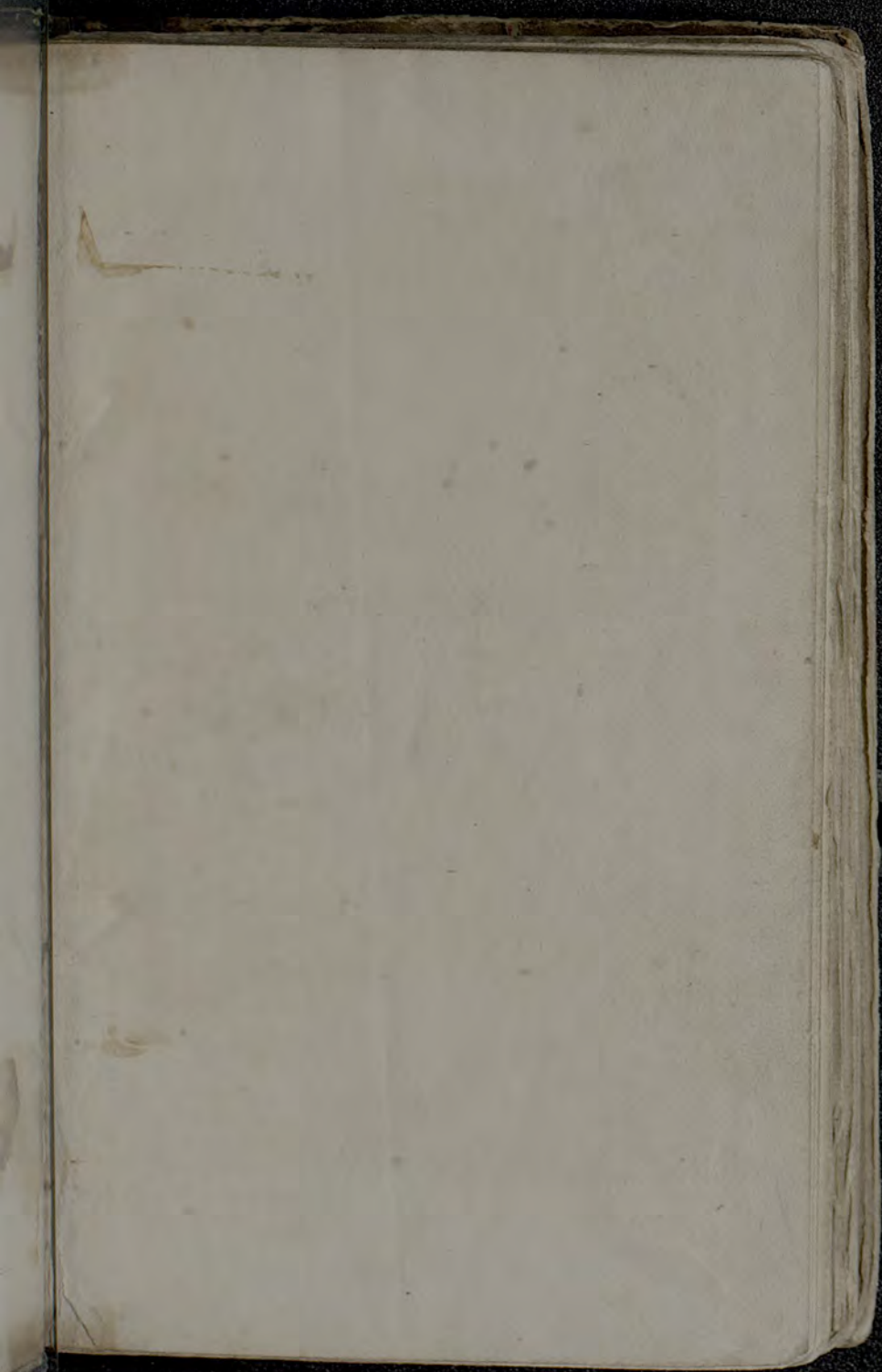


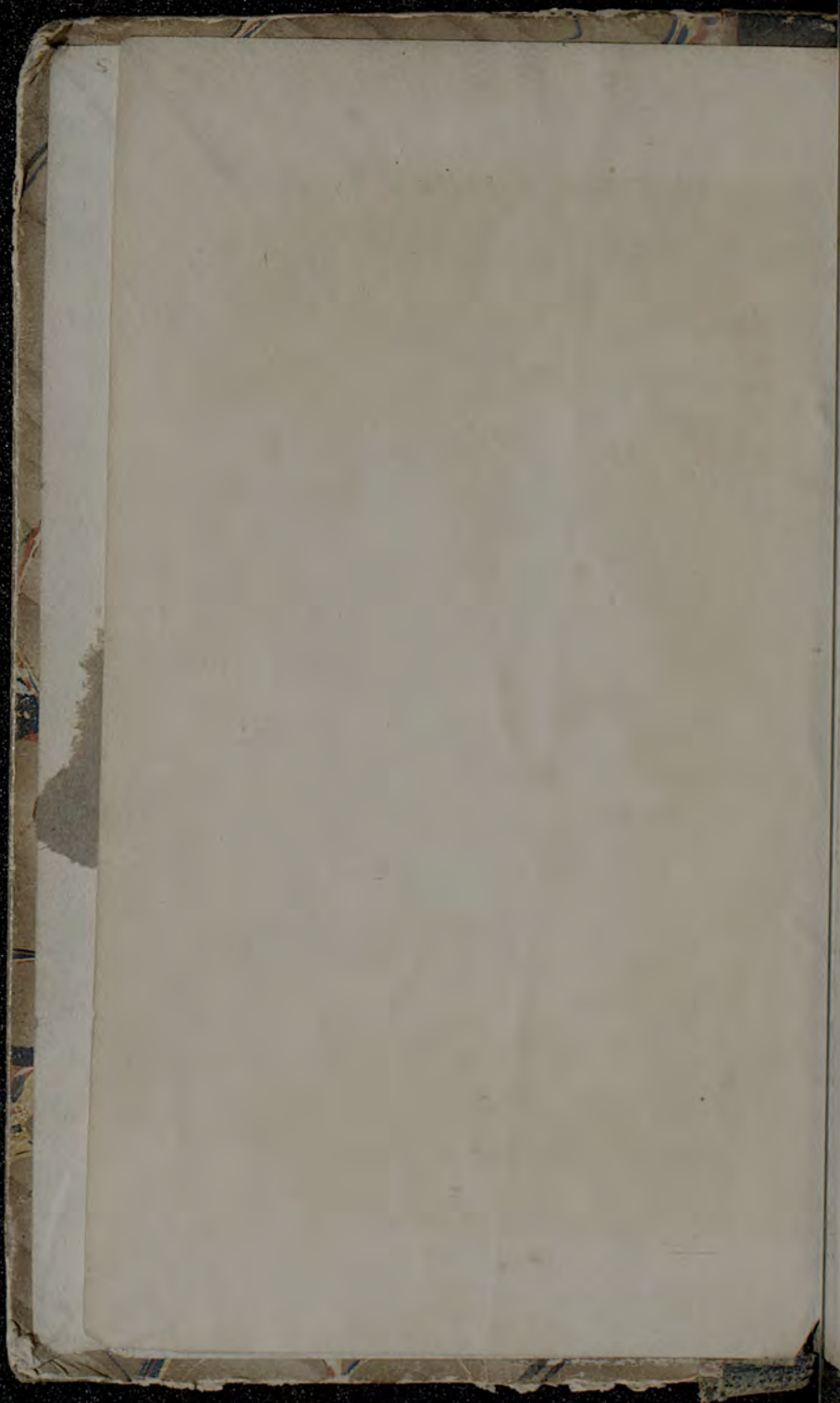
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SOPHIA.

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OR, THE
SOURCE AND BENEFIT
OF
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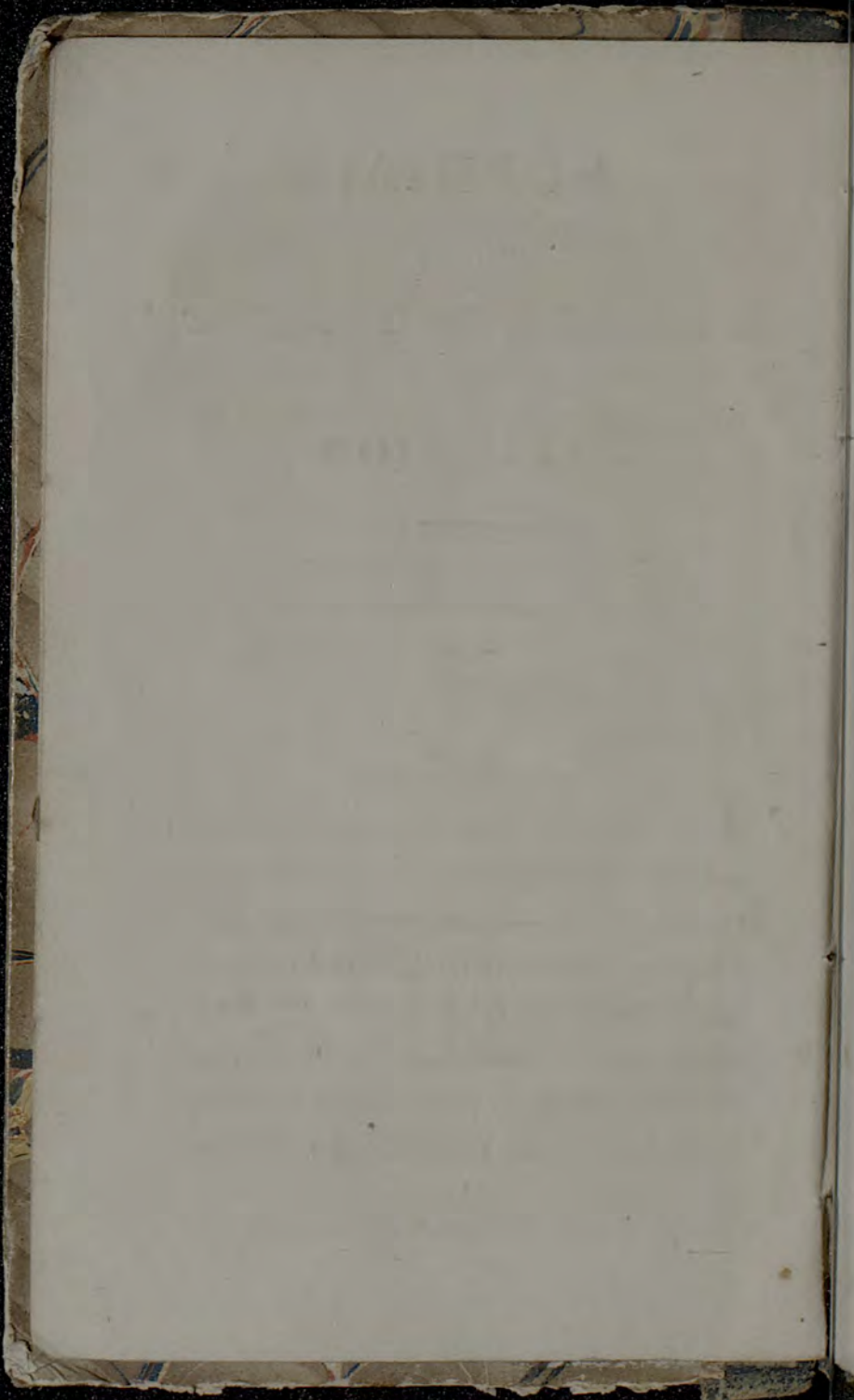
BY MRS. CAMERON,
Author of "The History of Margaret Whyte," &c.

