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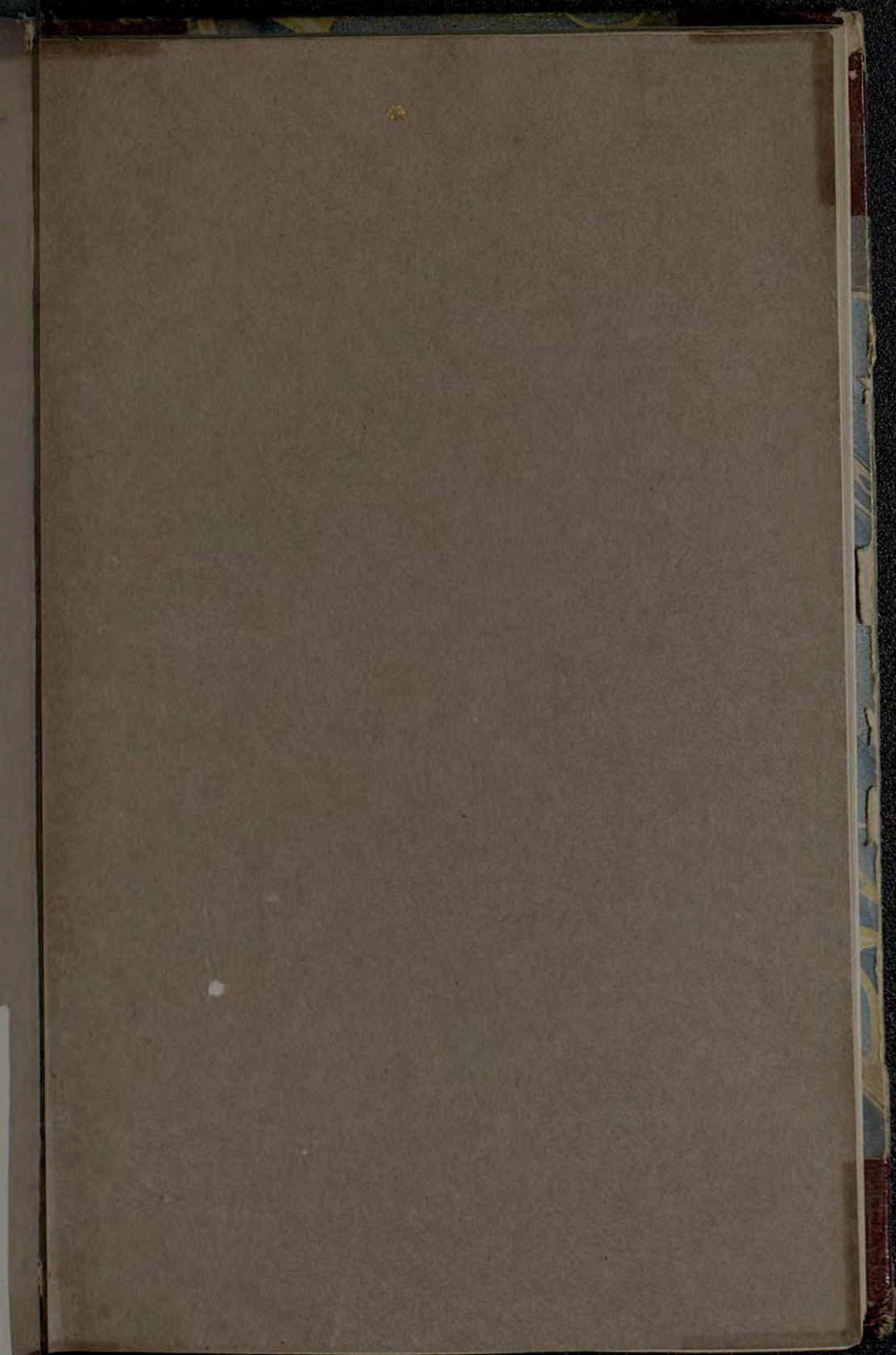
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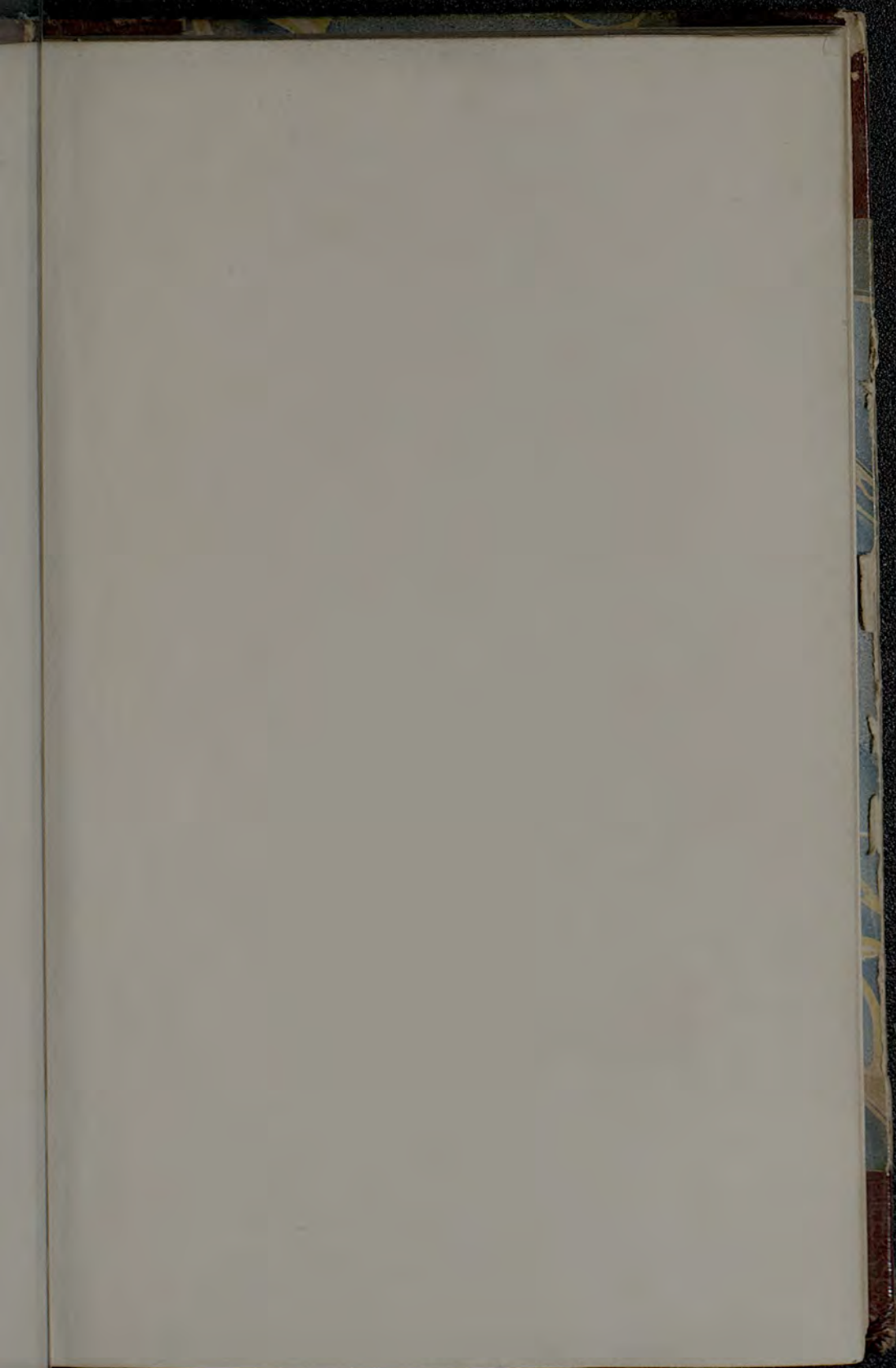
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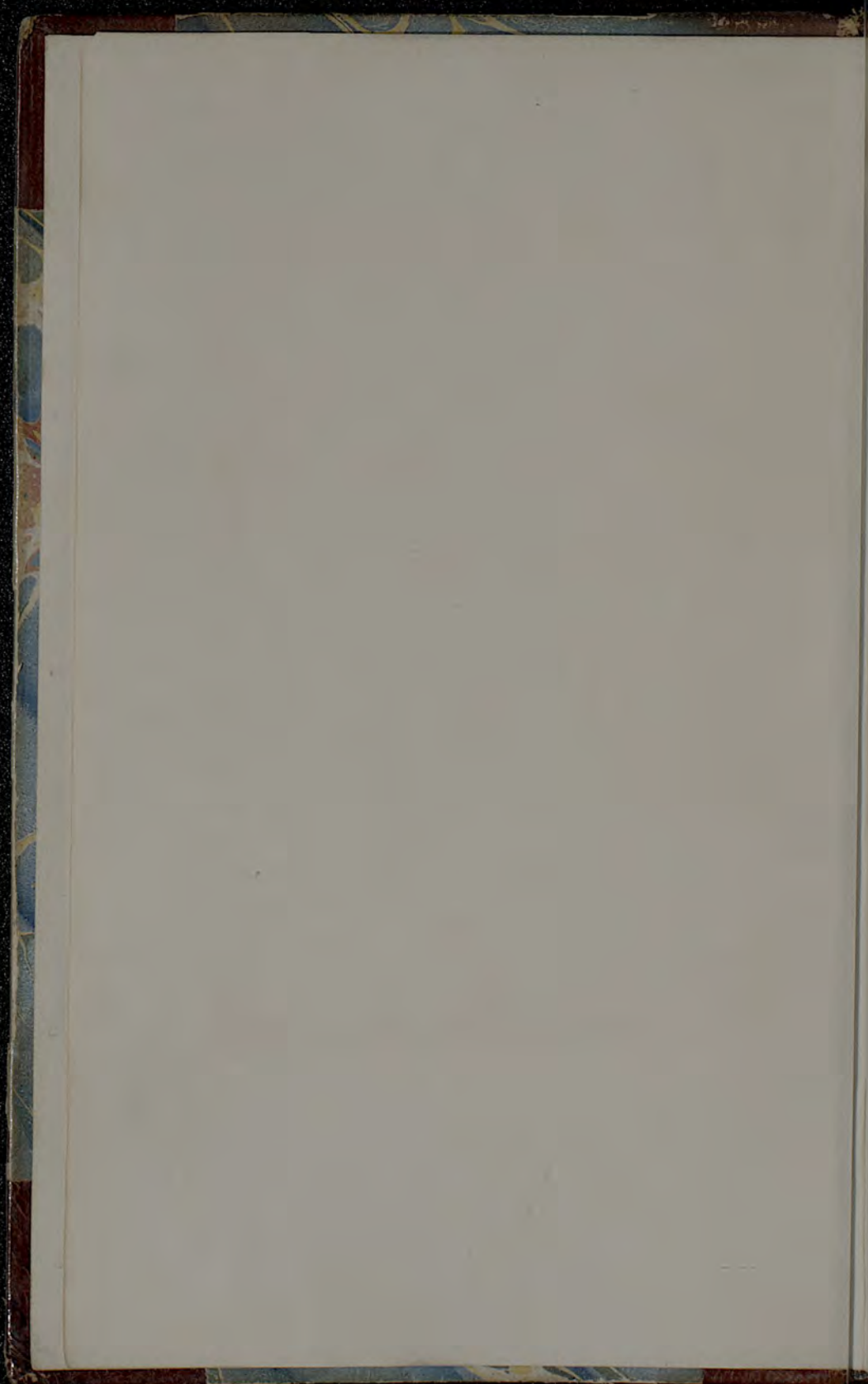
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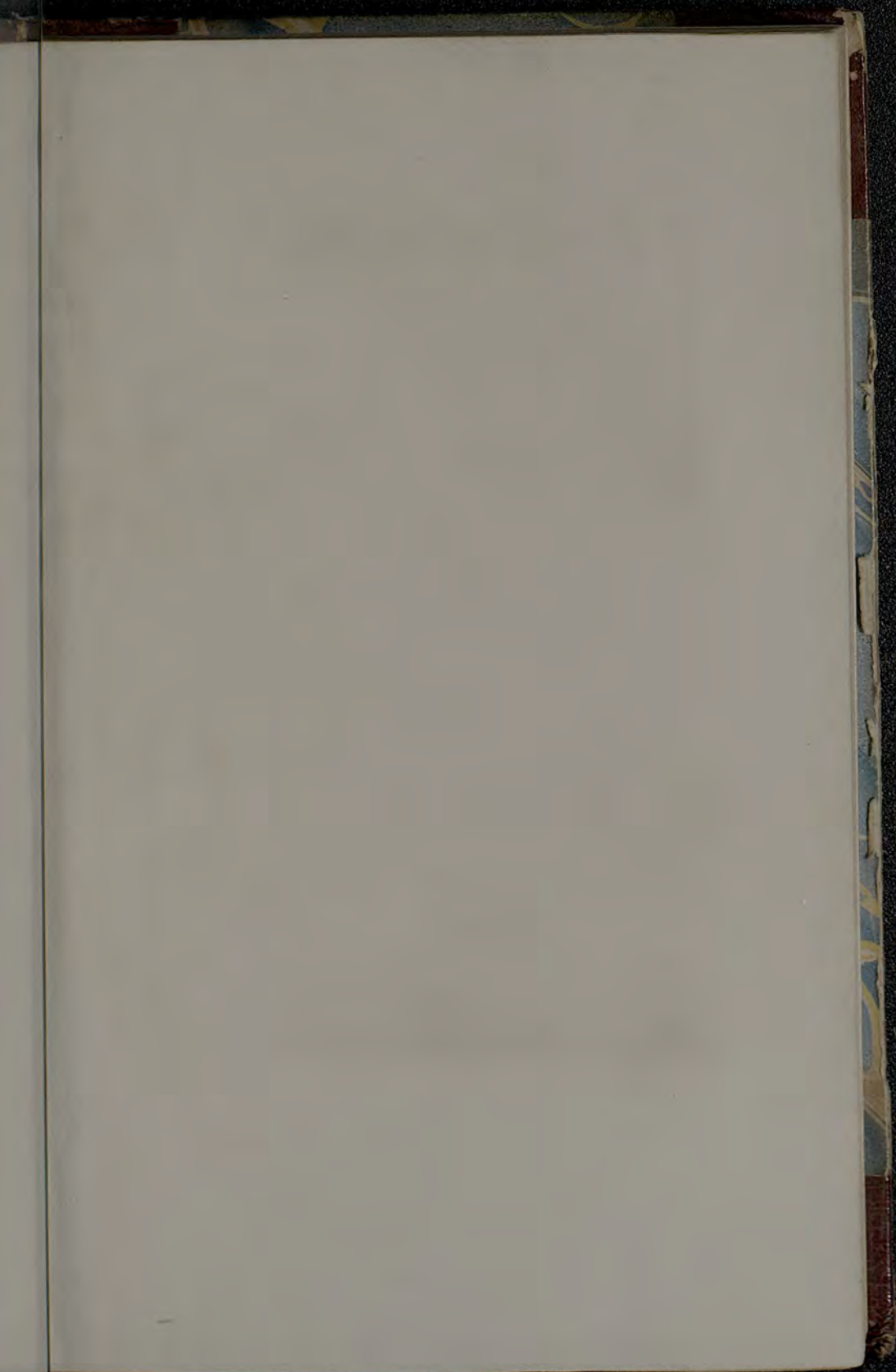


