



FORMS OF PRIDE;
OR,
THE MIDSUMMER VISIT.

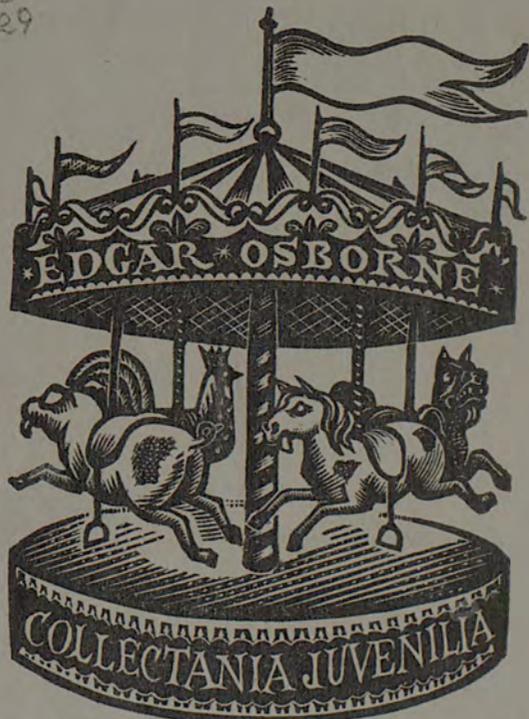
BY MRS. CAMERON,
AUTHOR OF
"Emma and her Nurse," "Margaret Whyte,"
"The Two Lambs," &c. &c.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HOULSTON & SON,
65, Paternoster-Row,
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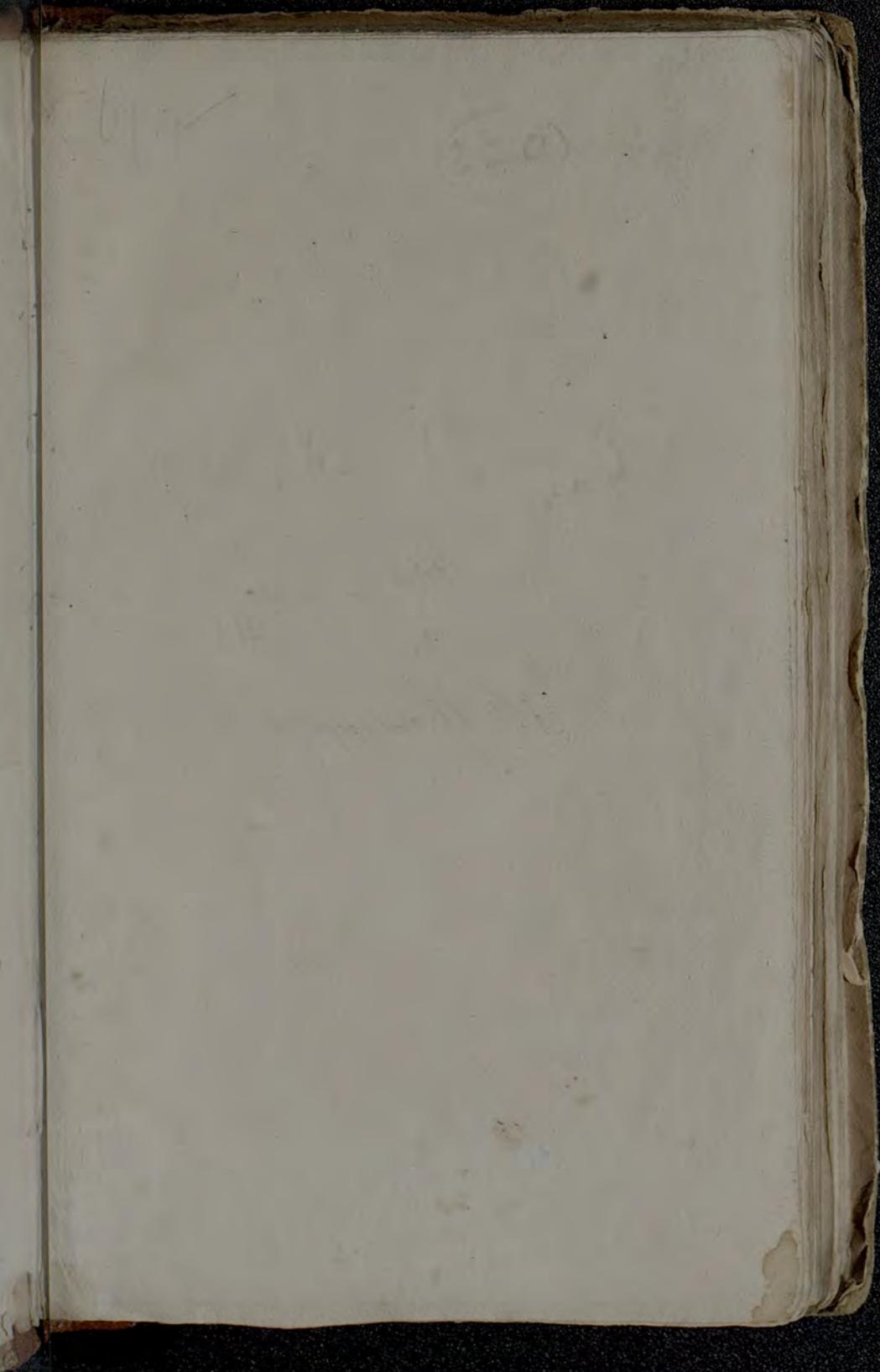
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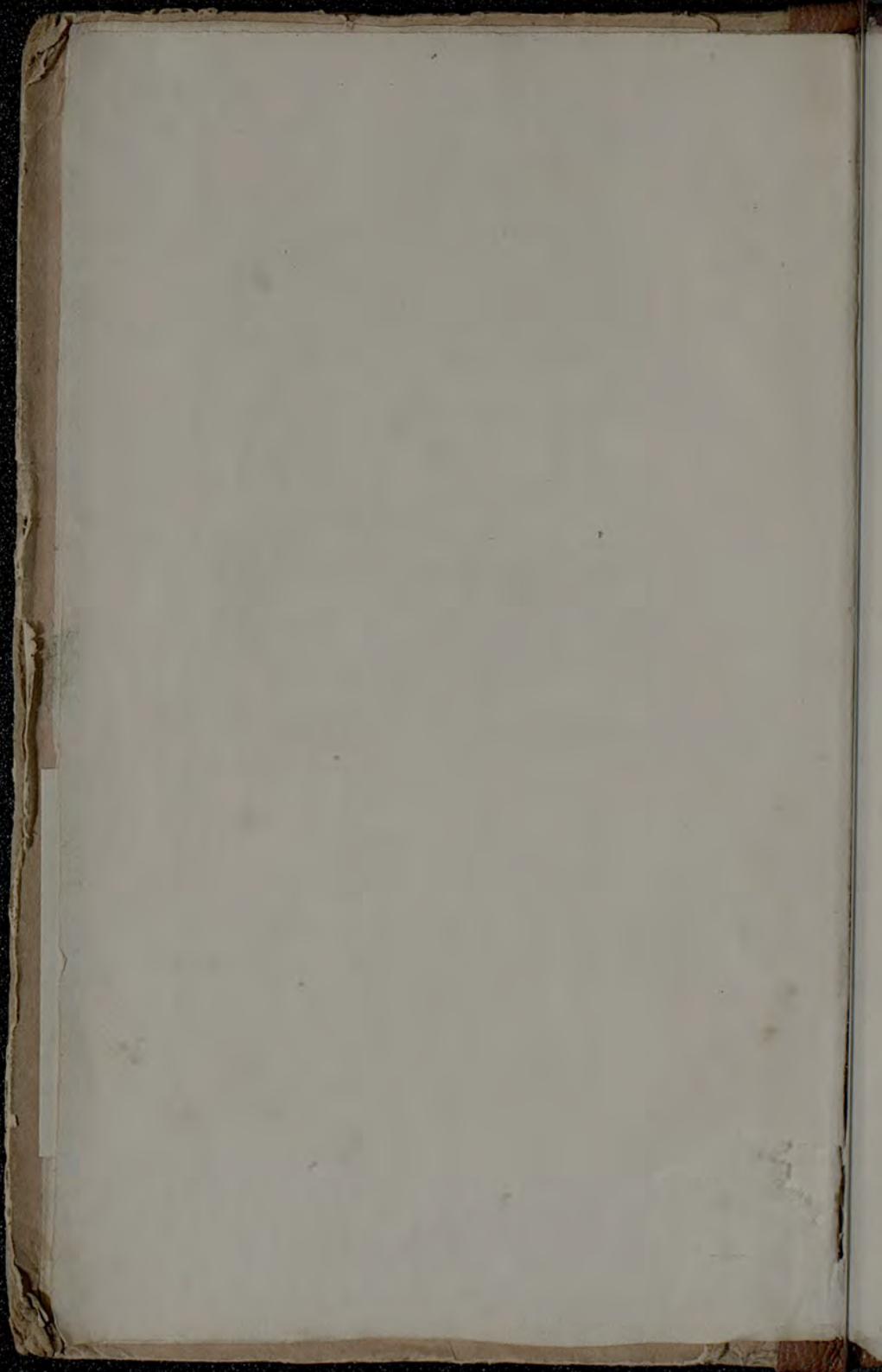


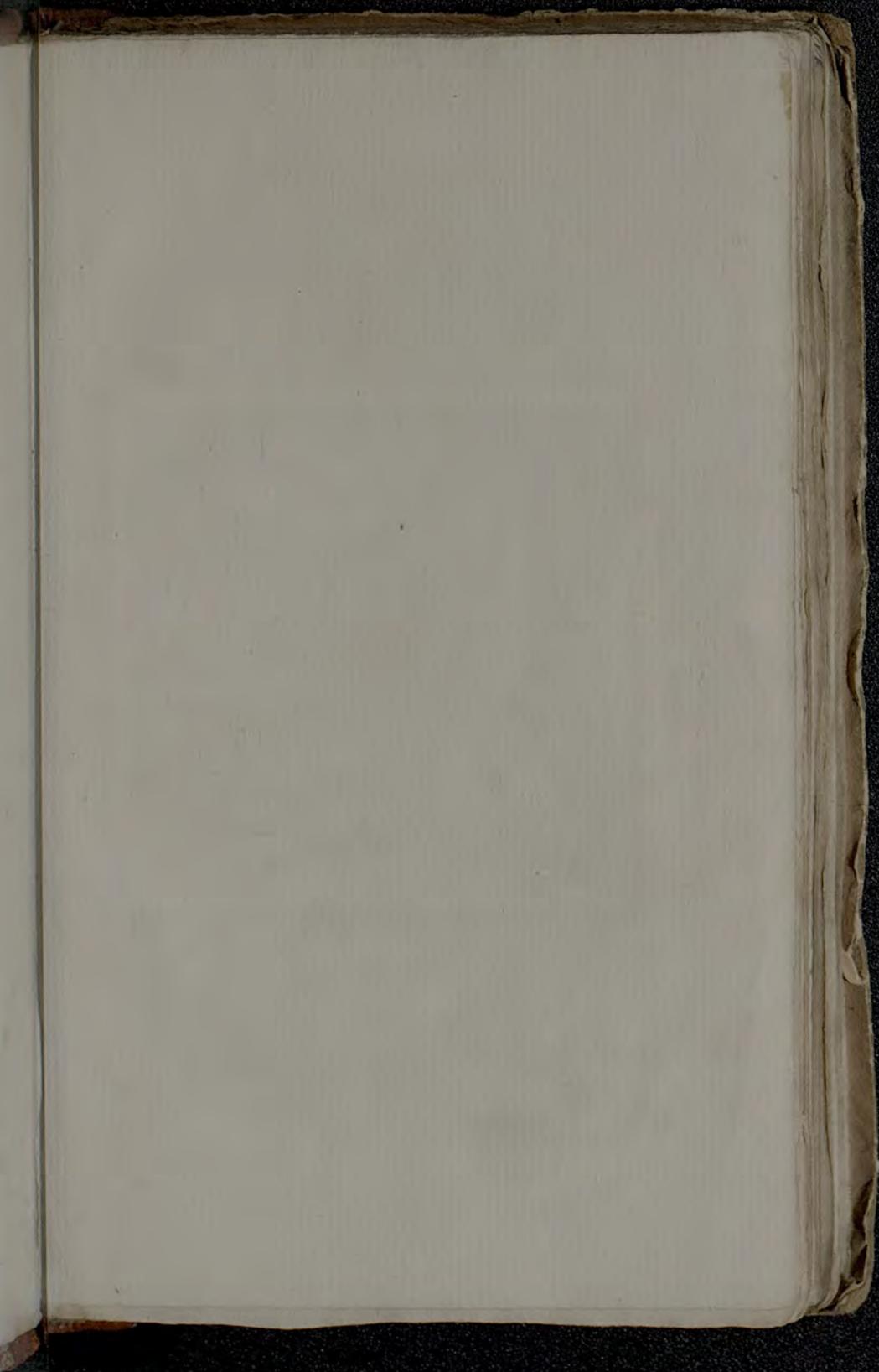
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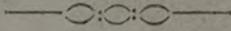




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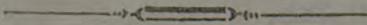
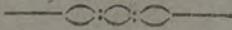


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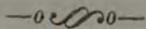
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FORMS OF PRIDE,

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MR. LESLIE was engaged in extensive business in London, but was possessed of a pleasant villa within a few miles of the City, where he spent his hours of leisure with his wife and family, consisting of five children.

In his marriage he had been particularly happy, for Mrs. Leslie had the same genuine, humble piety which gave the value to his own character; while her other mental endowments and accomplishments fitted her to conduct the education of her children.

The eldest of these was just turned seventeen, and had been lately placed in the family of a private tutor, to prepare him for the University, when this excellent mother was

suddenly removed from her duties by a very short illness. She had, however, a sufficient warning of her danger to take her leave of her family, to give each of her children a particular charge, and to leave with her husband some requests respecting their future plans: having completed which, she thought only of preparations for her long journey—preparations, however, which were not then to be first remembered.

After the death of Mrs. Leslie, a period of many weeks, if not of months, elapsed before her husband was sufficiently composed to give any thing like fixed attention to the family arrangements. In these he wished to follow, as far as possible, the last requests of his wife; for he knew that she had given full consideration to what would best advance the real good of her children.

In the west end of the town there was an establishment for young ladies, which was conducted by a Miss Seabright, a lady whom Mrs. Leslie had highly valued and respected; and, as expence was no object to Mr. Leslie, she had requested that her three daughters

might be intrusted to the care of Miss Seabright till they had respectively attained the age of eighteen. In this establishment, therefore, the three young ladies were placed within the first half-year after their mother's death.

The names of these young people were Harriet, Letitia, and Selina; and, at the time of their going to school, Harriet was fifteen, Selina twelve, and Letitia was between the two in age. There was much very promising in the characters of the sisters, yet they still needed considerable correction and improvement. Their respective defects had been well known to their mother; and, during her hours of health, she had diligently watched over them, and affectionately pointed them out on her death-bed to each of her daughters.

Mr. Leslie's youngest child was a boy, named Arthur. It was designed that he should remain at school till he was fourteen, when he was to be taken into his father's counting-house. George (the eldest) was the most deeply affected by his mother's

death, and he manifested in his whole behaviour how abiding a remembrance he retained of her invaluable instructions. A younger sister of Mr. Leslie's, who was at present unmarried, took charge of her brother's house till his eldest daughter should be of an age to take her place.

We pass over the first year and half which immediately followed Mrs. Leslie's death, and hasten to the midsummer holidays, which collected all the young people together, after the young ladies had been a year at school.

Miss Leslie, who had been some time engaged to be married, and yet was unwilling to leave her brother alone, was agreeably surprised, on the present occasion, to observe how much her nieces were grown and improved; and she really thought the eldest so womanly and steady in her whole behaviour and appearance, that she seemed in her eyes quite equal, not only to the managing of her father's family, but to the superintendance of her sisters' education; and she accordingly communicated her ideas on this subject to her brother; and, not being a person of much

experience or forethought, she made this communication in the presence of her nieces.