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SOPHIA;
OR,
THE SOURCE AND BENEFIT
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AFFLICTION.



CHAPTER I.



IN one of the lovely valleys which are watered by the Severn, there once stood a small and elegant mansion, of very simple architecture, which, with a surrounding estate of fertile meadow-land of no very great extent, had been, for several centuries,

the property of a very respectable family of the name of Falconer.

At the time I begin this relation, the possessor of the estate was an elderly man, a widower, with one only daughter about twenty years of age, upon whom every advantage of education within her father's power to procure had been lavished; yet not lavished in the common sense of the word, for she had used them well. Thus amiable and accomplished, with an agreeable person, and the prospect of a good fortune, it is natural to suppose that Sophia, for so she was called, was an object of considerable attention to the surrounding neighbourhood.

Among the visitors at the house of Mr. Falconer, was the youngest son of Lord L——, whose seat was on the other side of the river, at the summit of a woody hill which sloped to the river's brink. Charles L—— had known Sophia from a child, as their fathers were occasional visitors; and, as he advanced towards manhood, she observed more that was promising in his character than could reasonably have been expected from the careless education he had received; and she was prepared to view him in a very favourable light, when, upon his leaving the University, he came to spend a considerable time in the country, with a view, as he

professed, to decide upon his future plans of life. "I have too much taste for literature and the charms of a country life," said he one day, in conversing with Mr. Falconer, "to relish the army or the navy, and I want application to fit myself for any learned profession, and yet something, I know, I ought to do."

Mr. Falconer's house afforded him at that time the kind of society which suited his taste: and his superior rank and interesting manners contributed to render him always welcome to Mr. Falconer, and to shut his eyes to the errors of his character; while his many amiable

qualities won so much upon Sophia, that, when at the close of half a year's residence in the country, he made a proposal of marriage to her, it was not received with displeasure either by father or daughter. Nor was the proposed connection at all displeasing to Lord L—: for a younger son it could not be thought a bad one; and it was agreed that the young couple should reside almost entirely with Mr. Falconer, that Charles should employ his leisure in the study of the law, and that Mr. Falconer's estate should be settled on Charles and Sophia for their lives, and on their children after the death of both parents.

With sanguine hopes of happiness, Sophia gave her hand in marriage to Charles; and this amiable young man, for amiable in many respects he might be called, entered upon this change of life with prospects equally sanguine of becoming persevering and industrious, and of laying aside every bad habit, and every unsuitable companion. Mr. Falconer was pleased and somewhat elated with seeing his daughter allied in marriage to one of the first families in the county—a family he had been in the habit of looking up to from his cradle.

At first every thing went on in the most agreeable manner.

Study was new, and it was agreeable; it was never too much prolonged; and a walk, or a ride, with Sophia, was a delightful interruption and refreshment. At other times, Charles amused himself with reading French and Italian, or English Poetry, with his fair companion. Sometimes he corrected her drawing, for he had an excellent taste, or accompanied her on her piano-forte with his flute or violin. Thus the first year passed away, at the close of which the birth of a lovely boy seemed to complete the happiness of this little household.

Soon after the birth of the

child, an aunt of its father, and a sister of Lord L——, a widow lady, who resided chiefly on her estate in Wales, paid her usual annual visit to her brother's country-house. She had once called on Sophia since her marriage; and hearing of the birth of the infant, she took the earliest opportunity of visiting the mother. Lady Seymour was a middle-aged woman, of dignified but very sweet manners. She was still handsome; but bore the trace of having passed through many trials. She had survived a husband, and a large family of children, who had died at an early age; and hence she felt an unusual interest in the infant children of all her friends.

When she saw her little nephew, she took him in her arms, and tenderly kissed him. His flaxen hair and bright blue eyes called to her remembrance the last of her sons she had lost, and she requested permission to become his godmother. The parents were both pleased with the proposal; and it was accordingly fixed, that the christening should take place a few days preceding Lady Seymor's return home.

Previous to the christening, Lady Seymor frequently called upon Charles and Sophia, in whose welfare, on many accounts, she felt a particular interest. Charles was her young-

est nephew ; and, as he had lost his mother in very early life, his education in many important respects had been much neglected : while, at the same time, he had learned many of the idle and extravagant notions and habits in which his elder brother had grown up. Over this elder brother Lady Seymour had had little influence : but Charles had been frequently allowed to spend the holidays with her ; upon which occasions she had laboured, and not laboured in vain, to inspire him with a taste for literature, to store his mind with religious knowledge, and to give him a bias as far as she could in its favour. His habits she could

not form, as he was only an occasional visitor to her.

Lady Seymour had in her early days seen much of the parents of Sophia. She knew them to be serious people, and believed that they had taken great pains with their daughter. She had therefore been much pleased with her nephew's connection; and trusted that it would be a mean of rendering his habits regular and persevering, and fixing his mind entirely upon some one useful object. She had been pleased with visiting the young people immediately after their marriage, and she felt exceedingly anxious to observe how they were now going on;

but it was not always that the observations she now made were satisfactory to her. Though there was no very great apparent departure from the path of duty, yet she thought there was in all the party an increasing spirit of carelessness and indolence of mind, a spirit which too often accompanies uninterrupted prosperity, and which is most unfavourable to religion, and makes way for gross departure from the path of duty—When the watchman is not on his post, the enemy must be expected to break in.

On the morning of the christening, as the little baby was brought into the room where

Lady Seymour and the parents were waiting for the arrival of the rest of the party, she took the baby from the arms of the nurse, and having dismissed her, she said to Charles, "I could almost fancy that this was my own little Arthur:" then, looking up at Sophia and Charles, "how happy are you, my dear young friends, in the possession of each other and this sweet child; but let me intreat you to remember how easily you may be deprived of your present happiness, and if you forget the hand who gives it, it will assuredly be taken from you. How frequently, how very frequently it happens that we lose our blessings because we

do not love the giver, nor live in habits of thankfulness."

Lady Seymor spoke these words in a very impressive manner, and they were not wholly disregarded by either of the young people. They sunk deep into the heart of Sophia; and, as she took the baby from Lady Seymor, she thought to herself that no trial could be so great as the loss of so sweet an infant. The child was christened by the name of Charles; and the same evening, Lady Seymor took her leave of her nephew and niece till her next visit to Lord L——.

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT half a year after the birth of little Charles, Lord L—— fell into bad health, and he was ordered to go abroad; and he soon afterwards settled entirely in Switzerland, where he found his health materially improved; and he gave up his country-seat entirely to his eldest son, who was just married. The consequence of this change was, that, during a large part of the year, a succession of gay society filled the mansion: the

mornings were spent in various country amusements; large dinner parties followed; and then, high play.

Charles was now beginning to be wearied with study, and he was, as we have already seen, in that state of mind which is not proof against temptation. He and Sophia were, of course, frequent visitors to their brother and sister. Sophia was much pleased, at first, with this complete introduction to fashionable life; and it is more than probable, that she would soon have made rapid strides herself in vanity and the love of the world, had not her eyes been opened to see the dangers she was in, by

observing the effects of thoughtless, dissipated society upon her husband; and she withdrew herself from the dangerous influence, thinking that she should as easily lead him back to his former habits. But here she was mistaken: there was no strength of religious principles, no stability of old habits, to enable him to stand against the overpowering effect of dissipated society. Every day his time, his health, his strength, his fortune, and, above all, his many amiable and promising qualities, became more and more a sacrifice. He was daily less and less at home, daily less a sharer in the once favourite pursuits and employments of his wife.

When Sophia discovered, painfully discovered, that she could not lead, she would remonstrate with her husband; but remonstrance of the most persuasive and gentle kind produced very little effect; indeed, at times, it only made him irritable, or cold and distant, in his behaviour towards her, and more eager to rush into society where reflection would be drowned. Now did Sophia call to mind the words of Lady Seymour on the day of her baby's christening.

While such was the sad posture of affairs in this family, lately so prosperous, it happened, one Saturday, that a party,

unusually large and gay, arrived at the hall, and Charles spent the day with them by most especial invitation. He did not return at night, as Sophia had expected; nor did she receive any message from him to account for his stay. The next morning, she went as usual to church, (but not accompanied by her father, who complained of indisposition;) and she concluded, that she should meet her husband at church, and that he would return home with her; but, to her great disappointment and surprise, he was not there. A few individuals of her brother's family joined her after church. One of these, an elderly lady of no very delicate feel-

ings or mode of language, asked her if she had heard the news:—
“Your husband was obliged to be carried to bed last night, I hope you did not wait for him.” Sophia asked for an explanation with so much earnestness, and expressed so much emotion on receiving it, that the lady said to her in reply, “My dear Madam, don’t take things so seriously—Mr. L—— is a vastly good man, and these things are nothing but what is so common: really, I should be quite miserable if I thought I had made mischief.”

Sophia endeavoured to put away the expression of grief which she could not help feeling, and taking her leave of the

ladies, without taking any further notice of what had last been said, she made haste to get by herself, that she might give full vent to her overpowering feelings. Instead, therefore, of taking the path which led directly home, she turned down into a favourite meadow which lay between her father's house and the river. The boundary of this meadow on one side was a fine row of sycamore, and an irregular hedge of underwood, growing on a high bank which sloped gradually to the fine velvet turf of the meadow:—violets, primroses, wood anemones, and every spring-flower covered and perfumed the bank. This place had been the favourite resort of

Sophia in her infant days—here she had loved to fill her basket with flowers and snail-shells—here she had sat with her nursery legends of sylphs and fairies in gilt covers—dividing her time between reading, and diligently watching the progress of every boat on the river as it appeared and disappeared—here she had often watched her beloved Charles, in his boyish days, as he sailed his tiny fleet in the water—and here in her days of advanced childhood, or very early youth, she had often sat with her beloved mother, listening to her pious and affectionate instructions, which, alas, she had seemed to have forgotten, when she had ceased to weep

for the loss of that dear parent.

On this bank, in a spot where two sister sycamores, twining their arms, formed a kind of natural bower, Sophia sat down, and finding herself entirely out of sight, she burst into a violent flood of tears. The events of the last twelvemonth rushed in quick succession through her memory; she recollected the delightful prospects with which she had begun the year, and she exclaimed to herself, "O, the heavy change! why is it thus?" Her conscience immediately brought forcibly to her recollection the words of Lady Seymour, — "how frequently it happens,

that we lose our blessings because we do not love the Giver, nor live in habits of thankfulness." With swift and faithful recital, conscience told her how careless she had become in the discharge of her religious duty; how lukewarm and dead in her spiritual services; and how she had rested in created things for all her happiness: and she could not help acknowledging, that it was only in the strictest justice that her enjoyments of the creature were thus embittered to her.