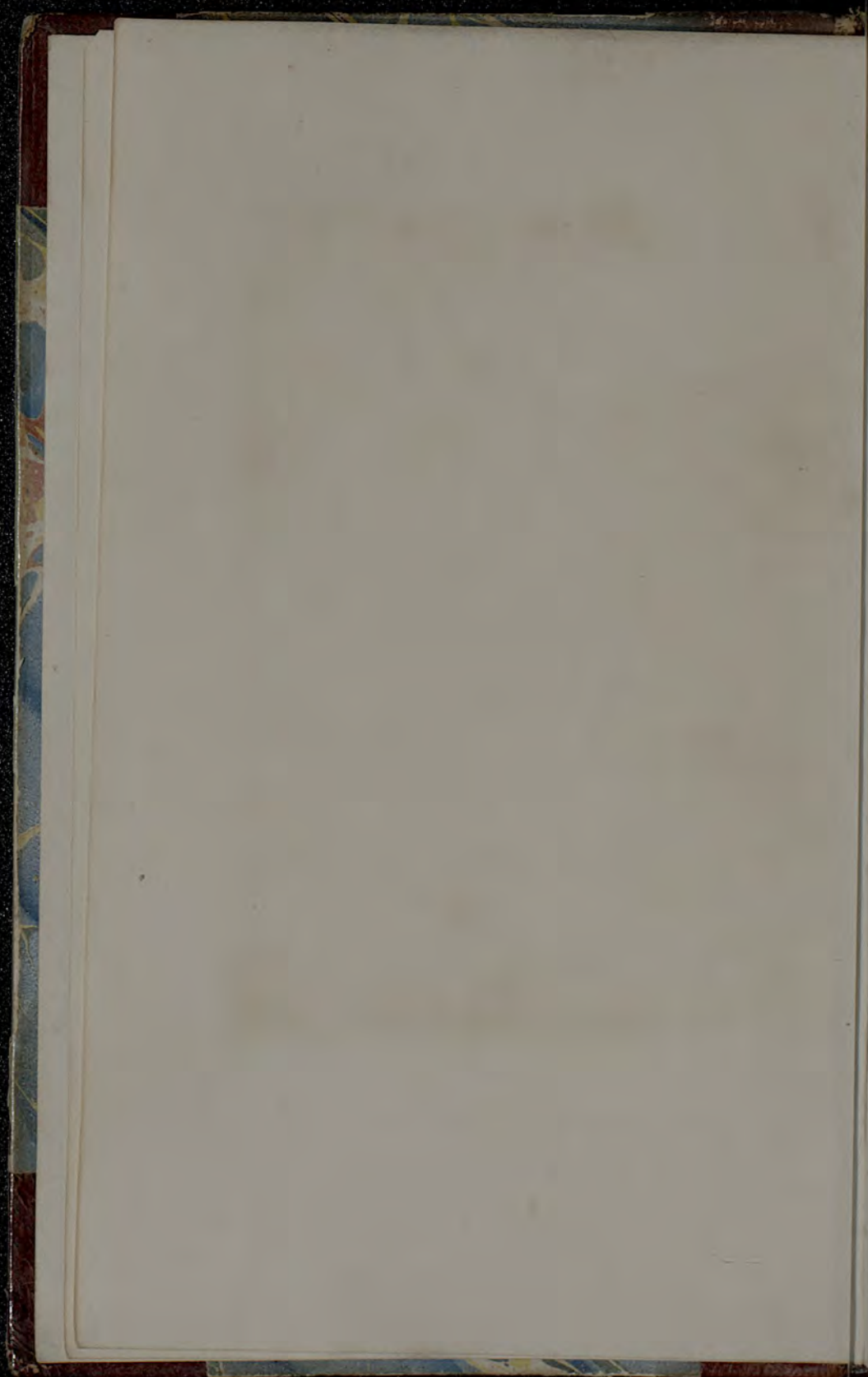
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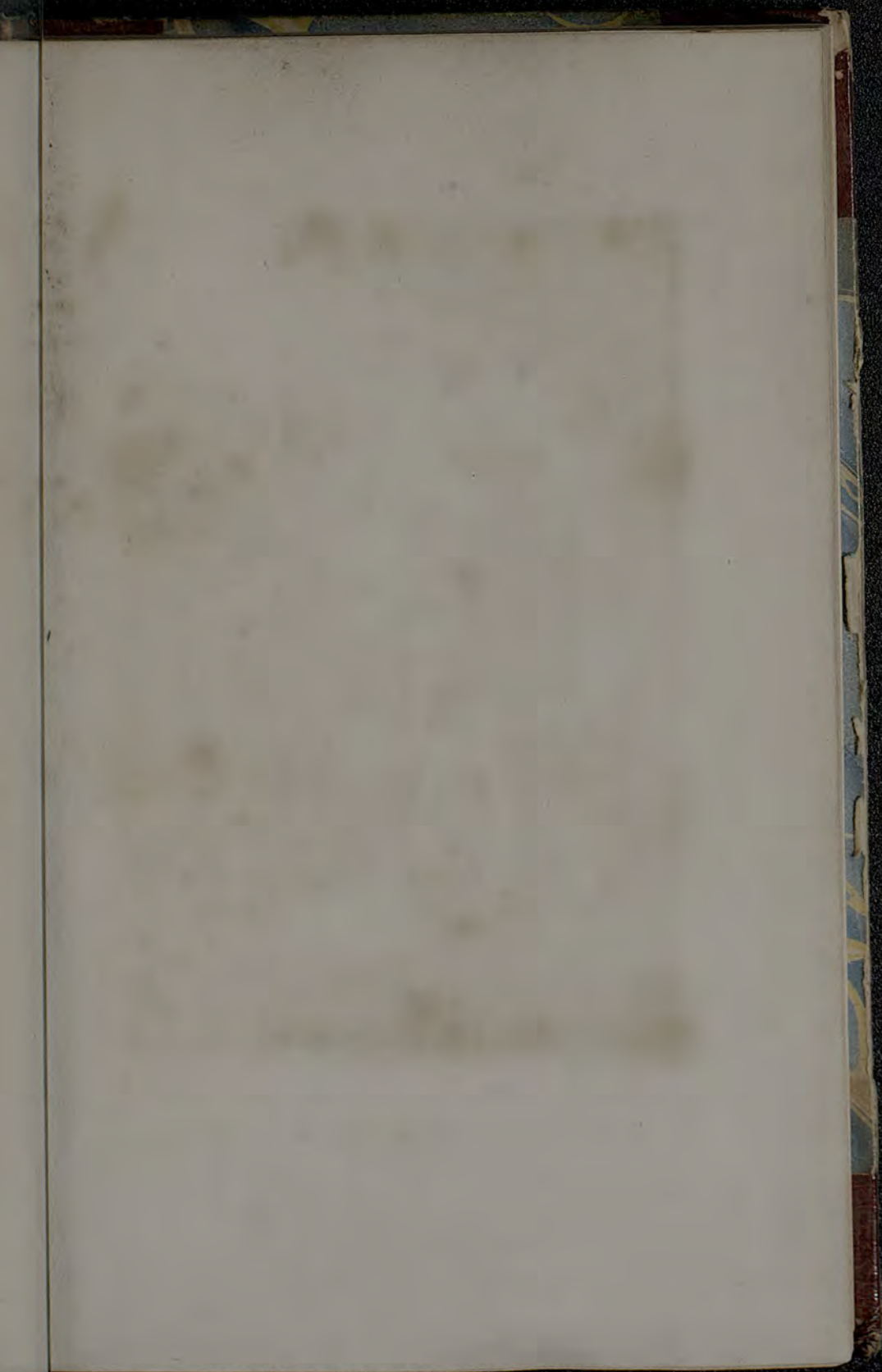
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FRONTISPIECE.



THE FRUITS OF EDUCATION.

*Published by Houlston & Son, 65 Paternoster Row London,
and at Wellington, Salop. February 1st 1827.*

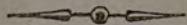
Maria Butler

THE

FRUITS OF EDUCATION;

OR,

THE TWO GUARDIANS.



BY

MRS. CAMERON,

Author of "Emma and her Nurse," "Margaret Whyte,"

"The Two Lambs," &c. &c.

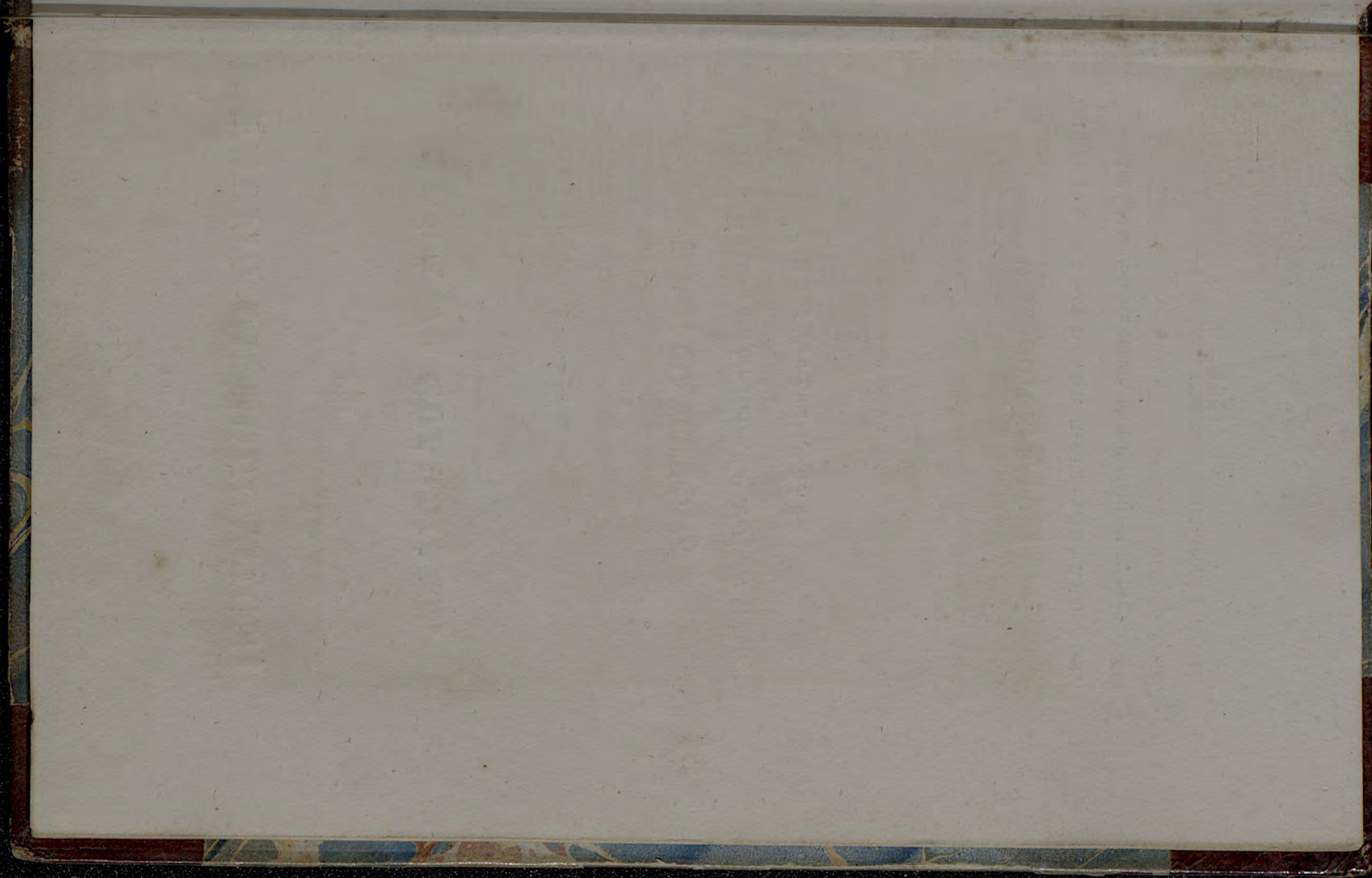


WELLINGTON, SALOP:

PRINTED BY AND FOR HOULSTON AND SON.

And sold at their Warehouse, 65, Paternoster-Row, London.

1827.



THE
FRUITS OF EDUCATION,

&c.



CAPTAIN OAKLEY was an officer in the army. He was a man of an excellent private character, amiable manners, and well disposed towards religion, though not yet acquainted with its real nature. At five-and-thirty, he married a lady of a character congenial to his own, though more advanced in her religious attainments; and for nine years she was the companion of all his travels, which had never yet extended beyond the United Kingdoms.

At the end of that period she was attacked with a disease which speedily terminated her life. She died, enjoying the hopes and consolations of a Christian, leaving behind her a son, aged eight years, and a daughter, aged six, in whose tender minds she had laboured to implant such pure principles of religion as they were capable of receiving.

A few weeks after Mrs. Oakley's death, the regiment of the afflicted father was ordered to the East Indies. Captain Oakley was on this occasion in extreme perplexity respecting his future plans: to leave the army at such a time, with little or no provision yet made for his family, he thought inconsistent with his duty; at the same time he felt at a loss what arrangements to make for his children.

While his mind was thus agitated, he received, one morning, two letters, from which I shall make some extracts. The first was from his eldest brother, who was in the church; it was as follows:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“You well know, that ever since the death of my highly respected sister-in-law, you have been continually in my thoughts, and daily in my prayers. But I felt that I could do nothing else for you. Since, however, I have heard that your regiment is ordered abroad, it has occurred to me, that if you have any thoughts of accompanying it, which, on some accounts, you may probably think desirable, it might be a convenience to you if I

were to undertake the charge of my little nephew and godson James.

“ If you design him for a soldier, you must give me particular directions respecting his education; if you should like to make a country clergyman of him, I could keep him under my own eye till his college days begin. My parish, my study, and my garden, you know are every thing to me; but still I think I could make the child happy, for we have poultry, dogs, and cats about the house, flowers in abundance in the gardens, apples in the orchard, squirrels in the woods, and pictures in the study; and, as his age ripens, I doubt not, with God’s blessing, that he will learn to take pleasure in my habits and pursuits, in which, indeed, I find abundance of peace.

“ I wish I could offer to take his sister, but, you know, I have neither wife nor sister, and my old housekeeper, I am sure, is not fitted to train a little girl.”

The other letter was from a first cousin of Captain Oakley’s, with whom, in his younger days, he had been in habits of intimacy, and he remembered

her as a lively good-natured girl. She had been married fifteen years to a gentleman of easy fortune and great respectability, who resided at Reading. Since her marriage, the continual change of place to which Captain Oakley's profession had subjected him, had prevented his ever meeting Mrs. Dánvers, but he had heard, from different people, that she was much respected in the place where she lived, and was considered as a very good sort of woman.—We shall copy nearly the whole of her letter :—

“ MY DEAR COUSIN,

“ Our ancient friendship, of at least twenty years standing, does not permit me to feel uninterested in your late troubles. I have several times sat down to write to you, but our intercourse has been so long interrupted, and I felt myself so ignorant of the circumstances in which you were placed, that I hardly knew how to address you. Accident, however, has befriended me: a gentleman, who had lately seen you, was, luckily, my next neighbour yesterday, when dining at a friend's house, and from him I heard all about you.

“ I understand your regiment is ordered to the

East Indies, and certainly you will not lose so good an opportunity of making a provision for your children; for you know nobody returns poor from India.

"Should you feel happy in trusting me with your little girl during your absence? I always loved children, though I have none of my own. I promise you that I will try not to spoil her.

"I cannot engage to undertake her education when she is past being a plaything; for the confinement necessary for such a purpose would not agree with my health and Mr. Danvers's engagements. But should you not be returned by that time, there is a most excellent school, in a charming airy situation, within a morning's drive of my house, kept by a very clever sensible woman, where I could send the dear girl. I could overlook her health and morals myself, and make her happy in the holidays.

"I suppose you will leave your son at school, and I should be happy at any time to receive him in his vacation. If you accept my offer, I will meet your daughter in London at any time you will name."

Captain Oakley read these two letters with emotions of thankfulness and joy. He had the highest reverence for his brother's character, and all his recollections of Mrs. Danvers were of a very pleasing kind. He therefore immediately decided upon accepting both these offers, and agreed to meet Mrs. Danvers in London at the end of a fortnight, for the purpose of committing his little girl to her care. And, as his brother resided upon a country living in Kent, Captain Oakley engaged to visit him, to convey to him his little charge, in the way from London to Portsmouth, where the regiment was to embark.

From this period till the arrival of Captain Oakley in London, all was hurry, bustle, and preparation. After spending one night in Town at an inn where the coach in which he had travelled had stopped, Captain Oakley took his children, the next morning, to a large hotel in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly, where he had appointed to meet Mrs. Danvers.

The little ones had been so much occupied with the many new things they had to see, that they had not reflected upon their approaching separa-

tion till they found themselves in a large room, looking into a wide, quiet street, where Mrs. Danvers, already arrived, was waiting for them.

Fifteen years had made a considerable change in the appearance of the two cousins; but they recollected each other, and exchanged many expressions of good-will. Mrs. Danvers took the little Maria in her arms, who shrunk back to her papa; and both the children, hanging upon his knees, fully understanding that they were soon to be parted, began to weep together.

"Oh! this will not do," said Mrs. Danvers, as she rung the bell in haste for refreshments; and placing the little ones on each side of her, she tried to dispel their sorrows by heaping up their plates with what appeared to them as delicacies. Meanwhile talking to the little girl of what she should see when they were arrived at home, "And before we go out of town," proceeded she, "we will buy a wax doll, and I do not know what else besides."

"But James," said the little girl, "when shall I see James and papa?"

"O, James," replied Mrs. Danvers, "he shall come and see you at the holidays, and papa will soon come back with his purse full of gold."

Captain Oakley was little disposed to interrupt this discourse ; yet there were many things which he had intended to say to Mrs. Danvers, especially relating to some requests his wife had made to him on her death-bed ; and now he felt, he knew not why, an awkwardness in repeating them.

When the hasty meal was concluded, Mrs. Danvers rang for her servant ; saying to Captain Oakley, "Since we must part, I think the sooner it is done the better : I shall order my horses."

Mrs. Danvers's maid was now busily employed in tying on the little girl's bonnet, taking possession of her small packages, and in endeavouring to dry up the tears of the children. Meanwhile Captain Oakley, drawing his chair close to that of Mrs. Danvers, proceeded to say to her : "Among my little girl's possessions, you will find a Bible, which her mamma gave to her on her death-bed ; at which time she earnestly requested me to take care that she should be daily instructed in its sacred contents,

and made to feel their vast importance. It was also her earnest request that she should be taught the necessity and advantage of prayer; nor merely as a form, but—

“Vastly right, vastly proper,” replied Mrs. Danvers. “Wilson,” added she, looking at her maid, “are you almost ready?” Then turning round again, “You may depend upon it, Captain Oakley, that I will do for your daughter exactly as if she were my own.”

“Mrs. Oakley,” continued the Captain, after a few moments silence, “entertained some peculiar notions respecting education. She was not desirous that her daughter’s acquirements should be of a showy or ornamental kind.”

“O, certainly not,” replied Mrs. Danvers; “accomplishments are but secondary things; morals and health must be considered in the first place.”

“Mrs. Oakley was extremely anxious that her daughter should be brought up in the habits of the strictest piety. She set, indeed, the example herself, had her child been old enough to follow it.

She was, indeed, sincerely and consistently religious."

"No doubt she was—I dare say.—Wilson, do desire them to let me have my bill immediately.—But you know, Captain Oakley, we cannot expect grey heads upon green shoulders. Fifteen years ago," she added, with a smile, "neither you nor I were the reasonable beings we are now."

"Surely not," replied Captain Oakley, "but much must depend upon the education we receive. You know too many young people are brought up to consider themselves merely as inhabitants of this world, without any serious reflections respecting the next."

"Very wrong; entirely wrong. A proper regard to religion is quite necessary."

"Perhaps," continued Captain Oakley, "I may have time, before I leave England, to put down on paper a few last requests which my wife made me on her death-bed."

"Do not put yourself to so painful a task," re-

plied Mrs. Danvers: "depend upon it, your child's welfare shall be as dear to me as if she were my own daughter; and I hope, at your return, she will be a comfort to you."

At this moment the servant appeared with the account, informing her mistress that every thing was ready.

All was now hurry and agitation. Captain Oakley found it a more bitter trial than he had expected to part with his little girl. The two children cried and sobbed. Mrs. Danvers took a very friendly leave of Captain Oakley, promising to write frequently to him. The little Maria was lifted into the carriage; she gave one more parting look at her papa and brother; the door was shut, the horses drove off, and the carriage, turning into another street, was out of sight in a few moments.