The consequence was what might naturally be expected: the young ladies caught eagerly at the new idea; Mr. Leslie was himself pleased with the scheme; and though he had some doubts of its propriety, yet, as it was his sister's suggestion, and he had an high opinion of her judgment in most respects, he hoped that he should not be erring materially in pursuing this agreeable plan; and, after some little deliberation, it was determined to remove his daughters from school at Christmas.

When this arrangement was first communicated to George, he looked surprised, and probably his countenance expressed some disapprobation; but, before he could speak, if, indeed, he intended to do so, Letitia, who sat by his side, laid her hands on his lips, saying to him, "Don't speak, you prudent creature."

As soon as the sisters were alone with George, they all collected round him, begging and entreating him not to say any thing

against their coming home at Christmas.—
“Why do you think I should?” answered
George; “do you doubt whether it is a wise
thing?”

“It cannot be silly if my aunt recommends
it, and papa allows of it,” said Harriet.

“Papa does not know——” Here George
paused.

“What silly girls we are,” said Letitia.
“I suppose that was what you meant to say?
But let me tell you, brother George, that
every body, even Mrs. Seabright, calls Harriet
steady, and poor dear mamma used to say
that she was steady.”

“Yet mamma particularly wished,” re-
plied George, “that you should each of you
stay at school till you were eighteen.”

“But you will not be so ill-natured,” re-
turned Selina, “as to say any thing to papa
against our coming home?”

“Why need you call me ill-natured, my
beloved Selina?” replied George; “have I
said any thing to papa?”

“But you looked as if you meant to do
it,” said Letitia.

“ I looked,” said George, “ as if I meant to speak my mind *plainly to you*, my beloved sisters: but I certainly shall not give my opinion to papa, unless he asks for it.”

“ Now, brother George,” returned Letitia, “ as you mean to speak your opinion to us, pray tell me why do you object so much to our being set at liberty, when you are going yourself, next October, to be emancipated from all discipline?”

“ In the first place,” answered George, “ going to College is not being emancipated from all discipline. I should be sorry at my age to be set free from all restraint, and you are still younger than I am; and therefore I cannot help thinking that this emancipation, which you talk of, will do you no good.”

“ But,” said Letitia, “ Selina and I are to be governed by Harriet, and she will be seventeen in February; and she is as steady as the old gentleman with the scythe and the hour-glass.”

“ Her task will not be a very easy one of governing you,” replied George, laughing, “ if you continue to love your own opinion as much as usual.”

“O, I am cured of that,” said Letitia; “I never contradict any body now.”

“Except at the midsummer holidays,” replied George.

“Indeed,” said Letitia, “Harriet is quite as fond of having her own way as I am.”

“And I must have it,” answered Harriet, “if I am to govern the family and you too.”

“O, when it is once a settled, established thing, that Harriet is to govern us,” said Letitia, “you will see how submissive we shall be. But, you know, now there is no reason for our giving up in every thing.”

“We shall come to no conclusion at this rate,” said George; “and, after all, I can do nothing but advise you.”

“Well, give us your advice, brother,” said Selina.

“I have given it already, and think the wisest thing you can do, will be to follow dear mamma’s plan for you. You know it is what papa approves, if you would not tease him out of it.”

“But it was my aunt’s plan first,” said Harriet.

“ My aunt is very kind to us,” said George; “ but she cannot have had the experience of our dear mother; she cannot have studied our characters, nor considered what is for our real good, as she did. Surely, then, my dear sisters, the wisest thing we can do is to follow her last counsels to us as far as it is in our power to do so: depend upon it we shall never repent doing this.”

George added more on this subject which commanded the attention of his sisters: they loved and venerated their mother's name, and when he had concluded what he had to say, they were quite convinced that it was all very true and very right, and they had almost resolved to request their papa to keep them at school a little longer; at least they promised to give the subject full consideration. And such, indeed, was the result of their sober consideration, that, had not their aunt greatly favoured this new arrangement, they would willingly have relinquished it.

But Miss Leslie's plan had been already communicated to some of her friends, who would not hear of its being changed; and, as

she conceived there was no alternative but that her brother's family must be managed by herself or her nieces, she was not at all disposed to hear of any further changes; and replied to Harriet, when she repeated to her some of her brother's conversation on the subject, "What should George know of what is proper for you? I should think I am as good a judge of what is suitable for my nieces as an overgrown school-boy. And pray does he think I am to keep your papa's house to the end of the chapter? I love my brother very much, and would do any thing in the world to serve him; but, really, living in this country place by myself, so much as he is out, would not suit my taste for ever."

The next time the sisters were alone, Harriet said to Letitia, "Really I do not see what more we can do with respect to following George's advice; my aunt wants to leave papa, and she really wishes us to come back."

"O, it is Mr. Milward that has brought all this about," said Letitia; "he has put it into my aunt's head. The last time he was

here I heard him tell her that you were as tall, and looked as steady as herself."

"That you might easily do," remarked Selina.

"O, for shame!" said Letitia, laughing.

"But why," said Selina, "could not Mr. Milward marry my aunt, and my grandmamma keep my papa's house?"

"Do you think it likely," replied Harriet, "that my grandmamma, who leads so quiet a life among woods and hills, would come and live so near London, in this large, busy family?"

"But my aunt calls it very dull," remarked Selina.

"But think of the difference of their habits," rejoined Harriet.

"Do not say any thing about grandmamma's keeping house for papa," said Letitia, "before George, or he will bring it about."

"And why should he not bring it about?" asked Harriet.

"Because then, of course," replied Letitia, "we shall stay at school: I know grandmamma will approve of that plan; she and dear mamma always agreed about every thing."

“Dear mamma,” said Selina, “always attended to her opinion, as we did to mamma’s, though she was grown up.”

“Are we attending to dear mamma’s opinion now?” said Harriet, with a sigh.

“We have tried to do it,” answered Letitia; “but you know mamma could not foresee all the circumstances that have happened lately.”

A long silence followed; and before the conversation was resumed, Miss Leslie came into the room.

It is to be feared that the sisters did not consult their brother George any further; nor did they remember to ask advice of him who could have guided them aright; but they followed, without a check, the devices and desires of their own hearts.

George was faithful in giving his opinion to his sisters still more plainly; but, supported by Miss Leslie, they held his counsel very cheap.

Mr. Leslie knew very little of the characters of his children, though the most affectionate of fathers: he was occupied with his own

business, and had been accustomed wholly to rely on his wife. He failed not to give good advice and instruction to his children; but it never occurred to him, that, to educate children well, we must use our eyes and ears diligently: not a look, or a whisper, will escape a vigilant parent. He was, therefore, as may be supposed, quite ignorant of the peculiar faults of his children, and, consequently, had only general notions of the dangers to be guarded against on their account. He knew that his sister was not particularly serious; but he considered her, generally, as judicious, because she had a good deal to say for herself. He considered, (what is often very true,) that it is difficult for the wisest parents to lay down plans for their children when they are gone, and, therefore, he the more readily acquiesced in his sister's agreeable proposal; in compliance with which, upon his daughters' return to school after the midsummer holidays, he gave notice for their removal at Christmas.

The particulars of this new arrangement were not known to Miss Seabright; she con-

cluded that the young ladies were to be placed under the care of a governess. But this was no concern of hers, except as feeling a very strong interest in the welfare of her three pupils.

As the time drew on for their leaving school, she increased, if possible, her assiduous care respecting them; and, on the evening preceding the day of their departure, she took them into her own room, where she gave them her parting advice almost with the affection of a mother. It was now that, for the first time, she learned what were their father's plans respecting them: upon hearing of which she expressed the greatest surprise. "And are you really, my dear girls," said she, "to be left entirely to your own management? I am afraid for you."

"Every body," replied Letitia, "commends Harriet for her steadiness."

"She is steady, my dear, for her age," replied Miss Seabright: "but to govern you and Selina, much experience and command of temper will be wanted."

"Have *you* found us unmanageable, my dear Madam?" asked Letitia.

"Far from it, in general," answered Miss Seabright; "but you look upon me as standing in the place of your dear departed mother. Shall you have that feeling towards your sister, who has been always your playfellow, and who is so very little older than yourselves?"

"If it is right to do so," answered Letitia.

"Certainly," said Miss Seabright, "if Providence places us in any particular situation, we may look up for his assistance; and if this is really the case with respect to your present change, you may certainly depend upon his help, provided you humbly ask for it. But you will not do this unless you feel your wants and weakness: I shall therefore repeat to you a few plain truths."

"We shall be much obliged to you for doing so," said Harriet.

"And I shall say nothing to you that is altogether new," observed Miss Seabright: "you know, I have always tried to follow your dear mother's plan by teaching you to

become acquainted with yourselves. My dear girls, you are all of you proud, though you shew your pride in different ways."

"But do we not strive against our pride?" asked Letitia.

"Yes, sometimes you do, and successfully too; but not in the degree I could wish.— There is not that abiding sense of your wants which leads you to be continually waiting on your Saviour for assistance."

The young people were silent.

"I hardly think you know yourselves, my dears, at least, as I could wish you should; and therefore, as it may be the last time that I shall ever have of talking freely with you, I shall once more tell you plainly what I think all your faults are, and the dangers to which they will expose you. I have generally preferred doing this by conversing with each of you separately; but, on this occasion, I think I may be more useful in speaking to you all together; and you know, my dear children," (and, as she spoke, she looked affectionately at each,) "you know I do this in love and faithfulness to you."

Letitia looked up at Miss Seabright with a sweet expression of countenance, saying, "We know you do, dear Madam." The other sisters each kissed a hand of Miss Seabright.

After a minute's pause, she thus proceeded:—"Pride, as I have said before, is the ruling fault of you all; though it betrays itself in forms so very different, that your characters, to strangers, appear quite unlike each other; but I believe the exaltation of self will be found to be the spring of all of your faults, and the cultivation of love and humility the great remedy.

"In you, Harriet, pride shews itself in a dictatorial spirit. You are fond of governing and managing, and giving your orders, and too impatient of disappointments, or any opposition to your will. You will find it very difficult, I will say you will find it impossible, to govern with patience and moderation, unless you look up for a strength superior to your own.

"Letitia's temper is of a very different nature: it is often gentle, kind, and com-

plying. Her pride is not gratified by exercising authority; she is not tyrannical; but it shews itself in vanity or a high opinion of her own talents. She is impatient of contradiction, not to her commands, but to her opinion. She cannot admit herself to have made a mistake, to have erred in her judgment. Hence arise perpetual disputes with her equals, and often with her superiors. Hence arise pertinacity and self-defence. Hence arises a love of that society where she is never contradicted. And Letitia will often more readily listen to the advice of an inferior, of whose judgment she has no jealousy, than she will listen to the advice of an equal or a superior. Will Letitia find no difficulty in always submitting to a sister but little more experienced than herself?"

As Miss Seabright spoke, the colour rose in Letitia's cheeks, and an answer seemed ready to proceed from her lips; but it was checked.

"Selina," proceeded Miss Seabright, "is not particularly fond of governing; she is not particularly vain: but she is haughty

and reserved; she is keenly sensible of any slight or affront; not quick to sympathize with the feelings of others, but wrapt up too much in her own. Selina wants that charity which endureth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things. Is Selina fitted cheerfully and pleasantly to submit herself to the tempers of her sisters, to make the best of little difficulties, to bear and forbear, to laugh with them that laugh, and weep with them that weep? Selina may be a steady and faithful friend; she may be patient and self-denying in affliction: but if she is not sympathizing, if she is not condescending, tender, and forgiving, she is not fit for domestic society under circumstances of particular difficulty.

“My dear children, have I pointed out any thing more than your own dear mamma and your own consciences have already told you?”

“Mamma has often told us all this,” said Harriet.

“And our own consciences too, a little,” said Letitia.

“You think, then, dear Madam,” said Selina, “that we ought to stay at school?—that is what George has often told us.”

“But we would not listen to him,” said Letitia.

“I did not intend to recommend any such thing,” answered Miss Seabright; “but I should recommend, that, if your papa wishes for your society at home, you should be placed under the care of a governess who will watch over you. You certainly, my dear children, are too young to govern yourselves.”

“Will you tell my aunt so,” said Harriet, “when she fetches us to-morrow?”

“If I have a good opportunity of doing so, I certainly will,” said Miss Seabright. “But you will have many better opportunities of suggesting this to your papa; and I am sure he loves you so much, that he will do any thing for your real good. And now, my dear girls, do not think me unkind for any thing I have said.”

“We know it is all for our good,” said Letitia.

“And whatever faults you may have,” proceeded Miss Seabright, “they are not too hard for Omnipotence. Only be convinced of them; ask for divine assistance perseveringly; and they will fall before you as Goliath fell before David.”

Miss Seabright finished her conversation with the young people by joining in prayer with them. She then tenderly kissed them, and they parted for the night.

The next morning, Miss Leslie came for them: but she was in such haste, and had herself so much to say during the very short time she stayed, that it was quite impossible for Miss Seabright to introduce her own opinions. The young people took leave of Miss Seabright with many tears.

During the Christmas holidays, nothing very particular happened. George was at home, and his influence was always beneficial over his sisters. He was continually reminding them of something his mother had said; and whenever her name was brought up in confirmation of any thing he recommended, he was sure to prevail. Nor were they yet

exposed to all the difficulties that were to be encountered in their new situation; for as long as Miss Leslie was in the family, her authority, of course, was absolute, and there was no room for contention or dispute among the young people.

Two or three days before the conclusion of the Christmas holidays, George said to his sisters, "I heard my father say that he meant to invite my grandmother to spend the midsummer holidays with us. I very much wish him to do it on many accounts; but I do not like to press it without speaking first to you, because I think I heard one of you say that you did not wish her to come."

"O, that was me," said Letitia: "I remember saying so once; but it was last holidays, I think, and my reason was because I was afraid she would prevent our leaving school."

"But you have no objection now?"

"No," said Letitia, "not now, because we are come home, and I think she will find us all going on so well at midsummer, that she will not be disposed to propose any changes."

“And if you should *not* be going on well,” answered George, smiling, “you will have no objection to changes being made?”

“O, but we shall be going on well,” said Harriet.

“Don’t begin to croak, George,” cried Letitia.

“I was not croaking,” said George. “Then you do not object to my grandmother spending the holidays with us?”

“No, certainly,” answered Letitia: “and it was only for that one reason that we did object, for we all dearly love grandmamma.”

The very day that George returned to Oxford, Miss Leslie took Harriet into her own room, and told her, as a very great secret, that she was to be married at Easter; and that, in the mean time, she would take great pains with her, to fit her to undertake the care of the house.

While this conversation was passing, Selina came up stairs, into her aunt’s room, to ask her a question; but Miss Leslie, who was impatient of the interruption, and who was at that time describing to Harriet some new

dresses she meant to purchase for the wedding, bade Selina go down in a very hasty manner, saying to her, "Your sister and I are engaged; I cannot speak to you."

Selina went down stairs to Letitia, who was sitting at work in her bed-chamber, and, not recollecting that a servant was in the room putting some clothes in the drawer, she said to her sister, "What do you think, Letitia? my aunt and Harriet are talking secrets; I wonder what they are about!"

"O, Harriet will tell us when she comes down."

Harriet soon afterwards did come down, but she had received peremptory orders from Miss Leslie not to betray her secret. As soon as she appeared, both her sisters laid down their work, exclaiming, "Now, Harriet, now, sister, do tell us the secret. What was my aunt telling you just now?"

Harriet made no reply of any kind to her sisters' questions. The maid was still in the room. This young woman, who was lately come into the family, and who was principally employed in waiting on the young

ladies, possessed a very large share of curiosity: she was neat and pretty, and had very obliging manners, and could, therefore, make herself very agreeable to her young mistresses. Her name was Myra, and though she might not be called bad principled, she certainly had no very good principles. On the present occasion, she was aware that Miss Harriet was restrained from speaking by her presence; and, as she guessed the nature of the secret, and thought there was another source of information from whence she herself might gain the knowledge she wanted, namely, Miss Leslie's maid, she took an opportunity of leaving the room as soon as possible; when Harriet immediately said to her sister, "How can you be so very thoughtless, to speak as you do before Myra! Did you not know that she was in the room? and when servants know there is a secret, they will soon find it out."