Her thoughts were thus employed, when the dashing of oars at a distance and the faint sound of music caught her at-

tention. She looked up; the spot where she sat faced a beautiful turn of the river, beneath a towering crescent of wood and rock on one side, and a continuation of the same meadow-land in which she was sitting on the other; and here, at some distance, she observed two pleasure-boats coming rapidly down the river. Her bower of sycamores sheltered her from view; while she herself was near enough to the river to distinguish who the persons were in each boat as it passed. The last contained a band of musicians; the first was filled with a party of Lord L——'s friends; each gentleman wore a rower's dress. As the eyes of Sophia ran rapid-

ly over every individual of this gay party, who were thus employing the sacred hours of the Sabbath, her eyes rested upon one figure too well known to her—her eyes rested upon Charles, and she was as one petrified to the spot. With fixed eye, she followed the boat, till the water ceased to be disturbed by the hasty course of the boats, till the faint sound of the oars had passed away, and the louder strains of the music were no longer echoed from the rocks and woody banks of the river.

CHAPTER III.



IT is impossible to describe all that passed through the mind of Sophia for the following half-hour. At length, under the influence of a sweet and salutary feeling, she awoke as if from a deep sleep, and clasping her hands together, she looked upwards. "O my Father! have mercy upon me: I fall into thy hands, for I have deserved every thing from thee. O lay not my sins to my charge, but forgive them, for my Saviour's sake:

and whatever may happen, O save, at last, my baby and its beloved father." As she concluded these words, she rose from her seat, and turned her steps towards home. Her head ached, and her heart was sick; yet she had with all this a feeling of calm resignation and dependence on Providence, to which she had long been a stranger.

As she slowly ascended the hill towards her father's house, she was met by a servant, who was in search of her, to inform her that dinner was waiting; and, likewise, that her father was much worse, and was unable to come down stairs,

and that he was anxious to see her.

Sophia made haste into the house. Her father was then asleep; but as soon as she had hastily swallowed her dinner, she stepped gently up into his bed-room, anxious to receive the first intelligence which she could hear from him on his awaking. She was soon convinced, upon asking him a few questions, that he was seriously ill, and she immediately sent for a physician.

During the hurry which followed upon the arrival of the physician, Charles returned. Sophia was deeply agitated at

receiving him, but did not utter either complaints or reproaches. He was confused and much affected when he heard of the illness of his father-in-law, and saw the distress of his wife, but entered into no explanation of what had passed.

Mr. Falconer's illness was of a very serious nature, and admitted no hope of permanent recovery. During a period of several months, Sophia constantly attended upon him. Charles sometimes was her companion in this employment; but, alas! he more frequently joined the gay society at the hall, to the utter neglect of all his plans of industry and improvement.

Mr. Falconer was now fully aware of the change that had taken place in his son-in-law; and more than once he said to Sophia, "My child, I fear I have been dazzled by worldly prospects in marrying you. Alas! I did not consider religious principle as the first requisite to make you happy; I did not seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first instance, and I fear that I have brought you into troubles from which I cannot extricate you: but to my latest hour I will pray for the pardon of my sins, and intreat that good may be brought out of evil."

Sophia only replied with tears.

She knew very well that both her father and herself had indeed been influenced by worldly motives in the acceptance of Charles, and had willingly shut their eyes to any suspicions that they were acting imprudently: but she had formed the wise and excellent resolution of never speaking of her husband's faults without the most absolute necessity.

Mr. Falconer often asked for his little grandson: he would fervently pray for him and bless him. During the course of his illness, he had several long conversations alone with his son-in-law, which always appeared at the time to excite conside-

rable emotion in the mind of Charles.

The season of quiet and adversity which was appointed to Sophia had its usual salutary effect; and her anxiety respecting her father had somewhat softened her affliction by dividing it; and she was comforted by witnessing the humble and penitent frame with which he met his latter end. At the end of three months after his attack he died, in the faith and hope of a Christian.

A month had scarcely elapsed after the death of Mr. Falconer, when Lady Seymour, as she was travelling through that country,

stopped at the hall for a few days to visit her nephew and niece. It was nearly two years since she had paid her last visit; but her brother having left the country, she did not feel the same call upon her to visit her nephew.

The very day after her arrival at the hall she called upon Sophia. She was much struck with the change in her niece's appearance, and whole style and manner—she looked pale and thoughtful, while a sweet expression of mild resignation added a beauty to her countenance she had never observed before; and her dress of deep mourning was also a contrast to the gaiety

of a christening attire. Little Charles was now able to run by his mother's side. Lady Seymour affectionately kissed her, and lamented that so long a period had elapsed since their last meeting; adding, that she had often thought of her in her affliction.

“And I,” answered Sophia, “have often thought of your too prophetic address—‘how frequently it happens that we lose our blessings because we do not love the giver, nor live in habits of thankfulness.’”

“And having learned this lesson, my dear niece, you have a new blessing to be thankful for,”

said Lady Seymor: "and I understand that your father's death was a most happy one, which you must feel to be a great cause for thankfulness."

"Assuredly," replied Sophia. She then entered into some particulars respecting her father's death: and when Lady Seymor compared the calm though affectionate manner in which she spoke of her father with the expression of deep dejection that sat on her countenance, she felt convinced that she had a source of sorrow which she had not yet made known to her.

A very little time explained to her what that sorrow was.

From all that she saw of Charles, when visiting at the hall, and from different things which were dropped in conversation respecting him, she soon discovered that he was wandering far and rapidly into the paths of what is falsely called pleasure, and that he was imperceptibly conforming himself to the dissipated habits of his company; while study and the society of his own home were daily more and more neglected——while health and money, as well as domestic happiness, were the price he paid.

Lady Seymour took an opportunity, before she left the neighbourhood, of talking very

seriously to her nephew upon the danger of his situation, the great injustice of his conduct to his wife and child, and the serious injury he was doing to himself.

Charles listened without irritation to the reproofs of his aunt; but though some convictions might be excited in his mind, yet they produced a very transitory effect, and becoming daily more averse to serious thoughts, he plunged deeper and deeper into dissipation; and now that he was master of his father-in-law's house and property, he involved himself more and more in expence. A thousand alterations were plan-

ned, large parties were continually invited, new and expensive furniture and carriages were ordered. Sophia did not fail to remind her husband that their income, though sufficient for all the comforts and elegancies of life, was by no means adequate to furnish them with extravagances. But her remonstrances, though made with the affection and submission that become a wife, were by no means welcome, and no change was made in consequence of them. Yet Charles had not yet learned to be unkind to his wife in his language, and occasionally he spoke of their quiet, happy way of living after their marriage, with feelings of deep regret that it was

past, yet without expressing the slightest intention of ever attempting to lead the same life again.

CHAPTER IV.

ABOUT a year after Mr. Falconer's death, Sophia had another little son, who lived only three months. Upon occasion of the death of this child, Lady Seymour wrote to Sophia, affectionately exhorting her to repose her whole trust in her heavenly Father in all her difficulties: and she wrote also to Charles, intreating him to learn wisdom from this warning, ere severer afflictions were sent to arrest his fatal progress in the ways of sin

and misery. For a time he seemed impressed by the loss of the baby, but the impression, by degrees, wore away; while, with Sophia, repeated earthly disappointments produced the happiest effects.

To what excesses Charles might have gone it is impossible to say: but the prayers of Sophia were heard, and his career was soon to be arrested, though not in the way which her finite wisdom would have suggested, or the natural desire of earthly happiness would have dared to contemplate.

The little Charles was now turned four, and a lovely girl,

called Amelia, after the mother of Sophia, had been added a few weeks to her family, when, one morning in the beginning of autumn, Charles, mounted on a hunter he had just purchased for an enormous sum, took his leave of Sophia, reminding her that he intended to bring home with him to dinner a large party of his friends. As Charles had before mentioned an intention of doing this, and Sophia had ventured gently to remind him that a frequent recurrence of these parties was in many respects inconvenient and unsuitable to them, Charles now adverted to the subject in a manner less obliging than was usual to him—his tone was decisive and

authoritative. Sophia made no other reply than a gentle assent, and smiling amidst tears which she vainly tried to disperse, she took her leave of her husband.

During the morning, as she made her arrangements for the engagements of the day, and unwillingly prepared every thing in a style which she knew she could not afford, a more than usual sadness stole upon her. Most of her father's prudent and simple, but hospitable plans had been done away. In his days all had been consistent and plain, yet not inelegant. Now it was all reversed!—a melancholy mixture of poverty and

grandeur appeared in every part of the house, and in every arrangement that was made, an excess of luxurious ornament and indulgence was mingled with a want of some of the necessaries and conveniences of life. Unpaid bills, splendid furniture, servants pleading for the payment of their wages, expensive horses and carriages, neglect out of doors, confusion within—met Sophia on every side, and baffled her every effort to be economical. One of her husband's parties, with expensive wine, and especially high play, consumed in one day the fruit of all her self-denial for months. Importunate tradesmen now appeared at every

door, instead of the poor and honest receivers of the bounty of the master.

Some peculiar circumstances had concurred to bring all these things strongly before the mind of Sophia during the morning; and when she withdrew into her own room to change her dress previous to the arrival of her guests, she threw herself into a chair, and gave vent for some time to her tears in deep and silent sorrow. Hardly knowing what she was doing, but from a habit which it is most important to form, she took up, at last, her Bible, which lay on the table beside her, and her eyes wandered over the following conso-

latory verses: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God: and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

They ceased to wander, and rested there till holy consolation seemed to be shed over her heart. She knelt down, and was for some time most sweetly and profitably employed.

At length, the striking of a clock reminded her of the lateness of the hour, and she hastened to complete her preparations. They were scarcely concluded, when she heard the

sound of horses in a court below, and she hastily went down stairs. As she passed the hall-door, which stood open, in her way into the drawing-room, Charles's elder brother, in his hunting-dress, hastily entered it. He took her by the hand, and seemed preparing to address her in a very agitated manner. His appearance alarmed her, and before he had said enough to give her any idea of his purport, her eye caught upon the lawn, and approaching towards the back-door of the house, a litter, borne upon the shoulders of men, upon which some one was laid. Her husband's spirited hunter following without a rider, and led by a servant, imparted

to her mind at once what her brother-in-law wished to have told her, aggravated, too, and heightened by her imagination; and had not he prevented her, she would have fallen senseless to the ground.

On returning to animation, she found herself in the arms of Amelia's nurse, a servant who had resided many years in her father's family, and who, though not the confidant of Sophia, was the silent sharer of all her sorrows. She seemed to awake as from a painful dream, and was some time before she could recollect what had passed; and when she fully called to mind what she had seen, she said to

the nurse, in a voice of deepest concern, "Is all hope over then for ever?—for ever?"

"O, no, Madam," replied the nurse: "the surgeon gives us great hopes; but my master is not sensible yet."

Sophia's imagination had represented her husband to her as indeed no more: the words of the nurse were therefore as life from the dead. In a transport of gratitude, she fell on her knees, and thanked her faithful God, who had not forsaken her; then, relieved by a flood of tears, she arose and begged the nurse immediately to lead her to her husband.