When Captain Oakley had completed a few arrangements, which occupied the remaining hours of the day, he commenced his journey into Kent. At break of day the following morning, the coach set him down at a small public-house, where, taking a guide, he began to descend by a green wind-

ing lane into a little narrow valley, extending itself between two woody hills. His brother's spire-church was situated on the declivity of one of these hills, two miles distant from the turnpike-road; and the adjoining village was embosomed in hop-yards and orchards, which richly variegated the green valley. Beyond, at a great distance, was a view of the ocean. The morning was exceedingly fine, and a sweet perfume from the opening flowers, now wet with dew, was wafted on every refreshing breeze.

Captain Oakley walked along in silence, which was only interrupted by the questions of his little boy. From the moment of his interview with Mrs. Danvers, he had felt a dissatisfaction of mind for which he could not account; and which he felt himself somewhat blameable for indulging.

From these feelings he was roused by his guide, who pointed out to him his brother's neat parsonage, and its pleasant little shrubbery opening into the church-yard. He quickened his pace, and in a few minutes he was within the gate; and was as speedily welcomed by his brother, who, being an early riser, was already in his garden.

After the first joyful salutations had passed, Mr. Oakley took little James by the hand, affectionately welcoming him to his new home.

But we will refrain from entering into too many particulars, and will pass over the two days which the brothers spent together; days of refreshing quiet to Captain Oakley. It may be necessary, however, to refer to one conversation which took place previous to their separation.

It was on this occasion that Captain Oakley entered largely into every particular which he wished to discuss with his brother respecting James: among these particulars, the profession for which the boy was to be prepared was not the least important. "Should my boy," said Captain Oakley, "manifest any disposition to the profession, I should be glad to have him brought up to the church. I should be happy to have him spared such a trial as that to which I am now called."

Mr. Oakley replied, that he would never urge his nephew to enter upon duties so sacred, as those of the pastoral office, unless he should observe in him a fitness for the employment. "I am much

pleased," he added, "with what I have hitherto seen of the child: young as he is, I can perceive that he has been well brought up."

"He had the best of mothers," replied Captain Oakley; "and many were her dying requests to me respecting the education of her children."

"And those requests," said Mr. Oakley, "I should wish to have on paper, with any other remarks of your own."

"It is my intention," replied Captain Oakley, "before I leave England, to write a letter to each of my children, to be given to them when they are able to understand it, containing some particulars of this kind, with my parting advice."

"Your plan is excellent," said Mr. Oakley, "and I trust the children will be taught to set a proper value upon these last injunctions of their parents."

"I hope," continued Captain Oakley, "that the children will sometimes be permitted to meet; and if you could now and then see my little daughter,

and give her a word of counsel, it might be of use to her. I am no great judge of these matters, but I do not feel, from my conversation with Mrs. Danvers, that she is altogether the instructress I could wish for my child. Yet I have understood, that both herself and Mr. Danvers are very worthy people."

Mr. Oakley made no immediate reply: but, after musing a while, he rejoined, "I will certainly endeavour to effect a meeting between the children once a year; and when it is in my power I will see your little girl."

Captain Oakley expressed his feelings of gratitude for this assurance; and soon afterwards tore himself away from his brother's retreat, and the little affectionate James, whose young heart was much touched by these repeated separations.

Though he felt this last parting very keenly, Captain Oakley was, nevertheless, entirely satisfied with the home provided for his little boy. He had leisure to prepare the papers he had proposed for both his children, inclosing them in letters to Mr. Oakley and Mrs. Danvers, in which he expressed

his feelings of gratitude for their parental kindness in undertaking the charge of his children.

Soon afterwards he took leave of England, and set sail for India; comforting himself with the hope that, before many years should elapse, he might return to the discharge of his paternal duties.

Several months passed away after the departure of Captain Oakley, before his brother had an opportunity of seeing Maria. But upon occasion of his taking a journey of business into Buckinghamshire, he paid Mr. and Mrs. Danvers a visit of a few hours: at which time, they obtained from him a promise that James should spend a month with his sister during the following Christmas holidays.

When the children first met, they were exceedingly happy; but, young as they were, a great difference was soon apparent in their tastes and pursuits. James, at first, would often bring his Bible into his sister's room, and read to her; and sometimes he would ask her to kneel down with him, and repeat a short prayer which his uncle had accustomed him to use in the middle of the day. He would relate many little stories his uncle had told

him, of holy children, of saints and martyrs of elder days; at other times his conversation was chiefly about his flowers, his rabbits, a favourite hawk, and the large dog, or other topics of a similar kind.

Before the month had half elapsed, there was a change in the habits of little James: he learned to play at cards with his sister and other children who visited her; he was become fond of eating nice things; and had gained some knowledge from Mrs. Danvers's coachman, which was by no means profitable to a little boy.

What Mr. Oakley thought of this change in the child I cannot tell; but it is certain that he never allowed him to pay another visit by himself to Mrs. Danvers, though he accompanied him once a year to spend several days with his sister. On these occasions, Mr. Oakley generally brought the little girl a present of a book, and would take the opportunity of giving her such advice as he thought she most required.

At length the time arrived when Mrs. Danvers thought it necessary to send Maria to school. She

had passed three years in her family, during which time, she had been indulged with the grant of almost all her wishes, not only by Mrs. Danvers, but by her good-natured husband, who never regarded a child in any other light than that of a plaything. The little girl had been occasionally checked by Mrs. Wilson, under whose care she was placed when too rude or noisy to be endured in the parlour, or when Mrs. Danvers was engaged with company at home or abroad, which was very often the case. She as frequently performed her lessons to Mrs. Wilson as to her mistress, for the superintendence of these lessons did not require any great degree of learning: they generally consisted of a chapter of the Bible, which was read aloud, but never explained; a column of spelling learned by heart; and a task of needle-work. Short, however, as they were, they occupied as much time as would have sufficed for an education conducted upon a much more enlarged scale. The intervals of play were commonly employed by the little girl, especially when she was with Mrs. Wilson, in looking out of the window, throwing about her playthings, kicking her heels first upon one chair and then on another, and playing with an old pack of cards

which lay in her maid's room. She had a very nice doll, and Mrs. Wilson frequently bestowed upon her pieces of silk, and muslin, and gauze, and needles, and thread, to provide it with clothes; and though she might take pleasure, for a few minutes, in planning some little change in the dress of her doll, yet she never amused herself with any persevering labours of this kind. By a child's method of playing we may often judge of its method of learning. She was sometimes so troublesome to Mrs. Wilson, that when Mrs. Danvers was out she would shut her up; but she never ventured to do this when her mistress was at home, for Maria, in this case, would scream till Mrs. Danvers came to her release. To supply the place of punishment she was, therefore, obliged to bribe the young lady to do what she was bid, by the promise of something nice out of the housekeeper's room.

But Maria at last became so uncontrollably rude; her selfishness and greediness shewed themselves in forms so unpleasant; her manners and behaviour were so excessively awkward; that, being a great girl of her age, Mrs. Danvers began to be ashamed of her, and determined upon sending her to

the school to which we have before alluded, when the next Christmas holidays should be elapsed.

It was during these holidays, while Mr. Oakley and James were paying their accustomed visit to Mrs. Danvers, that some circumstances occurred which I shall proceed to relate.

On the third day of their visit, a party of select friends being invited to dinner to meet Mr. Oakley, the two children were sent together, when the ladies left the dining-room, to spend the rest of the evening with Mrs. Wilson, in Mrs. Danvers's dressing-room.

As soon as they had finished their tea, Mrs. Wilson, who was a very good-natured woman when she was not teased beyond all endurance, enquired of the children in what manner they would like to amuse themselves.

"O, sister," said James, "let me read to you. I have such a pretty book which my uncle gave me a little while before I came here. You know how pleasant it was when dear mamma was

alive; you used to wish for your doll, and I used to read to you after tea. Shall I, Mrs. Wilson?"

"You may do what you please, Sir."

James ran into his room and fetched his book. "And now, sister, I will bring your work-box and your doll;" so saying, he laid them both upon the table by her.

Maria pushed them from her without thanking her brother; then, drawing her chair close to the fire, she put her feet upon the fender, leaning her elbows on her knees and resting her face upon her hands, all the time shaking the fender so as to produce a very unpleasant noise.

James began to read, stopping occasionally at passages where he felt most interested, expecting to see the faces of Mrs. Wilson and his sister lightened up with pleasure like his own.

Maria never stirred from the posture she was in; Mrs. Wilson yawned loud several times. At length, giving up all hopes that James would lay down his book, she exclaimed, "Do, Master

Oakley, put away that dull book: it is enough to make one melancholy. It is all about goodness, just as if it was Sunday evening."

"I thought it was a very pretty book," said James, "but if you do not like it I will take it away." So saying, he very mildly put it aside, and asked Mrs. Wilson if he should get another, for he had more in his box.

"And there let them stay," said Mrs. Wilson, shrugging up her shoulders: "why, your uncle's a methodist, is not he?"

"A methodist!" repeated James; "I do not know what you mean."

Mrs. Wilson made no answer, but rising, she fetched the cards and a little pan of counters: "Come, Miss Oakley," said she, "let us have a game at cards."

Maria turned round in a moment. "But what can we play at," answered she, "that will do for three?"

Mrs. Wilson mentioned two or three games.

James coloured, and was silent for some minutes; then looking up at Maria, he said, "I am very sorry, but I cannot play at cards."

Mrs. Wilson now burst out a laughing. "I said your uncle was a methodist, and now I am sure of it: those methodist people never play at cards. Come, Miss Oakley, let you and I have a game at cribbage, and your brother may read one of his godly books the while."

Maria laughed, and she and Mrs. Wilson sat down to cribbage. Meanwhile, James looked very good-humoured, and taking a pencil and a bit of paper out of his pocket he began to draw.

In about ten minutes Maria, laying down her cards and looking up at her brother, cried out, "How can you say, James, that you don't know how to play at cards, when you know that two years ago you used to play with me almost every day?"

"Yes, I know I did," said James, "but I have never seen any cards since; and I do not think I should remember any of the games we used to play at."

"O, but you can try," said Maria.

"But I do not think my uncle would like me to try."

"The murder's out now," said Mrs. Wilson, laughing again; "that was what I said before. La, Master Oakley, what a dull life you must lead with that old curmudgeon!"

"Do not call my uncle names," replied James, reddening: "and I can assure you that I am not dull at all. You do not know how good-natured he is: when I have done my lessons he will talk to me, and play with me, and tell me stories; and, besides, we have so many things to do, and most of them are very pleasant, that we have not time to be dull."

Mrs. Wilson said no more. They all continued at their several employments till the clock struck ten, when Mrs. Wilson, throwing down her cards, exclaimed, "Ten o'clock, Miss Oakley, and you are not in bed!"

"The company's not gone yet," returned Maria.

"But that is nothing to you," said Mrs. Wilson; "it is quite time that you should be in bed, and Master James too."

"Well, let us finish our game first," replied Maria, "and then I will go. You know we did not come out of the dining-room till near eight: I am sure it is not an hour and half since we had our tea."

The game was finished at last. "Now then," said Mrs. Wilson, "Miss Oakley, you will please to go to bed?"

"Will you be so good as to give me a candle? and I will go immediately," said James.

"But I sha'n't," cried Maria, "till I have had a glass of lemonade. I am sure there is lemonade in the anteroom: go and ask the butler for a glass and some macaroons."

"What! when you know my mistress says lemonade is so bad for you?"

"But you know, Wilson, that she never refuses me when I ask her for it."

"Because you do so tease and plague her."

"There's a good Wilson, do fetch it me: I will be so good all to-morrow; and I won't tear my frock, nor soil my sash. Come now, fetch it me, dear Wilson."

"Indeed I shall not," said Mrs. Wilson.

Maria now returned to her old posture at the fire, with her feet on the fender.

"A pretty posture that is for a young lady," said Mrs. Wilson; "I wonder what your school-mistress would say to it."

"I am not at school yet," answered Maria.

"I am sure it is time you should; for your manners are very bad."

Maria made no answer, and a silence followed for some time; till Mrs. Wilson, raising her voice, said, "Pray, Miss Oakley, when do you mean to go to bed?"

"I don't mean to stir from this place," returned Maria, "till I have had a glass of lemonade and some macaroons."

Mrs. Wilson now began an attack upon Maria in loud invectives, to which Maria listened without moving or expressing any thing. James looked with surprise at his sister and Mrs. Wilson. At length the maid went out of the room, and returned with a glass of lemonade, some macaroons on a plate, and a lighted candle for James, which she pushed towards him with a very surly countenance.

Maria now turned from the fire to her lemonade and cakes very cheerfully; James wished his sister and Mrs. Wilson a good-night with a serious countenance; and shortly afterwards the young lady went to bed.

James rose very early the next morning, and as soon as he was dressed he sat down and wrote a letter to his sister, in which he very prettily pointed out the sinfulness of her behaviour to Mrs. Wilson the night before. He reminded her of the instructions she had received in her infant days from her mother, and simply and earnestly sug-

gested every argument that occurred to him which might lead her to serious and profitable reflection. This letter he folded up, directing it to his beloved sister, and as soon as he heard her moving in her room, he knocked at the door and gave it to her.

Maria was not in a state of mind at that time to receive this letter as she ought: she scarcely read it through, and then threw it on her dressing-table, where it was picked up by Mrs. Wilson soon afterwards.

Mrs. Wilson having read the letter, carried it to Mrs. Danvers, at whose toilet she was going to preside, and having shewn her the letter, she expatiated upon the objections which the little boy had made to playing at cards the night before; and described the dismal prosing book which he had read to the little party.

"Every body knows that my cousin Oakley is a methodist," replied Mrs. Danvers, "but I should be very sorry to have our little Maria infected by his gloomy notions: I shall put the letter in my pocket, and shew it my cousin. You have done

very right, Wilson, in bringing it to me; but, pray, what was the quarrel between you and Maria to which the boy alludes?"

"Nothing, Madam; but that she wished for a glass of lemonade, and I did not like to give it her at first."

"I never saw such a child as she is for lemonade," replied Mrs. Danvers; "it is certainly a bad thing for her, and I shall be glad when she goes to school, and is out of the way of lemonade, and some other little indulgences; but as for making a serious matter of the thing, it is quite absurd, and shews that the boy's head must be very full of gloomy notions."

When a suitable opportunity occurred, Mrs. Danvers and Mr. Oakley being quite alone, Mrs. Danvers took from her pocket-book James's letter to his sister, saying, with an assumed smile, "I conceive, cousin, that this letter has been penned without your knowledge?"

Having read it, Mr. Oakley replied, "Certainly, I have not been consulted on the occasion; nor

have I the slightest idea of the transaction to which my little nephew alludes. It was apparently something that took place in their play-room last night. But you have probably enquired into the particulars?"

"They are much too frivolous for a serious investigation," replied Mrs. Danvers; "but I trust you will point out to your nephew the impropriety of this interference."

"Whether my nephew has taken a correct view of his sister's conduct," answered Mr. Oakley, "and whether he has acted judiciously in the affair, may be matters of question; but it is evident that he has meant well, and it will scarcely be possible to point out his error, if he has been guilty of an error, without doing him an essential injury."

"I am satisfied," continued Mrs. Danvers, as if answering something that she thought it possible Mr. Oakley might advance, "that nothing has been neglected which respects the religious education of Maria. She reads the Bible daily. I frequently hear her say her prayers myself, and always pro-

vide that she *should* be heard. She repeats the collect for the day, and the Church Catechism, every Sunday. I take her to church myself in a morning, and if I am prevented attending the evening service, my maid accompanies her, and sees that she behaves properly."

"All this is very excellent," replied Mr. Oakley, "if she is taught to apply what she learns at church and at home to the regulation of her heart and temper."

"You may suppose then," added Mrs. Danvers, "that it is not very agreeable to have this kind of implied attack upon my instruction by a mere child."

"I am certain," replied Mr. Oakley, "that no attack is implied here. My nephew means nothing more than to bestow some faithful and affectionate advice upon a beloved sister. It has been my grand object, to impress upon the mind of my little charge the immense importance of eternal things; to give him such a knowledge of the evil of his own heart as his tender years will admit, a knowledge which may shew him to himself as lost and undone without a Saviour's help, and lead him

to pray for that Spirit by whose assistance alone he can be made a new creature. Without an education of this kind, my dear cousin, we may, indeed, regulate the outward conduct of our children, at least, in many respects, but we can never effectually control the heart and affections."

"Well! cousin," said Mrs. Danvers, somewhat impatiently.

"Educated with these views," continued Mr. Oakley, "can you be surprised that an affectionate boy like James should have expressed himself in the manner he has done towards a beloved sister, admitting that he believed her conduct to be really blameworthy?"

"If you choose," returned Mrs. Danvers, hastily, "to bring up your nephew as an enthusiast and a methodist, it is no reason that Maria should be made one."

"Cousin," rejoined Mr. Oakley, calmly, without taking any notice of this last speech, "if you wish me to ask James any particulars respecting this affair, I will do it with pleasure."

“ At this moment a loud knock was heard at the street-door, and Mrs. Danvers, tired of the discussion, hastily replied, “ Keep the letter, and make what use you please of it; if we discuss this affair another hour we shall be no nearer an agreement than we are now. You know, you and I never did agree in any one point, except that of having a sincere friendship for each other. You must follow your system of education, and I shall follow mine; and, I dare say, both the children will do very well in their different ways: but I must supplicate that you do not suffer James to make a methodist of his sister.”

Mr. Oakley had no time to make any reply, for morning visitors were now introduced.

The rest of the day was spent quietly at home, for it was the last day of Mr. Oakley's stay, and the children being both in the sitting-room with the rest of the circle, they had no opportunity for much discourse by themselves, and nothing passed about the letter.

The next morning, when Mrs. Wilson was dressing Maria, the child said to her, “ Poor James

is going to-day: I am very sorry, for it will be a whole year, I dare say, till I shall see him again. I wonder what is become of the letter he wrote to me; I can't find it any where."

"I can tell where it is," replied Mrs. Wilson: "I picked it up, and gave it my mistress, and I dare say she has made a noise about it, and Master Oakley will get a fine scolding."

