looked very earnestly at them. There was an expression of joy in their faces more pleasant than any thing I had ever seen, which gave them so sweet a look that I wished I knew them, and could talk to them. The jewels in their caskets shone so bright, and looked so beautiful, that my heart was filled again with strong desires for them.

Now I saw that the person in white was not yet gone, and that there remained by him one casket of the most beautiful emeralds I ever saw. Then I turned to the old man, and I said to him, "Do you think I may ask for this casket? Is there any hope of my getting it?"

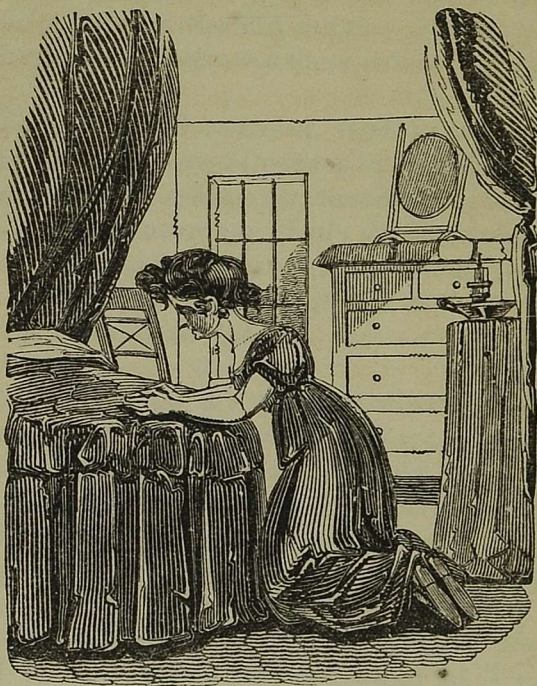


“That casket of jewels was provided for you,” answered the old man; “but ask your conscience if you may have it now.”

Then I called to mind, that I had spent the precious hours of prayer in looking about me, instead of asking for heavenly blessings: and the remembrance of my sin was so painful to me, that I burst out into tears; and my grief was so bitter, that I awoke, and found it was a dream.

After I awoke, it was some minutes before I could tell where I was. The tears were running down my cheeks, and my heart felt very sad. At last, the clock of the cathedral, which is not far from my grandmamma’s house, struck six, and I remembered that I was in my own little bed, and that it was Sunday morning. Then such a pleasant thought came into my mind as I can hardly tell you of, and I said, quite loud, “It is Sunday morning, and I am going to church to-day, and the casket of jewels may still be mine;” for I knew very well what the casket of jewels meant. I almost clapped my hands for joy, and I made haste to get up and dress myself, and I knelt down by my bed-side. And when I had





“Help me so to spend these days of rest, and so to hear and pray in thy house, that, at last, I may come to thy eternal rest, and join with angels, and the souls of holy children, in singing hymns of praise to thee for ever!”—p. 103.



finished my morning prayers, I said these words, some of which had been taught me by my grandmamma: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Shepherd of the lambs, through thy precious blood wash me from my sins, and make me able to do thy will to-day. Give me grace to go to thy house with a very humble and penitent heart, hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and do not send me empty away, but make me rich with the gift of thy most holy Spirit, which is more to be desired than all manner of precious stones. Make me more and more to love this day of the Lord, and the house where thine honour dwelleth; and help me so to spend these days of rest, and so to hear and pray in thy house, that, at last, I may come to thy eternal rest, and join with angels, and the souls of holy children, in singing hymns of praise to thee for ever!"

Now I believe that my prayer was heard, for I do think that there was some little change in my thoughts and behaviour yesterday; and I feel a hope to-day, that God will give me his grace this week to be more obedient, and good-natured, and kind, and industrious, and humble, than

I have been used to be. And so I may hope that the little casket of emeralds is indeed mine. I hope that I shall learn to love the things of this world less, and to long more and more for the true and heavenly riches; and I hope all other little children who shall read this dream will learn to do so too, and then, at last, through the merits of our blessed Saviour, we shall come to a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, whose streets are of pure gold, and whose walls are garnished with precious stones,—a city far more lovely than the beautiful palace which I saw in my dream.

L.

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