But we must here forbear entering into too many particulars. Charles had been thrown from his horse, and received a violent blow on his head. He was for a length of time insensible; and what further effects the fall might produce was long uncertain. A violent fever ensued, and high delirium. These at length gave way, and Charles returned gradually to sense and recollection, but not to health. The injury he had received at a moment when his constitution was beginning to feel the baneful effects of repeated excesses, induced a paralytic attack: and thus a premature old age withered his youth and strength, and was gradually undermining his life.

Charles had received this fatal accident at the very moment when he seemed to be in the fullest career of sin. He had purchased his hunter with a considerable sum of money, which had been set apart for the payment of Christmas bills, he was involved deeper and deeper in engagements with men of unprincipled character and dissipated habits, and dissatisfaction with himself and all around him had just begun to vent itself in unkind words, as well as unjust actions, to the faithful and gentle Sophia. Meanwhile conscience had never ceased, from time to time, to embitter all his enjoyments. Hence, as he gradually regained recollection and

consciousness, a bitter sense of his folly and guilt was, in great mercy, permitted to awaken with his reviving intellect.

When he first recollected Sophia, a confused and exquisitely painful feeling of having injured her returned with memory—a feeling which he then found it impossible to express. He called her by her name, and looked at her with such an expression of countenance, as melted her into tears; while joy at witnessing his returning intellect excited the warmest thankfulness in her bosom.

CHAPTER V.

THE feelings of Charles, naturally amiable, and now softened by deep affliction, inclined him to entertain the deepest sense of his past unkindness to Sophia. But this was not enough: there were other and higher wrongs which Sophia wanted him to feel, and of which she daily and earnestly prayed that he might become sensible. Religion had never, at any period, attained in the mind of Charles to any thing like

habitual influence; nor had he ever gained that knowledge of his own spiritual wants which could lead him to fervent or effectual prayer. As his feeble strength permitted, he did not however refuse to listen to Sophia when she read to him or prayed with him; but it was more from a desire to oblige her, and a faint conviction of duty, that he did so, than from any great interest he felt on the subject.

At this important crisis, Lady Seymour accidentally, or, we may rather say, providentially, arrived at the seat of her eldest nephew; where, for the first time, she heard of Charles's ac-

cident. She immediately repaired to the house of mourning; and, finding that now was the season of usefulness, she kindly requested permission to assist Sophia for a season in nursing the beloved Charles, and she dismissed the whole of her equipage, that she might neither add to the trouble nor expence of the little disordered household.

The experience of Lady Seymour was a powerful assistance to Sophia. She had a perfect knowledge of the character of Charles, and the strongest interest in his welfare. It was easy for her to see, without the information of the physician given

freely to her, that Charles was never likely to regain that health and strength, of which, alas! he had made so bad a use.

She took opportunities, when alone, of conversing freely with him, of stating to him her opinion of the evil of his conduct, with all its aggravations, against light, and knowledge, and conscience; of his sin, against his wife, his children, and society in general; and especially against Heaven. She represented to him, that his life and strength, blessings for which he had never thanked the gracious Giver, were now, in all probability, about to be taken away; and that the season allotted for him to make

his peace with his God and Saviour would be very short.

Charles gratified his aunt by his thankful and candid reception of every thing she said to him, and she trusted that the blessing of God would eventually excite in his breast those feelings of deep penitence which it was her grand object to awaken. She further prevailed upon him to see the clergyman of the parish, a pious and experienced man, to whom the habits of his life were thoroughly known.

Thus, full of hope, Lady Seymour took her last leave of her beloved nephew, when circum-

stances obliged her to return home. Nor were her hopes vain, founded as they were on the confidence that fervent and believing prayer shall sooner or later receive a gracious answer.

It was not long after her departure, while the memory of Charles was full of the conversations of his aunt, and of his aged friend the clergyman, but before they seemed to have penetrated deeply into his heart, that another and alarming seizure of his paralytic disease was in great mercy permitted to attack his body, while it left his mind, except only for a short season, quite unimpaired in its every faculty but that of me-

mory, which was occasionally confused.

Now did the voice of God seem to sound loudly and effectually in his ears; and as he called to mind in the silence of a sick room past events and past reproofs, to every charge brought against him, conscience witnessed to him—*Thou art the man!* He was now deeply distressed and agitated, and the anguish of his mind in various ways betrayed itself to the watchful friends that surrounded him; but it was a considerable time before he recovered sufficiently the use of his speech, which his last attack had much impaired, to lay open his feel-

ings to any one. At length he was enabled to make the attempt, one evening, when he found himself alone with Sophia and his kind and constant visitor the rector of the parish. The softened and impressive tone of his voice, and the agitation of his manner, with a few broken expressions which he dropped in his first effort to introduce the subject, laid open the state of his mind, and enabled the rector to assist him in the task he had undertaken.

With Sophia it was otherwise : as she sat beside her husband, who held her hand and occasionally leaned his pale face against her shoulder, and as she listened

to his penitent, humble, and broken language, she felt quite incapable of finding words to express her feelings. Her gratitude to that Almighty Father, who can create anew the stubborn heart of sinful man, was such, as for a time to overpower and absorb her every faculty.

From repeated conversations with Charles, as his weak state would admit, and from witnessing his uniform patient endurance of suffering, his affectionate behaviour to Sophia, and his thankful reception of every attention paid to him, his aged and pious counsellor became entirely satisfied that his language of penitence was sincere; and

then he thought himself fully justified in leading him to the source of all consolation to the returning penitent, and in saying to him,—“*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.*” It is not always that even the penitent sinner will rest upon this hope, when it is first presented to him; but, by degrees, the glorious confidence that the ransom of his sins was fully paid was admitted into the bosom of the now contented Charles. The Sun of Righteousness rose upon his heart, gradually dispelling every cloud of despair, ignorance, and fear, as it advanced towards perfect day. And now, indeed, it might be truly said of him, as

the outer man decayed, the inner man was renewed day by day: and even Sophia, as she contemplated the glorious transformation in the heart of her husband, of rebellious pride into childlike dependence on his Saviour, could regard with perfect composure the progress of that disease which had been made so important a means of his soul's recovery. The lively, animated, handsome youth was now become a feeble, pallid, emaciated old man, as much in need of the assistance of those about him as his little infant daughter: but, to the eye of faith, this evening of life was the most prosperous and happy interval of its whole duration.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM the period of his last attack, the health of Charles gradually declined more and more rapidly, and forbade the most remote prospect of recovery. For many months he retained a very considerable vigour of intellect; at least, so much as to enable him in general to converse with those about him as freely as his powers of speech would admit: and thus he was enabled to bear, in many ways, a consistent testi-

mony to the sincerity of his repentance. Every article of expence which seemed a memorial of past excesses was painful to him to look at, and was carefully banished from view.

He spent the greatest part of his time in Sophia's dressing-room, which had always retained its simplicity of furniture. Whenever he was able to bear the company of his children, they were brought to him: he prayed most fervently for them both, and discoursed at times sweetly with the little Charles, and often expressed in the most pathetic manner his earnest hope that he might become a better man than his father had been.

The quiet conversation of Sophia, the visits of his pastor, but, above all, his Bible, and his frequent secret devotions, became the sources of his highest enjoyment; and, when his weak frame was wearied with these, he would compose himself to sleep, like a young infant. When the weather was temperately warm, he would walk with Sophia; frequently in her favourite meadow, by the river's brink.

The very last walk which they took together, finding the weather, though it was autumn, sufficiently warm for the purpose, they sat down in their favourite bower of sycamore,

where the pleasant warmth of the sun cheered the palsied limbs of Charles, and a refreshing breeze from the river afforded him at the same time a temporary vigour.

Here, as they sat in this scene, which had in former days witnessed many hours of enjoyment, now to return no more, Charles turned to Sophia, and laying his chilly hand upon hers, said to her, with a look which penetrated to her heart, "Ah, Sophia, how happy we might have been, had I served my God as faithfully as I served my pleasures!"

"It is all well," replied So-

phia, suppressing a sigh. "Let us remember, how good God has been to us."

"I have no wish to linger here," replied Charles, raising his eyes to heaven. "I trust my sins have all been borne by my Saviour; I trust my peace is made, and that I have a home, a glorious home in heaven. But can I, ought I, to forget that I have embittered all your days, by my sin and folly? nay, that I have robbed you and my babes of their bread?"

"We have a heavenly Father," interrupted Sophia, "who will never leave us, nor forsake us. Think, my beloved Charles, how

far more real prosperity we are enjoying now, than when we first entered upon life!—now, I humbly trust, we are rich for eternity!”

“I trust we are, I trust we are,” answered Charles; and, as he spoke these words, his mind seemed to take another turn; and he sat silent, looking upwards, and wholly absorbed in heavenly meditation.

It had been usual with him lately, whenever he spoke of the embarrassed state of his affairs, to enter into some particulars with Sophia respecting them, and he often betrayed such acuteness of feelings, in

the consideration of the distress he had brought upon her, that she carefully concealed from him her own fears and anxieties, and never alluded to the subject when it was possible to avoid it; though she was well aware that nothing but the peculiar distressing state of her husband's health prevented their creditors from pressing upon them for immediate payment. This day, however, the painful anxieties which he had just expressed seemed to have passed instantaneously away, and to have yielded to considerations of a very different kind.

Sophia sat looking for some time at the calm and heavenly

countenance of her husband, when a trifling circumstance at once turned the current of her thoughts. A little boat appeared in view, coming rapidly down the stream towards them, containing two persons, one of whom was rowing, the other playing upon a flute—and, instantaneously, the remembrance of that sad day when, in that very spot, she had been brought to a full knowledge of her sins, and her misfortunes, came so strongly into her mind, and were so powerfully contrasted with her present circumstances, that tears of gratitude burst from her eyes; tears of gratitude to Him who had dealt so mercifully with her in the midst of

judgment. Still however these feelings were not without their alloy of sorrow, when she recollected that her earthly happiness was on the point of flitting from her grasp for ever. How long she remained in this state of mind, she knew not. Charles at last interrupted her train of thoughts, by suddenly turning towards her, and thus addressing her, in a calm and placid tone: "Sophia, I now feel that I can leave you and my babes with my God and my Redeemer. I can leave you now without a pang. All is well. O! the long-suffering love of my Saviour to me, the chief of sinners."

Sophia looked at him with a feeling of joy and surprise, and much emotion; and severely reprobated her own rebellious repinings. He then arose, and, leaning on her arm, walked silently towards home.

It is probable, that Charles felt some intimations of approaching illness which he did not communicate, for he expressed the same evening a great desire to see his revered friend the clergyman, and obtained his promise to administer the sacrament to him the following morning, after receiving which he remained in a state of delightful calm, and seemingly in communion with his God nearly the

whole remainder of the day. When he retired to his bed, which was always at an early hour, he took his leave with unusual tenderness of his family, and then composed himself quietly to rest: but ere the hour of midnight struck, a most alarming seizure roused Sophia from her slumbers. From this seizure Charles never recovered sufficiently to know any person about him; and, in the course of a few days, it terminated his life as if by a sleep which stole gradually upon him.

Thus died Charles L——, in the twenty-ninth year of his age. But while the tender, the faithful Sophia mourned over an

affectionate husband prematurely torn from his family; accomplished, young, and handsome; born, as it would seem, to bless and be blessed; with the eye of faith, she saw a brand plucked from the burning, a sinner saved from death: and holy peace and thankfulness gave promise gently and gradually to wipe away the tears of natural sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.