"Why did you meddle with it?" said Maria, "and why did you give it Mrs. Danvers? I am sure I would not have my brother scolded for it just now, the last day, when he is going."

"How you turn about, Miss Oakley," returned Mrs. Wilson: "it was but the other day that you were laughing at him for being a little parson."

"Well, so I was," said Maria; "but for all that, I do not want him to be punished just the last day, when he is going away. Has Mrs. Danvers been scolding him?"

"No, she left that to his uncle, I fancy," said Mrs. Wilson; "for she told me last night that she

had given the letter to Mr. Oakley, and spoken her mind to him pretty plainly about it; and she hoped he would take the child to task."

"Maria made no answer, but looked very cross all the time that Mrs. Wilson was tying her frock.

She had not been alone ten minutes when she saw, from the window, her uncle walking in the garden; so, without putting on a bonnet or cloak, or regarding the cold, she made all haste down stairs into the garden, where, running up to her uncle, she cried out, almost out of breath, "I want my letter, uncle; please to give it me."

"What letter do you mean, my little girl?" replied Mr. Oakley, standing still and looking at her with some curiosity.

"Why, James's letter," said the child, "that Mrs. Wilson carried to Mrs. Danvers. Please to give it me."

"Why do you want it?" asked Mr. Oakley.

"Because James is going away; and I do not

know what business Mrs. Wilson has to take my letters out of my own room."

"Have you read the letter? Do you know what it is about?"

"Yes, I read some of it; it is about that lemonade."

"Do you think you deserve to be blamed as James has blamed you in that letter?"

"I don't know: but I want the letter, for I shall not see James again till next Christmas perhaps."

"Do you remember your mamma, my dear?" said Mr. Oakley, leading the little girl by the hand into the breakfast-room, for the wind blew cold, and the breakfast-room was likely to be unoccupied for some time.

"Remember mamma!" repeated Maria, looking up: "yes; I remember her a little."

"Do you recollect what she said to you when she was dying?"

"Yes, I think I do," replied Maria, after some minutes silence.

"You should often think of her," said Mr. Oakley, "she was a kind mamma to you: and I have often heard from your brother James, that she used to tell you that you had a very naughty heart, and that you could not be good without the help of God's Holy Spirit; and that she taught you to pray to God to forgive you for all the wicked things you had done, for the sake of Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for you."

"I have almost forgotten all this," said Maria, "for I never hear any thing about it now."

"Do you never go to church?" asked Mr. Oakley, "and do you never read your Bible and say your Catechism?"

"Yes," answered Maria, "I go to church twice every Sunday, and I say my Catechism, and the collect too, to Mrs. Wilson, and I read a chapter in the Bible every day."

"Then I am sure you have a great many op-

portunities of learning your duty. If you will try to understand the meaning of what you hear at church, and of what you read at home, and of the Church Catechism and the collects, you will find that they all teach you the same things which your dear mamma used to teach you."

"Will they?" said Maria.

"Have you got any ears?" said Mr. Oakley, smiling, "have you got a head to think with?"

The child laughed.

"Well, then, you must use them when you read the Bible, and when you go to church; and if, too, you will pray to God to help you to understand, I am sure you will soon become much wiser than you are now."

"Well, now uncle, will you give me James's letter? and pray do not let him be scolded for writing it? Poor James! I shall not see him again for a long while."

"I can assure you," replied Mr. Oakley, "that

James has not been scolded ; and I will give you the letter upon one condition, and that is, that you promise me you will read it over attentively, and try to find out whether what James says is true, about something that passed two evenings ago. I am not in his secrets upon this occasion, and I do not know myself what he is talking about."

"Very well, uncle."

Mr. Oakley then produced the letter, and with it a new morocco pocket-book. "In this little case," said he, "you may keep your letter; I bought it for you yesterday, and at the beginning there is the picture of the sea and a ship, and on the shore there is a church, with trees around it, and grave-stones among the trees. I chose this picture because I thought it would remind you of your dear papa and mamma; and I pray God that you may become a good child, and then I trust you will be a comfort to your papa when he returns, and when you die you will go to heaven, to live with your mamma."

"What a pretty picture! what a pretty book!" said Maria, taking the book from her uncle without

one word of thanks, then carefully placing the letter in one of the pockets, she added, "There, Mrs. Wilson, you may get at the letter now if you can."

At this moment, James came into the room, and Maria made haste to shew him her new pocket-book and the picture, and she made him peep at the letter, but said nothing more about it. James was pleased to see that she had taken care of his letter, though he had heard nothing of the bustle which it had occasioned. Soon afterwards the rest of the family came into the breakfast-room.

Before Mr. Oakley took his leave of Mrs. Danvers he said to her, "As you gave me leave to do what I pleased with James's letter, I have returned it to the lawful proprietor at her earnest request. I do not think you have any reason to apprehend any bad consequences from it, but I thought it right to tell you what I had done."

The mind of Mrs. Danvers was at this moment occupied with some arrangements she had been making with a dress-maker, respecting a new pelisse for Maria, and she felt perfectly indifferent respecting the fate of the letter. She took a friend-

ly leave of Mr. Oakley and James, inwardly rejoicing, however, that they were going, for, as she often said, she thought her cousin Oakley a very dull prosing man, though other persons might consider him as very conversable and entertaining.

Maria's feelings being set at ease respecting her brother, she thought very little more of the letter and of her uncle's advice, at least at that time, for as the holidays were drawing near to a close, new frocks were daily to be tried on, new bonnets and sashes were to be chosen, and various other occurrences, equally interesting, were making daily demands on her attention.

At length Maria was placed under the care of a lady highly qualified for the purpose of producing an accomplished pupil, one calculated to make an advantageous figure on the theatre of this world.

In the space of six months a considerable change was produced in the outward appearance of Maria, and, in some respects, in her manners. She had learned to hold up her head, she was rarely seen to lounge, at least in company, she had learned to re-

press the outward expression of greediness and self-indulgence, she knew how to be silent, she was more attentive in her behaviour to Mrs. Danvers, far more polite in company, and very neat in her person; so that Mr. and Mrs. Danvers, and all their acquaintance, confessed that there never was a girl so much improved in so short a time.

Mrs. Wilson's private opinion was different. After Maria had been three days at home, she declared to the housekeeper, that she thought Miss Oakley was as hard to manage as she had ever been; she was as rude, out of sight, as in former days, and quite as fond of eating nice things; only she was more cunning, and kept it from the company. All she could say in her favour, was, that she took more pride in her dress, and was more careful of her best clothes than she used to be.

Maria was a girl of quick capacity, and when her old habits of idleness were overcome, she made a rapid progress in all those acquirements which fell in with her taste, and these were generally such as pleased Mrs. Danvers; so that she frequently gained the good word of her governess,

and was treated with great indulgence by Mrs. Danvers at the holidays.

From time to time letters were received from Captain Oakley, and reports from other quarters were brought that he had obtained a very lucrative situation, and this information was not concealed from Maria.

Mr. Oakley and James continued their annual visits to Mrs. Danvers. James and Maria always met with affection, but as they advanced in age there was an increasing dissimilarity in their tastes and pursuits: yet the advice which Mr. Oakley gave to his niece, as he had opportunity, was not lost upon her; neither were the remonstrances and exhortations of James, which were given with all the ardour of sanguine youth, yet with that peculiar gentleness which marked his character; but they were like seeds cast in the ground, which unfriendly seasons still prevented from springing, saving here and there very scantily.

Once, while at school, Maria had an illness which confined her to her bed, and being often left alone she had leisure to call to mind the many

pious counsels she had received at different periods from her infancy; among these, James's letter was remembered; and she formed many resolutions of reformation which she would make in her life and conduct upon the recovery of her health. But with returning health, temptations to worldly pursuits and worldly habits returned also. Resolutions formed in her own strength passed quickly away, and there was none at hand to remind her of the things belonging to her peace.

Thus passed the time till Maria was turned sixteen, and she had returned home for the Midsummer holidays. During this season, it chanced one morning that an intimate friend of Mrs. Danvers, who had been some time out of town, called upon her at an hour considerably earlier than was customary, and was introduced into the dressing-room where Maria spent her mornings, and where Mrs. Danvers frequently sat till the hour when she expected morning visitors.

After mutual friendly salutations had passed between Mrs. Danvers and Mrs. Howard, who had not met for some time, the latter lady addressed herself, as follows, to Mrs. Danvers: "I

caught a glimpse of Miss Oakley as I came up stairs, she is very much grown,—she is really a very fine girl. Pray what age is she?”

“She is just turned sixteen,” replied Mrs. Danvers.

“I should have taken her for seventeen. Pray how long is she to stay at school?”

“Entre nous!” said Mrs. Danvers, “I mean to take her home this time twelvemonth, for I should like her to see a little of the world before her father returns, and how soon that may be is uncertain. She will probably have a fine fortune, and I should be sorry to have her buried alive, and a little bird has told me a secret about papa—”

At this moment, Maria herself entered the room, with a music-book in her hand, but upon seeing Mrs. Howard she was retiring.

“Come in, child,” said Mrs. Danvers, “I know Mrs. Howard will excuse you. We are going to a little musical party this evening, and Maria must be prepared, and you know we have only

one instrument in the house, which is in this room."

"It will be quite a treat to me to hear a little good music," said Mrs. Howard; "I know Miss Oakley has a charming finger."

"Sit down, Maria," said Mrs. Danvers. Then lowering her voice, "And now this secret?"

"O! this secret," replied Mrs. Howard, in a whisper; "but had we not better change the subject just for the present?"

"O! she is the best creature in the world," replied Mrs. Danvers; "she is thinking of nothing but her notes and her fingers." Then raising her voice, she added, "Maria, we are talking treason, so you must not listen to us."

"Very well, Ma'am," replied Maria, smiling, and immediately she began to count in a more elevated voice than usual.

Mrs. Danvers drew her chair nearer to Mrs. Howard, and in a whisper thus proceeded: "I have

been told that he has formed some enthusiastic acquaintance abroad, and is become quite a methodist."

"Was not that the case before he went abroad?" whispered Mrs. Howard, in reply.

"His wife certainly was inclined that way, and you know very well the brother's character, and it is possible he might have been a little tinged: but the thing, I understand, is now quite decided."

"'Tis a pity, a great pity; it will be a vast disadvantage to *somebody*. I really think you are quite right in wishing to bring her out rather earlier than usual; and at seventeen, with her formed manners and womanly appearance, she will appear like many girls of eighteen."

Unfortunately, at this moment, a very soft passage occurred in the sonata, occupying a whole page, upon which occasion there was a dead silence; and now the air becoming more loud and lively, Mrs. Howard remarked, still in a low whisper, "She will really be a very fine girl."

"Beautiful eyes!" answered Mrs. Danvers, "and a striking figure!"

"After the next Midsummer holidays?" repeated Mrs. Howard.

"That is my present plan," replied Mrs. Danvers.

Whether Maria's counting became more faint, or whether any thing in her countenance indicated that she was thinking of something besides her notes and fingers, or from whatever other cause she might judge, it occurred again to Mrs. Howard that the present subject of discourse was not judiciously selected, and still whispering to Mrs. Danvers, she said, "I really think we are not quite prudent." Then raising her voice, and casting a significant glance at Mrs. Danvers, she added in her usual tone of voice, "I really was much pleased with what I saw of Miss Smith, and with her handsome fortune, accomplished education, and fine person, I shall expect to find her a very general favourite when I next visit Hampshire."

"I dare say you will, Mrs. Howard," added Mrs. Danvers, at the same time expressing by a cer-

tain tone and look, that she perfectly entered into the manceuvre.

Maria had not been educated in those principles which could lead her to resist the temptation of listening to a conversation of which she was aware she was the subject. She was too acute to be duped by Mrs. Howard's stratagem; and though her ears were not quick enough to catch every thing that had passed, yet from what she had heard, she had made three very important discoveries:—First, That she was to be introduced into the world at the end of another year, while she had calculated upon remaining two years longer at school:—Secondly, That her father was become a methodist, and that, therefore, his return, at least at present, was not an object of desire; she obtained also, a confirmation of what she had been often told before, that she should have a large fortune:—but, Thirdly, what was still more important, she was now made certain of what she had already suspected, that though she might not be a perfect beauty, yet that she was something very near approaching to one.

She was not a little delighted, as we may sup-

pose, with all these discoveries, the knowledge of which she carefully concealed within her own bosom: and when Mrs. Howard rose and approached the instrument, the conversation being concluded, she replied to every thing she had to say with the most engaging sweetness, to use Mrs. Howard's own word.

Her self-complacency remained with her during the evening, and no effort was wanting to exhibit her beautiful eyes, fine figure, and the delicate execution of her finger.

On her return to school the same recollections returned with her; and possessing a mind of great natural energy, she was stimulated to every exertion that could prepare her for the exhibition of all her accomplishments at that happy period when she should be emancipated from school discipline. Many were her reveries and waking dreams of balls and assemblies, of idle mornings and gay evenings, of elegant dresses, beaux, and admiration, and conquests; all ending in some splendid establishment, by which the privilege of living as she pleased should be secured to her before her father's return, to which last event she looked for-

ward with agreeable expectation, provided that she might previously be secured from all danger of being buried alive.

During this period, though James and her uncle were sometimes remembered with affection, yet their instructions seemed wholly forgotten, and serious reflection of every kind occurred more rarely to her mind than had been the case through any previous period of her life.

When the Christmas holidays arrived, Maria returned home so much improved in every thing that Mrs. Danvers thought desirable, that, a short time previous to her return to school, she decided upon informing her that she meant to take her home at the expiration of the next half-year and introduce her into the world; and she even then planned several excursions they should make to places of fashionable resort.

On the day after Mrs. Danvers had so delightfully confirmed all Maria's expectations, Mr. Oakley and James paid their accustomed visit to Mrs. Danvers in their way to Oxford, where James was going to reside. Their visit was very short, but in

the course of it Maria informed her brother, when they were alone together, that she was to leave school at the Midsummer holidays.

"I am very glad to hear that you are," answered James, "for when you are at home I shall be often able to ride over and see you. This will be an eventful year," he added, "in the lives of us both. We must consider the years of our childhood as past; and we are now entering upon new and untried duties."

"It will be a delightful change to us both," answered Maria.

"Yes," said James; "but we must expect to meet with far greater temptations than we have had yet to encounter, and if we do not look up to a strength superior to our own, we shall not pass safely through them."

Maria made no reply, and James presently added:—"I hope, my dear sister, that we shall be enabled so to conduct ourselves, that, at our dear father's return, we may be a comfort to him."

"Do you think it is likely that he will return soon?" asked Maria.

"It is quite uncertain," answered James; "but I do not like the last accounts of his health, though he makes few complaints."

When Mr. Oakley and James had taken their leave of Mrs. Danvers and Maria, the former remarked, "I am very glad, Maria, that your brother is going to Oxford. He will now change his society, and I hope we shall be able to get him a little among us, especially when you leave school. He is a very fine gentleman-like young man; and it is a great pity that he should be buried alive with your old antiquated uncle."

During the Christmas holidays Maria had been invited to several balls, purposely given for young people; and here she had found herself so much an object of attention, that her thirst for a full enjoyment of these gaieties was not a little increased. Those pleasures which possess no intrinsic value, are never so highly prized as when seen only by glimpses. When fully known, their vanity is perceived if not acknowledged.

With unabated hopes Maria returned to school, but the half-year would have passed away very slowly had it not been fully employed, for Maria was always industrious when she believed her exertions would lead to display.

At length the tardy months rolled away; the holidays commenced; Mrs. Danvers came herself to take her dear Maria home. The parting with her schoolmistress and young companions was some trial, and, as she took her place by Mrs. Danvers in the carriage, she shed some tears.

Mrs. Danvers, with a good-natured intention, endeavoured to give her thoughts another turn, and soon succeeded in her attempt:—"I am going the week after next," said she, "to —— races, and of course I shall take you with me. They will be remarkably well attended; we shall scarcely have time to prepare you for them. And next month we are to go to Brighton: Mr. Danvers thinks a little sea-bathing will do him good; and perhaps we may take a little tour on the coast."

Maria's tears soon dried up, and her heart beat high with expectation as Mrs. Danvers continued

to converse respecting her plans for the summer. At length they reached the town, and the carriage stopped at Mrs. Danvers's house; when, to the great astonishment of both the ladies, the door was no sooner opened than James appeared, ready to hand them out of the carriage.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Danvers, "what unlooked-for circumstance has brought you here? I am, however, vastly glad to see you; and especially without Mr. Oakley," continued she, turning round in a whisper to Maria.

"How do you do, dear James?" said Maria, skipping out of the carriage; "are you out of leading strings?" added she, flippantly.

"But, perhaps, term is over," said Mrs. Danvers, when they were seated in the drawing-room, "and you are taking us in your way home? though, surely, it is too soon."

"The vacation will begin in a few days," replied James, "and I certainly meant to take you in my way home, but my errand now is of a different kind."

"Well, whatever brought you, we are always glad to see you, my dear boy," said Mrs. Danvers; "and you are just come in time to welcome your sister, who has been taking her leave of school."

"I thank you for your kindness," returned James.

"I hope you will be a frequent visitor to us now I can offer you the inducement of Maria's company. But pray, my dear James, what is your errand? I hope it is of a pleasant nature."

"In some respects it is of a very pleasant nature," returned James, "but it is not altogether so. My uncle has just forwarded me a packet from my father, which, owing to some unavoidable circumstances, has been, at least, a month longer travelling to us than it ought to have been."

"Well, my dear, and I hope you have received good accounts of your father."

"I did not consider our last accounts as very favourable," replied James, "and I am sorry to

add, that my father's illness became so alarming, almost immediately after his last letter was written, that he was ordered to return to England without loss of time."

"Well, James," said Maria, almost breathless.

"Compose yourself, my dear sister," returned James, taking his sister's hand; "I have told you the worst. My father is now actually on his way to England. He was to sail within three or four weeks after the date of his letter, which I have just received. Even now, perhaps," he added, his eyes brightening with delight, "he may be within view of his native country."

Here Maria sunk into a chair: Mrs. Danvers hastened to support her, and rang for *sal volatile*.