"Well, she is gone now," said Letitia; "so you may tell us."

"No, I sha'n't tell you," replied Harriet, "for I promised that I would not."

"We won't tell," said Letitia.

"I will not trust you," replied Harriet, sharply.

Letitia coloured.

"O, if you will not trust us," said Selina, "we do not want to hear."

"Nay, I would tell you if I could," rejoined Harriet; "so you needed not have spoken so sharply, Selina."

Nothing more was said about the secret at that time; but the same day, a little before dinner, Letitia and Selina were together in their room, looking at their aunt and eldest sister walking arm-in-arm in the garden, when Myra came into the room to ask some question about her work; which being settled, she stood for a minute, by the side of her mistresses, looking out of the window; and then, simpering, she said, "I suppose, Miss Letitia, you heard the secret."

"No, I did not, indeed; Harriet would not tell us," answered Letitia.

"Then I can tell it you," said Myra.

"Can you?" said Letitia, hastily turning from the window towards her: "do tell it us, Myra."

"Can you keep it, Ma'am?" said Myra, smiling.

"O, yes, I can keep a secret very well," answered Letitia: "do tell it, Myra."

"Will Miss Selina keep it?" said the maid.

"I sha'n't tell it," answered Selina, still looking out of the window, without any expression of interest in what the maid said.

"And you won't let Miss Harriet know, for fear she should tell Miss Leslie? and then ——"

"Come, don't be so teasing, Myra," said Letitia: "I won't tell any body; so let us have it out."

"Then it is that Miss Leslie's to be married at Easter."

This piece of information was followed by a multitude of questions from Letitia, and a great deal of frivolous information from Myra, which was not interrupted till Harriet came into the room to dress for dinner.

From this trifling occurrence of the morning, there sprang up, gradually, a division which had never before existed between the sisters.

Harriet became more and more the companion of her aunt, and the confidant of her secrets. She saw parts of her letters, and was consulted about her dresses. And in like manner there sprang up, between Letitia and Selina, not an increase of sisterly love, but that species of intimacy, so common among school-girls, which, as it is generally built upon some feelings of party spirit, contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

In addition to this, Letitia gave a large portion of her confidence to Myra, who, on her part, finding Miss Letitia by far the most accessible of the three young ladies, had a thousand tales of petty scandal to communicate to her—tales which were calculated neither to exalt her sentiments nor purify her mind.

Thus were seeds of evil and division springing up among the sisters, of which they, heedless and inexperienced, and, alas! too forgetful of the source of true wisdom, were entirely unaware. Their father was too little with them to see these things, and their aunt had not eyes to discern them.

Thus the time passed away till Easter; a few days before which time, Letitia and Selina were unavoidably made acquainted with the important secret. The wedding was to take place in Easter week. The young ladies were all to attend their aunt to church, and Mr. Leslie was to act the part of a father. After the ceremony, she and Mr. Milward were immediately to set out upon a journey to visit Mr. Milward's friends; but they promised to return to London to spend part of the midsummer holidays with the assembled family. George was not to be present at the wedding, as he was to spend the Easter vacation with his grandmother in Herefordshire. He was urged to this visit from a desire to persuade his grandmother to accept his father's invitation, she having declined it from motives of dislike to so long a journey.

The three sisters were each provided with a dress of white lutestring, and an elegant hat corresponding to it. With these dresses, and other arrangements and preparations for the wedding, they were much occupied, and not a little pleased: and Myra was very busy also,

and related many anecdotes to Letitia of bridal dresses and bridal schemes; and described to her how young and how handsome such and such ladies were when they were so happy as to *become their own mistresses*.

Miss Leslie did not take leave of her nieces without giving them some prudent counsel, though it differed much from the advice bestowed upon them by Miss Seabright; and at the church-door she took an affectionate leave of them. The remainder of the wedding-day was spent by Mr. Leslie's family in visiting Richmond, a place which the young people had never seen.

The following morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Harriet took her sisters into the room where they slept. "We are now, my dear sisters, left entirely to ourselves, and it becomes us to consider well how we are to spend our time. We will meet in the little drawing-room, and talk over our plans. But first I will go and speak to the housekeeper, for there is much to arrange with her; and I wish you would direct Myra to put away our gala-dresses, while you arrange our work,

and our books, and our drawings, which were thrown here out of the little drawing-room; for, you know, the whole house has been in hurry and confusion all the last week."

"Very well, sister," replied Letitia, in a listless voice.

Harriet left the room all activity and bustle. As soon as she was gone, Letitia and Selina began their respective tasks; while Myra folded up the white dresses, which had been thrown hastily into a drawer. While this employment was going on, Letitia, casting her eyes on Selina's white hat, exclaimed, "I think there was some mistake about our hats; I am sure that yours, Selina, would fit me better than my own: I shall just try it on." So saying, she sat down before the looking-glass, trying on her sister's hat.

Upon this occasion, Myra, walking up to the looking-glass, remarked, "Indeed, Miss Letitia, you do look very well in that hat; only you want your hair more dressed, unless you were to wear Miss Harriet's small wreath under your hat."

"Do just reach it me," said Letitia.

“Does it not look well?” said Myra, turning to Selina.

“I do not know,” answered Selina, coldly. “And pray what will Harriet say, if she comes in and finds you, Letitia, trying her wreath on, instead of putting your things in order?”

“O, it is Miss Leslie now,” said Myra; “it is not Miss Harriet. All the servants call her Miss Leslie. She is our mistress now.”

“*Our* mistress!” repeated Letitia. Letitia proceeded to try on several other small bunches of flowers; so that, in the course of half-an-hour, which elapsed in this manner insensibly, (while Myra stood by giving her opinion,) the disorder of the room was rather increased than diminished, and Selina, having done somewhat of her task, had sat down to a book.

In the midst of all this, Harriet’s nimble step was heard; and, opening the door, and seeing how Letitia and Myra were engaged, she gave vent to her feelings in language which she would by no means have allowed to proceed from her lips, had her mind been

under due regulation; and she proceeded immediately, with great rapidity of motion, and various appearances of impetuosity, to perform the business which Letitia had neglected; while her sisters afforded their assistance not very graciously, and Myra returned to her business.

At length, the young ladies repaired to the little drawing-room, where for some time there was little said; Harriet manifesting her ill-temper in extreme industry, Letitia hers in listlessness, Selina in perfect apathy. Harriet was the first to break silence. Her mind having regained a little composure, she began to lay down to her sisters a plan she had formed for their regular employment. The plan was not bad; but it was too complicated, and did not make sufficient allowance for the interruptions of circumstances, which is the general case with the schemes of young people: and she then proceeded, in somewhat too lordly a way, to express her desires that it should be implicitly followed by her sisters.

"Very well, sister," returned Selina, sullenly.

“I shall be very glad to comply with your wishes,” said Letitia, after some minutes’ consideration; “but really, Harriet, in many respects your plan appears to me impracticable. For instance: when we are seldom in bed before eleven, it is impossible to rise at six.”

“You might be in bed soon after ten,” said Harriet; “but you keep Myra so long talking to you.”

“Not longer than I require her to curl my hair. And then it is impossible to practise so long as you wish. I had rather spend more time at drawing; I have much more taste for drawing than music.”

“Am I or am I not to direct you?” said Harriet, in a raised tone. “Was it not upon condition of my doing so that you came home?”

“Certainly,” said Letitia, “you are to direct us; but, so near as I am to you in age, I might be allowed to give an opinion sometimes.”

“And have you any thing else to say?” asked Harriet.

"I think," answered Letitia, "that you ought to allow us more time for exercise."

"Nay," returned Harriet, "as to that, I allow you quite as much time as my aunt did."

"And Myra says," replied Letitia, "that my aunt treated us quite like school-girls: she says she never knew young ladies so confined as we were."

"Myra is Letitia's oracle," said Selina, laughing; "if she was to say black was white, Letitia would believe her. She dare not contradict her."

"And yet she is always contradicting her eldest sister," said Harriet, bursting passionately into tears.

Letitia looked up, and, seeing her sister weeping, the tears stood in her own eyes, for she had very tender affections, and she longed to throw her arms round her neck; but pride, wicked pride, restrained her.

From this account of the manner in which the sisters commenced their new plans, it may easily be guessed how they were carried on, and in what state the tempers and habits

of the young ladies were found when June arrived.

Early in this month they received a letter from their aunt, to inform them that she intended to spend a fortnight with them in the beginning of July; and shortly afterwards Mr. Leslie received a letter from his mother-in-law, Mrs. Neale, in which she expressed her design to accept his kind invitation, her grandson George having kindly offered to come down into Herefordshire immediately upon the commencement of the vacation, and to accompany her in her long journey to London.

One evening, a few days before the expected arrival of George and his grandmother, Harriet called both her sisters into the little drawing-room, and after a short pause she thus addressed them:—

“It is very long since we have had any sisterly discourse together, and I almost fear that we shall never love each other again.”

“Not love each other again!” repeated Letitia, colouring; “how can you say so? have we ever ceased to love each other?”

“We have behaved as if we had,” said Harriet; “and ever since my grandmamma’s last letter arrived, I have been considering what appearance our present habits will make in her eyes.”

There was a profound silence for some time.

“And you think then,” interrupted Selina, “that she will advise my father to send us to school again?”

“It is most probable that she will,” answered Harriet.

“It is very true,” said Letitia, “that we have treated each other unkindly, but it is not too late to amend our conduct; my grandmamma is not come yet. Can we not now be reconciled?”

The mild blue eyes of Letitia beamed with benevolence as she looked up at both her sisters, and, as if with one accord, they rose and affectionately kissed each other. An entire reconciliation seemed to have followed, and their sanguine, inexperienced hearts believed that all evil was now at an end.

“Well,” said Selina, after a pause, “and what further changes must we make?”

“Grandmamma,” replied Harriet, “will expect to find us very industrious.”

“I will look up the Arabian Nights to-morrow morning,” said Selina; “and I will put my workbox in order, and I will finish the cap which I began to work for grandmamma last Christmas; I can finish it with industry in two days: and we will practise our duets, Letitia; George is very fond of them; and he will not be pleased if we have quite forgotten them.”

“All this will be very easily done,” remarked Letitia, “and we will put the books in order, and I will finish one or two of my drawings; George, I know, will be angry to see so many pieces begun and not finished.”

“One great difficulty will be with Myra,” said Harriet; “you have made her so impertinent and interfering.”

“O, that will be none,” said Letitia; “she will not be interfering before grandmamma and George; and, besides, I will talk to her, and represent to her the impropriety of her behaviour.”

“You must be punctual at meals, dear

sisters," continued Harriet; "and you must have a time for doing every thing, and especially we must not neglect to meet and read our Bible."

"It will be very easy to regulate all that," said Letitia; "besides, you know, we don't often miss reading our Bible together."

"O yes we do," interrupted Selina.

"That is," said Letitia, "because Harriet is so often called away. First, there is the housekeeper to be talked to, then come our masters, then come morning visiters, then it is time to go a walking, then it is time to dress for dinner, and so on."

"But, you know," answered Harriet, "that, according to the plan I have laid down, we ought to read our Bible before breakfast, and if we all get up when we are called, we have quite time for doing it: lying in bed awake is a very bad thing indeed."

"We will turn over a new leaf to-morrow," said Letitia, smiling.

The next day arrived, and Letitia arose as early as her sister Harriet; but, nevertheless, Myra wiled away the time with her long tales;

and, though Harriet had gone into the drawing-room to look for the Bible, and had opened the instrument to accompany the Morning Hymn, Letitia wanted either courage or inclination to check the talkative Myra, and to tell her she was in haste to be gone, and the hour of breakfast arrived before Letitia joined her sisters in the drawing-room: so the Bible was not read that morning. Letitia was vexed with herself, and Harriet's temper much disconcerted.

After breakfast Letitia produced her portfolio of drawings, and laying them out upon the table, she consulted Harriet as to which of the unfinished pieces she should begin upon.

"There are several small pieces," said Harriet, "which want only a little touching up, and a few hours would suffice for the purpose: I would recommend you to finish those."

"I feel disposed," replied Letitia, "to finish this gipsy-girl which I began last week. I think the style of it would please George."

"You cannot finish it properly before he

comes," replied Harriet. "And then you have the duets to practise."

"It is Selina that is so imperfect in those duets," replied Letitia.

"Come then, Selina," said Harriet, turning with some vexation from Letitia, "do la y aside that book, and sit down to practise your duets."

"Presently," answered Selina. "I must just get my friend Sindbad out of that dreadful cavern where he is lying with his dead wife, and then I will sit down to the instrument: it would be quite cruel to leave him in such a condition."

That day, little was done to any purpose by the two younger sisters to prepare for their grandmamma's arrival; nor did the mind of the elder make any advances towards that state of composure and self-command which was likely to please her grandmamma.

The next morning, as the sisters were sitting round the breakfast-table, at an hour rather later than usual, some time after their father had set out upon his daily visit to Town, the following discourse took place.

“So,” said Harriet, “another day is gone, and we are very little nearer to the reformation we proposed.”

“My painting is advanced considerably,” replied Letitia.

“But it will require several days yet to finish it, I am sure,” said Harriet; “and we may see grandmamma to-morrow.”

“Impossible!” replied Letitia. “The vacation only began yesterday; and, supposing George reached grandmamma’s house yesterday, he would at least stay one day before they set out on their journey; and the journey would at least take up two days. But, however, Harriet, I will be ruled by you to-day, and I will finish the little pieces, as you advised me yesterday.”

“And you, Selina,” proceeded Harriet, “do put up your book of tales, and practise your duets.”

“I will,” replied Selina.

“What an hour it is to be at breakfast!” observed Harriet, after a moment’s pause and looking at her watch. “Do let us make haste, my dear sisters, to go up stairs. Your

drawings, Letitia, are scattered all over the writing-table; and your music, Selina, is much in the same state. Had you both got up when you were called this morning, all this might have been arranged before breakfast. Besides reading our chapter, I have myself put the books in order, as well as our workboxes."

"Now, really," replied Letitia, "you accuse me unjustly; for it was Selina who did not get up: I did rise as soon as I was called."

"Then," said Harriet, "you lost your time in talking to that silly girl, Myra."

"How prejudiced you are," rejoined Letitia, "against that unfortunate creature! It is impossible for Myra to do any thing to please you."

"I may well dislike her," replied Harriet, "when I perceive the influence she possesses over you. Indeed, indeed," added she, vehemently, "I see now my folly in undertaking to govern you, Letitia: George's words are indeed verified."

While Harriet was uttering these last words, in an impassioned tone of voice, somewhat

louder than usual, Selina, who was sitting opposite the door, suddenly rose, with a countenance expressive of surprise and pleasure. Harriet and Letitia turned round, and perceived that the door had been gently opened, and just wide enough to admit George's face, which was lighted up with joy as he peeped in upon his sisters. Harriet, mindful of what she had been just saying, coloured, and hung back for a moment; while Letitia rushed forwards with her usual expressions of sisterly affection. "But come," said George, after receiving the welcome of his sisters, "come and meet grandmamma."

Mrs. Neale was already at the door of the dining-room. She tenderly embraced her granddaughters, and allowed them to lead her into the room, and place her in their papa's arm-chair; where they stood around her, while she contemplated them with maternal feelings, tracing in each some resemblances to her beloved daughter. They were much grown, and, as to outward appearance, improved, since she had last seen them, a few weeks before their mother's death.

Mrs. Neale, from a long widowhood, was in habits of great retirement, which, with the dress of advanced years, had given the impression of her being some years older than she really was. She was, in fact, in full vigour, and retained considerable remains of former beauty. She had a tall and majestic figure, with an extremely intelligent and penetrating eye, whose expression, whatever it might have been naturally, was now softened by that tenderness of feeling towards the infirmities of others which will ever be felt by the true Christian who has through a long life laboured to know *himself*.