THE remains of Charles had been scarcely resigned to their last quiet home, when an event which Sophia had too often anticipated took place. Bills without end poured in upon her, and she soon found that the extravagance of her husband had exceeded even her own fears. There remained but one alternative: either to mortgage her estate, or to bring her husband's name under a disgraceful cloud, and to injure many

worthy families to whom he was indebted.

Sophia, long habituated to the salutary discipline of sorrow, had learned, that in keeping the commandments of the Lord alone there is peace, and she determined upon following the narrow path of duty, and trusting God with herself and her children. She gave orders therefore to the person who managed her worldly affairs, to make such arrangements as might satisfy the demands of every claimant, though the residue merely proved adequate to maintain herself and her two children in the most simple and humble mode of life.

She had no sooner made this decision than she wrote to Lady Seymour, with whom she had regularly corresponded since her last visit, and informed her of the step she had taken. By return of post, she received from that lady an offer of a cottage, free of expence, in one of the lovely valleys which beautifully variegate the foot of Snowdon, and at a short distance only from her own mansion. This offer was gratefully received by Sophia, who felt the great importance of bringing up her little son at a distance from those connexions which had proved the ruin of his father. But when the moment arrived in which she was to take leave of

her native place; the house where she herself as well as her children were born; where her parents and her husband had lived and died; the woods, the rivers, the meadows, the hills, endeared to her by a thousand recollections; she felt a pang too bitter for description. Nor was it less severe to part from her old friends in the neighbourhood, and her near relations at the hall: yet, when this was once done, when every tie was burst asunder, and she had commenced her journey with her little boy, her infant daughter, and her faithful nurse, she began to taste afresh some feelings of composure, she felt with thankfulness that she had been

enabled to make the sacrifice which the will of God seemed to require from her, and she doubted not but that his blessing would attend her.

After travelling two days she arrived at Beddgelert, where the carriage of Lady Seymour was waiting for her, and, a little before sunset, she reached the lovely abode which had been prepared for her: it was on the declivity of a low woody hill, which, on three sides, surrounded a deep and smooth lake of considerable extent, and the cottage exactly faced the stupendous rocks which rose from the remaining side of the lake, and formed one of the stupen-

dous ascents to Snowdon, whose peak itself appeared arising far beyond them. Waterfalls and masses of wood were mixed in wild disorder with these rocks, and formed a sublime contrast to the peaceful woodland scenery around the cottage. The cottage was one of those rural and simple abodes which we often see in the neighbourhood of Snowdon, built for temporary residence in the height of summer, but usually too secluded for a winter residence. In front a little smooth lawn, bordered by flowers and flowering shrubs, was gained from the surrounding wood; and behind, a small kitchen-garden afforded what was useful. The cottage was

white, neat in its appearance without, and comfortably though very simply furnished within. Lady Seymor was herself waiting to receive the strangers, and her affectionate welcome was indeed a cordial to Sophia.

The description of this affecting meeting we pass over, and hasten on with our story. We have seen that Lady Seymor was to be a near neighbour to her afflicted niece: a road, winding for some time along the lower part of the wood, occasionally descending to the borders of the lake, but at last, abruptly ascending, led to the upper ground, where, in a more open and cultivated country

and commanding a full view of Snowdon, stood the ancient dwelling of Lady Seymor, scarcely two miles distant from the cottage. Beside this mansion was a small chapel in which English service was regularly performed, and, in due time, the kindness of Lady Seymor provided Sophia with the means of regularly attending upon it; and Sophia was by no means disposed to permit slight difficulties, from weather or roads, to debar her from seeking her customary refreshment in the house of God.

Various conveniences, too, of a temporal nature, which the slender income of Sophia could

not have procured, were provided by Lady Seymour, who was ever anxiously watching over her welfare: and assistances, too, in the education of her little boy, which she valued still higher, were in the same way afforded to her. For several years his education consisted of little but English reading and grammar, and such little instruction in biography, history, and geography, as his early years could receive.

Sophia had nothing to interrupt her attentions to her children; therefore Charles, at an early age, was unusually advanced: but his mother, drawing wisdom from sad experi-

ence, was very anxious to give him solid rather than brilliant acquisitions, and to teach him patiently to overcome the difficulties which stood in the way of any attainment he was making; and she never allowed him to turn away from the conquest of difficulties, or to leave what was begun unaccomplished, for the sake of learning something new. She took great pains to make him hardy and self-denying in his habits, and very kind and affectionate to his little sister, who soon became his follower and imitator, if not his playfellow.

Her sweetest employment was, to give her dear children

religious instructions. Religion had, as she humbly trusted, been the refuge of her husband in his dying hours. Under its influence she believed that he had died, reconciled to his God, and at peace with the whole world. But she trusted that religion would also be the guide of her children's life; in childhood, in youth, and in advanced age. She carefully read the Bible with them twice a-day, and taught them the habit of secret prayer and daily examination of their conduct. To feel repentance for childish faults she considered as essential as to feel penitence for the faults of more advanced life: the heart of a child may as easily be hardened

by allowing itself in frequent trifling sins, as that of an older person; and a child whose conscience is not tender, will seldom have a tender conscience when he grows up.

The amusements of Charles were not few; he was almost as active as the kids that lived upon the mountains: and when his little sister could not follow him, he always took care to leave her in a place of security, and seldom failed to return to her with some favourite mountain-flower or beautiful crystal, to reconcile her to being left behind, or to repay her for her alarms on his account—for she would often cry with fright at

seeing him upon heights which appeared to her tremendous. Sometimes he explored the wood-walks, pushing aside carefully the thorns and briars, that his sister might be enabled to follow him: and they were often rewarded for their pains, by the discovery of a cascade tumbling from the hills above, or a brook watering a little valley of delightful verdure. Here they could sit and read, if they were so disposed, or gather flowers and wild strawberries to take home to their mother.

During the play-hours of the children, Sophia suffered not herself to indulge unavailing sorrow by painful recollections

of the past. Sometimes, indeed, she could not repress her sighs, or check her falling tears, when she recollected that her sun of prosperity had set so early: but she endeavoured rather to cherish a sense of thankfulness for the blessings that had been mingled with her trials, and humility for those errors which had brought her trials upon her; and especially she sought for peace, where it is as certain to be found as it is rarely sought. “*In me ye shall have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation;*” are the words of Him who can neither deceive nor mistake. Thus she was enabled to receive her children again, after any little absence,

with that cheerfulness of manner without which it is scarcely possible to be useful to very young people.

In summer Sophia walked with her children in an evening, or sat with them in some sweet sheltered place, where, while she worked, Charles read to her, and whatever he read, she endeavoured to make profitable to him, by mixing with it useful explanations, or little anecdotes applicable to the subject. Sometimes they sailed on the lake in a boat kept by one of Lady Seymour's tenants; and here Charles delighted himself with gathering the white water-lily, whose beautiful cups sailed

in abundance on the surface of the water.

In the winter their amusements were varied. After the conclusion of their morning lessons, Sophia generally accompanied her children in their walk. By degrees they gained sufficient knowledge of the native language of the country, to be able to converse with the poor people, while they administered, as far as they were able, to their wants. During the winter season especially they frequently paid long visits to Lady Seymour. The mansion of this lady was large and ancient, but it belonged to her husband's family, and was only hers for

her life. Her jointure was ample, and a very large portion of it was bestowed on charitable and benevolent purposes. A long gallery and other apartments of the house were filled with pictures of her husband's ancestors and relations; but the library, in which she usually sat, she had appropriated to the portraits of those particularly dear to her. Over the fire-place was a very large family-picture of her five children, who had once been alive together, in every lovely stage of infancy, from half a year old to the age of seven. The youngest, the lovely Arthur, was springing from his mother's arms, then represented in the height of her

beauty, to his father, who appears just coming into view with his bow and arrows in one hand; his eldest boy in an archer's dress is following him, and three little girls are playing together on the grass in various attitudes. Charles was much struck with this picture, and would stand for a long while looking at it; and Lady Seymour, whose imagination was vivid, and affections warm, was never more pleased than when relating to him in glowing colours a thousand little anecdotes of each dear personage represented in this picture. She spoke of her husband as a very pious man, who had influenced her to tread in his steps; and the

deaths of her elder children she described as very happy. In one part of the library was the picture of Lady Seymor's father; and in another the portraits of her brother, lately dead, and his two sons, the present Lord L——, and the interesting and unfortunate Charles. Frequently, when Lady Seymor was alone with the boy, she would take him to look at the picture of his father. She carefully drew a veil over a certain period of his history; but would speak of his visits to her house in his boyish days, and tell how he played with her own departed little ones; and then she would describe how full of peace and hope was the close of his days.

Hence she turned the conversation to his mother.—“ Though you have lost your father,” she would say to him, “ a kind Providence has given you the best of mothers ; and I hope the time will come, when you will recompense her in some degree for the sacrifices she has made. Her early days have been clouded with many sad misfortunes ; but I trust her later days will be far more prosperous ; and upon you, Charles, under the divine blessing, this must depend : your exertions alone can restore to your mother in any degree what she has lost. Your industry, your perseverance, your dutiful behaviour, are her only earthly prospect for the future.”

Further than this Lady Seymour never chose to explain herself; but she obtained the point she had in view by these appeals. She impressed upon the child's mind the idea that something depended upon his exertions, which was to be very important to his mother; and he learned to feel, that when he was idle or naughty, his mother would in some way be the sufferer.

When Charles arrived at an age when it became necessary that he should learn something more than English, Lady Seymour undertook to provide him with a tutor for the purpose. The chaplain who performed the

duties of the adjoining chapel, and who resided with his wife very near to Lady Seymor's house, was a man of learning and of amiable manners, and he undertook to meet Charles every morning at Lady Seymor's house, for the purpose of instructing him in Latin and other things which it fell not within his mother's province to teach him; though she, ardently solicitous for her son's good, and enjoying considerable leisure, was not satisfied till she had herself gained sufficient knowledge of what he was learning, to be able to watch his progress when he was preparing his lessons at home, and thus to prevent his careless performance of them.

A knowledge of this sort is not calculated to excite vanity in a female mind; as it affords little occasion for display, and when gained from a motive so pure and so strong, it will leave little place for inferior motives in the breast.

Charles was not destitute of his father's volatility of disposition; but the extreme caution of his mother and his aunt, together with the regular habits of perseverance and industry in which he was brought up, kept this disposition within such bounds, that it only appeared occasionally in lively and sanguine expressions respecting his favourite pursuits, scarcely ex-

ceeding the usual vivacity of
childhood.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Charles was about nine years of age, his uncle, Lord L——, paid a visit to Lady Seymor, with his Lady and their little son, a child not six years of age. He called upon Sophia, and seemed much affected by seeing her cottage-residence. He was very kind to her, expressed much interest about her boy, and, upon taking his leave, intimated his wish to bear a part in his education.

As he and his lady were spending some time in the neighbourhood, in visiting its various attractive beauties, they left the little Frederick with their aunt, who, with her usual warmth of feeling, expressed a strong interest in his welfare.