"I have been too hasty, I fear," said James.

"You have indeed," replied Mrs. Danvers. "Dear girl, she has so much sensibility."

James hung over his sister till she opened her eyes, and then taking Mrs. Danvers's hand she

burst into tears; but she took no notice of her brother's affectionate solicitude.

Mrs. Danvers and Wilson, who had just arrived with *sal volatile*, now supported Maria into her own room, where they both remained with her till she was sufficiently recovered to permit the maid to assist her in changing her dress for dinner.

Whether the agitation of Maria's feelings was wholly to be attributed to her anxiety respecting her father's health, or whether feelings of disappointment had their share in occasioning them, must be decided by those persons who know the deceitfulness and extreme wickedness of the human heart, and who have seen the absolute dominion which worldly schemes and worldly hopes had obtained over the mind of Maria.

The young lady appeared unwell and indisposed to talk, especially to James, during the rest of the day, so much so, that he did not venture to speak of his father in her presence. But as he was obliged to return to Oxford the same night, he took an opportunity of shewing Mrs. Danvers his father's letter; in which, Captain Oakley had

expressed his wish that both his children should meet him at his brother's parsonage, where he intended instantly to repair upon his landing in England.

"My vacation will commence in a few days," proceeded James, "and if you will permit me, I will come here immediately, and will then make some arrangements with you respecting my sister's plans."

Mrs. Danvers could do no otherwise than assent to James's proposal, though she took some considerable share in Maria's disappointment. It was of no use now to prepare dresses for race balls; a cloud hung over every favourite plan. Maria was evidently dejected whenever she spoke of her father's return; some people would have called her sullen; but Mrs. Danvers herself was not in a very good humour, and was not, therefore, likely to notice what was amiss in Maria.

At the end of the week James returned. Inexperienced as he was, he expected that now his sister's agitation must necessarily have subsided, he should find her, like himself, all anxiety to re-

ceive her long absent father; and he doubted not, but that he should rejoice her in the highest degree by shewing her a few hurried lines which he had just received from his uncle, informing him that Captain Oakley was actually arrived at Portsmouth, that he expected he would reach the parsonage the following Tuesday, and trusted that the young people would be arrived there in time to receive him.

Maria heard this information with so little appearance of joy, and at dinner she received the congratulations of Mr. Danvers upon the event with so much coldness, that her conduct was noticed by every body, and Mrs. Danvers herself could not help feeling that it bore a very extraordinary and unnatural appearance. Accordingly, when they had retired into the drawing-room, she said to her, "Maria, your behaviour at dinner rather surprised me. Are you not glad that your father is returned?"

"To be sure I am," replied Maria.

"But really," replied Mrs. Danvers, "you do not behave as if you were."

Here Maria burst into tears. "I cannot bear the thought of parting with you," added she, throwing her arms round Mrs. Danvers's neck.

Mrs. Danvers kissed her affectionately. "My dear girl," replied she, holding her hand within hers, "why should you talk of parting with me? You must persuade your father to take a house in this town. I will look out for one near us, and then I shall see almost as much of you as I should if you were living with me. Your father will, no doubt, wish to be near your brother, and as Oxford is a very unsuitable place for your residence, he cannot fix upon a better place than this. As an invalid, he will have the advantage of good medical advice and a little quiet society; while I shall be able to introduce you, as I have all along purposed, into the society suited to your age and fortune. So cheer up, my child, and welcome your father with all that sensibility and affection which he has a right to expect from you; do not mortify him, and disgrace my education of you by a cold reception of a long absent parent."

Maria had not intentionally deceived Mrs. Danvers by what she had just said. Unaccus-

tomed to examine the springs of her own actions, and knowing nothing of the evil of her own heart, she had no suspicion how entirely the love of the world had deadened her affections, and how selfish she was rendered by vanity and the desire of pleasure long indulged. But as she listened to the conversation of Mrs. Danvers, worldly hopes again sprung up in her heart, and she began to flatter herself that she should be able to influence her father to fall in with her plans. She became reconciled to this change in her circumstances, and the emotions of natural affection, no longer opposed by more powerful counteracting feelings, now revived in her bosom. She spoke of seeing her father with joyful anticipation, and in this state of mind commenced her journey with her brother the following Monday.

In the outward expression of their hope and cheerfulness there was now little difference between James and Maria, but in their inward feelings there was this remarkable difference; that while it was the fixed purpose of James to study his father's comfort, and to make every sacrifice that duty could require, to the promotion of his happiness, Maria was laying various schemes how to render

her father's plans subservient to her own views of wordly enjoyment; to gratify self was the principle of her conduct, to do the will of God was that of James. Such were the fruits of their different educations.

The young people arrived at their uncle's parsonage a few hours before their father, and were prepared to receive him. The recollection which they retained of their long absent parent was very imperfect, yet as they remembered him in his full strength and high health, they were much shocked by his appearance of infirmity, far beyond his years, and the pale and diseased appearance of his countenance, although his joy in this re-union to all those he loved best on earth gave a more than common sprightliness and cheerfulness to his manner.

After tenderly and repeatedly embracing his children, he fell on his knees, and raising his eyes and hands he earnestly thanked his heavenly Father that had thus restored him to his beloved children.

His meeting with his brother was but little less affecting. But I hasten to pass over these scenes,

as well as a period of some weeks that immediately followed Captain Oakley's return; for although circumstances of this kind are highly interesting to the parties themselves, yet they are not equally so to tell or hear of, and the affections thus called out hardly allow the character to develop its natural propensities.

The young people were the constant and attentive companions of their father, and the quiet life they led was sometimes agreeably varied to Maria by unpacking his stores of Indian clothes, by contemplating an Indian shawl, and sorting the oriental jewels contained in a work-box of ivory and ebony which her father had brought home as a present to herself.

Thus a very considerable part of the long vacation passed away, and Captain Oakley finding his health in some measure recruited, began to form his plans for his future residence. The first time that he made any allusion to this subject was at tea-time one evening when all the little circle were collected together.

Mr. Oakley having made some remark to him

respecting the improved appearance of his looks, he replied, "While I was on my voyage, I thought that I should hardly do more than take one farewell look of my native country and you, my beloved friends; but my heavenly Father has seen fit to restore my health in so great a degree, that it seems now a duty incumbent upon me to be looking out for some quiet abode, where I may spend the time that may be yet allowed me in preparation for my last great change."

"Dear papa," said Maria, "I dare say you will soon be as well as ever, now you are returned to this healthy climate."

"I must not expect this to be the case," replied Captain Oakley: "I am an old man in constitution if not in years."

"But we may hope a good deal," answered James, "from the change of climate; and you will find Maria so kind a nurse."

"And James will help me too," answered Maria: "you must settle near James, papa."

"Within a morning's ride of Oxford," continued James, "that I may frequently come over to see you."

"Then," rejoined Maria, "you can take a house at Reading: it will be a nice distance from Oxford, and only a day's journey from my uncle, and near Mrs. Danvers. Dear James, do persuade papa to settle at Reading."

"I have no objection," answered James: "and you will have very good medical advice; and, I believe, literary and serious society."

"I do not love a town," replied Captain Oakley; "it will not suit me."

"O, do not say so, papa," replied Maria, colouring: "you will find the country so dull."

"I hope *you* do not think the country dull, my love," replied Captain Oakley.

James looked as if he wished to speak, but checked himself, lest he might say something that might appear to interfere with his sister's wishes.

Maria replied, "Papa, you have been always used to society, and it would never do for you to shut yourself up in a country place."

"Well, my dear niece," replied Mr. Oakley, "I hope your father will not be in haste to decide upon his new abode, and that he will not run away from this dull place till he has had time to look about him, and to consider well what will best suit him. I hope he will spend one quiet winter under this roof before he makes any change in his plans."

Captain Oakley thanked his brother, and here the conversation dropped; but it left an impression upon his mind of no agreeable nature.

The secret, which a little bird had told Mrs. Danvers respecting Captain Oakley's religious sentiments, was by no means founded on false rumour. He left England, as we have seen, favourably disposed towards religion; and while in India, he was introduced into society, both among military and clerical characters, which had been in the highest degrees profitable to him. His religious views were become clear, his feelings earnest and

devout, and his practice in every way consistent. From this time he became proportionably uneasy respecting the arrangements he had made for his daughter's education. Upon his return he anxiously watched her language and sentiments. He had not, hitherto, seen any thing decidedly unfavourable, though she never cheered him by those sweet expressions of unaffected piety which were continually proceeding from the heavenly mind of James, and he had flattered himself, from the affectionate attentions which she shewed him, that he might find her easily impressible by religious instruction; but upon this evening he was alarmed by the decisive manner in which she had opposed his proposition of living in the country, and he took an early opportunity of laying open to his brother all his views and feelings on the subject; consulting him, at the same time, how far he would advise him to oppose her evident inclinations in the choice of his residence.

“ Brother,” replied Mr. Oakley, “ there are perhaps few circumstances in which we can be placed in this world, whence hope is excluded. If any error has been made in your daughter's education, remember she is yet young. Faith, and

prayer, and perseverance, can perform wonders. You are providentially returned to take the charge of your child at an important crisis in her life. With respect to the best methods that may be pursued for her welfare, and the arrangements for your final establishment, points that are probably connected with each other, let me advise you to take your time, and weigh well what wisdom and duty require. I trust you will consider my house as your own, at least till next spring: in the meanwhile, I would advise you to pay a visit of a few weeks to Mrs. Danvers; an act of attention you owe to her, as she has, certainly, intended to be a kind friend to Maria. After this visit, you will be better enabled to judge of what you ought to do."

Captain Oakley approved of his brother's counsel, and was encouraged by it. Accordingly, he wrote to Mrs. Danvers, telling her, that he purposed, upon his son's return to Oxford, to pay her a visit, and acknowledge, personally, his debt of gratitude to Mr. Danvers and herself for all their kindness to his beloved child.

He received a most friendly reply to his letter;

and upon the termination of the long vacation he commenced his journey to Reading accompanied by James and Maria.

Here he received a most hearty and affectionate welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Danvers.

Satisfied with seeing her father the object of the friendly attentions of Mrs. Danvers, Maria now returned to her ancient habits, or rather entered as far as she could upon all the new ones to which she had been so anxiously looking forward for so many months past. She was now released from all the restraints of her uncle's house: she rose late, did next to nothing all the morning, unless a little ornamental needle-work, a little music, reading a French fairy tale or English novel, might be called doing something. She allowed herself a little more latitude in the mode and variety of her dress, and considerably more in the rattling style of her discourse, especially when surrounded by her former acquaintance, which was the case during some part of every day, although Mrs. Danvers professed to be exceedingly quiet as long as she was favoured with the company of her invalid cousin.

There were not at this season any public diversions in the town; but Maria took part, almost every evening, in a round game of cards, with an eagerness which alarmed her father. In the course of one month Captain Oakley had an opportunity of seeing Maria exactly as she was, without any disguise: for so strong were ancient habits that, returned again to the scenes where these had been exercised, she seemed wholly to have forgotten all the motives which had lately induced her to lay a restraint upon herself. At the expiration of six weeks, Captain Oakley signified his intention of visiting an old friend who resided near the town of Aylesbury. Buckinghamshire was the native county of Captain Oakley, and he was much attached to it.

"I shall take the liberty," said he to Mrs. Danvers, "of leaving Maria under your hospitable roof, and I shall return to you as shortly as I can, I shall not even take James in my way."

We may hereafter learn what was the particular object of Captain Oakley's journey, independent of his desire to see an old friend.

Circumstances detained him longer at his friend's house than he had expected, and he did not return to Reading till the beginning of December.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Danvers had taken the advantage of Captain Oakley's absence, to give his daughter a taste of every delight to which any public amusement within a moderate distance could introduce her.

While under the roof of Mrs. Danvers, Captain Oakley had been purposely more reserved than was his habit in expressing his feelings and opinions, in order that he might be able to judge more fully of the exact state of his daughter's habits. Nevertheless, that lady, who lived in the constant dread of being too good, had discovered something in her cousin which she thought augured ill for Maria; and she was, therefore, anxious, according to her original plans, to counteract these predicted evils by every means in her power.

Two or three days before the return of Captain Oakley, a report was circulated that a very nice house, agreeably situated on the banks of the river, and within a short distance of the town, would be let at Lady-day.

"This is exactly the house for your father," said Mrs. Danvers, "and we must make a grand attack upon him at his return. I can see that he likes quiet, and here will be country scenery for him, and a sweet shrubbery; while you will be within a trifling walk of us all, and I can chaperon you to our evening parties just as easily as if you lived with me. I can never consent to your being buried alive in a country place."

Upon Captain Oakley's return, Mrs. Danvers made him promise, that, as his absence had been so much longer than he had first proposed, he should remain at Reading till James's vacation commenced. She would willingly have persuaded him to spend the Christmas holidays in her house, but he had promised his brother to bring back the family party to pass that season with him. Two mornings after this promise was made, Mrs. Danvers proposed a drive in the carriage to Captain Oakley, and on their return home she called to pay a morning visit to the persons who occupied the house we have before mentioned; and she took care to point out to Captain Oakley the pleasant prospect from the windows and the delightful situation of the garden.

Nothing was said further upon the subject till the evening, when Captain Oakley had taken up a book, Mr. Danvers had fallen asleep in his arm chair, there being no company, and Maria was employed with her netting. Mrs. Danvers, having first cast a significant glance at Maria, thus addressed herself to Captain Oakley:—"Cousin, do lay down your book a little; I want to talk to you."

Captain Oakley closed his book courteously, and looked up at Mrs. Danvers.

"I have been meditating an attack upon you, or rather, I should say, I am going to make you a very humble petition; and an old soldier will surely be too polite to refuse a lady any thing."

"Your claims upon me, cousin," answered Captain Oakley, "are stronger than those of mere politeness. Pray what petition have you to make?"

"I should like to have your promise first that you will grant it."

"But supposing," replied Captain Oakley, "that it should not be in my power to grant it."

"O, but I know that it is, papa," interrupted Maria.

Captain Oakley smiled. "By its being in my power, my dear Maria," replied he, "I mean, not merely that I *can* do what you ask, but that it would be right for me to do so?"

"And how do you suppose, my dear cousin," said Mrs. Danvers, "that I would ask you to do what is wrong?"

"No," replied Captain Oakley, "not what is wrong in itself, but circumstances may make a thing wrong for me to do which is not wrong in itself."

"I do not quite understand all these refinements," replied Mrs. Danvers: "but, however, you have been used to have your own way, and so I am willing to admit that your distinctions are very proper; and provided that I succeed in carrying my point in the end, I shall not mind giving up a little in the way of bringing it about; and I will assure you that the request I have to make is right in every sense of the word. You know, cousin,

that this dear girl has been my companion for eleven years: I cannot bear to lose her entirely."

"She will be ever bound to you," replied Captain Oakley, "by the ties of gratitude and affection."

"And what good will it do me if she is to love me at a distance?"

Captain Oakley looked up earnestly in Mrs. Danvers's face.

"Nay, do not frighten yourself, cousin," said she, "I do not wish to take her from you; I am not so unreasonable as that comes to: you have the first claim upon her, but I want to make a compromise." Here she paused.

"Well, cousin!" said Captain Oakley.

"Well, cousin," repeated Mrs. Danvers, "I am now come to the point. There is one plan upon which you may enjoy the happiness of this dear girl's dutiful attention, and I may have the frequent pleasure and gratification of enjoying her

society, and that is, by your taking a house in this town."

Mrs. Danvers paused again, and Maria cast a glance of earnest entreaty at her father.

Captain Oakley seemed affected, but made no immediate reply.

"You will be very near your son," continued Mrs. Danvers, "and at no great distance from your brother; and you may here enjoy society exactly suited to your taste. And now to let you a little into our secrets; it was with this view that I took you to-day to visit a delightful house which will probably soon be vacant: you expressed yourself much pleased with the situation. Do gratify me, Captain Oakley," proceeded she, extending her hand to him, "by saying that you will take my proposal into consideration."

"Do, dear papa," interrupted Maria; "do say that you will take a house at Reading."

Captain Oakley cordially took his cousin's hand, then covered his face with his other hand for some

minutes in evident agitation, and probably lifting up his heart at the same moment for direction. At length, with a composed and very benevolent expression of countenance, he looked up to Mrs. Danvers and thus replied:—"Feeling as I do the debt of gratitude which I owe to you, it will ever be my object to testify my sense of your multiplied kindnesses to my child and myself; and I promise you that I will give full weight and consideration to your request, and if I find that I can fall in with your views I will do so, if I can, I mean, consistently with my views of duty."

"Well," replied Mrs. Danvers, who could not help perceiving that Captain Oakley shewed a desire to comply with her wishes, "I must be satisfied with this; and I will promise to let you know as soon as it is decidedly ascertained that this house is to be parted with."

Nothing further was said upon the subject, and every thing went on much as usual till the return of James from Oxford, when Mrs. Danvers took an opportunity of taking him apart with herself and Maria, in order to interest him in their plan, the particulars of which they detailed to him.

"I shall certainly not oppose dear Maria's wishes," replied James, "and in a little while we shall be able to judge how far her plans will advance my father's happiness. I am sure," and James spoke as he believed, "I am sure if she finds that a town residence is not likely to suit him that she will be the first to give up her own gratification."

"To be sure," replied Mrs. Danvers, coldly. "Have you any interest in wishing him to live any where else?"

"Certainly not," replied James, with an expression of surprise: "I can have no interests in this respect independent of my father and sister."

"Then you are not unfriendly to our views: that is all I want; I trust to Maria to manage the rest."

James always returned into Kent as to a beloved home; Captain Oakley felt little less pleasure at the prospect; and Maria, still supported by worldly hope, did not permit her spirits wholly to sink upon taking her leave of Mrs. Danvers.

We pass over the Christmas holidays, and the return of James to Oxford, and several following weeks.

One morning in the beginning of March, Captain Oakley received a letter which seemed to excite considerable interest in his mind: he continued silent and thoughtful for several days.