Harriet soon invited her to partake of the refreshments that were in the room; upon which occasion, the eye of the old lady was for a moment fixed on the breakfast-table, evidently forsaken prematurely, while she mildly declined her granddaughter's invitation.

"We breakfasted two hours ago," said George, smiling, "before you, my London sisters, had opened your eyelids."

"Do not condemn us all together," said Harriet, turning hastily to George: "it

was only Letitia that came down stairs so late."

"And Selina!" interrupted Letitia.

"Only the *ungovernable* Letitia," said George, in a whisper sufficiently loud to be heard by Harriet.

The sisters coloured, but said nothing more.

"And now, George, explain," said Letitia, "to what happy circumstance are we indebted for this early arrival."

George then informed his sisters, that a neighbour of Mrs. Neale being unexpectedly obliged to take a journey to Oxford, she had given him a place in her carriage as her escort; and they had arrived in Oxford a few hours before the time when George would have set out into Herefordshire; and, in consequence, they had been enabled to proceed immediately to Town.

This unexpected arrival introduced Mrs. Neale much earlier than would otherwise have been the case to an acquaintance with the habits of the young people; and before Mrs. Milward's arrival she had gained a very

considerable knowledge of their characters, although she had hitherto made her remarks in silence; nor was she indebted to George for the knowledge she acquired.

This prudent and affectionate brother was well aware that his aunt's plans were far from advantageous to his sisters. He knew also that his father entered but little into the details of education; and he very justly felt that the most essential service he could perform for his sisters was to draw the attention of his grandmother towards them. He loved and revered his grandmother because she had been loved and revered by his mother; and, in obeying her, he felt as if he were still obeying that beloved and departed parent. He had endeavoured to put his grandmother in possession of the present circumstances in which his sisters were placed, without any avoidable allusion to their faults. He thought too humbly of himself, and mistrusted his own judgment too much, to dare to throw needless censure upon others; and he felt assured that the discriminating eye of his grandmother would soon discover whatever

it was necessary for her to know. Mrs. Neale had also perceived the intimacy which subsisted between Letitia and Myra; a knowledge which perhaps she would not have gained so speedily, had it not been for her own maid, who had lived with her forty years, had been the nurse of Mrs. Leslie, and had gained the esteem of her mistress by her habitual piety, and faithful and well-trying services. This person had frequent opportunities of hearing Myra speak of her young lady in language which proved that an unsuitable freedom subsisted between them, and she had communicated the circumstance to her mistress.

At length the bride and bridegroom arrived at Mr. Leslie's house, and were heartily welcomed by the whole family, but most especially by Harriet. Mrs. Milward's views were in most respects of a perfectly contrary nature to those of Mrs. Neale, yet she by no means wanted acuteness: and she was now soon aware that habits of idleness and self-will had greatly increased in her two younger nieces. Nor were the complaints of Harriet

wanting to confirm all these discoveries.— Harriet was still her confidential companion; and her feelings of good-will towards her sisters were not increased by her incessant practice of complaining of them, especially of Letitia, to her aunt.

Mrs. Milward now viewed things in a less prejudiced manner than she had formerly done, and she began to suspect that the plan she had recommended to her brother was not so very wise as she had once persuaded herself it was. She saw that Harriet was incompetent to the government of her sisters; and she took an early opportunity of giving her own opinion on this subject.

Harriet, dreading to be sent to school, would now have recalled her complaints of her sisters; but Mrs. Milward assured her, that she meant to propose a plan to her papa which would by no means involve the necessity of sending her beloved Harriet to school.

A few days after this conversation had passed between Harriet and Mrs. Milward, as Myra was assisting at Letitia's toilet, she said to her, "I have got another secret for

you, Miss Letitia: I guessed how it would be when your grandmamma came into the house."

"What secret have you got for me now?" said Letitia; "what secret can you know about grandmamma?"

"Indeed I am very angry with her; she has been setting on Mrs. Milward to ask my master to send you and Miss Selina to school."

"And not Harriet?" said Letitia.

"O, no," said Myra; "Miss Harriet is such a favourite with Mrs. Milward that she will be sure to consult her pleasure, whatever may be done with you and Miss Selina."

"How did you know all this?" said Letitia.

"Why, Mrs. Milward's maid picked it up from some discourse she heard between Miss Harriet and her mistress."

"Between Harriet and my aunt?" repeated Letitia.

"Yes," said Myra, "between Mrs. Milward and Miss Leslie."

During this discourse Selina had been

reading very quietly; but she now laid down her book, asking Myra how the maid knew that her grandmamma was at the bottom of all this.

“O, that is clear enough,” replied Myra; “I knew it would be so when Mrs. Neale came into the house. I tried to get it out of Mrs. Simpson; but she is so close, she will never answer my questions.”

“But,” said Selina, “*did* the maid actually hear her mistress say that grandmamma wished Letitia and me to be sent to school?”

“She did not hear her say so in so many words, but she heard her mistress repeat Mrs. Neale’s name very often: besides she *knew* it was so.”

Selina tossed back her head contemptuously and took up her book again, and spoke no more till the maid had left the room; upon which she laid down her book, addressing herself very gravely to her sister: “I cannot help wondering, Letitia, that you should allow Myra to talk so absurdly to you. Do you not perceive how much more impertinent she becomes every day?”

“Perhaps, occasionally she may be so,” answered Letitia; “but still she has a great many good qualities, and I do not think that you and Harriet do her justice, and therefore I am the kinder to her, and I believe she is sincerely attached to me.”

“And she shews her attachment,” returned Selina, “by setting you against all your family.”

“I believe what she says is very true,” said Letitia.

“And I believe it is very false,” answered Selina.

“How?” said Letitia: “do you mean to say that Myra says what is not true?”

“I do not mean to say,” answered Selina, “that she absolutely tells stories; but I believe that she runs away with half a story, and that she greatly misrepresents what she hears: for instance, I do not believe that my grandmamma has ever advised our aunt to send us to school.”

“I think it very probable,” said Letitia, “for I am certain, from many little things which grandmamma has dropped, that she

is dissatisfied with our way of going on, though she has never exactly said so; and, you know, she is so quick in her observation, that nothing escapes her which passes in her presence."

"I am, however, quite sure," said Selina, "that grandmamma, whatever she may think, will never make a cat's paw of my aunt."

"But I am not so sure," returned Letitia.

"Because evil communications have corrupted your manners: you enter into all the suspicions of your favourite Myra, while you refuse to listen to the wisest suggestions from George or Harriet."

Selina, who had excellent plain good sense, had spoken the exact truth; but it was done with so little kindness and tenderness, and with such an air of pride and contempt, that it produced nothing but angry feelings in the bosom of Letitia, who was by no means in that wise and humble state which disposes us to receive instruction and reproof, in whatever form it may be conveyed.

During several following days, Letitia felt alienated from both her sisters, her grand-

mamma, and George, and her ears were more than ever open to the vain discourse of Myra; Harriet was as much as possible with her aunt; while Selina was more than usual with her grandmamma and George.

The fortnight which Mrs. Milward had promised to stay with her brother had now nearly elapsed. Two evenings before her departure, she contrived to be alone after dinner with her brother and Mrs. Neale; upon which occasion she stated to them her views respecting the present state of her nieces, and the necessity of making some changes in their plans. "And I am anxious," she added, in conclusion, addressing herself to her brother, "to enter into all these particulars with you in the presence of Mrs. Neale, that you may have the advantage of her advice and experience."

"I shall be very thankful for the advice of my respected mother-in-law," replied Mr. Leslie, "for of her skill in education," he added, with a sigh, "I have had the best experience; and yet, my dearest sister, as you have been, in some measure, the cause of our

present difficulties, I must first have your opinion as to the remedy to be applied."

"You must send the young ladies to school again," returned Mrs. Milward; "at least the two youngest; or you must have a governess in the house. Harriet, I must say, is industrious and active, and, considering her age and inexperience, manages your house extremely well: you must not send *her* to school. But the other two girls do absolutely nothing, or next to nothing. Can you, Mrs. Neale, recommend any better plan?"

As the eyes of Mrs. Milward and Mr. Leslie were both directed to Mrs. Neale, as if waiting her reply, after some minutes' silence she thus addressed them: "It is easy to perceive that some change is requisite in the plans of our dear girls, and perhaps not less in those of Harriet than of her sisters; but how to effect this change is the difficulty. Where entire liberty has been given, as in the present instance, it is not so easy to recall the gift, without producing a dangerous revulsion of feeling. We must, if possible, in-

duce our dear girls to surrender their liberty, rather than forcibly deprive them of it."

"But, surely, my dear Madam, that is quite impossible," replied Mrs. Milward: "girls of their age will not easily surrender liberty, when they have once tasted its sweets; unless, indeed, you can act upon their pride, for my nieces are all proud, though in different ways. I suppose," added she, laughing, "they inherit their pride from their aunt, for their father was always the humblest creature in the world."

"I believe," answered Mrs. Neale, "we may trace this inheritance to a source much higher than the present generation."

"But pray, my dear sister," said Mr. Leslie, "how would you make use of pride on the present occasion? For my part, I have always considered pride as a very dangerous engine."

"Nevertheless it is a very powerful one, and, as we are now in a dilemma, we must do the best we can; and I would thus apply the remedy. Letitia is vain; she would like admiration: Selina is haughty; she would

like to be looked up to. Impress strongly upon their mind that neither of these feelings can be gratified if they grow up in ignorance, and they will voluntarily submit to the restraints that we desire."

"And what, my dear Madam, shall we have gained?" said Mrs. Neale. "We shall have purchased something, indeed, that is desirable, but by the increase of what we ought before all things to eradicate."

"But can you suggest any thing better?" said Mrs. Milward.

"Religion, my dear young friend," said Mrs. Neale, with a countenance enlightened with a heavenly lustre, "religion will accomplish far more than pride can do. I admit, with you, that pride is a powerful, a very powerful stimulus. Pride has slain its thousands, but religion has slain its ten thousands."

"But what is the religion of sixteen years?" said Mrs. Milward.

"It is as much, in its way, and I speak from experience, as the religion of sixty years: it is as equal to meet the duties and

difficulties of that age, as the religion of sixty is to meet the duties of that period."

"If so," said Mrs. Milward, "a girl of sixteen is able to conduct herself without direction."

"By no means," replied Mrs. Neale; "true religion is designed to teach a young person of sixteen submission to her superiors: obedience, not judgment, is the duty of that age."

"I must own," said Mrs. Milward, "that I have no conception of such a way of governing a girl of sixteen."

"I trust you will," said Mrs. Neale, smiling, "when you are blessed with a daughter of that age. It is a sight I have seen, and it is one I remember with daily thankfulness."

Mrs. Milward had been urged to take the present step, by the consciousness that her own advice had led her nieces into their present difficulties; but her mind being drawn to her own concerns, she was very ready, having satisfied her conscience, to relinquish all charge respecting her nieces; and, therefore, seeing the interest Mrs. Neale took in their welfare, she determined to make no fur-

ther opposition to her opinion, though she could by no means enter into her views: she therefore replied, "Well, my dear Madam, it would be presumption in me to oppose your better judgment; and I trust you will assist my brother better than I have done, it seems, in forming his plans for these unruly girls." So saying, she rose in haste; and, hearing her husband's steps on the staircase, she joined him, and they went out together into the shrubbery.

Mrs. Neale and Mr. Leslie continued some little time together in profound silence, which was at last interrupted by Mr. Leslie. "I have little experience," said he, "in education; but I confess I had my fears that my sister's plan would not answer, and am by no means surprised at its failure. The pleasure of being surrounded by my children induced me too easily to yield my judgment to hers. I feel the difficulties in which I am involved, and I can see but one remedy, and that is one which I hardly dare name to you."

"What is it, my dear Sir?" said Mrs. Neale, with encouraging kindness.

“That you, my dear Madam, could take the superintendance of my daughters’ education; but I hardly dare form this into a request.”

Mrs. Neale remained long silent. “I see,” replied she, at length, “so many difficulties in the way of what you would propose, from my long habits of retirement and quiet, and from the infirmities which I must expect to be daily growing upon me, that I feel unable to acquiesce in your plan. I see also the difficulties in which you are involved, and I must have time to consider of the best means of meeting them: I wish, also, to see more of my granddaughters. You talk of visiting Brighton: take your son with you, and, in the mean time, allow your daughters to return with me into Herefordshire; and, when they have spent a month with me, you shall come to fetch them; and, perhaps, I may by that time see the way more clearly respecting them.”

Mr. Leslie entered into this plan with extreme satisfaction: it was heard of with delight by the young people, who had never visited

Herefordshire since their very early days; and, as soon as Mr. and Mrs. Milward were gone, they began to prepare for their journey. George was, perhaps, most of all delighted with this plan.

One day, as the young people were sitting round their grandmamma talking of their journey with great glee, Mrs. Neale said to Letitia, "I have one request to make, and that is, that Myra may not accompany us."

Letitia looked up, as much as to say, "Why not, grandmamma?"

"I will give you my reasons for this request another time," said Mrs. Neale.

"And not now, grandmamma?"

"No, not now, my dear; but I think I am quite sure that my dear child will see the reasonableness of my wishes, when I have had some conversation with her upon the subject."

Myra had greatly desired to take this journey, and depended upon Letitia to bring it about; and, when Letitia informed her of it, she was so excessively sulky, and gave her assistance in packing up her young ladies'

clothes with so ill a grace, that Letitia could not help feeling the painful consequences of an intimacy so unsuitable to both parties: nor did Myra refrain, on this occasion, from threatening to repeat some language which had dropped from Letitia, in an unguarded moment, respecting her aunt and sisters.

At length the happy day arrived for the commencement of the journey, the pleasure of which was only interrupted to the young people by parting with their papa and brothers, and, in Letitia's mind, by some apprehensions respecting Myra.

Mrs. Neale was three days on the journey, which gave the party time to see what was worthy of remark in the various places through which they passed. Mrs. Neale had read much; and, from the simple habit of exercising her memory, and observing what she saw, and from the habitual endeavour to render her common discourse agreeable and useful, she had, in the course of years, acquired those powers of conversation which are usually attributed to peculiar talents. Thus the young people found a charm in their grandmamma's

society, which they had seldom met with in that of other persons, and of which they had scarcely been aware while at home, owing to the irregularity and hurry which had attended the usual disposition of their time.

On the evening of Wednesday, they arrived at their journey's end, in a pleasant village situated in one of the most retired parts of Herefordshire, on the bank of a river flowing through a narrow valley, bounded by two woody hills. At the end of a village street stood the old and respectable mansion of Mrs. Neale. It was within a garden walled around, approached by two antique massy gates. The garden was not laid out with particular taste; for its trim walk and arbours brought to remembrance the scenes where Theron and Aspasio carried on their important and profitable discussions; but it was rendered extremely agreeable, not only by its vast variety of flowers, but by the delightful shade of mulberry and walnut trees. In front of a glass door, which opened into an old-fashioned hall, was a grass-plot, surrounded by a border of holyoaks, of every

colour and tint which the rainbow presents. The garden opened behind the house upon fields and orchards, inhabited by Mrs. Neale's cattle and old coach-horses; and beyond was one of the woody hills we have before mentioned.

Mrs. Neale's establishment consisted of a footman and gardener, not much younger than Mrs. Simpson, her maid; besides a coachman and two female servants who had passed the meridian of life. All these persons, who had not accompanied Mrs. Neale on her journey, received their mistress with great appearance of joy, and the whole village seemed to share in their satisfaction.

Mrs. Neale was occupied for two or three days in settling herself again at home, the leaving of which was to her a no very usual event. Meanwhile, the young people found unceasing diversion in exploring the garden and immediate surrounding grounds. The pleasure of wandering about, unattended, was one they had seldom enjoyed before; and tea-time on Saturday arrived before they had formed any regular plan of spending their time.

As they were all sitting together at the tea-table, "I am thankful," said Mrs. Neale, "that I am entirely recovered from the fatigue of the journey, and feel once more perfectly settled at home; and shall now, I hope, my dear children, be able to devote myself more to you than I have yet done. I always love to spend Saturday evening with some view to the approaching day; and I think I shall not be spending this evening unsuitably by introducing you, my dear children, to some scenes which will remind you of your dear departed mother. When tea is over, you shall go with me up stairs."