Charles and Frederick met every day at their aunt's house, and soon became well acquainted, though there was a difference of nearly four years in their age. One evening Lady Seymour took her youngest nephew with her to call upon Sophia. The child received the kindest reception, yet he seemed quite insensible of every civility, and scarcely spoke. He

appeared deeply engaged in looking about him; and as soon as he and Charles had received permission to go out of the room to play, he said to Charles, "Where do you live?"

"In this house," answered Charles.

"Why, it is a cottage!"

"Yes, I know that: but I live in it."

"Then your father's not a gentleman, and I will not play with you."

"My father is dead," answer-

ed Charles: "but he was a gentleman."

"Then why do you live here?"

"I do not know," replied Charles; "but I was not born here. Mamma came here when Amelia was a baby."

"Are you sure your father was a gentleman?" asked Frederick: "I thought gentlemen never lived in cottages. I will ask my aunt if he was."

"And I will ask mamma," replied Charles, "why we live here."

As soon as Charles was alone

with Sophia, he said to her, "Mamma, why do we live here? and why did we leave that pretty house where I was born?"

"Because," answered Sophia, "we could not afford to remain in it. Some time or other you will return there, if you live."

"And will not you, mamma?" asked Charles.

"It is most likely that I never shall," answered Sophia.

Sophia suppressed a sigh as she spoke, and a tear stood in her eye. Charles perceived this, and thought there was

some reason why she did not like to talk of his native place; and he asked no more questions. The next day, when he went to his aunt's house as usual to receive his lesson, she sent for him into her library: Frederick was with her. After addressing him very kindly, she took the hands of both the children, and led them opposite the pictures of their respective fathers. "Your fathers," said she, "were brothers; and I hope that you both will grow up to love each other as brothers, though it has pleased the wise Governor of all things to put one of you for a time in a cottage: and when you are old enough, Frederick, to know why

Charles lives in a cottage, you will, on that very account, learn to love him the more."

The children both listened with attention to their aunt, yet it was some time before Frederick would behave to Charles as he had done previous to his visit.

A short time after this little occurrence, Lord and Lady L—— returned to Lady Seymour's house, and remained there two or three weeks. During this time Lord L—— saw a good deal of Charles, and was much pleased with him. One day he said to Lady Seymour, "I feel much interested about

that boy, and am anxious to do something for him: in two years I shall send Frederick to school, and I will pay Charles's expenses at the same place; he is four years older than Frederick, and he will be a protector to him."

Lady Seymour remained for some time silent; afterwards, turning to her nephew, she replied, "My Lord, your plan is excellent, and it is very kind on your part: yet I could wish one thing—that the boys might be well acquainted with each other before they go to school together. You are going abroad for some time; could you make up your mind to leave your boy

behind you, under my care? Charles's tutor should be his tutor, and the boys in this solitude must be playfellows, and most likely will become friends."

Lord L——, after consulting the mother of Frederick, accepted Lady Seymor's proposal, only adding, "Take care, my dear aunt, that you do not make my boy too religious."

"It is an easy matter," replied Lady Seymor, "to make a child singular in his manners, or a great talker about religion; but not so easy to make him really good and religious. I certainly shall try to make your

boy good, and really religious, if he lives with me; but needless singularities I will try to prevent him from acquiring."

Lord L—— cared too little for any of these things to enter further into the subject; and here the conversation dropped: it remained only to communicate its purport to Sophia, and Lady Seymour went over to the cottage immediately to do so.

When Sophia heard of the proposal respecting her son, she replied, in an agitated manner, "Lord L—— is very kind, but must my boy be the companion of his son?"

Lady Seymor, who knew well what was passing in Sophia's mind, replied, "It will be impossible to prevent your son, as he advances in age, from becoming acquainted with his relations; but if we can establish that intercourse upon a proper footing early in life, we shall do more for him than if we were to shut him out from their acquaintance till he should arrive at an age when novelty will have peculiar snares."

Sophia knew the strength of her own feelings on a subject of this nature, and dared not trust them; and having a full confidence in Lady Seymor's judgment, after a little more discus-

sion, she yielded the point, and acquiesced in her decision.

Soon after this arrangement was made, Lord and Lady L—— took their leave of Lady Seymour, and left their little boy under her charge; and, a few weeks afterwards, they quitted the kingdom.

It was not immediately that Frederick was reconciled to certain changes which now took place in his habits. He was obliged to make exertions he did not like; for though his new tutor required but little of him, that little must be done thoroughly, and what was once required, was never to be given

up. Besides, young as he was, he had lost much of the simplicity of infancy, and could not be so easily amused as Charles, though he was so much older: and, with respect to principles, he had no other idea of right and wrong, but being gentlemanlike or ungentlemanlike; and there was, in his usual manner, a coldness and listlessness quite unlike the warmth and liveliness of childhood.

Charles, on the other hand, though he had always been brought up in polished and educated society, and had never incurred a single vulgar habit, had been used to few indulgences, was simple in his plea-

tures, and industrious at his studies. He was a gentleman from habit, and a Christian from principle. He had been roused to an energy hardly natural to him, by being made constantly to feel that something very important depended on his exertions; while, at the same time, he was carefully taught, that his own exertions, unassisted by that divine grace which he must diligently ask for, would produce nothing really and truly good.

A few months, however, produced a great change in the little Frederick: labour gave him a relish for play; religious instructions, assiduously but sea-

sonably given by his aunt, began, through the divine blessing, to produce principles, and even new affections; air and exercise had given him robust health; and he learned to be as happy as Charles in gathering water-lilies or mountain plants, in making little boats to sail on the lake, or in searching for crystals on the mountain side; and he would take pleasure in reading his Bible with Charles, as they sat together, on a Sunday, in some favourite solitude.

Sometimes their tutor, with the help of a little poney, would take them with him to the top of some almost inaccessible rock, and shew them far distant lands,

(which to their imagination were the boundaries of the earth,) and the sea covered with ships. Then he would point to almost impenetrable depths of wood below their feet, and cascades bursting from the mountain side. He took them to the very inmost recesses of the Pass of Llanberis, and that lovely valley where the greyhound sleeps. More than once he ascended with them to the very summit of Snowdon.

Frederick learned to take delight in listening to the black-bird and nightingale, and the ring-dove, in the deep wood, and began to notice the varying beauties which every change of

season affords. The companion of his studies and his pleasures, although the inhabitant of a cottage, became every day dearer to him; while Charles, on his part, made each day a progress in what was really valuable. While he became more active and manly in his pursuits, and made more rapid attainments in his studies, he lost none of his tender affection for his mother and sister, or of his deep reverence for religion: the seeds of piety sown in early infant days had put forth leaves and flowers, and had the promise at least of fruit.

These were happy days, but they passed rapidly away, and

at length the period, long dreaded by Sophia, arrived when her boy must go to school.

CHAPTER IX.



LORD L—— had prolonged his stay abroad to a greater length than had been expected; but he did return before the expiration of the two years, and his first visit was to the mansion of Lady Seymour. Both parents were pleased with the improvements of Frederick, and anticipated the comfort, if not the moral advantage, which he would derive from going to school in company with his cousin; and arrangements were

now immediately made for their going to a public school of eminence after the following Midsummer holidays. Lady Seymour undertook to provide Charles with every thing necessary for his new situation; while Sophia endeavoured to fortify her own heart against the approaching separation, by earnest prayer to her heavenly Father, and to prepare her boy by diligently giving him such advice as she thought it possible he could stand in need of in a situation the dangers of which were only imperfectly known to her.

The evening preceding the departure of the two boys, Lady Seymour called Charles into her

dressing-room, where she thus addressed him:—"I know, my dear boy, that your beloved mother has spared no pains in giving you those principles and instructions to which, with the divine blessing, we must look for your behaviour as a Christian during your residence at school. But I think I may be of some use to you, by pointing out to you a few of the occasions when you will most need to call these principles into action. I have lived many years in the world, and have seen something of the experience of my brothers and nephews. My own dear boy was, too, preparing to go to school, when he was otherwise and far better provided for."

Here she paused. "And you, my Charles, are my child too, and I feel for you all the anxiety of a parent, and more especially when I consider how much depends upon your present conduct. You cannot understand yet all the sacrifices your mother has made for you: but you may begin to know something about them, and you must exert every nerve to obtain that knowledge which may enable you to work for her, as well as yourself, when you are a man. And you must learn to be self-denying. Your mother will be practising self-denial all the time you are at school for your sake, and you must not be self-indulgent."

Charles looked up at his aunt, all ardour, as if he would have said, How can you suppose, aunt, that I should be self-indulgent?

“But, my boy,” replied Lady Seymour, answering to what was passing in his mind, “a school is a little world; and those who have lived much in the world; have always found that the way to be respected by the greatest part of it is, to make a great deal of themselves, and to spend a great deal upon themselves, it little signifies often how foolishly: while to deny one’s self, and do without what it is the usual custom of the world to have, even for the good of

parents, or near and dear relations, will be called stingy. Thus a boy who is careful in spending what his parents are earning with difficulty, will often be called by many hard names, which, without looking up for divine help, he will not be able to endure. But boys, as well as men, must endure persecution, if they will live godly in Christ Jesus; and they will surely reap the harvest of such sowing hereafter: yes, and the first fruits, even in this world."

Lady Seymor here stopped, waiting to see if her nephew had any thing to say in reply; but he looked silently attentive to her, and she thus proceeded:—

“A school is a little world, in another important respect. The language of Canaan is not talked among the generality of men: on the contrary, true religion and religious people are ridiculed; and, sometimes, even strict morality will be so too. And this you will find to be the case among your new companions. Some boys will not only do wickedly themselves, but will strive to make you as bad as themselves, and will laugh at you, and perhaps beat you, and call you names, if you do not fall in with their views. Here, nothing but the grace of God can preserve you from joining a multitude to do evil. But be cautious of opposing even these

wicked children in a wrong spirit. Let Christian courage make you firm in opposing, and Christian humility meek and gentle. If your companions cannot ruffle or discompose your temper, they will in time cease to torment you; and meanwhile, if you are diligent and industrious, you will get forward in the school, and will obtain that situation in it, which will give you influence, and will enable you to promote the cause of virtue by precept as well as example, and you will become the protector not only of your little cousin, but of all other well-disposed children.

“From our cradle it is ap-

pointed to the children of Christian parents to fight manfully in the spiritual warfare. Many are the battles of this kind you will be called to fight at school: but there are many now in heaven, who were enabled to be more than conquerors through the Captain of their salvation, even during the days of their childhood, and in the very same situation in which you are now going to be placed.

“O, my Charles, may you be one of that holy generation, who are as burning and shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. But remember, that prayer at least twice a day and on every oc-

casation of need, reading the Bible daily, and employing the Sunday properly, are means you must use, whatever ridicule they may expose you to, if you would expect a blessing on what you do. I shall conclude my advice with relating a little anecdote to you.—A few years ago meeting with a nobleman a little younger than myself, and chancing to converse alone with him, he told me that, next to God's blessing, he owed all his happiness in this world, and his hopes in the next, to the example my husband had set him, and the private instructions he had given him, when restraining him from evil, and this at a time when they were school-boys to-

gether, and my husband so much higher in the school than himself as to give him great influence over him.—I need not tell you," added Lady Seymor, "what delight this relation afforded me. I can only pray for you, my boy, that you may be made a means of similar usefulness."