The following week Maria received a letter from Mrs. Danvers, informing her that the desirable house at Reading was to be disposed of immediately, adding, that she trusted Captain Oakley had made up his mind to take it, or if not, she entreated Maria to use every persuasion to induce him to do so.

Maria instantly gave this letter to her father, who, having read it, invited her to accompany him in a walk into the shrubbery.—“Maria,” said he, after some minutes silence, “I feel greatly, very greatly obliged by Mrs. Danvers’s kindness, but my plans are now decided.”

“Decided, papa!” repeated Maria, “you are decided to go to Reading, are you not?”

"No, my dear. I wrote yesterday to an intimate friend of mine, desiring him to take a house for me in Buckinghamshire."

"In Buckinghamshire!" repeated Maria, "that frightful flat county."

"The country where my house is situated," replied Captain Oakley, "is neither flat nor frightful."

"What could induce you, papa, to take a house in Buckinghamshire?"

"When I visited my friends at Aylesbury last autumn, I saw a house, or rather a cottage, exactly suited to my taste and circumstances. My friend informed me last week that it was to be let at the next quarter-day, and I sent him my final orders to take it for three years; and yesterday I received accounts that the contract was made."

"This is James's doing," said Maria, petulantly.

"You are quite mistaken," replied Captain Oakley: "James has always shewn a desire to

comply with your wishes in every thing; and as to my present plan, he has never heard of it."

"Then you have broken your promise, papa, to Mrs. Danvers: you told her that you would take a house at Reading if it was in your power to do so."

"I have broken no promise," replied Captain Oakley: "I promised that I would consider the subject, and that I would comply with her wishes if I found it consistent with my views of duty."

"And what can be the harm of living at Reading? dear Reading!" repeated Maria, in a tone of much impatience. "My uncle hates Reading; he is at the bottom of all this."

"Maria," said Captain Oakley gently, "I little expected this opposition from you."

Maria burst into tears. "It is such a disappointment; and I am sure, papa, you would have been too good-natured to have vexed me in this way if my uncle or James had not persuaded you to do so."

"I should be glad to satisfy your mind," replied Captain Oakley, "though you have no right to expect all these explanations from me. I have told you already that James is always desirous to please you as far as he can, consistently with his duty to me; and as for your uncle, he has never given any opinion on this subject."

"Then why, papa, will you not go to Reading? is it too late to alter your plans?"

"My plans are the result of much prayer and much consideration," replied Captain Oakley: "I shall not now give you all my reasons for them; hereafter, I trust, your views will be very different in many respects from what they are now, and then you will thank me for the step I have just taken."

"That time will never arrive," thought Maria to herself.

"One reason, however," continued Captain Oakley, "I may give to you for declining the house at Reading; the situation is too expensive for my income."

"That is a reason," replied Maria, smiling, "that Mrs. Danvers will never believe: she has so often told me, papa, how rich you are, and what a lucrative situation you had abroad."

"Then, my dear Maria, it is time you should be undeceived. I certainly had a lucrative appointment abroad; and my health was providentially spared till I was enabled to make a comfortable provision for my old age and for you, my children, at my death: and, thank God, I shall possess in my declining years, not only the necessities but the comforts of life; but my income will not enable me to live in what is called style; nor am I desirous to do so either on your account or my own."

"Oh, Mrs. Danvers!" again exclaimed the petulant Maria, "how shall I tell you all this!"

"You may leave that task to me," replied Captain Oakley; "I will answer her letter."

Maria again burst into tears, and Captain Oakley allowed her for some time to give vent to her grief without interruption. At length, thinking it

time that she should lay some restraint upon her feelings, he thus proceeded:—"I do not wonder, Maria, that you should feel some disappointment upon this occasion; I expected that you would. It is as natural that you should love Reading and Mrs. Danvers, as it is that James should love Kent and your uncle; and I shall always wish you both to preserve feelings of affection and gratitude towards the friends of your childhood: but you should remember that you owe a duty to an only surviving parent, who has always tenderly loved you, and who has been labouring in foreign climates for your welfare. I would not willingly remind you of these things, but I own, Maria, that after our long separation I had hoped to have found in you a more disinterested desire to promote my happiness. Believe me, my child, in all my present arrangements I have your good in view more than my own. Let me see that it is your object to do your duty as in the eyes of an all-seeing God, rather than to gratify your own inclinations, and you will do more to the promotion of my health and comfort than can be effected by change of climate."

So saying, he extended his hand affectionately

towards her, and as Maria looked upon his face she saw the tears trickle down his cheeks. She was affected by the sight, and some feeling of remorse was excited in her bosom. A few faint expressions of a wish to comply with her father's desires proceeded from her lips. Captain Oakley was satisfied, and thus this painful conversation was concluded.

The very same day he wrote to Mrs. Danvers, in language of sincere friendship and gratitude, expressing his regret that he could not comply with her own and his daughter's wishes, and plainly stating his moderate income as one reason for his inability to do so.

In Mrs. Danvers's reply, which was neither very speedy nor very friendly, she informed Captain Oakley, that she was on the eve of accompanying her husband to Bath on the score of his health.

As long as Maria was under the influence of affectionate feelings towards her father, so long she shewed some submission to his will and a desire to oblige him. But feelings are capricious;

the love of self soon resumed its empire over her heart, and before she left Kent a sullen acquiescence in what she considered as hard necessity had taken the place in her heart of those worldly hopes which had lately inspired her with a delusive gaiety.

She felt no feelings of sorrow at taking leave of her uncle, and she undertook her journey into Buckinghamshire with fixed dissatisfaction.

The second night after their departure from Kent, Captain Oakley and his daughter arrived at Aylesbury, and having rested for one day at a friend's house, they took possession of their new abode. It was an ornamented cottage on the declivity of one of the Chilton hills, surrounded on three sides by a wood of beech with underwood of box clothing the hill to its very summit. In front, over a little garden descending into a valley which wound along the foot of the hill, the cottage commanded a view of the parish church and a few surrounding cottages built of rough unhewn stones; beyond, the vale of Aylesbury extended its fertile lap. This cottage had been fitted up originally for a country retreat

during the sporting season, and it was furnished in a neat and convenient style; it afforded every comfort which could be required by Captain Oakley's little family. In one parlour a small piano-forte was provided for Maria's use, and the other was a dining-room, and was to serve the purpose of a study for Captain Oakley.

It was now the beginning of April, and the weather was very fine, so that all the delights of that sweet month might now be enjoyed: the garden bloomed with spring flowers; the air was perfumed with violets; the voice of the blackbird on the trees behind the house was pouring forth its melody; the fields were covered with lambs; the air was mild; and the sun shone very enlivening. Captain Oakley's friend had kindly taken the trouble of seeing that every thing within and without doors was duly arranged for his travelled friend, and had even engaged his servants; so that, with some additional supplies the little party had brought with them, they were almost immediately in possession of every thing necessary for their comfort.

Captain Oakley, who had first seen this little

abode in the month of November, was astonished with its varied delights, and his heart glowed with gratitude as he walked across the little grass-plot in front of the house, enamelled with its tufts of flowers, and bordered by low evergreens separating it from the sweet valley below.

They had no sooner entered the house, than he led Maria into the little parlour destined for her use, and placing himself on a sofa by her side, "Thank God," said he, "for providing me with such a home! O, my Maria, may we here enjoy the comforts of domestic life! May we here live in the service of God! and we shall be happy."

Maria was for a few moments affected by her father's address, but soon returned to her accustomed coldness.

The following week James arrived, all joy and gaiety, and actively assisted his father in completing his little arrangements.

After his departure the time dragged on very heavily till the beginning of the long vacation, when he

once more returned to be the comfort and companion of his father. He was grieved to observe that his sister was not yet reconciled, in any degree, to her new abode. He observed, with deep regret, the settled melancholy, or rather the listless sullenness of her whole behaviour: her domestic duties were carelessly and negligently performed; her hours of leisure were frittered away, if not in absolute idleness, yet in doing next to nothing; her attentions to her father were few and cold; she had no pursuits; she enjoyed nothing either within or without doors. She was occasionally visited by a few respectable persons in the neighbourhood, who, if they were more plainly dressed than herself, certainly possessed more genuine politeness, and were far more agreeable in society than herself. To these persons she was barely civil; she took no interest in the pursuits and enjoyments of her father and brother, and with respect to religion, she manifested something more than indifference. The language which she was continually uttering was the unrestrained expression of disappointment, mixed with a cold acquiescence in what she seemed to consider as the most cruel of destinies; nor did she upon any occasion express any sense of gratification, but in

playing or singing certain airs which reminded her of Reading, or in sitting down upon the summit of the hill and fixing her eyes upon the high grounds of Berkshire, which were thence visible.

The continual yet varied efforts of her father to make her happy, his gentle and affectionate attentions towards her so ungraciously received, alternately melted the heart of James and roused his anger. He was aware how keenly his sister's conduct was felt by his father, though his patience seemed still unshaken. Having observed all these things for some time, and having vainly tried all indirect methods of effecting a change in his sister's conduct, he determined to speak to her upon the subject very plainly and openly; and a few evenings after he had formed this resolution a favourable opportunity for the purpose occurred. They had ascended the hill together, when Maria sat down as usual in her favourite seat, where she could look towards Reading.

After a silence of some minutes, during which Maria had sighed several times profoundly, James said to her, "Pray, my dear sister, why do you

always choose to sit upon this stone with your eyes turned towards one particular spot?"

"Because," replied she, "my heart is there. That spot is Berkshire."

"Is not your heart here with our dear father?" answered James: "I think it ought to be here."

"O, James," replied Maria, "you don't know how I love Reading, and how I love Mrs. Danvers. It is in vain to try to like this place; I shall never be happy till I can persuade my father to live at Reading."

"But it is your duty to try to like this place," replied James, "and if you make the attempt you will succeed."

"I hate the very name of the county," replied Maria.

"Your dislike is unreasonable," replied James; "your situation here is very pleasant and very interesting."

"In what respect is it pleasant and interesting?" asked Maria.

"Nothing can be more agreeable than the situation of this cottage. You might find pleasure in learning to manage your house, and trying to make your table and other arrangements agreeable to my father."

"What should I know about keeping house?" interrupted Maria.

"I suppose you are inexperienced," answered James: "but you must some time or other gain this kind of knowledge, and you must have seen and heard something about it in Mrs. Danvers's family; and there is a great pleasure in conquering difficulties; my father too would give you his advice, and he would be so much pleased with your efforts to oblige."

"So this is to be one of my pleasures," replied Maria, "to learn to scold the servants, and direct how puddings are to be made?"

"Yes, it is a pleasure," replied James, "to learn

to do those things well which it is a duty to do. But, however, I by no means speak of these employments as your chief pleasures: you have a long morning to spend as you please; you have a sweet retired little study, furnished with music, and work, and books, and drawing-instruments, and presenting you with an ever-varying scene of beauty from the window. If you would form a regular plan for spending your time in this room, how many valuable books you might read, how much you might improve your mind!"

"Why, I am eighteen," replied Maria; "I am not to be at school all my life."

"And I am twenty," replied James, "and yet I read more, and to more purpose, now than I ever did in my life."

"O, that is another thing," replied Maria; "your books are to be your bread."

"And do we only read," replied James, "to get our bread? Is there no pleasure in improving our minds? Do not you wish to become a companion to your father and brother, and your hus-

band if you ever marry? Do not you wish to be able to educate your children?"

Maria here yawned.

"Then, Maria," proceeded James, "there are your walks, the roads abound with flowers, and the hills with views; you can draw well, and my father would gladly teach you a little botany or mineralogy. If you would sometimes sketch a scene that strikes you, or pick up a beautiful flower or fossil, how much amusement might your walks afford you, and my father too; and yet, since I have been here, I have never seen you gather one flower, or look at any view except the Berkshire hills."

"Well, James, have you any thing more to say?"

"Yes, a great deal. Your evenings, Maria, how happily they might be spent with our beloved father! if you would enter into his pursuits, listen to his conversation, try to enjoy his books, you might gain more wisdom from him than, perhaps, you have ever had an opportunity of doing throughout your life."

"If you want me to do all these things," interrupted Maria, laughing, "you must new mould me, I believe."

"You are more right I fancy, my dear sister, in saying this, than, perhaps, you are aware of. We all want new moulding; every thing that is wrong is natural to us. Are you really serious when you say you want to be new moulded?"

"I am serious in saying that I must be new moulded if I am to perform all the tasks that you have set me, at least with any feelings of pleasure."

"And are you sensible, my dear sister, that you ought to like these things, and that it is the evil of your heart which occasions all your present misery?"

"No," replied Maria, "I cannot see how the evil of my heart occasions all my present misery."

"Your will," replied James, "is not subdued to the will of God; but you do not see or feel that it is not so. You do not desire that it should

be subdued. All you want is to have your own way."

"And does not every body desire to have their own way?" interrupted Maria.

"Yes," replied James, "naturally they do: but when they are new moulded, to use your own word, when their nature is changed, they pray to have their wills conformed to the will of God, and they try to like what he likes, and to do what he pleases."

"And so I ought to try to like this odious Buckinghamshire, and to forget Mrs. Danvers and my beloved Reading!"

"No," replied James, "I would not have you forget Reading or Mrs. Danvers; on the contrary, I would have you think of them with affection: but as it is now your duty, and the will of God, that you should live with our dear father, you ought to try to make him happy."

"Well, I do whatever he bids me, I am sure, without complaining."

“Not always,” replied James; “but you ought to do more, you ought to perform your duty to him cheerfully and willingly, and try to enjoy what he enjoys; you ought to look out for all that is agreeable in your situation, and thankfully enjoy it; and you should learn to cast all your cares and difficulties upon God, and then you would really become happy.”

“I am sure I shall never do all this.”

“You are not required to do so in your own strength; in ourselves we are weak and utterly helpless: pray to God to shew you how you have neglected your duty and rebelled against him during your whole life; pray to him to forgive you all your past sins for your Redeemer’s sake, and to grant you his Spirit, to change and new mould your heart, and then you will be able to perform all the duties I have pointed out to you, and many others; and you will taste at the same time a peace of mind to which you have been hitherto a stranger.”

Maria made no immediate answer, and James thus proceeded:—“Beloved Maria, promise me that you will seriously consider what I have said to

you. O, could I witness such a change in your heart as I have described, I should be the happiest of brothers, and I think you would add years of comfort to my poor father's life; for he feels, keenly feels, your insensibility to his happiness."

Maria wished to have replied to her brother in terms of ridicule, yet tears forced themselves into her eyes; for her affections were strong, and throughout her life her conscience had from time to time awakened in her bosom some desires after that excellence which she knew she was not pursuing. Of late these feelings had been more rarely excited, and more transitory than in the days of her childhood. Some faint efforts towards a change of conduct were, however, evident during the remainder of her brother's stay. But she had yet to learn that no dependence was to be placed upon her own resolutions.

When James returned at Christmas, little or no fruit appeared of the conversation we have just related. Captain Oakley at this time laid open to him his whole heart, lamenting that he had made his choice of a guardian for his daughter so little the subject of prayer, and acknowledged that he

had deserved the severe chastening which had ensued from this neglect; he felt that it was designed to humble him before God, yet he expressed a trust that persevering prayer for his child would ultimately be heard.

James endeavoured to encourage his father's hopes, while he strove to supply to him the dutiful and affectionate attentions which were due to him from both his children. But he was not then able to do any thing further with Maria, for she closed her ears whenever she suspected that he had a design of giving her any advice.

A few weeks after the long vacation had expired, and James had returned to Oxford, he came over one morning to spend the day with his father, as was his occasional custom; and he brought with him a young gentleman, a fellow collegian, and one of his most favourite companions; he was older than himself, and of similar views and tastes in all respects. His address and manners were extremely agreeable, and seemed much to interest Captain Oakley.

Maria was pleased by this unexpected visit,

received her brother affectionately, and, certainly, appeared more than usually to advantage.

The day passed agreeably. The little party separated at night mutually pleased with each other, and for some little time the name of Henry Owen was mentioned with satisfaction by Captain Oakley and Maria.

During this period Mrs. Danvers wrote seldom to Maria; Mr. Danvers was unwell, and she was a great deal from home attending him in different excursions for his health. A few weeks, however, after the close of the Christmas vacation, Maria received a letter from Mrs. Danvers written with her usual liveliness and warmth of feeling; stating, that Mr. Danvers was now considerably better, that they were once more settled quietly at home, and concluding with an earnest request that she would visit them at Easter, during the season that her brother would be at home with her father. She added, that she did not wish to detain her long from her father, but that she had a very particular reason for wishing to see her at that time.

Captain Oakley did not think it wise to deny his

daughter's earnest request to accept this invitation, and it was shortly afterwards arranged that Mrs. Danvers's carriage should convey her to Reading on Easter Monday, as a little journey of business would then bring Mrs. Danvers into the immediate neighbourhood of Captain Oakley's cottage on that very day.

A very short time before Easter Captain Oakley was attacked with an illness which appeared to be of an alarming nature, but it soon yielded to the judicious treatment of his medical attendants; and Maria was assured that if he had no relapse there was little apprehension of danger, but that the greatest attention was requisite, both as to diet and other points connected with domestic management. Under these circumstances, few attentive daughters would have chosen to leave a father even under a brother's care; but as Captain Oakley did not *require* Maria to give up her proposed visit, she did not herself feel the necessity of doing so; and when the expected day arrived she prepared herself for her little journey, deaf to all the arguments of James, who would willingly have persuaded her to excuse herself from leaving her father in his present state of health.

"I see no necessity for disappointing Mrs. Danvers," replied Maria: "my father is not in danger; we have a very careful servant who knows what he wants; and you will be his constant companion; if there is any change, you can send for me. My father does not require me to stay at home, and why should you?"

"I should think," replied James, "that your own sense of duty would require it."

To this Maria made no reply. She completed her preparations for her journey; the carriage drove to the door. In some agitation she went into her father's room; he did not then come down stairs, he had reclined in his easy chair by the fire; James was by his side. "Farewell, dear papa," said she gaily.

"Are you really going, Maria?" said James, in a tone of voice, the meaning of which she perfectly understood.