The young people heard this invitation with delight, and made haste to conclude their meal; when their grandmamma led them up the ancient oak staircase to a dressing-room, which joined, on one side, to her bed-room, and into which they had not yet been admitted. This room was wainscoted, except where several bookcases with glass covers were let into the wall. The furniture was old-fashioned, like that of the rooms below, and the walls hung round with pictures.

Most of these were landscapes, which Letitia recognised as the work of her beloved mother. Mrs. Neale led the young people to the window, and bade them look at the river rolling beyond the little village street, its sparkling current peeping amidst the trees which hung over its sedgy banks; and beyond it, on the other side, towards a hill, gently ascending, where, amidst thickets of alders, cottages embosomed in their orchards, or luxuriant hop-yards, the haymakers were gathering the hay into large hillocks, for its more secure preservation during the rest of the Sabbath.

Having pointed out the beauties of this scene, Mrs. Neale sat down in her arm-chair by the window, and the young people gathered themselves around her. "In this room," said she, "were passed some of the happier part of your mother's early days. Here she received many of those instructions which, poor and feeble as they were, it pleased her heavenly Father so remarkably to bless; and I shall rejoice if in this place I may be permitted to afford any benefit to her dear children." Here Mrs. Neale looked affectionately at her

children, and their expressive countenances shewed how much they were interested in what she said.

“In this room,” proceeded Mrs. Neale, “I have enjoyed the utmost earthly happiness—the society of my two dear children and their beloved father. I have survived all these beloved persons; but it is something like a revival of former happiness to be able to benefit you their representatives; and if I could see you, my dear children, moulded into any thing of your mother’s sweet character, what happiness would it afford me!”

“Dear grandmamma,” said Letitia, “make us what mamma was at our age.”

“Your mamma was humble, gentle, affectionate, obedient, industrious, and self-denying.”

“And what are we?” interrupted Harriet.

“What are you?” repeated Mrs. Neale: “my dear children, the first advice I would give to each of you is solemnly to ask yourselves this question—What am I?—and that will be the first step to your becoming what your dear mother was. And something else

we will also do immediately: we will arrange a plan for spending our time; though in this arrangement we will bear in mind that this is a kind of holiday season, and that you are to spend a considerable portion of that season in gaining health and strength among gardens, orchards, and meadows. We will meet here after breakfast, and we will read and work till my old-fashioned dinner-hour. And after tea we will meet here again, or else in my favourite arbour; and here we will talk of your dear mamma, or converse and read on other subjects that will be profitable to us."

After some further discourse, Mrs. Neale took her granddaughters into an adjoining light closet, where a small chintz bed faced a range of mahogany shelves, upon which were carefully preserved a great variety of playthings. "In this closet," said Mrs. Neale, "my infant children used to play, while I was engaged in writing or reading. I could here watch over them without being disturbed by their childish noise. But when my little Arthur died, his sister requested that her playthings might be put away; and I

then provided her with a little bed near to myself, as she was long a mourner for her dear departed companion; and, by having her near to me, I could often afford her comfort."

Mrs. Neale then unlocked an Indian box, and took out two miniatures of children fastened to pearl bracelets. One represented a little boy of four, with waving flaxen hair, blue eyes, and a countenance of extreme gentleness and placidity; the other that of a little girl, in whose baby face and dark eyes shone the utmost animation and vivacity.— These she put into the hands of her granddaughters, saying, "Such were the dear children with whom my heavenly Father intrusted me: one only for a while; the other lived long enough to sow those seeds in the hearts of her own children which I trust will bring a plentiful harvest."

The young people earnestly bent over the little miniatures, and it was long before they could return them to their grandmother.— "How old," said Harriet, after a long silence, "was our uncle when he died?"

"His death," said Mrs. Neale, "was at-

tended with some interesting circumstances, which I will some day relate to you. He was within one fortnight of being ten at the time he died, and his sister was three years younger. Till the time of his death I had known little outward sorrow: but though my affliction was very bitter, I have had since that time much increase of spiritual joy: and my little darling was still a greater gainer; for he was a child of great piety, and remarkably devoted to his heavenly Father. You, my dear children," proceeded Mrs. Neale, "are blessed with a brother whose life and example are of unspeakable value to you; and this dear boy, by his death, was the instructor of his sister. How much may brothers and sisters do for each other! I would that young people were more sensible of their responsibility in this respect."

As Mrs. Neale spoke, the sisters thought of George: remembering how they had slighted his advice, they felt ashamed.

This interesting discourse was prolonged till it was time for evening prayers; after which, the young people retired to bed in a

more calm and pleasant state of mind than they had enjoyed for some time.

The next morning, they rose early, and took their Bibles into the garden, where, in some pleasant, shady spot, they sat enjoying the sweet quiet of a Sunday morning.

After breakfast, they accompanied their grandmamma to a Sunday-school which she superintended; and from thence they were invited to church by the cheerful chime. After service, Mrs. Neale stopped in the church-yard to accost many an old neighbour whom she had not seen since her return, and to none of these did she fail to introduce her blooming granddaughters. The rector and his wife looked at them with almost parental feelings. The old gentleman pronounced his blessing upon them, praying that they might tread in the steps of their excellent mother.

After dinner, they went to church again; and, the evening being extremely fine, Mrs. Neale took an early tea beneath the shade of a favourite mulberry tree, whose branches sheltered a circular plot of shorn grass, in the midst of which the tree grew, and surround-

ing this were trim beds of gaudy flowers, with the choicest pinks and carnations.— Here they were delightfully regaled by the village bells, echoed back from the opposite banks of the river. After some time spent in profitable and interesting conversation, Mrs. Neale returned into the house, where she read to the assembled family; and the day was closed as pleasantly as it began.

A week passed away in calm and regular habits; during which the sisters were more happy in each other than they had been for some time. But the reins had been too long laid on the neck of pride and self-will; Mrs. Milward's injudicious management, and Myra's improper interference, had produced too many injurious impressions to be all done away at once and without considerable effort, and of the evil they had produced the young people were not yet aware.

During this week, they became more acquainted with the beauties of the neighbourhood; to some of which Mrs. Simpson was allowed to introduce them in their afternoon walks, as Mrs. Neale did not like them to

walk far by themselves. One or two visits also passed between Mrs. Neale and the old rector and his family.

The following Saturday, the evening being extremely calm and delightful, Mrs. Neale informed her granddaughters that she intended to drink tea under the shade of the favourite mulberry tree; and that, afterwards, she would give them some account of the early life of her two dear children, and the death of her little boy.

This plan was heard of with great delight by the young people; and accordingly, each sitting round their grandmother's arm-chair of twisted oak, which was placed beneath the old mulberry tree, she thus addressed them:—

“ My little Arthur was a child of unusual thoughtfulness, even from his cradle; and though he did not engage the attention of strangers like his little lovely sister, he was an extremely interesting companion; when almost an infant, he would place himself on a low stool at my feet, and ask me questions about his God and his Saviour, about heaven, and the crown of glory prepared for

all who love their Saviour. He was extremely fond of instructing his little giddy playfellow whenever he could persuade her to listen to him, and there never was a kinder brother. We always endeavoured to impress upon his mind the great duty of being kind to his sister, and that he ought to shew his superior strength by protecting her and administering to her happiness, not by tyrannizing over her, and making her a slave, which is too often the case with brothers; who thus in their early days acquire habits which render them in after life overbearing, self-indulgent, and dogmatical, and by this means also lose the influence which an affectionate elder brother will always possess over his sisters.

“When our beloved Arthur was seven years old, he was sent every day to our worthy rector, who kept a school for children of his age. But this circumstance did not by any means lessen his pleasure in the society of his little sister, nor did it in any measure change the serious cast of his character.

“Thus the time passed away till my dear boy was about nine years and a half old;

when, one day, as my little Amelia was playing by herself in the garden, the gardener chanced to leave the door open which leads into the meadow. Curiosity led her to the door, and, though forbidden to go out of the garden by herself, she heedlessly strayed in search of cowslips till she had proceeded a considerable way in the meadow without being perceived; and it happened,—I will not say unluckily,—that a large dog, having broken his cord, was at this very time making his escape from an adjoining farm-house.—My little Amelia was accustomed to play with our great mastiff, and therefore approached this great dog without fear: but the fierce creature flew at her, barking furiously, and seized her by the leg. She screamed violently, and the sound of her voice reached the play-ground where her brother was playing with his companions. He instantly knew the voice of his beloved little sister, and, running towards the spot, he perceived her still in the power of the dog. He stood for a moment, at a loss what to do; then, taking up a great stone, he threw it at the

dog, which happily obliged him to let the little child go; and then, running to her, perceiving that she was unable to move, he raised her up, while she put her arms round his neck, calling out, 'Save me, brother! save me, dear, lovely brother!' Not being able to carry her in any other way, he took her upon his back, and made all the haste he could to bring her into the garden, lest their enemy should come after them; and when he had got within the garden, he laid down his burden on the grass, carefully closing the door after him; and then, having for a minute rested himself, he was going into the house to look for me, when she again called out, again reaching out her arms towards him, 'Do not leave me, Arthur; do not leave me, beloved brother.' So, unwilling to vex her, he seated himself on the grass, and, laying her head upon his lap, he tried to bind up the wound, from which the blood still trickled, with his handkerchief; and in this employment he was engaged when I accidentally walked into the garden, and arrived at the spot where they were.

“After this time, my little girl was for several weeks unable to walk, and she was, during the day, laid upon a sofa in my dressing-room; and here I witnessed the last scenes in which it was permitted my little Arthur to be actively engaged. No schemes of pleasure with his young companions could ever detain him from his beloved sister. Sometimes he read to her; sometimes he talked to her; sometimes he would bring his little basket of twigs and his knife, and manufacture his bows and his arrows in her presence, to amuse her. The last bow and arrows which he made are still preserved in her little closet. But I remember with the most unfeigned delight, the lessons of religion which he then gave her, often drawing them from the late accident she had met with. ‘You love me, Amelia,’ I have more than once heard him say, when he thought I was engaged with some other employment, ‘you love me, because I saved you from that naughty dog. Why do you not love Jesus Christ, who saved you from the power of the lion?’ Sometimes she appeared inattentive: once I heard her reply, ‘Say no

more about it, brother; I do love Jesus Christ.'—'But not enough, sister: you do not love him enough: you do not think enough about going to live with him in heaven: that will be the real happy time: you do not pray enough, sister: you are not sorry enough for the naughty things you have done.'

"However these instructions might have been at that time disregarded, they were soon to be impressed upon the mind of the little listener in a manner which could never be effaced.

"By degrees my Amelia recovered from her wound; and with what glee did she speak of the time when she should return to her usual habits of play! alas! little thinking that she would no longer have one to share with her in them.

"Upon the day when she was last visited by the surgeon, she said to her brother, when he returned from school, 'O, Arthur! I have joyful news for you—next week I am to run about and play as I used to do. O! how nice it will be! What nice games of play we shall have!'

"There was something in the countenance

of my little boy, while she spoke this, which much attracted my attention, and I could not help saying to him, 'Why do you look so grave, Arthur? are you not pleased with the thoughts of playing again with your sister?' — 'Yes, dear mamma,' answered he, 'I had rather play with Amelia than with any body in the world. But, as she was talking about being got quite well, and being able to play again, I could not help thinking of that verse in Watts's Hymns—

"Are these thy mercies, day by day,
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than they,
And strive to serve thee best."

"As the child spoke, I continued to look earnestly on him, and for the first time I thought that I distinguished an appearance of disease in his countenance, and again I concluded it must be fancy. But I have no doubt that he had for some time felt an indisposition to the usual sports of childhood, by which means his heavenly Father had been ripening him for a removal, which was so soon to follow.

“On the very day which my little Amelia, and which, indeed, her father and myself had joyfully anticipated, when she was to leave her sofa and to be restored to liberty—on this very day my lovely Arthur complained of a head-ache, the effects of which he tried in vain to conceal: all day long he laid his head upon a pillow, but never complained. ‘O, Amelia,’ he said to his sister, ‘you are well, and can play; but I cannot play with you. Go, dear sister, and run about the garden without me.’—‘No, Arthur,’ she answered; ‘you would not play without *me*: I will not play when you are sick.’ He several times asked me to read to him; and when I opened a Bible, he said, ‘Read about Jesus Christ dying for me.’

“We had sent for a physician immediately upon the child’s complaining of a head-ache. But the messenger of death was on his road; he was hasting towards us, and his progress was not to be arrested. In two days, the understanding of my little boy began to fail: a stupor gradually spread itself over it. In his few intervals of sense he evidenced that

his heart was in heaven. But at length he knew us no more; and, after three weeks of almost total insensibility, this our little beloved instructor was removed from us."

Mrs. Neale here paused, and wiped away her tears; yet her countenance was expressive of holy triumph, and she thus proceeded:

"My beloved Amelia seemed for a time inconsolable. Her playthings were put aside, and never afterwards resorted to, even after she recovered her usual spirits. She now became inseparable from me, and I was the confidant of all her feelings. The strongest of these seemed now to be a lively regret that she had paid so little attention to her beloved brother's instructions.

"From this time, her character, through the divine blessing, took a new mould, and was gradually formed into that fair and beautiful model which I could wish to present as an example to her children. She recovered, in time, her gaiety; but it was now under due restraints. Her piety was sincere and progressive. She endeavoured not only to govern herself by the laws of religion, but

also to habituate herself to taste its pleasures; for we must gain a taste for the pleasures of religion, as much as we would for the pleasures of literature, or for those of any other pursuit. She was orderly and industrious in her habits; and united, what are not, I believe, often separated—a thirst for real wisdom and knowledge with a great enjoyment of innocent and simple pleasures.

“Thus did my beloved Amelia grow up to the age of sixteen, when a trifling circumstance brought her excellences as a daughter to the test; and as I contemplated her progress with parental delight, I could not help attributing it very largely, humanly speaking, to the impression made upon her mind by the loss of my beloved Arthur. Thus, had I been disposed to murmur, every feeling of that sort must have been subdued into the sweetest resignation.”

Here Mrs. Neale stopped; and the young people thanked her for the interesting account; and they continued for some time longer to speak of the lovely boy. Before they rose to return into the house, Harriet

said to her grandmother, "You mentioned, dear grandmamma, that, when mamma was sixteen, a trifling circumstance brought her excellences as a daughter to the test. Might we be allowed to hear the account of this?"

"Certainly, my dear," answered Mrs. Neale; "perhaps on another Saturday evening. But allow me to ask, my dear children, if you are making practical use of our conversations?"

"I do not quite understand you, dear grandmamma," replied Letitia.

"In these days," said Mrs. Neale, "there is no want of means of instruction: they are abundant; but we do not see always correspondent good produced in those persons to whom they are offered. Why is this?"

"I suppose," answered Letitia, "because they are not properly used."

"A sick person," said Mrs. Neale, "may not be the better for the neighbourhood of a physician, because he does not know he is sick and will not send for him, or because, sending for him and consulting him, he will not take his medicines."

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“You are our physician, grandmamma,” said Letitia: “I think we know we are sick.”

“And I hope,” said Harriet, “we are willing to take the medicine.”

“But perhaps,” said Selina, “we do not know what our exact sickness is.”

“I own,” said Mrs. Neale, “for I wish to deal openly with you, my dears, that I have not been altogether satisfied with every thing I have seen in you; but I would rather lead you to discover your faults yourselves, than point them out to you. You know how to do this: you have been blessed with the best of parents, and you have enjoyed great advantages with Miss Seabright: you are not ignorant of what you ought to be. Let me beg of you to spend some time this week in examining yourselves; and whenever we have any conversation together, ask yourselves, Have I done what I hear pointed out as right? have I fallen into the sin against which I am warned?”