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning, at an early hour, Charles and Frederick set off on their journey to school: and as my limits will not permit me to enter into any particulars respecting the conduct of Charles while at school, or his history during that period, I shall merely state, that the holidays were always a season of joy to the little party that met together, whether in the cottage of Sophia or the mansion of Lady Seymor—and Charles ne-

ver returned home without some little present to his mother or Amelia, which he had purchased with the savings of his pocket-money.

From his after-life some judgment may be formed whether or not he followed the faithful and wise conduct of his mother and aunt. We will now pass on to that time when he was arrived at an age to leave school, and go to the University, Frederick having attained that experience and steadiness which enabled him to act with respectability without the watchful eye of his cousin. Charles was grateful in his acknowledgments to his uncle for the part he

had borne in his education, the further expences of which were undertaken by Lady Seymor.

Before he entered upon his college life, he spent several of the summer months in the society of his mother and sister, and afforded to his widowed parent the sweet anticipation that she should see revived in her beloved son all that was interesting and engaging in her husband, purified, by the chastening power of religion, from what she had so bitterly lamented in the early days of the elder Charles. Yet the son wanted none of the vivacity or gaiety of his father; but he was as well pleased to display these quali-

ties in the company of his mother and sister, and Lady Seymour, or his revered tutor, as in the midst of the gayest society. Indeed, he seemed to require no other relaxation after study than their company and the enjoyment of the beauties of the surrounding scenery. And whether visiting the ancient haunts of his boyish days, or exploring new scenes of beauty and magnificence, amid rocks, whose eminences brought into view far distant lands, and dingles, deep and sombre, where surrounding woods of seemingly inaccessible height shut out every prospect of surrounding habitations, he received an ever-varying delight. His pencil

here was often called into employment: at other times he would read; and in his more serious moments he was often led from the contemplation of created things to the beneficent Creator, and would view in these sweet streams of creating love to man the Fountain of Love itself.

It was now that Charles began to feel a new anxiety to learn what were those sources of affliction in his mother's life, to which Lady Seymor had so often alluded, and why she was reduced to circumstances very different, as he was now aware, from those in which she had been born. Before he left home

he ventured to impart to Lady Seymour his desires on this head, and she complied with them; for she conceived that the time was now arrived when he might derive benefit from the experience of his father.

It was a painful task to Lady Seymour to relate the melancholy tale, and equally affecting to the aunt and nephew; but the latter part of the little history was sweet and soothing, and Charles was strangely touched by the recital of his mother's faithful attachment to the memory of his father, evidenced by resigning all those comforts of life to which she had been accustomed from the cradle,

for the sake of discharging his debts and rescuing his name from ignominy.

The mind of Charles was too deeply impressed by this interesting recital to allow him in any measure to express what he felt to Lady Seymor; and the impression accompanied him when he took leave of his friends and entered upon a college life, and he was spurred on anew to make those exertions which obtained for him the honours of diligence and perseverance, while, at the same time, he laboured to retain those principles of simple and sincere Christianity, which, without ostentation, preserved him from

the contamination of a wicked world. On every occasion he strove to express his increasing reverence and attachment for his honoured parent, and their meetings were increasingly delightful.

Charles's destination was the law, the profession which his father had once designed to follow; and at length the period arrived when he was to leave the University, and to fix his residence in London. The interval between his leaving Oxford and entering on his new studies was to be spent in his endeared domestic circle. It was summer, a season when his home was particularly delightful. Lady

Seymor was not in the neighbourhood when he arrived at his mother's cottage, but immediately upon her return home he hastened to call upon her.

In the course of their first conversation, he told her, though with some little confusion, that, during his residence at college, he had been able to save, out of the allowance which she had liberally made him, a hundred pounds, which sum he was anxious to lay out in some way that would be useful to his mother, and he begged her advice as to the most suitable way of doing so.

She seemed much touched by

this proof of steady and persevering regard to his mother; and as his allowance was not, in fact, large, she was convinced that he must have practised much self-denial in order to effect his purpose. She did not, however, express all this to him, but told him that she would consider of the best means of forwarding his wishes.

CHAPTER XI.

A FEW days after the conversation related in our last chapter, Lady Seymor sent for Charles again; when she told him, after a short preamble, that she had been so much gratified by the instance he had lately given of his steady regard to his mother, that she thought she might venture to treat him with complete openness, and lay before him all her plans. "I have," proceeded she, "always designed to do something for

yourself and your sister, which might enable you to live in that station to which you were born; but I have wished to do this in such a way as might quicken you to exertion, and not foster you in habits of indolence. You have been educated in hardship, and, I trust, have both imbibed those principles which will be a guide to you throughout your future life. But much remains to be done especially by yourself: you must be persevering and laborious in the prosecution of your studies, and then I trust you will be able to repay your mother for some of those *temporal* sacrifices *at least* which she has made for you. Her anxiety to make you true Christians can

indeed only be repaid by her seeing your consistent course of life; but you may restore her to the possession of those earthly comforts which she has so nobly resigned. It is to you, Charles, that I look for the accomplishment of this my favourite hope. But as time must elapse before it will be in your power to do any thing of this kind, I give you, meanwhile, five thousand pounds, the interest of which must support you in the situation upon which you are now about to enter. It is my intention to bestow the same sum of money upon your sister at her marriage.

Charles looked with earnest-

ness at his aunt while she spoke; but when some reply, expressive of his gratitude, might have been expected, he spoke not, but sunk into deep silence, and seemed wholly lost in profound thought.

Lady Seymor had ceased speaking, and looked at him with surprise and curiosity, as if she would have read his inmost thoughts. How long this silence would have lasted on the part of Charles is uncertain, had not his aunt by some slight movement recalled him to himself—when suddenly awakening, as from a deep slumber, he turned to Lady Seymor, and taking her hand in his usual

affectionate and respectful manner, "What must you think of me, my dear Madam? what must you think of my long silence?—and yet I feel, indeed I do, and more strongly than I can express, the full force of this fresh act of kindness to your unworthy Charles."

"I suppose," said Lady Seymour, "that your mind was engaged in something else which interested you still more than what I said to you. Tell me upon what subject your thoughts were employed, and I will pardon you."

After a short pause, and with a blush on his countenance,

Charles replied, "When you named, my dear aunt, the sum of five thousand pounds, it occurred to me, that possibly such a sum might redeem my mother's estate for her immediate use, provided that a bond, or something of that sort, were given by me, to secure the payment of what would still remain unpaid at the time when the estate should come into my possession. You know, I am now of age, and could make such a bond: whether it would be available I cannot tell—for I am not *yet* a lawyer."

"And upon what would you propose to subsist yourself during the remaining period of

your education?" asked Lady Seymour, assuming a serious manner.

"I would be dependent upon my mother," answered Charles.

"You are a noble boy," exclaimed Lady Seymour, in the warmth of her feelings, and putting away her serious countenance.

"Then I may trust I have not offended you, my dear aunt," said Charles, stooping forwards, and taking her hand again; "I was almost afraid I had."

"No, my child," replied Lady Seymour, "how can I be offend-

ed by any proof of your dutiful attachment to your mother? I know you mean all that is right towards me at the same time, but whether your plan is practicable I cannot tell: however, I will talk to my steward upon the subject."

The steward was consulted, and a plan was devised by which Lady Seymor's intended gift of five thousand pounds to Charles was appropriated to the purpose he had proposed, and the immediate possession of her paternal estate was secured to Sophia. The debt not yet discharged was hereafter to be paid by Charles, which his aunt judiciously considered would be a spur to in-

dustry in his profession. The payment of interest was undertaken by Lady Seymour; and, probably, she afforded securities and other assistances in the accomplishment of the plan, the particulars of which it concerns us not now to enter into. The house was at that time untenanted, and, within three months, all negotiations might be completed—all preparations might be made for the restoration of Sophia to her native place.

When the possibility of this arrangement being so speedily made was imparted to Charles, it is impossible to describe the joy and thankfulness which he expressed on the occasion. It

was decided that nothing should be named to Sophia at present, and if every arrangement should be completed within the three months, her beloved Charles was to be the restorer of his dear mother to her home: for he had now that period before him to remain among his friends. Amelia alone was to be entrusted with the secret, as her assistance in various little plans would be very valuable. The gentle, faithful, and lovely Amelia, in whom the mother bloomed anew, could not but share with all her heart in every plan formed for the happiness of that parent.

How this plan, so delightful

to Lady Seymour and the two children of Sophia, was put into execution, we shall shortly see, at least in its most interesting particulars. In its prosecution, Charles visited his cousin Frederick, who was then at his father's country-seat, more than once, and now he found abundant use for his hundred pounds, in making many little improvements within and without his mother's house.

Lord and Lady L—— entered with a warm interest into Charles's plans, and insisted upon bearing a considerable part in the furnishing of the place, and the gardener was ordered, at his Lord's expence, to

put the little shrubbery, flower-garden, and kitchen-garden, in neat and convenient order. Charles was anxious to spur on these preparations; and every thing needful was completed by the time the necessary arrangements which the steward had undertaken were concluded.

The three months had now nearly passed away, when Charles returned from the mansion of Lord L——, and brought with him a pressing invitation from Lord and Lady L—— to Sophia and Amelia, to pay them a visit. The little party were assembled at Lady Seymour's when Charles delivered his mes-

sage: Sophia had received frequent invitations of this kind, and had invariably declined them; she proposed to do the same on the present occasion: for she felt a repugnance, natural enough indeed, to revisit the scenes of former trials and former happiness; and having lived long in solitude, she felt little disposed to leave it.

“I do not think,” said Lady Seymour, upon hearing her express her intention, “that I shall allow you to decline this invitation quite so easily as you have done on former occasions. I am going to see my nephew myself, and I should have great

pleasure in taking yourself and Charles and Amelia with me at the same time."

Sophia thanked her aunt for her kind offer, but did not look disposed to accept it.

"Besides," said Lady Seymour, "this great girl, almost eighteen, ought to see something more of her fellow-creatures, and of her native country, than the foot of Snowdon will afford. Should you not enjoy such a scheme, Amelia?"

The countenance of Amelia expressed a degree of ardour on the occasion which surprised Sophia.

“Do, my dear mother,” said Charles, “oblige us by accompanying my aunt and myself.”

“Are you going to visit your uncle again?” said Sophia, somewhat anxiously.

“Not to leave you, my dear mother: but you would really much oblige us by accepting this invitation of Lady L——: it was very kindly sent.”

Sophia was always reasonable, and always ready to sacrifice her own inclinations to those of others: perceiving therefore the wishes of her children and Lady Seymor, she gently said, that she would consider of

the plan, and the subject was dropped.

When alone, she prayed earnestly for direction, for she felt it would be a severe trial to revisit her native country as a stranger; and she feared introducing her daughter to a new style of society. Yet, on the other hand, she doubted whether she was acting a right part towards her by secluding her from all intercourse with her relations, to whom, at some period of her life, she must be introduced without her mother's watchful eye over her.