Captain Oakley looked wistfully at his daughter, kissed her tenderly, and implored a blessing upon her.

"James, you will write and tell me how papa goes on?" said Maria.

"You will not be absent longer from us than you can help?" said Captain Oakley. "I am a poor dependent creature now."

"O no, papa," replied Maria, "I shall soon be at home again."

She then kissed her father again, and gave her hand to James, who took his leave of her without accompanying her to the carriage door. Whatever might be the feelings of Maria upon this occasion, she certainly commenced her journey without any appearance of uneasiness.

Maria was affectionately welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Danvers, and many kind enquiries were made respecting her father, of whose state of health she made rather too favourable a report. The party did not arrive at Reading till late the same evening.

The following morning Mrs. Danvers informed Maria that she expected a young relation, who

was a vast favourite, to spend several days with her, and when Maria came into the drawing-room before dinner, she was not a little surprised to see Henry Owen: both the young people seemed pleased with the meeting, and Henry made many enquiries after Captain Oakley.

After dinner, when the ladies were alone in the drawing-room, Mrs. Danvers asked Maria how she liked Henry Owen.

"I like him very well," replied Maria; "only," added she, laughing, "he is a little too like James."

"That is a strange objection!" said Mrs. Danvers; "I am sure your brother is a very gentlemanlike young man."

"Yes," replied Maria; "but you know how he has been educated, and I think Mr. Owen is a little of the same school."

"And now you are a country girl," replied Mrs. Danvers, "I suppose you are got a little more sober in your taste."

"I have not learned to love the country," answered Maria.

"Well, my dear," replied Mrs. Danvers, "you must oblige me by making yourself as companionable to Henry Owen as you can. Mr. Danvers and I, you know, are old people, and we shall be really at a loss how to amuse him. I dare say you have picked up a little botany, or a little mineralogy. Do make the best of what you know on the present occasion, I entreat you; and do talk of some other books than novels, and indulge us with a little music."

As the party that evening consisted only of Mr. and Mrs. Danvers and Henry Owen, and Mr. Danvers slept as usual after tea, Maria had no objection to comply with Mrs. Danvers's request. She made herself as agreeable as possible, and was quite the studious country girl; and the following morning she accompanied Mrs. Danvers and Henry in a country walk, looked at flowers and talked of drawing. In the course of their walk they passed a beautiful villa which had lately come into possession of a young and gay pair.

"Next Friday," said Mrs. Danvers, "I am invited to a *dejeuné* in these beautiful grounds. Easter is so unusually late this year, or it seems an unfavourable season for such a scheme. It is a birth-day festival."

"Nothing can be more promising than the present weather," replied Henry, "for the purpose."

"I hope it will continue," said Mrs. Danvers, "for I promise myself much pleasure in shewing you and Maria the walks, which are really laid out with uncommon taste."

"The weather will certainly hold up till the day after to-morrow," said Maria.

The same evening Mr. and Mrs. Danvers and the young people were engaged from home. The party was large. While the elder part of the company sat down to cards, some of the young people assembled round the piano-forte. Maria was playing a favourite Scotch air and accompanying it with her voice; Henry Owen was listening with pleased attention, for he was extremely fond of music, and had particularly asked for the air

she was playing; when one of the young ladies of the family came up to Maria and whispered in her ear, that they had a band in the dining-room and were going to dance. Maria forgot that she was in the middle of a song; she jumped up, and, without informing Henry where she was going, and why she rose in such precipitation, she took her friend's arm and skipped into the dining-room, where the lively sound of a country-dance added not a little to her gaiety. Her young friend introduced to her a military gentleman, who engaged her hand, and in a few minutes a large number of the young people were engaged in the dance.

Mrs. Danvers was immediately aware of what was going on, and seeing Henry in some surprise, she said to him, "Your songster has made her escape into the dining-room, and if you follow her you will be rewarded with something better than a song."

The lady of the house now entering from the other room, politely addressed him, and conducted him into the apartment of which the young people had taken possession. Henry looked round for Maria, and was not a little surprised to find

that she was already engaged in the dance: still, however, he expected to receive from her an explanation of her conduct, but in this he was deceived. At length refreshments were introduced; the music ceased; and such of the young people as could procure seats were glad to sit down. Some of the card-tables were broken up, and the elderly ladies were looking for their daughters and carefully providing them with shawls and fur tip-pets. In the confusion of voices and the continual flitting of gay or grave personages about the room, Maria had taken possession, unawares, of a chair beside a pillar against which Henry was standing. Her partner was leaning over her chair, and had entered upon topics of discourse far more suited to her taste than botany, or mineralogy, books, or sketches. Maria had a great deal more pleasure in being complimented as a vain and thoughtless beauty, than in being treated as a wise, amiable, and rational human being. Her present companion had seen much of the frivolous part of her sex, and knew how to adapt his conversation to her taste. Henry had no intention of listening to this tête-à-tête, and had soon heard enough of it; he turned away, sighing, and hastened to look for the rest of the party. He found Mrs. Danvers

just risen from the whist-table; she was earnestly discussing with her partner the propriety of his having played a king at a certain crisis of the game. "Certainly, my dear Sir," said she, laying her fan upon his arm with considerable earnestness, "certainly, if you had not played your king till all the trumps had been out, we should not have lost the game; at least, we should have saved our lurch."

At this unfortunate moment she perceived Henry alone, and exclaimed, "Where is Maria?"

"Miss Oakley has run away from me," said Henry, half smiling and half serious: "I have not been of her party this evening."

Mrs. Danvers looked for her shawl, which Henry assisted her in putting on, and then taking his arm she went in search of Maria, who was easily found where Henry had left her. "So I have found you at last, Maria," said Mrs. Danvers, rather sharply. "Mr. Owen could give me no account of you."

"I have been very visible all the evening," replied Maria, flippantly.

"It is quite time that we should be at home," said Mrs. Danvers: "I shall be obliged to you, Mr. Owen, to enquire if my carriage is ready."

Henry obeyed. "And pray wrap yourself up, Maria," continued Mrs. Danvers: "how thoughtless you are to dance till the last moment!"

The young officer brought Maria's fur tippet, and immediately afterwards Henry returned with the information that the carriage was waiting; he gave his arm to Mrs. Danvers, and Maria was handed to the carriage by her partner, and on taking his leave he was heard to say, "On Friday morning then I may look for the pleasure of seeing Miss Oakley again."

Maria smiled, bowed, and gaily entered the carriage.

"It is very late, my dear," said Mr. Danvers, when the party were all seated, "I have been asleep above an hour."

"That last rubber was a very tedious one,"

replied Mrs. Danvers. "If I can help it, I will never play again with Mr. Howard."

"Really," rejoined Maria, "I think the evening has gone upon wings."

Henry said nothing.

"And pray, Maria," asked Mrs. Danvers, "how came you to run away from Mr. Owen without finishing your song?"

"I am very sorry that I was guilty of such a neglect," answered Maria, flippantly, "and I hope Mr. Owen will pardon me if I promise to finish it to-morrow evening. But who can resist an invitation to a ball-room? and if Mr. Owen would have followed me there he would have found attractions far superior to that of a Scotch air. Don't you love dancing, Mr. Owen?"

Before Mr. Owen had time to make any reply, the carriage stopped.

The next morning Maria was not in a state of mind to lay any restraint upon herself. When

breakfast was over, she left Mrs. Danvers and Mr. Owen alone, to talk of books and botany together, as she herself said to Mrs. Wilson, and retired to consult with her old and experienced friend as to some preparations she wished to make for the following morning. Mrs. Danvers more than once came to look for her, but Maria entreated her to excuse her appearance till she had completed some work in which she was deeply engaged.

"I might as well be at home in that detestable Buckinghamshire," said Maria to Mrs. Wilson, when alone with the maid, "as talking to Henry Owen about things of which I hate the very name. What is the reason, Wilson, that Mrs. Danvers has taken such a fancy to that young gentleman?"

"Why, don't you like him?" said Mrs. Wilson.

"I like him well enough," answered Maria, "but he is not to be compared with some people I have met with since I came here."

"You will perhaps alter your mind," said Mrs. Wilson.

At this instant the maid was called out, and in a few minutes returned with a letter which she gave Maria: it was from James, and was written in great haste the preceding day: it stated, that Captain Oakley had had a very alarming return of illness, and it expressed in strong language the expectation of James that she would lose no time in returning.

Maria read the letter again and again with the greatest agitation. At length she came to a decision, "Twenty-four hours," she said to herself, "cannot make any great difference in my father's state of health: I will put this letter in my pocket till this time to-morrow."

Maria spent the remainder of the morning in a state of mind that it is easier to imagine than to describe. At dinner she appeared in the highest spirits. Any thing like quiet discourse was insupportable to her; she rattled, and talked, and laughed, to silence the checks of her conscience; she wished to forget her father, but she found it impossible: it was in vain that Mrs. Danvers endeavoured to moderate her spirits or to lead into any thing like quiet conversation; she was either pro-

foundly silent or noisily gay. After tea, however, she complied with the request of Mrs. Danvers to play and sing the Scotch air which she had left unfinished the preceding night; it was performed with an ill grace, and though she was courteously thanked by Henry, he did not solicit her to favour him with another song.

As the evening closed it was observed that the sky lowered and threatened tempest, and before nine o'clock there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning accompanied with pouring rain. "Here is an end to your breakfast-party," said Mr. Danvers.

"We shall see, Sir," replied Maria; "it will, perhaps, be finer than ever after the storm."

Before eleven o'clock the storm had passed away and a beautiful cloudless night followed, and when the party separated for the night Maria called Mr. Danvers to the window and pointed out to him the moon and stars shining in their majesty.

Maria had not retired many minutes into her

bed-room, when Mrs. Wilson knocked at her door and informed her that her mistress wished to speak to her. Maria immediately followed the maid into Mrs. Danvers's room.

"Sit down Maria," said Mrs. Danvers.

Maria placed herself beside a small fire which glowed in the grate: Mrs. Danvers was engaged with her maid at her toilet, and had her back towards Maria. "My dear," said Mrs. Danvers, "I am sorry to disappoint you, but I have given up all thoughts of the breakfast party."

"Why so, Ma'am?" returned Maria, quickly.

"The violent rain that has fallen to-night must have rendered the ground very damp, and it will not suit my rheumatic complaints."

"But, my dear Madam," replied Maria, "if the weather should be unfavourable in the morning they will no doubt breakfast in the house."

"If it is decidedly unfavourable," replied Mrs. Danvers. "But my friends are young people; and

if the weather should be fine they will not regard the past rain, and I shall have a serious illness if I venture to sit out of doors."

"But there is to be a tent on the lawn; you will be under cover."

"I am convinced," replied Mrs. Danvers, "that it will not do for me to run any risks: I had the sciatica severely in the autumn."

"But you would not object to my going?" returned Maria.

"And pray, my dear, how are you to go to the house of a stranger by yourself without an introduction?"

"O, Miss Howards would introduce me," said Maria. "They told me that they were going, and they asked me to join their party, only I said that I was going with you."

"You had much better give up the scheme, and stay at home with Henry Owen and me. He cannot go unless I do."

"Will not your staying at home have a very odd appearance?" said Maria.

"Every body knows that I have been an invalid lately," replied Mrs. Danvers.

A silence of some minutes followed. Mrs. Danvers at last interrupted it, by saying, "Maria, I do not wish to keep you up, it is getting very late."

Maria did not at first seem to hear Mrs. Danvers. At length, rising, she added, "Then you object to my going with Miss Howards?"

"I certainly do wish you to stay at home," replied Mrs. Danvers, "as I cannot go myself. But I am really sorry to disappoint you," added she, good-naturedly.

Maria took up her candlestick and walked towards the door, heavily dragging one foot after the other. As she held the door in her hand, she wished Mrs. Danvers good-night, coldly and ungraciously, and then slowly closed the door after her.

"I never thought," said Mrs. Danvers to her maid, when Maria was gone, "that I should find so much trouble in managing that girl. But what are you laughing at, Wilson?"

"You must excuse me, Madam," replied Mrs. Wilson, "but I could hardly help laughing all the time you were talking to Miss Oakley: for when you told her that you did not like her to go with the Miss Howards, she looked just as she did when I would not let her have the lemonade a great many years ago; she pouted, and put her feet on the fender exactly in the same way."

"Ah, Wilson," replied Mrs. Danvers, "we should not have allowed her to have her own way then: but we have spoiled her. I dare say my cousin Oakley has not half the trouble with James."

"It is too late to make changes now," replied Wilson: "and if you would give me leave to speak, Madam, I think I would advise you to let her have her way this time."

"What!" said Mrs. Danvers, "and allow her to go with the Howards! Why, don't you remember

what I told you about Henry Owen? I should not wish her to go unless he could be of the party."

"But I am sure, Madam," replied the confidante, "that if she is disappointed she will not make herself agreeable to the young gentleman at home. You cannot think how busy she has been all day in preparing a dress hat for the occasion: and she has made up her mind to dance with a Captain somebody, for she tells me that there is to be dancing on the green after breakfast."

"And what good will she gain from such an acquaintance as Captain ——? who knows any thing about him? he is quite a stranger here."

"As to that, Madam, she only thinks of amusing herself."

"She is a very thoughtless girl," returned Mrs. Danvers.

"But if, Madam, you would indulge her to-morrow morning, I do think I could persuade her to make herself agreeable in the afternoon."

"Well, Wilson, you may manage it so if you can. To be sure, the poor girl leads a very dull life in Buckinghamshire, and one ought to make some allowances for young people."

"Then, Madam," returned Wilson, "I may tell her that you will not object to her going with the Miss Howards?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Danvers; "and tell her she may have the carriage, and give orders accordingly."

"She has got the lemonade and macaroons at last," returned Mrs. Wilson, laughing.

As soon as Mrs. Wilson was released from her attendance on her mistress, she hastened to communicate the joyful tidings to Maria, not forgetting the condition upon which the permission was granted, a condition which excited Maria's merriment not a little.

Maria rose in high glee the next morning, and endeavouring to forget that she had a father, she joined Mrs. Howard's party. The morning was brilliant, and the company ventured to breakfast

in a tent, protected by carpets from the damp ground. Here was an assemblage of every outward enjoyment which Maria's imagination could have anticipated: beautiful grounds, affording continual variety to the eye; gay and fashionable company; every delicacy of viand, fruit, and flower that money could procure; added to which, was a band of fine musicians, judiciously placed in the garden. To the breakfast succeeded a dance upon the green: of this amusement Maria largely partook, and Captain —— was her partner. But in the midst of all these agreeable circumstances, the remembrance of her father would from time to time pierce like an arrow into her bosom. The winged hours at length passed away, the breakfast party dispersed, and Maria found herself once more at Mrs. Danvers's house before the clock struck three. The amusements of the morning had furnished her every thing that she could have expected, but the elevation of her spirits had given place to langour and restlessness, if not remorse.

On her return home, she found that Mrs. Danvers and Henry were gone out. She retired to her room, and threw herself into a chair: she now again opened James's letter, and upon reading it a second

time, the account of her father's illness seemed to her still more alarming than it had done the preceding day. She seemed at once to have forgotten all the motives which had induced her to conceal the letter. The illusion was destroyed. Vexed, disappointed, dissatisfied, she remained in a state of the greatest dejection, till she heard Mrs. Danvers's step in the passage, when she immediately arose and followed her to her room. Having thanked her for her kind compliance with her wishes, and informed her that she had spent a very agreeable morning, she put into her hands the letter which she had *just* received from James: and when Mrs. Danvers returned it to her, she asked her if it would be possible for her to return home that very day.

"I do not think it would," replied Mrs. Danvers; "it is now four o'clock: but I will go and talk to Mr. Danvers about it. It is a great pity that you did not get this letter sooner: from the date, you ought to have received it yesterday."

Maria made no reply.

Mrs. Danvers went in search of her husband; and soon returned, informing Maria that Mr. Danvers

would himself accompany her in his carriage early the next morning to some considerable distance, and give her every assistance that could enable her to complete her journey speedily and comfortably.

Maria appeared at dinner unaffectedly serious. When she met Mr. Danvers, she thanked him for his kind offer of assisting her on her journey.

"I wish, my dear," returned he, "that you had received this letter a day sooner: for, independent of the satisfaction it would have afforded you, it would have been a great deal more convenient to me to have accompanied you to-day than it will be to-morrow."

"I am sorry you should suffer any inconvenience on my account," returned Maria.

"Think no more about it," said Mr. Danvers. "In cases of this sort, we must not mind a little personal inconvenience."

When the ladies retired after dinner, Maria requested leave to withdraw into her own room to

make some arrangements for her journey: but before they parted Mrs. Danvers asked again to see James's letter. Maria left it with her, and having read it, Mrs. Danvers laid it on the table, where, Maria not being returned, it was still lying when Mr. Danvers and Henry Owen appeared in the drawing-room. As the eyes of Mr. Danvers glanced upon the letter, he said to his wife, "Is that James's letter which Maria has just received?"

"It is," returned Mrs. Danvers.

"I am certain," replied he, after taking up the letter and examining the direction for some time, "I am certain that Tomkins brought me this letter yesterday morning."

At this critical moment, the butler himself appeared, with the silver tea-urn in his hands, and Maria immediately followed.

"Tomkins," said Mr. Danvers, "did not you bring me this letter yesterday morning?"

Tomkins looked at the letter. "Yes, Sir," said he: "it came by the post yesterday morning."

I remember bringing it to you in the library, Sir."

"And did I not desire you to carry it to Miss Oakley?"

"Yes, Sir; but Miss Oakley was not in the drawing-room, nor in my mistress's dressing-room; so I sent it to Mrs. Wilson, and desired that she would carry it to Miss Oakley."

"This is very strange, my dear," said Mr. Danvers to his wife: "had not Tomkins better ask your maid why she did not give the letter immediately to Miss Oakley?"

"Shall I go and speak to Mrs. Wilson?" said the butler.