“It is for want of this close application that we are so little benefited by the sermons we hear, or the examples and pious discourse

of those we live with. And hence it sometimes occurs that the children of good people are so unworthy of their parents. Alas! they little think how much they have to answer for. The children of Sodom and Gomorrah will, perhaps, rise up in judgment against them at the last day, and say, 'Had we been blessed with parents such as yours, we would have taken heed to their counsels, and not have perished in the overthrow of the city.'"

Mrs. Neale's advice was not disregarded by her granddaughters. Their mother had early accustomed them to self-examination, and this duty had been recommended to them by Miss Seabright; though, alas! it had been much neglected during their last residence at home; and they were by no means ignorant of their own particular besetting sins, yet they were not at all aware of the degree in which they had lately yielded to them. The counsels of Mrs. Milward had fostered Harriet's love of power; and her intimacy with Myra had encouraged Letitia's vanity and conceit; and the conduct of both her sisters had driven Selina more within herself; while

a general spirit of worldliness and carelessness had crept into the hearts of all.

In the course of the week, they passed some considerable portion of their time, as circumstances allowed, in solitude. Shady walks, and those recesses where the nightingale pours her solitary lays, have been ever found favourable to meditation. Thus summer invites particularly to devotion; and when we sit or walk alone, the hum of bees, and the jubilee of birds, seem naturally to raise our souls in gratitude to the Author of all our good.

What was the fruit of this sweet and profitable employment of their time may hereafter appear: its immediate visible effect was an increase of good-will among each other.

At length Saturday returned again; and Letitia reminded her grandmamma of her promise to give them some particulars of their mother's conduct when she was sixteen.

The day having been very rainy, it was impossible to drink tea under the mulberry tree; and, Mrs. Neale being chilly, a fire was lighted in her dressing-room, round which (tea being concluded) the little party

assembled; the young people at their work, while Mrs. Neale thus began her relation:—

“As my dear Amelia had passed the years of childhood, and had hitherto lived in great retirement, I felt desirous, that, as opportunity offered, she should see a little more of the world than had hitherto been shewn to her. I had always felt a great dread of that sudden change which parents so often permit to take place in the lives of their daughters, by removing them at once from almost total solitude into a vortex of dissipation. I wished gradually to shew her a little of different manners and different places, keeping her, however, entirely in the back-ground.

“With this view, as leisure and income were liberally provided us, we proposed undertaking a journey to London, where I had a sister at that time residing.

“My husband and myself were still discussing this plan between ourselves, when we had an unexpected visit from the sister of whom I have been speaking and her only daughter. My sister was herself a serious

woman, and had given her daughter, as she believed, a religious education; but, having intrusted the care of her very much to others, it did not occur to her that it was necessary to watch over the application she made of the instruction she had received to her own particular circumstances. Matilda was accomplished, and had much propriety in her outward manners; indeed, she was far more silent and reserved in domestic society than Amelia, though only a few months older.

“ Before we had communicated to my sister our plan of visiting London, she herself, in the presence of my daughter, requested permission to take her back with her to pay a long visit; adding, that she should have great pleasure in shewing her every thing worthy of being seen—while she might also have the benefit of masters.

“ Mr. Neale had always a great dislike to travelling; and, feeling himself rather indisposed, though so slightly that nothing was apprehended of danger, he seemed extremely glad to avail himself of this opportunity of effecting our purpose for our daughter with-

out being himself obliged to undertake a journey he so much disliked.

“I did not like the idea of this separation; but, finding my husband’s wishes so strongly against the journey, and Amelia’s desires being excited for the plan, I consented to it without making any objection; and, accordingly, preparations were made for the journey, which Amelia witnessed with great glee, though the thought of leaving her parents was painful to her.

“The pleasant months of autumn were now rapidly passing away. My sister and her daughter had promised to remain six weeks with us. The fifth week was already arrived, and the journey continued to be talked of with great delight. An intimacy had been gradually growing up between Amelia and Matilda; and I was pleased to observe it, because my daughter had no young friend excepting Julia Seabright, a young person who resided near us; and I thought it desirable that she should form some suitable acquaintance with persons of her own age.

“The last week was now entered upon,

when I perceived a sudden and very evident change in the appearance and behaviour of my daughter. She became extremely silent; there was a languor, and often a dejection, in her countenance; she was absent and thoughtful. When I asked her if any thing was the matter, she would put me off, though as pleasantly as she could. If I questioned her as to her health, she would sometimes admit that she had the head-ache, but nothing more. I sometimes attributed all this to her feelings at the idea of a separation from her friends; but again I thought she evidenced more distress than was natural on such an occasion. One evening, I was so much struck with her manner and appearance, that I was convinced that she must be seriously indisposed either in mind or body; and, seeing her unwillingness to communicate her feelings to me, I became the more uncomfortable.

“When I retired to my room, at night, I was so distressed that I could not sleep. After having been in bed about half-an-hour, I got up, and, wrapping myself in my dressing-gown, I stepped lightly into my dear Amelia's

room. She was not in bed, but the door of a light closet opening out of it stood ajar. I stepped softly up to the door, and perceived her kneeling at a chair; but so absorbed was she in her sacred employment, that she did not hear my step; and I returned back to my room, but not to my bed. An hour passed, I believe, before I determined upon what I should do. Then I took my candle again, and stepped once more into Amelia's room. It was quiet, and in total darkness. I walked up to the bed, and there found my beloved child asleep, as I thought; but her eyelids were still wet with tears, and a feverish tint was on her cheeks. I stood by the bedside for some time, looking at her; then, putting down my candle on a small table near the bedside, I knelt down, and, gently kissing my beloved daughter's cheek, I said, softly, 'Heaven bless thee, dear child, and dry those tears for thee, which thy mother cannot do.' I perceived a gentle motion in the bed as I spoke; and I had no sooner risen from my knees, than with a sudden spring she raised her head, and, opening her eyes with the

sweetest smile, she said, 'What you, mamma? O! how kind! And have you left your bed to see your poor unworthy Amelia?'—'I was afraid you were unwell, my dear,' said I.—'Not unwell, mamma,' said she: then laying her head upon my shoulder, as she drew me to sit down by her side, she added, with some trepidation, 'No, mamma, I am very well, but I am unhappy.'—'Unhappy, my love! what makes you unhappy?'—'I have done very wrong,' said she: 'I have listened to somebody who has spoken ill of you and papa.' Here she burst into a violent flood of tears, which for some time she could not check. I hardly knew what to say, I was so much taken by surprise. 'Mamma,' said she, at last, 'I shall be happier when I have told you every thing. I do not wish to speak ill of any body; but I must tell you *all*—it was Matilda, mamma; and I have listened too long, and almost believed what she said: but I see my sin now.'—'And did you join with her, my dear, in speaking ill of me and your papa?'—'No, mamma; no, I did not do that: but it was wicked, very wicked, to

listen to her, and harbour one undutiful thought. Dear mamma, will you forgive me?'—'You are sensible of your fault, my dearest,' I replied, kissing her; 'and you have confessed it, not to me only, I doubt not. You have my full forgiveness.' I then expressed my wish to know more particulars; and she related to me, more largely than I need do to you, the details of her cousin's behaviour.

"It seemed that Matilda was in the habit, which cannot be too severely blamed, of complaining of the treatment she received from her parents, of relating to others what she considered as instances of their injustice, and of reflecting upon their general behaviour, scrutinizing their motives, and passing her judgment upon them. In this manner she had conversed with my daughter; and, from speaking thus of her own parents, it is not to be wondered at that she should soon proceed to speak to Amelia in a similar way of *her* parents: and Amelia listened, though she did not otherwise join in the discourse."

"But what should she have done, dear grandmamma?" asked Letitia, earnestly.

“She should have expressed her disapprobation of this sort of conversation in a manner so decided as effectually to put a stop to it. If wives or children permit the faults of their husbands or their parents to be discussed before them, except under very particular circumstances, or even permit a judgment to be passed upon their motives in their presence, they are failing in the solemn obligations of love and reverence which they owe to them, while they are equally forgetful of the respect which they owe themselves; for, in the end, those persons who make improper complaints always subject themselves to contempt.—Young people should learn early to distinguish between real friendship and that pernicious intimacy which is founded upon similar habits of sin, or folly, or mere party spirit, or a common dislike to the same person. Real friendship must be built upon real religion, and will never sanction any breach of divine commandments.”

“And is it against the divine law,” said Letitia, “to speak of the faults of our parents and husbands?”

“Certainly so, when it is needlessly done, or in a wrong spirit,” said Mrs. Neale. “Besides, my dear girl, it may not always be the case that even a wife is a judge of the motives of her husband’s conduct; and with children, in respect to their parents, the thing must be so frequently the case, that they can scarcely fail to err when they pretend to form a judgment upon it. Avoid then, my dears, the society of those who presume to find fault in your presence with those who are in authority over you, at least if they persevere in doing so after you have checked them for it.”

“I hardly know how this is to be done,” said Letitia.

“There are many means of bringing this about,” said Mrs. Neale. “For instance: suppose your maid Myra was to say to you, ‘I wonder at your papa for doing so and so; he ought to buy such and such a thing for you; he ought to allow you such an indulgence;’—you might reply to her, ‘Myra, if you have any thing to suggest on this subject, you had better do so to papa himself; I am not the person:—I am satisfied that whatever

he does is right.' Sometimes a marked silence is enough; but if we really feel the greatness of the sin, we shall find no difficulty in expressing our disapprobation as circumstances arise. But the great hindrance to doing this is the indulgence of pride, vanity, and sinful curiosity in ourselves."

Letitia thought of Myra and herself, and blushed.

"On this very account," proceeded Mrs. Neale, "it is, that young people receive so much mischief from the society of servants in general, who, being incapable, through ignorance, of forming a proper judgment of what their superiors ought to do in many instances, and wanting humility to feel this, are apt to allow themselves in speaking their mind very improperly;—though to this rule there are many valuable exceptions."

"But now, dear grandmamma," said Harriet, after some little silence, "will you proceed with what you were saying?"

"Having listened," proceeded Mrs. Neale, "to your dear mother's confession, I pointed out to her where she had erred, and gave her

much such advice as I have done to you ; cautioning her against hasty intimacies, and pointing out to her the difference between these and that true and genuine friendship, the seeds of which are often sown in childhood, and which flourish and bear fruit in after life, and which I doubt not will abide while the immortal soul endureth.

“ After this, she seemed quite at ease ; and, in conclusion, she said to me, ‘ I have one favour to ask of you, dear mamma—do not let me go to London with my aunt and cousin. I feel my own weakness ; I see the danger which surrounds me ; and let me wait till papa is well, and you are able to take me.’—‘ Are you serious,’ I said, ‘ in making this request?’—‘ I am,’ she replied ; ‘ I have considered it well.’

“ I gave her a day to consider further of this proposal ; when, finding her resolution fixed, I took an opportunity of acquainting my sister with it, in the kindest manner I could think of, without throwing any blame upon her daughter, and I told her that I hoped we should all be able to accomplish a journey to London

in the spring. But Providence had appointed other things for us.

“When my sister and her daughter left us, my beloved child expressed some little distress, but it soon passed away; and, from that time, she resumed all her usual cheerfulness, and nothing ever occurred afterwards to interrupt the delightful confidence which had so long subsisted between us.

“My dear silent Selina,” said Mrs. Neale, taking her granddaughter’s hand affectionately, “I am afraid you have too much reserve in your frame of mind. It proceeds too often from pride. Cultivate openness, my child, towards those who are really your friends—your father, your excellent brother, your sisters, and all you live with whom you ought to love and reverence. It is a sweet temper of mind, and is the source of many amiable, social, and gentle feelings.”

Selina coloured, but smiled pleasantly at her grandmamma, who thus proceeded:—

“In the course of the following winter, the indisposition of your dear grandpapa increased much upon him, so as to preclude all

thought of our leaving home in spring, and soon increased to such a height as to demand the utmost attention. During this period of mixed sorrow and consolation, nothing could exceed my Amelia's dutiful attention towards the best of fathers; nor, when he had exchanged this world of sorrow for a land of everlasting rest, could any thing surpass her unceasing attention to her widowed mother."

Here Mrs. Neale was interrupted by that tribute of meet sorrow which the remembrance of scenes so trying will draw from the Christian.

"From that time," proceeded Mrs. Neale, "we continued to live in great retirement, till chance, or rather I should say Providence, brought a relation of your dear father into our immediate neighbourhood. At this gentleman's house your father was a frequent visiter, and there was introduced to my Amelia. We occasionally left home during the period I have been speaking of, but circumstances directed us to other parts of England than London; of which Amelia would often say,

after her marriage, that she was glad, as she was to become almost an inhabitant of that place, and have so many opportunities of seeing all its wonders.

“It was during this period, also, that I indulged my beloved child with the grant of a very favourite wish. I have before mentioned to you the name of Julia Seabright. She was the daughter of worthy parents, whose circumstances were much decayed. She was three years younger than my beloved Amelia, and possessed considerable natural talents, though she wanted the opportunities of improvement. My dear Amelia had much leisure, possessed much industry, with a great desire to make herself useful; and she formed the design of making these talents subservient to the good of Julia Seabright. At her request I received this young person into my family, and she became her pupil; and in her improvements my Amelia tasted a pleasure which she would in vain have sought from worldly amusements. After her marriage, she procured for her young friend still greater advantages; which enabled her, at

length, to commence the establishment where you were placed."

"And was Miss Seabright educated by dear mamma?" said Selina.

"Yes, in part she was," answered Mrs. Neale.

"O how I shall love her then!" said Selina. "I knew she was her friend; but I did not know all this before."

"They were friends indeed," said Mrs. Neale, "in the best sense of the word. But in speaking on this subject, I cannot forbear to mention the extreme tenderness and gentleness with which my beloved child conducted herself towards her pupil—a conduct which was the more difficult, as there was so little difference of age between them. Much forbearance, no doubt, was exercised on both sides, as they had been formerly accustomed to associate as playfellows. I often thought, upon these occasions, that my child remembered the example of our beloved Arthur.

"At the age of twenty-two, my dear Amelia married your father. How she discharged

the duties of a wife and mother I need not tell you: it is my daily prayer that her children may tread in her steps. Her last prayers were for them. I cannot doubt but that they will be heard; and that I shall live to see my dear children successfully fighting with their own peculiar temptations, and each in her own way adorning her Christian profession, the comfort of their father, and the solace and delight of one another: and thus, though many separations may have taken place here among us, we may hope to be a family that shall be united above through the countless days of eternity."

After Mrs. Neale had ceased to speak, there was for some time a silence among the young people: they seemed still to hang upon their grandmamma's words, while their hearts burnt within them to follow the steps of their beloved mother.

The following day was a solemn one to each of the young people. In proportion as we contemplate what is excellent with a well-disposed mind, in the same proportion we are affected with a view of our deficiencies. He

who sees most of God, sees also most of his own unworthiness.

For some time past, the sisters had each been in the habit, when any thing went amiss, of defending herself, and casting all the blame upon her sisters. It began now to be otherwise: they felt disposed each of them to say in their own hearts, "Lord, it is I." A thousand sins rose up in remembrance before them, and they saw these sins, in some degree at least, in their own frightful colours.

Such were the feelings which, more or less, were alive in the hearts of the sisters, both towards their heavenly Father and each other; but in Letitia, who was very quick in all her feelings, they attained an earlier ripeness.

It was in the course of the following week, that, the day having been extremely hot, they did not take their accustomed walk after dinner; and Mrs. Neale directed them in the evening to shut their book earlier than usual, for the purpose of walking before sunset.

When Harriet and Selina were prepared to go out, Letitia was missing. They looked for

her in the garden, and she was not to be found. "She would not, surely, go out of the garden without us!" said Harriet.

"There is yet one place where we have not looked for her," said Selina; "and that is the alder thicket, where grandmamma has often told us that dear mamma and uncle Arthur used to play."

Within the inclosure of Mrs. Neale's ground, there was a little field sloping to the river, at the upper end of which alders grew in little thickets; between which the grass had been lately with some difficulty mown, and had left the turf low and delicate, perfumed with the sweet odour of fresh hay. Amidst these thickets it was very easy to be hidden; and here was no danger of interruption, as the field was only a private footway to the river from Mrs. Neale's house. A copse ran down one side of the field as far as the river's brink.