The next morning she had made the sacrifice of her own

feelings, and she acquainted Lady Seymour with her intention to acquiesce in her proposal. This information gave universal satisfaction, and the beginning of the following week was fixed for the journey.

CHAPTER XII.

AS Sophia drew towards her native place, many sad and very painful remembrances crowded upon her mind, and it was in vain that she endeavoured to conceal from the friends who accompanied her, or those who received her, the extreme agitation of her spirits.

Lady Seymour permitted three or four days to elapse after her arrival at Lord L——'s seat without pressing forwards the ob-

ject for which the present journey was undertaken. During this time Sophia had leisure to discover that Lord L——'s family was not, as in former days, the scene of temptation. Lord and Lady L—— were in outward appearance considerably older than Sophia; they were both rather invalids: necessity, if not principle, had soberized their habits; and their spirits, from extraordinary elevation, were depressed to habitual flatness. Even Sophia, tried as she had been in the school of adversity, usually possessed far more cheerfulness and vivacity. Religion is often found to produce that elasticity of mind which is generally considered as pecu-

liar to young people, and which long intercourse with the dissipated or anxious part of the world almost invariably removes.

The chief society at the hall was composed of elderly females, and a few gentlemen, of quiet habits, who were occasional inmates in the family, and dinner-parties consisting of the families of the most respectable country gentlemen in the neighbourhood.

Lord L——, more prudent for his son than he had been for himself, and probably having tasted somewhat largely of the dangers of gambling, had carefully banished from his family every species of high play.

Frederick, if he possessed not all the good qualities of his cousin, was, at least, correct in his habits, and gentlemanly in his manners. He had acquired a taste for reading and quiet employments, very salutary in his station of life; and he might, upon the whole, be called a promising and well-disposed young man. It was evident that he had received much benefit from his intercourse with Charles, and was still much influenced by him.

Sophia perceived all these circumstances with thankfulness, and gradually recovered her usual state of spirit. Lady Seymour was no sooner aware of the

return of her usual composure, than she requested her, with Amelia, to accompany her, one morning, in a drive in her carriage; and after a short airing in the grounds of Lord L—, the coachman, as previously directed, crossed the bridge in a neighbouring village, and presently brought the little party almost within view of Sophia's ancient abode. Sophia was aware of the circumstance, and seemed much agitated. "As we are got thus far," said Lady Seymour, "would you indulge Amelia with a still nearer view of a spot in which she feels strongly interested, and of which memory has nothing to tell her?"

Sophia was wishing, yet dreading, to obtain, at least, one transient view of the beloved place; and when Lady Seymor made the request, she gave an abrupt consent.

In a few minutes the carriage drove into the lawn—the well-known lawn—and stopped before the neat verandah, into which the hall-door opened. Lady Seymor supported Sophia as she descended from the carriage, and Amelia took her other hand. “I cannot go into the house among strangers,” said Sophia, all agitation.

“There are no strangers in the house,” answered Lady Sey-

mor; "it is at present untenanted: but we will walk about a little first." So saying, she led her upon the smooth velvet turf surrounding the house, scattered here and there with underwood of flowering shrubs and beds of mignonette, and other flowers of lovely perfume. Amidst a thicket of these sweets was an ancient seat, formed of the crooked branches of trees; and here Lady Seymor placed her weeping and trembling companion.

Amelia had procured a glass of water for her mother; and when she was somewhat recovered, Lady Seymor ventured to point out to Amelia the prospect

seen from the spot where they were sitting, and which was commanded also by one front of the house. It was the Severn, rolling beneath an amphitheatre of wood, and was a similar view, only seen higher up the hill, to that which Sophia's favourite meadow commanded. The favourite meadow and the bower of sycamore itself were in view. Sophia looked up too, as well as Amelia; but her eyes were instantaneously dimmed with tears, and a fresh burst of sorrow followed. She sunk back upon her seat; her father, her mother, her husband,—all were presented so strongly before her by memory far too faithful at that moment, that she was for a time

quite overcome. At length her habitual feelings of piety bade her remember that all these dear persons were now in glory, that ever since the days of her own infancy, loving-kindness and mercy had followed her, and that too amidst the keenest trials which she had been called to encounter, whether in the life or death of her beloved friends. Her composure gradually returned, and relieved too by the abundant tears she had shed, she was enabled in a little while to look up and give her hand to each of the two dear persons who sat beside her, anxiously watching her, yet fearing to intrude officiously upon her feelings. She smiled amidst her

tears, saying, "I have still cause for nothing but gratitude."

At that moment the window of the drawing-room, which descended by one step upon the soft turf, not far from the spot where they were sitting, suddenly opened, and Charles appeared coming towards them. He addressed his mother with as much composure as he could assume, and said, that he was glad to find that she had had resolution to accompany Lady Seymour and his sister, and gently invited her to come into the house. She seemed desirous to shrink from nothing, and Charles supported her into the drawing-room, where he seated

her on a sofa. After a little pause, he entered into indifferent conversation with his aunt and Amelia respecting the pictures which were hung in the room: then turning, perhaps too abruptly, to his mother, he asked her how she liked the taste of the furniture.

With all the calmness she could assume, she looked around her, and said the room was elegantly fitted up, and she supposed it was prepared for a tenant of a superior kind.

“Yes,” said Charles, hastily, taking her hand with an ardour he could not repress, “it is prepared for you.”

“For me!” said Sophia, looking almost wildly at him.

“And your son, your Charles, gives it you,” said Lady Seymor, with equal warmth.

“O, do not jest with me,” replied Sophia; “I cannot bear it now.”

“It is all reality, it is no jest,” answered Lady Seymor.

Sophia had been for some time exerting herself to the utmost, and she sunk under this last demand upon her feelings. In extreme agitation she fell back on the sofa.

“We have been too hasty,” said Lady Seymour to Charles and Amelia; “leave your mother to me for a little while: as soon as she is calm I will send for you.”

When the young people had withdrawn, Lady Seymour sat by Sophia for some time in perfect silence, till once again she regained sufficient composure to intreat an explanation of what had passed. Lady Seymour then gently gave her the whole account of her nephew's behaviour on that day when she had made him the offer of an independence: how anxious he had been to relinquish that independence for his mother's sake,

pleasing himself with the idea of looking to her for his future supplies. She then related the particulars of the plans which had since been gradually put into execution. Thus, by degrees, Sophia was convinced that she had in reality become possessed again of her inheritance, and in a way too, which afforded far more gratification to her feelings than she could have derived from the mere circumstance itself.

As soon as the relation was concluded, she begged to see her beloved boy. Charles and his sister were called into the room: when the mother, in a transport of maternal feeling,

fell upon his neck and tenderly embraced him; then lifting up her eyes towards heaven, she fervently thanked God for giving her such a son.

As Lady Seymour beheld the affecting spectacle, she turned to Charles: "Receive now, my boy," said she, "the reward of all your self-denial at school and at college. Do you now repent the sacrifices you then made for your mother's sake?"

Charles, in the greatest agitation, had seated his mother again upon the sofa, and placed himself beside her, and she, quite overpowered, had sunk on his shoulder.

“O, my dear niece,” continued Lady Seymor, placing herself on the other side of her, “and you are now receiving the reward of all your labours of love for your husband and children.”

“O, Lady Seymor,” exclaimed Sophia, raising up her head, “give no praise to me; to God be all the glory. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase.”

The pious feelings of Lady Seymor and Charles echoed back these words of Sophia, and, in this moment of universal joy, the most delightful feeling in

every bosom, was an unspeakable sense of the goodness of God, which had, in so remarkable a manner, followed this little family; so that the language of every heart was that of the psalmist, *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness.*

This scene, almost too interesting for the weak feelings of human nature, was at length interrupted by the unwelcome

intrusion of Lady Seymour's servant, who came to inform her of the lateness of the hour. And in closing the history of this affecting period, we might at the same time close that of Sophia, having seen her restored, by the virtues of the son, to the comforts and enjoyments of which she had been deprived by the vices of the father: but we cannot entirely take our leave, till we have briefly mentioned a few particulars relative to the various personages spoken of in this little narrative.

CONCLUSION.

IN a few months Sophia and her beloved daughter were settled in their native place. The blessing of the neighbourhood, which loved and honoured the memory of Mr. Falconer, rested upon them; and they, in their turn, became indeed a blessing to the neighbourhood. It was ever the study of Sophia, to testify her gratitude to the Author of all good, for the countless mercies she had received, and especially as mani-

fested in the late interesting manner of her restoration to her native place, by devoting a large portion of her time and income to the spiritual and temporal good of her neighbours as she had opportunity for so doing.

After the establishment of her son in London, whose wants we may rest assured were tenderly and liberally supplied by his mother, she occasionally spent some part of her time in his immediate neighbourhood. His vacations were always spent in the country with her; and, during the summer, they invariably visited Lady Seymour, whose parental kindness and adoption, as it were, of the family, was

never to be forgotten. As she gradually declined in health, and the infirmities of age grew upon her, their attentions towards her were increased; and for some months previous to her death Sophia never left her. Ripe in years, and full of faith and hope, she expired in the arms of Sophia. Her warmth of feeling never forsook her to the last, and her death might be called triumphant. She left behind her the legacy she had promised to Amelia, and to Charles she left a sufficient sum completely to emancipate him from any incumbrances which he might still have on his property. Her estate went into another family after her death; but Sophia and

her children frequently visited, with feelings of tender affection and gratitude, that beautiful and beloved part of Snowdonia where her mansion stood. Her residence in Lady Seymor's cottage Sophia always spoke of as a circumstance which, with the divine blessing, had been peculiarly beneficial to her children, at a time of life when the influence of the world is so much to be dreaded for the unformed mind of tender infancy and early youth.

Sophia had the satisfaction of seeing both her children married in every respect suitably to her wishes; and we may be sure that in the formation of

these connexions the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness were the first things she had in view.

Amelia was settled in her immediate neighbourhood; but Charles for some years carried on his profession in London.

Sophia spent a considerable part of her time with her children and grandchildren, some portion of it was given to her neighbours, and the remainder was passed in solitude. Long habit, and her peculiarly serious and contemplative character, rendered solitude at all times very delightful to her: and as she advanced in life, and lived

daily more and more with heaven in view, that retirement which afforded much opportunity for communion with God and the exercise of faith, and penitence, and lively hope, became hourly more sweet to her. She did not live to a very advanced age; the sorrows and trials of early life had considerably affected her constitution: but her latter days were easy, and she gently drew to the close of life; and in the sweetest state of calm reliance on a Saviour's merits, she died amidst the tears and tender attentions of her children.

Soon after her death, her son settled entirely on his country

estate, where he long preserved a uniform, consistent, and manly walk, in the duties of a Christian and a gentleman, a husband, a father, and a brother; and his influence over the young Lord L——, which, as they advanced in life was far from diminishing, was considered not only as a private blessing to that nobleman, but as a means of much benefit to the neighbourhood. And thus, as much as in him lay, the younger Charles was the means of counteracting the sad effects of his father's errors: while the history of both, as well as that of Sophia, testify in a striking manner, that the end of the ungodly is, they shall be rooted out at

the last; *but the salvation of the righteous cometh of the Lord; who is also their strength in the time of trouble.*

L.

Finis.