A voice as soft and sweet as that of a nightingale met the ears of Harriet and Selina as they entered the field: it proceeded from one of the thickets. "O, there she is!"

said Selina: "I hear her voice! it comes from the alder thickets."

"Stay one minute," said Harriet: "do not interrupt her; her voice sounds very sweet. Poor Letitia!"

As they stood still and listened, they clearly distinguished her singing the following words:

"Soon as we draw our infant breath,
The seeds of sin grow up for death:
Thy law demands a perfect heart;
But we're defil'd in every part."*

"Do you hear those words?" said Selina, looking up earnestly at Harriet.

"I do," answered Harriet; and, as she spoke, the tears trickled down her cheeks.—
"Let us go and look for her."

As they stepped softly in silence towards her, Letitia was not aware of their approach, and she still continued to sing; nor did she see her sisters till they stood before her. "Letitia," said Harriet.

Letitia looked up at her sister and started, and, seeing the tears running down her cheeks, she instantly rose with some emotion.

* Psalm li.—Dr. Watts.

“It is I, Letitia, that have been to blame; it is I, Letitia, not you,” said Harriet, the tears bursting from her eyes.

Letitia threw her arms round her sister's neck, and was unable to make any answer. Selina wept too; and a reconciliation took place between the three sisters, the particulars of which I cannot describe, for it was one so entire, and so sweet: and it had a promise of permanency, because it was built on a deep sense of their sin towards God. Their former apparent reconciliations had proceeded chiefly from a desire of appearing well before their grandmamma, in order that they might not be sent to school again. But their purposes of reformation had then been built upon their own strength: they now saw and deeply felt their own weakness, and knew how unable they were in themselves to do any thing good.

Now as they sat together, each seemed trying to be most forward in accusing herself as the author of their past unhappiness. Harriet acknowledged how she had abused her authority over her sisters; Letitia lamented her self-will, and her proneness to listen to any

misrepresentation of her sister's conduct; Selina confessed her unkindness, her coldness, her distance, her disobedience: and each saw and felt that the love of self and a departure from God had been the root of all their sins. They remained in sweet discourse together till the moon, rising above the opposite bank of the river, reminded them that it was time to return home.

After this evening, they met, as circumstances would allow, in the alder thicket, and had much discourse together; not vain, or light, or frivolous, but such as suited their present circumstances, and the views which they had been led to form of their respective states; and, in the course of a few days, they came to a resolution which was the result of earnest and humble prayer. The plan was first suggested by Harriet; it was approved by both the sisters; and, after being matured in their private conference, it was put into execution—as I shall now relate.

Mrs. Neale was sitting in her dressing-room, with her granddaughters, one evening, and Selina, at her desire, had taken from its

place the book they were accustomed to read in the afternoon. She appeared to be some time engaged in finding the place, looking from time to time at her sisters; when Harriet, at length, with some trepidation, thus addressed herself to Mrs. Neale:—

“Dear grandmamma, Letitia and Selina and myself have endeavoured to follow your advice, and to look into our late conduct; and we are fully convinced that we have done very very wrong, and I especially, who, as the eldest, ought to have known the best; and we wish, dear grandmamma, for your advice. We think we are too young, and too inexperienced, and too self-willed, to be left to ourselves; and we wish, all of us,—I speak for Letitia and Selina,—to place ourselves in your hands. Will you, dear grandmamma, direct us what to do? We are ready to go to school again, if you advise it; and we are ready to submit to any other control at home.”

When Harriet ceased to speak, Letitia and Selina both approached their grandmamma, and took each a hand; while Letitia added,

"You are our only mamma now: direct us, dear grandmamma; tell us what we ought to do."

The tears ran down the cheeks of the old lady as she looked at her children gathering round her. "I thank God, my dear children," said she, "for this change in your desires. It is *his* doing; for from him all good thoughts and holy desires proceed, and without his help we can do nothing that is good."

"And will you, dear grandmamma," said Harriet, "undertake to direct us?"

"Next week," replied Mrs. Neale, "we expect your father: when he arrives, I will discuss with him what plans will be best for you; meanwhile, I will give the subject full consideration, and we will all ask for heavenly wisdom to guide us in so important a decision. If I can in any way supply to you the loss of your beloved parent, I shall have new cause of thankfulness to him who has thus prolonged my life and strength. Be assured, my dear children, that I have no wish so near my heart as to make you really wise and really happy."

Mrs. Neale, then, with tears, tenderly embraced each of her grandchildren; and afterwards, having resumed her composure in some degree, she asked Harriet what had particularly led herself and her sisters to form this wise resolution.

In reply, the young people spoke with considerable openness of what had lately passed in their mind, and of the conversations that had taken place between themselves.

From this day until the arrival of Mr. Leslie and George, the conversations of Mrs. Neale with her granddaughters became of a still more interesting nature than they had ever been before. That confidence seemed now established between all parties which enabled Mrs. Neale to apply her instructions more particularly to the respective wants of the young people; and they, on their parts, felt entire freedom in laying open to her their own difficulties. Mrs. Neale was well aware, by long experience and constant study of the Bible, of the weakness and depravity of the human heart, and the subtlety of our spiritual enemy, and the great necessity of watchful-

ness; and she knew, also, that young people are often so extremely happy when they have obtained a spiritual victory, their spirits are so elated, that they are apt to forget they have any more trials to meet; and hence are too often involved in some fresh difficulty immediately after they have conquered the old one. She therefore endeavoured to put her granddaughters upon their guard against this danger. She tried to open their eyes, still more than they were already, to their lost and fallen state in themselves, and their absolute need of a dying Saviour to restore them to the Divine favour, and the constant need of Divine assistance to enable them to walk in the narrow way. She assisted them also in forming good habits, and pointed out to them many subordinate means of avoiding or conquering the temptations to their besetting sins. Harriet she softened into gentleness and mildness; Letitia's too great readiness to bring self forward was repressed; Selina was invited to confidence. Harriet was taught to be calm and composed in her activity; for bustling is

neither graceful, nor does it, in general, accelerate the dispatch of business, while it is apt to promote irritability and impatience of temper. Letitia was taught to do every thing at its proper season; for she was too apt to consider herself industrious, because she was seldom wholly unemployed. But this is industry—not to be doing something—but to be doing what we ought to do at the time in which it ought to be done. Selina was stirred up to exertion. The plain good understanding of Selina generally shewed her what she ought to be doing, but she wanted to be stimulated to action. Thus did true religion, true Christian motives, produce what pride might long have laboured in vain to effect. Christian practice must be built upon Christian principles.

Thus passed the time till the arrival of Mr. Leslie and his sons. How happily and profitably had this month passed away!

The newly-arrived guests were received with the greatest joy, and the most hearty welcome.

The morning after their arrival, the sisters

took their brothers a long walk. George was well acquainted with the country, but to Arthur it was new; and, having been some time in a town, the liberty of the country was delightful to him. His object, on the present occasion, was downright play, in which Selina was his companion; and his grandmamma's old fat spaniel Gunner, who was a great favourite with Selina, added not a little to their amusement, though the fat old gentleman did not much like exceeding the stately pace with which he was accustomed to follow his mistress. Meanwhile, Harriet and Letitia introduced George to some of their favourite retreats, which acquired a new interest to him from the recital of many little incidents connected with them.

George had never heard the particulars which Mrs. Neale had related to her granddaughters respecting their mother and the little Arthur; and these little anecdotes were now related to George. From hence they insensibly passed on to speak of themselves. They related to George much of what had passed during their visit; and, in conclusion,

they acknowledged to him, with sweet humility, how they had been convinced of their sin and folly, and, among their other faults, of their negligence of his advice; and they made him acquainted with the resolution they had formed of submitting themselves to the direction of their grandmamma, and of the manner in which they had communicated this resolution to her.

It is needless to say that George was highly gratified by his sisters' discourse. Every thing seemed now going on just as he could wish; and he could not but feel the warmest thankfulness to Providence, who had thus prospered his exertions for his sisters' good.

While the brothers and sisters were thus engaged, Mrs. Neale and Mr. Leslie were employed in discussing the arrangements that were to be made for the young people. As Mr. Leslie's stay was to be very short, there was no time to be lost in doing this.

Ever since the conversation we related as having taken place in London, between Mr. Leslie, Mrs. Neale, and Mrs. Milward, Mrs. Neale had been giving deep consideration to

the request Mr. Leslie had made that she would take charge of his family ; and many a painful mental struggle had she undergone relative to this subject. She had earnestly prayed for direction, and the late amiable behaviour of her granddaughters, in requesting her direction as to their own future conduct, had thrown great light upon her path, and seemed to direct her way, and she was now ready to communicate to Mr. Leslie the result of her reflections.

As soon as the young people were gone out, Mr. Leslie and Mrs. Neale, who were sitting in a summer breakfast-room down stairs, from whence they took a view of the trim garden, entered immediately upon the subject in which their minds were both deeply engaged. Mr. Leslie began the discourse by thanking Mrs. Neale for her kindness to his daughters.

“They are *my* daughters,” replied the old lady; “for indeed the interest I take in them falls but little short of that concern which I felt for their beloved mother.”

“I am inexperienced,” said Mr. Leslie, “more so than as a father I ought to be, in

the management of young people: but I can see that my dear girls are much improved by their month's residence with you. There is a delicacy, a modesty, a softness in their manners, which I have seen but little of lately. O, my dear Madam! if they could but always enjoy the advantage of such superintendance!"

"My dear son!" said Mrs. Neale, assuming an air of composure which but indifferently concealed the agitation of her feelings, "I have given full consideration to your wishes upon this point, and have come to a decision which I trust may answer our purposes for the dear children."

Mr. Leslie looked up earnestly at her.

As preparatory to what she had to propose, Mrs. Neale thought it best to relate to Mr. Leslie some of the conversations which had passed between his daughters and herself during the last month—especially their interesting avowal of their faults and follies, with their request to be directed and guided by her.

Mr. Leslie appeared greatly affected by this account.

“In conclusion,” said Mrs. Neale, “it is my opinion that it will be best to commit Letitia and Selina again to the care of Miss Seabright. There are circumstances and seasons which render a good school the best situation for young people—and such are the circumstances, I think, of your younger daughters. Letitia has been brought too forward, and at school she will be more kept back than she can now be at home, and Selina requires a degree of activity and exertion in those who educate her, which it would be impossible for her to receive from a person advanced in life. Miss Seabright loves these dear girls almost as a mother: they cannot be in better hands than hers, till they have attained that age at which their mother wished them to leave school.”

“I am perfectly of your opinion,” said Mr. Leslie; “but Harriet——”

“Harriet,” said Mrs. Neale, “is industrious, active, and prudent. She manages your family well considering her age, she is a comfort to you, and it is not fit that you should be left without some solace; but she

wants advice, direction, and regulation in many ways:—she is too young to be left without a guardian when you are not with her.”

Mrs. Neale here paused—the colour rose in her cheeks. She then proceeded:—“All that she wants in these respects, I am willing to supply to her in your house; while your youngest son, Arthur, whom you propose to take home at Christmas, will be a cheerful companion to her. Harriet, therefore, I would advise you to keep at home.”

“And will you, my dear Madam, really become an inmate of my house?—this is what I have desired beyond every thing, ever since the loss of our beloved Amelia, but never dared, till very lately, to hint at such a plan, nor even then to hope for its execution, knowing how happily you were situated here on your own estate, and how averse you always have been to a town.”

“I own,” replied Mrs. Neale, as the tears rolled down her cheeks, “that I have not come to this decision without some struggle. In this sweet place I have spent forty years

of my life: here rest the ashes of my husband and one of my children. This place is endeared to me by being the scene of the happiest period of my life, as well as by its possessing that perfect retirement in which those who have been long used to a country life find so many charms."

"How grateful, then," said Mr. Leslie, "ought I to feel to you for consenting to leave this place for the good of my children!"

"I was going to add," proceeded Mrs. Neale, "that, when you first made the request to me last spring, in London, the considerations I have just mentioned came so powerfully into my mind that I could not bear to think of them: but I was soon led to suspect that I was in danger of indulging to a sinful degree my love of retirement; that, though old, I was still healthy and strong beyond numbers of my age; and that as long as I was capable of working in my Master's vineyard it was my duty to do so. It seemed that the present call was one which I ought to obey. Why should grey hairs exempt us from working while our strength in any degree holds out?"

Besides," added Mrs. Neale, smiling amidst tears, "when my dear girls can do without me, when the evening of my life shall be still further advanced—I may hope yet to return and close it here, that my ashes may be laid beside those of my beloved husband:—and, more than this, I shall stipulate that we always spend the midsummer holidays in this place. It will be a feast and refreshment to me, a benefit to the taste and health of my granddaughters, and it will enable my dear George to become acquainted with the habits of a country life; as this place is to be his abode when I shall have exchanged it, as I trust, for a better."

Here Mrs. Neale paused, and received from Mr. Leslie the most grateful acknowledgments. He saw the wisdom of Mrs. Neale's plans, and perfectly acquiesced in them; for he could not but feel that she had at once consulted his comfort and the benefit of his children, while her own tastes and convenience were the sacrifice; and he could not but feel increased reverence for his excellent mother-in-law, who, at the age of

sixty, would cheerfully sacrifice the habits of forty years for the benefit of her fellow-creatures. Imitating the example of Abraham, she by faith desired a better country, even a heavenly. (Heb. xi. 16.)

Arrangements of less importance now only remained to be discussed. Among these, it was fixed that George and his sisters should remain with Mrs. Neale till she could complete her arrangements for leaving her present abode; and that Mr. Leslie, immediately on his return to Town, should request Miss Seabright to receive his two younger daughters into her family at Michaelmas; and that Myra should be dismissed from his service before the return of Letitia.

Nothing now was wanting but to communicate to the young people such of these arrangements as related to themselves. Mr. Leslie was thought the most proper person to make this communication. It was received by them with the greatest submission and cheerfulness, though they felt some disappointment at the idea of being separated. The feeling, however, that all was better

planned for them than could have been done by themselves, with the idea of adding to their papa's happiness, and of their grandmamma living with them, soon reconciled them very much to this circumstance. George was beyond measure delighted with the arrangement.

Two days after all these things were settled, Mr. Leslie set out upon his journey homewards, with the pleasant prospect of collecting his family round him within six weeks, under far happier circumstances than they had ever been placed in since Mrs. Leslie's death. Arthur was his companion, as his holidays were now nearly expired.

George and his sisters endeavoured to make themselves as useful as they could to Mrs. Neale. It was her purpose to leave her house under the care of her valuable and well-trying servants, that it might be ready at any time for her reception.

We pass over the particulars of her separation from her old neighbours and acquaintance, which she supported with great composure. On the evening, however, preceding her departure from her beloved home, she was

exceedingly dejected. She had been spending the afternoon, beneath the favourite mulberry tree, with her family and the clergyman of the parish and his wife, a very venerable couple; and when they rose to take their leave, she found it impossible to conceal her emotions.

The evening was unusually still, and every sweet sound belonging to the depth of country solitude was distinctly heard; the moon was rising over the copse, and a nightingale was heard in the depths of the wood.

A thousand remembrances connected with these scenes rose up before the mind of Mrs. Neale, and she could not restrain her tears.

The venerable pastor knew well all the habits of her past life, and he knew also the motives of her present conduct.

“My dear Madam,” said he, taking the hand of the old lady, “bless God that you are not suffered to sleep on the enchanted ground. Through my long life I have always observed that the children of God are never long safe unless they are labouring or suffering in their Master’s cause.”

“Ah!” replied Mrs. Neale, “I have feared lest my situation was too free from trial—too easy—and have prayed that it might not be a snare to me.”

“And God has heard your prayer, my dear Madam,” replied the clergyman, “and has called you to fresh service; and if you are doing his work, it signifies little where it is; and, remember, it is trial which makes us press forwards on our journey, and suffers us not to linger here. You will soon reach Jordan’s banks, and get a view of your promised inheritance——”

“A land far lovelier,” interrupted Mrs. Neale, raising her eyes, “than this my beloved home!—

“Sweet fields, beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dress’d in living green.’”

The excellent old people all remained for some moments silent; an air of holy peace sat on their countenance. At last Mrs. Neale, turning to the clergyman, said, “I thank you, Sir, for the kind admonition and consolation you have afforded me; for this,

and all the instruction I have heretofore received from you, I return you my sincerest and most grateful thanks."

"To God be all the glory!" replied the pastor; "and may his blessing continue to rest upon you wherever you go; and may he at last bring us all to the fair land of our inheritance, the glory of Lebanon, the excellency of Sharon!"

After a solemn pause, the old man turned to the young people. "My young friends," said he, "you are setting out upon the journey of life: I would give you one important lesson. It is natural to all of us to place our hopes of happiness upon some earthly object: each of you will be tempted to say, 'If I can have but this or that enjoyment or possession, I shall be happy. But though created things are good in their place and season, yet, believe me, true peace is only to be found in walking with God.—Great peace have they, and only they, that love His law.'"

It was thus that Mrs. Neale separated herself from her best and most attached neighbours. The bitterness of separation seemed

now to have passed away, and the composure with which she took her leave of her beloved home the following morning quite astonished the young people; and, before they had concluded their journey, she had resumed her usual cheerfulness, though her constancy of mind was again put to the test when she took possession of her apartment at the house of her son-in-law.

Mr. Leslie's little villa was surrounded with a shrubbery prettily laid out, and was situated in what might be called the country by those persons who have never lived in those deep retreats where the voice of the ring-dove, the hum of the passing fly, the distant sound of dog, or sheep, or ploughboy, alone interrupt the delightful stillness. But here, in the place of these sounds, was heard the thousand noises which the neighbourhood of a great town will always assemble on a high-road; and instead of the simple objects which moved on the village green, or the scenery of the garden, the meadow, and the copse; gay equipages, beaux, and belles, or the various vehicles which are ever passing and repassing

to London with their busy attendants, met the eyes of Mrs. Neale, whenever she looked beyond the little shrubbery. These little things are trials to those persons long used to the delights of the country; and if the imagination is suffered to dwell upon them, as upon other little evils, they produce serious unhappiness. But Mrs. Neale had made up her mind, the path of duty was plain before her, and she set her face as a flint to meet little trials, and never allowed her fancy to roam in the fields of her beloved valley. She determined thankfully to enjoy all that was agreeable in her son-in-law's family and situation, and to devote herself wholly to her work—the spiritual and temporal improvement of her granddaughters; and by these means, by walking in this path of self-denial, she found herself more rapidly pressing forward to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The little party did not arrive at Mr. Leslie's house many weeks before the appointed time when Letitia and Selina were to return to Miss Seabright's.

A very short time previous to the day when the sisters were to be separated, Mrs. Milward, who was now settled at some considerable distance from London, paid an unexpected visit to her brother. A sudden call of business brought Mr. Milward to London for a few days, upon which occasion she accompanied him, in order to see her nieces previous to their going to school; which event she had heard from her brother was concluded upon, though she did not know how it had been brought about.

Mrs. Neale was pleased to observe an increase of composure and steadiness in the manner of this lady; and, as Mr. Milward was a man of some seriousness, it was hoped that, in time, a permanent change might be made in her character, though probably it would not be wholly effected without the discipline of adversity. Those who indulge in levity, are always laying up for themselves a store of future afflictions.

Mrs. Milward was extremely curious to know whether the young ladies were merely submitting to authority in the present ar-

rangement, or whether they had been induced by any motives to return to school with satisfaction to themselves; she therefore took every opportunity, when alone with her favourite Harriet, of enquiring into these things. Harriet simply related to her aunt all the particulars of their midsummer visit to their grandmamma's; and, as she was in the habit of great confidence with her aunt, and possessed but little of that false shame and sinful timidity which lead us to be silent respecting religious truths when we ought to speak them, she did not conceal from her how her own mind, and those of her sisters, had been brought to see their faults and mistakes, and willingly to surrender themselves up to the management of their grandmother.

Mrs. Milward listened and wondered, but ruminated in silence over all these things. She had not left Mr. Leslie's house when the long-expected day arrived. It had been arranged that Miss Seabright should herself pay a few hours' visit to Mrs. Neale at Mr. Leslie's house, and take the young ladies back with her. She came to breakfast. The

young people received her with an appearance of affection and regard which they had never shewn to her before, because they now remembered that she was the beloved pupil as well as friend of their mother.

After breakfast, Mrs. Neale had a conversation of some length with Miss Seabright; in which she communicated to her many things which she thought might afford her assistance in the management of her granddaughters. Meanwhile, the young people wandered together in the shrubbery, or busied themselves in some little preparation, clinging to each other as sisters do when about to part.

“What shall I do without you?” said Harriet: “you will have each other, but I shall have neither brother nor sister very soon; for George will go to Oxford in a few weeks.”

“But, after Christmas,” said Selina, “you will have dear Arthur; and, when he is not with papa, he will be a delightful companion to you.”

“Poor papa!” said Harriet; “I have

sometimes thought, lately, that we have not been attentive enough to him, nor tried to supply, as we ought, the place of dear mamma. Mamma was always studying how she could please him and make him happy, and I think we ought to try to do so too: a child's duty is not merely to do as it is bid."

"What you say is very true," said Letitia; "and this will be an object for you when we are gone. And, besides, you will have grandmamma for a companion all day—and she is something like dear dear mamma; and you will have papa in an evening; and Arthur will read to you. Then, when summer comes, we are to spend the midsummer holidays in the country with grandmamma."

"O! how delightful that will be!" said Selina.

"In the mean time, dear Selina," continued Letitia, "let us try and improve ourselves, and spend our time as dear mamma would wish if she was alive."

"We have lost much time," said Selina: "I hope we shall lose no more."

"And if we spend the time well," said

Letitia, "we shall indeed have a happy meeting."

"But let us remember, Letitia," said Harriet, "that we cannot spend our time well in our own strength."

"I am sure," said Letitia, "we have reason to remember that; for we are all too confident in ourselves. Miss Seabright spoke very truly when she told us, that pride, in some shape or other, was the besetting sin of each of us."

"Before we part," said Harriet, "let us say a prayer together, that we may be forgiven for all that is past, and enabled to do better for the time to come; for, if we walk in the narrow way, whether we live or die, or whatever happens to us, as dear mamma used to say, it is all right."

They immediately retired into their bedroom; where, all kneeling together, Harriet selected a prayer suitable to the occasion, in which they joined with real earnestness, as sinful creatures, feeling their own weakness and need of divine forgiveness and support. They had scarcely risen from their knees,

and given each other a kiss of sisterly love, when they heard the voice of George calling them to come down stairs. They guessed it was the signal for the departure of Letitia and Selina, who, taking each an arm of Harriet, accompanied her down stairs.

The ladies, with George, were all in the dining-room. Miss Seabright was standing up, prepared to set out. "I am sorry to hurry you, my dear young friends," said she; "but my time is precious."

"And if we are to part," said Mrs. Neale, "the sooner it is over the better."

"Come, do not make so serious an affair of it," said Mrs. Milward, as Letitia and Selina kissed their grandmamma with tears: "Christmas will soon be here. The leaves are already falling off the trees; and then brothers and sisters will have a happy meeting."

Miss Seabright took her leave of Mrs. Neale, and walked first into the hall. George accompanied her, to hand her into her carriage; and then slipped back, to separate each of his younger sisters from Harriet, on

whose arm they still leaned: and, as he bade them farewell, his countenance expressed not only brotherly affection, but a pleasant sense of approbation and satisfaction, which, if their dim sight would allow them to perceive, could not have failed to please.

Mrs. Milward followed the young people into the hall, where she took her leave of them, and remained with George and Harriet watching the carriage till it was out of sight. George then gave his arm to Harriet, and led her into the shrubbery, intending to beguile with his society the hours till dinner, which he feared she might find hang heavily upon her hands.

Mrs. Milward returned to Mrs. Neale, who had not quitted the dining-room; and as she placed herself upon the sofa beside her, she said to her, "You have almost made a convert of me, my dear Madam: I begin to believe that the fruits of pride, let them bear what form they may, all spring from an evil root."

"And let me further add," said Mrs. Neale, replying to her companion with a

countenance of great benignity, "that from true Christian humility springs every thing that is good and excellent.—*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; (Phil. iv. 8.)* these are the fruits of true humility."

L.

THE END.

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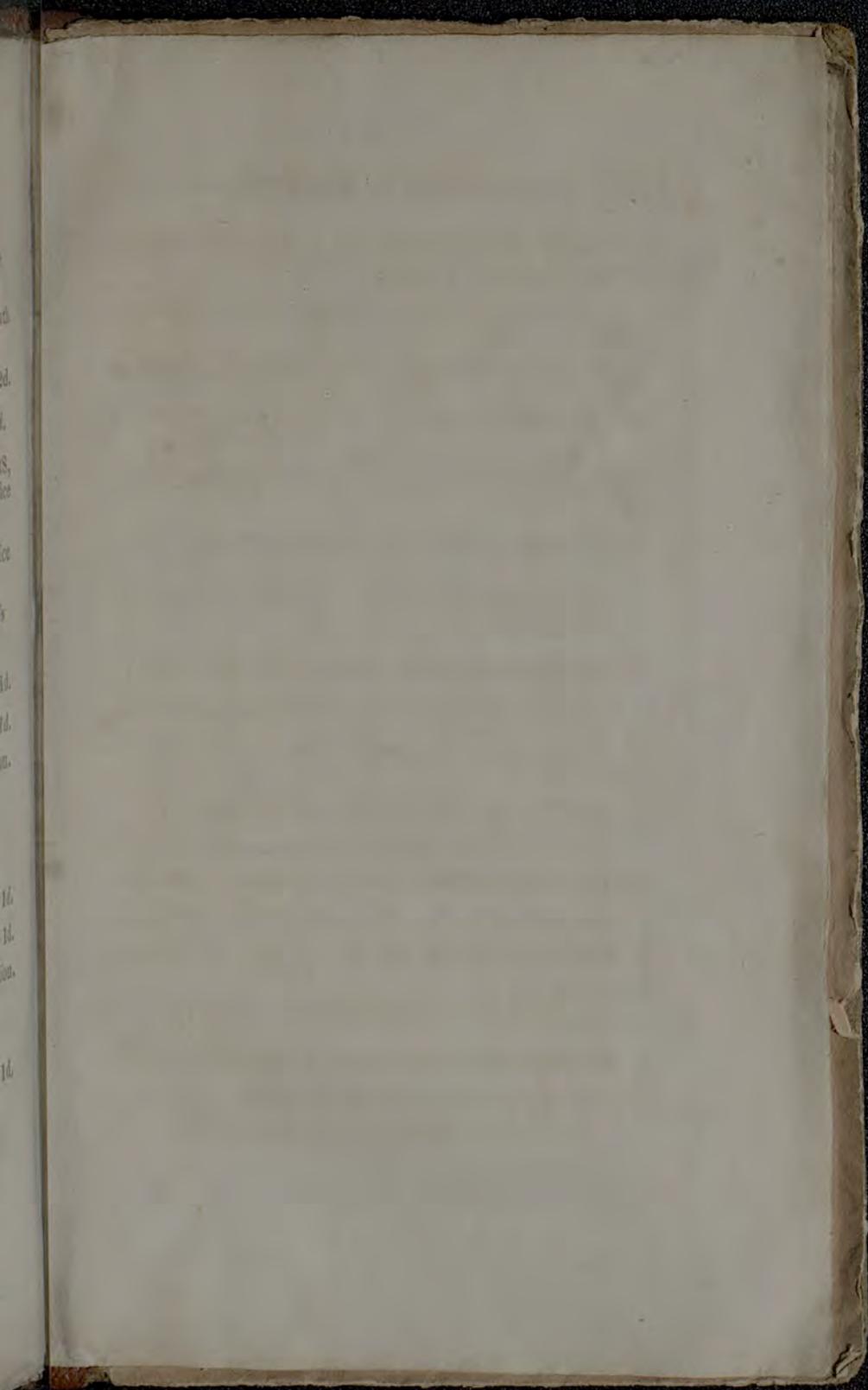
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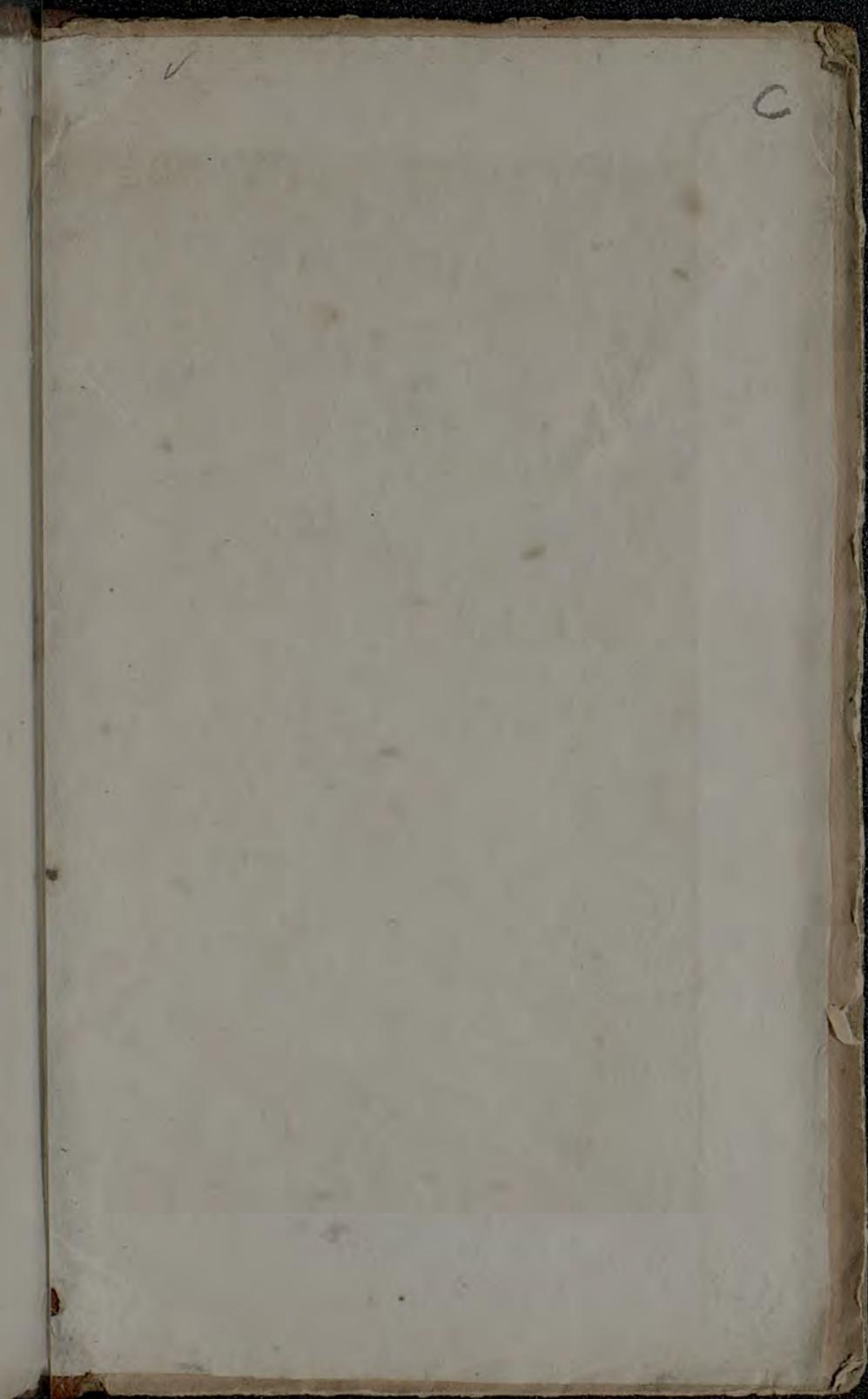
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