Mr. Danvers was a very slow man, and never thought of reading any thing except in a book; he had never studied the human countenance. But it was not so with his wife: Maria's burning blushes and a supplicating glance which she now cast upon Mrs. Danvers, assured her that there was some mystery in all these apparent blunders; and recollect-

ing Maria's eagerness to go to the breakfast party, she began to guess how things really were: so not wishing to expose her before Henry Owen, she replied to the butler, "You need not trouble yourself, Tomkins, to speak to Wilson; I will enquire into the affair myself." Then turning to Mr. Danvers, she added, "My dear, I suppose the letter was somehow mislaid, but I will enquire into the particulars."

"It is very provoking," said Mr. Danvers: "a letter of such consequence!"

Maria had often thought and called Henry Owen very dull in the course of the last week, but she now wished that he was ten times duller, for while this discussion was going on he had cast upon her such a penetrating glance, as seemed to read all that was passing in her mind.

It was in vain that Maria tried to assume any thing like cheerfulness: she was scarcely composed during the remainder of the evening. In addition to her mental feelings, she had caught a severe cold from dancing on grass from which the hot sun was exhaling the moist vapours produced by the storm

of the preceding night: but she was not now in a state of mind to notice these bodily feelings, and if she had noticed them she would not have mentioned them to Mrs. Danvers. Soon after tea she withdrew again into her room, and Mrs. Danvers seeing her husband engaged in conversation with Henry Owen, an event which rarely happened, for he usually slept at this hour, she followed Maria, and having desired her to intrust the remainder of her arrangements to Mrs. Wilson, she led her into her own apartment, where she bid her sit down. "Maria," said Mrs. Danvers, in an unusually serious manner, "you have vexed me, indeed you have: you have been deceiving me about this letter."

Maria made no reply.

"You received it yesterday, I am sure you did; and you concealed it from me that you might not be disappointed of this breakfast party. You are a perverse girl, Maria. I am almost ready to give you up."

"O, Mrs. Danvers," said Maria, bursting into tears, "you were not accustomed to treat me in this way! why are you so changed towards me?"

You have not behaved towards me all this week as you once used to do."

"Because you have vexed me," returned Mrs. Danvers: "you have thwarted my plans. It is of no use to conceal any thing from you now: I invited you here at this time with a particular view, and in this you have disappointed me."

"With what particular view," said Maria, "did you invite me?"

"It begins to be suspected," said Mrs. Danvers, "that your father is not the rich man he was supposed to be; and of course, Maria, your expectations must be more humble than they once were."

"But I shall not receive less kindness from you on that account, if it is so?"

"Do not interrupt me. Last Christmas I had a visit from my relation, Henry Owen, whom I had not seen since he was quite a child. His friends reside near London; they are persons of respectable, if not opulent, circumstances. I found that he knew and liked your brother; and that he had seen

you and greatly admired you. I determined that I would give you an opportunity of meeting in my house: and, I doubted not, that occasional acquaintance would have ripened into something more: had you behaved with common prudence, it would have done so, but your conduct during the last two days has greatly lowered his opinion of you; and this evening, I am sure, he perceived how you had been acting respecting the letter, and guessed the motives of your conduct; and, with his high views of duty, what must he have thought of you?"

"I do not regard what Henry Owen thinks of me," replied Maria, pettishly. "He is not to my taste."

"But you regard my opinion, I suppose?" replied Mrs. Danvers. "And I suppose you regard the opinion of the world? And I must assure you, that if you throw away your opportunities of establishing yourself well in the world, and this, too, for the sake of passing away your time with persons who are merely amusing themselves at your expence, you will never gain the good opinion of the world, nor can I continue to bear with you as I have done."

"And with what view have I been educated," said Maria, hastily, "but to be admired and to enjoy myself?"

"But you are sacrificing the end to the means," returned Mrs. Danvers. "I certainly wished to see you accomplished and elegant, and have spared no pains to bring this about: and I trusted that you would have had prudence enough so to use these means of recommending yourself to notice, that they might procure you a respectable establishment; instead of that, you have allowed them to be snares which have led you into the grossest neglect of filial duty."

Here Maria burst into tears. "O, Mrs. Danvers!" she exclaimed, "I have been taught to value admiration and pleasure above all things, and I do admit that they have, in the present instance, carried me beyond all bounds: but they are like spirited horses, and I have no bit or bridle to put in their mouths."

The good-natured Mrs. Danvers was affected by Maria's tears: though she might have felt that her conduct was only the natural effect of a

worldly education upon an ardent and lively disposition. But feeling no self-reproach, she took the hand of Maria, adding, "I will look over what is past, in consideration of your youth; and I hope that you will gain wisdom from experience." She then kissed her, and, after giving her some advice of worldly policy, she entered upon other subjects of discourse which employed them till they were reminded by the clock of the lateness of the hour, and they returned into the drawing-room.

Here they were met at the door by Mr. Danvers, who had risen from his seat on hearing his wife's step. "Well, my dear," said he, "have you seen your maid, and enquired about this letter?"

Mrs. Danvers seeing that her husband was not to be diverted from the enquiry, laid her hand upon his arm, leading him to a sofa at a remote part of the room, at the same time raising her voice to Henry Owen, who was seated beside a table on which a tray was set, she desired he would help Maria to some wine and water. Mrs. Danvers whispered for a few moments to her husband, and they both returned to the table where the young people were sitting in profound silence. Henry

looked unaffectedly serious. Mr. Danvers had seldom much to say at any time. Mrs. Danvers sat down with a cheerful countenance to the table, and made several attempts, crowned with but little success, to introduce some lively discourse; and in an interval of silence, drawing her shawl over her shoulders, she unfortunately remarked, "It is really chilly to-night: I am afraid that this storm of thunder and lightning has quite unsettled the weather."

"I have been consulting the glass," said Mr. Danvers, "this evening, and I have no doubt but that there will be rain to-morrow. It is a great pity that we did not take this journey to-day. Really, Maria, I do not yet understand your motives for keeping this letter in your pocket for twenty-four hours."

Mrs. Danvers did not wait for any thing more to pass, but instantly rising and turning to the agitated Maria, she said, "I think, my dear, as you are to rise so early in the morning, you had better go early to bed."

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Danvers, in a good-natured voice, as he shook hands with Maria, "do not make yourself uneasy. I shall not regard a

little rain, I shall be ready for you by eight o'clock. But you know," he added, laughing, "it is always best to make hay when the sun shines."

Henry Owen took his leave of Maria with some little agitation; which she, however, was too much disconcerted to observe. Mrs. Danvers accompanied Maria to her room, and they parted with many expressions of kindness on the part of Mrs. Danvers, and many tears on the part of Maria.

Mrs. Danvers had not taken her leave of Maria ten minutes, when she returned to her again, bringing a folded paper in her hand. "Maria," said she, "I have always forgotten to give you this paper. It was sent for your use by your father, just before he left England; and if he should find that you have never seen it, it may hurt his feelings. But I did not think it particularly desirable to give it you in your early days."

Maria thanked Mrs. Danvers: she put the paper in her pocket-book, and they parted once more.

Maria passed an almost sleepless night. She was not kept awake by vexation and mortification alone,

but by fever, and very distressing sensations in her throat, feelings which she had not dared to impart, even to Mrs. Wilson, lest the unfortunate breakfast party should once more come under discussion.

Maria had by no means an agreeable journey home: the feelings of the day were not more comfortable than those of the night had been. When the carriage, in which she had travelled the last stage alone, had stopped at the door of her father's cottage, a servant only appeared at the door to receive her. She was in such a state of agitation that she dared not ask after her father, but walking into the parlour, she threw herself on a chair and burst into tears.

"Do not distress yourself so, Ma'am," said the maid, who had followed her into the room: "my master is alive; but I fear he will not know you. He was looking for you all yesterday, and listening to every noise. Indeed, we all expected you till midnight; and I never saw Mr. James so disturbed about any thing as he was at your not coming. And my poor master cried like a young child when it became dark and you did not come."

"When did my father become so much worse?" asked Maria, as soon as sobs would allow her to speak.

"We may date it from your going, Ma'am," replied the maid; "for that was, to be sure, the cause of it."

"What do you mean?" said Maria, with trepidation.

"I am sorry to be obliged to mention it," returned the maid; "but you will hear it from some one else if I conceal the circumstance: but, in your hurry, in the morning you went out, you gave me the wrong wine to put in my master's sago, and it was some time before we found it out. Mr. James was the first person who did, but it was then too late, the mischief was done: the physician said it was nothing else which brought on all his complaints again."

"Where is James?" said Maria, after another burst of sorrow.

"He is up stairs with the physician," answered

the maid. "He will come down, I dare say, when he is gone; and he will be very glad to see you. And I am sure I am very glad on his account that you are come, for he has not had his clothes off these three nights. I never saw such a young gentleman for attending upon the sick. He has been son and daughter both to my poor master. Indeed he will hardly leave him to take his meals."

At this moment the physician's step was heard on the stairs; and James, having attended him to the door, came into the parlour to Maria. What he might have purposed to say to his sister is uncertain, but she was in such an agony of grief that he could only entreat her to be composed. In a short time she was able to accompany him up stairs, and to approach the bed where her father lay.—But, Oh, how changed he was in his appearance since she had parted with him on Monday! the ghastly hue of death was painted on his countenance, and he did not know his daughter.

During the remainder of the day Maria was not to be prevailed upon to quit his bedside, nor did she utter one word, except in reply to any questions that were made to her.

When night had closed in, James insisted upon her going down stairs and partaking of some refreshment. "You seem much fatigued, Maria," said he: "I hope you will go to bed. I shall not leave my father, and the nurse is very attentive. If any change takes place, we will call you."

"No," replied Maria, with emphasis: "I will never leave him again."

"O, that you could have seen him yesterday!" replied James: "he was then himself. Did you not receive my letter early enough to enable you to come?"

"I did," answered Maria: "and some other time I will explain to you why I did not come. I cannot tell you now."

"It was an unfortunate delay," said James. He would have added more, but so great was the agitation that appeared in Maria's countenance, that he feared to increase it.

They now returned up stairs, and Maria took her seat beside the bed. The night was chilly. James had placed himself in his father's arm chair

near a small fire: beside the chair was a table where lay several books, and on which a candle stood. The nurse was going to and fro on tip-toe, and was often engaged with preparations of some kind below. Captain Oakley seemed in a kind of doze, and lay in great composure. Nothing was heard but his breathing, the cracking of the fire, and that complaining of the wind which often precedes a change of weather. Hour after hour passed away in perfect stillness. The thoughts which passed through the mind of Maria were of the most distressing nature: they became at length almost insupportable, and she thought she would endeavour to divert them by reading. She rose from her seat in search of a book. As she approached the table she perceived that her brother, wearied with watching, had fallen into a deep sleep. She looked upon his calm countenance and sighed. She took up the book which had fallen from his hand. She did not like its appearance, and laid it again on the table. At that moment she recollected the paper which Mrs. Danvers had given her the preceding night: she took it from her pocket-book and opened it. Within was inscribed these words, "The dying requests of Sophia Oakley respecting the plans to be pursued in the education of her beloved infant

daughter Maria; transmitted to Mrs. Danvers, for the use of that dear child, by her affectionate father, Frederick Oakley, upon occasion of his leaving his native country."

Maria's eyes were in an instant so dimmed with tears, that for some minutes she was unable to read any thing further. The manuscript proceeded as follows:—

"It is my earnest request that my Maria may be early taught to bear the light yoke of her beloved Master; that she may be habituated to subdue her will to his; and to look for her chief happiness from the service of Him, in keeping of whose commandments there is great reward. I wish that her education may be of a very simple kind; such as will render her easily pleased, and contented under all the changes and chances of this life, and will fit her, in all circumstances, to discharge the duties of a daughter to that beloved father who is about, so early, to be deprived of the affectionate attention of the companion of his youth. I wish her to be brought up with a particular love for her brother, and with a deference to his opinions, provided he shall grow up according to the promise which

he now gives. I have, in these requests, had a particular reference to her character; which, young as she is, I can already discern to be of an ardent, vain, and very lively turn. But the foundation of every thing good must be the same in both my children: a sincere conviction of the depravity of their own nature; a lively sense of God's mercy through Christ; with an abiding faith in Christ, as the Saviour of sinners; and a continual dependence on the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to enable them to do any thing that is good."

Thus far were the words of the mother. The conclusion was an address from Captain Oakley to Mrs. Danvers, in which he entreated that the dying requests of her excellent mother might be often brought to the recollection of Maria, and that all her plans of education might be regulated with a view to them. The paper was concluded with many tender wishes for the welfare of his children; an earnest prayer for the blessing of God upon them; and an ardent hope that, if he was ever restored to his native country, he should close his days comforted with their dutiful attentions, and cheered with the delightful conviction that they were walking in the narrow road.

As Maria read this touching letter, she seemed like one awakening from a deep sleep. "And is this," said she to herself, "the plan upon which I have been educated? O, my beloved mother! why was I never acquainted with your desires for me? O, Mrs. Danvers! why have you hidden all these things from me? I have lived without God in the world! I have lived as if I were never to die! Vanity and the love of pleasure alone have ruled in my heart! And whither have they led me? To disgrace and mortification in the world! And, Oh! they have murdered my father!" Here clasping her hands, in an agony of grief, she returned back to the bed, and throwing herself on her knees, she hid her face in the bed-clothes, calling out, in a suppressed voice, "Oh, my father! my beloved father! your child is your destroyer! Was ever guilt like mine?"

How long she remained in this situation, she did not know. She heard footsteps in the room, but the nurse did not approach her till some time had elapsed; when coming to the bedside to look at Captain Oakley, to moisten his lips with some brandy, she perceived Maria's posture. She immediately raised her up, and entreated her to be

composed. As she placed her on a chair, Maria looked up wildly in her face, as if she did not recollect her. The nurse prevailed upon her to swallow some wine and water, which she did with great difficulty. "My dear young lady," said the nurse, "do not grieve in this way: you will really make yourself quite ill. How your hand burns! you have really fretted yourself into a fever."

Maria remained where the nurse had placed her for some time. Bodily illness, and extreme agitation of mind, had produced a temporary stupefaction.

At length the morning light began to peep through the shutters; and soon afterwards some little change appeared in the countenance and motions of Captain Oakley. The nurse stood beside Maria looking intently upon him: he opened and shut his eyes, his countenance underwent many changes. The nurse shook her head. At length he gave a convulsive start. "He is going," said the nurse. "He is going! Miss Oakley, awake your brother." Maria made an effort to rise, but her limbs failed; a dark mist seemed to rise before her eyes, and she sunk apparently senseless upon the floor.

When she first revived to any recollection, she found herself lying on her own bed, and the maid who had received her upon her return standing beside her. She was parched with intolerable thirst, and her head and throat were painful in the highest degree. "He is gone!" said Maria, looking up at the maid; "he never gave me his blessing! he never told me that he forgave me!"

The servant made some reply, but Maria could not understand her: she was in a high fever, and she was either delirious or entirely insensible for many days afterwards. In her delirium, she called herself her father's murderer: she cried out that she was lost and undone for ever. She knew nobody that approached her, nor understood any thing that was said to her. On one occasion, awaking from a disturbed sleep, she fancied that she saw her father sitting by her bedside: he seemed as pale as when she had last seen him in bed; she thought he looked kindly upon her; she tried to raise herself up towards him. "Are you come back," said she, "to say that you forgive me? O no, that can never be. Lost, undone Maria, you shall never never hear a father's blessing!" Here she clasped her hands, and the sweet vision passed from her eyes.—Yet, before

it disappeared, tears seemed to fall from the eyes of her father as he bent over her.

When Maria's disorder began to abate, her intervals of recollection became more frequent: during these, the sense of her extreme sinfulness, and of her cruel neglect of her father, were almost intolerable to her. She had been confined nearly three weeks to her bed, when, after a long and undisturbed sleep, she awoke one afternoon more than usually calm and refreshed. On opening her eyes she perceived James standing by her bedside, and perfectly recollecting him, she stretched out her hand to him, saying, "O, James, are you come to see me? I do not deserve this kindness. I am a poor, wicked, miserable creature."

"Thank God," replied James, "who has restored you again. I had hardly dared to hope for this blessing."

"O, James," said she, clasping her hands, "I had better have lost my recollection for ever. I awake only to a sense of my misery."

"What misery?" said James.

"The sad knowledge of my own wickedness," she replied. "My beloved James, you have served God from your cradle, I have served my own wicked desires; I have ruined myself; I have destroyed my father. You cannot understand what my misery is."

"My sister, my dear sister," said James, sitting down beside her, "do not call yourself miserable if you are brought to a knowledge of your sins; you never were so happy before in your life."

"O, James, you do not know my heart! You have never served sin as I have!"

"My heart is by nature like yours," said James: "and if I have been preserved from some sins by a pious education, let God have all the glory, and his grace will be sufficient for *you* now."

"There is no hope for me!" answered Maria, "I am too wicked!"

"Cast yourself at the foot of your Saviour's cross," replied James, "and there is abundance of hope for you: He can save to the uttermost all that

come to him." Here James, perceiving that she looked exhausted, desired the nurse to bring her some refreshment, and giving a particular charge that she might be kept very quiet and not allowed to talk, he thought it most prudent to leave her for a time.

She sent for him before an hour had elapsed, and entered again into discourse with him much in the same manner as she had done before. His words seemed to soothe her; and several texts which he repeated she pronounced to herself again very distinctly. She passed a composed night, spoke little upon any subject to those about her, and after she had breakfasted she sent again for James, and seemed much pleased at his appearance. The expression of her countenance was more composed than on the preceding evening, though it bore the traces of deep sorrow. She soon engaged her brother in conversation with her on the subjects of eternal truth; and, for a time, she appeared not only deeply interested, but greatly refreshed; when, suddenly, she burst into an agony of tears, and upon James enquiring into the cause of her distress, she replied, "O, James! had I thought and felt some time ago, as I do at this moment, my father might now have been living. He

is happy, James, I know he is; but I have brought disgrace, and shame, and remorse upon myself for the remainder of my life."

"And do you think," said James, "that you have deserved all these things?"

"I do," said Maria; "and far, far more: and I will try to bear them with patience."

"Is it not a mercy," proceeded James, "that life has been spared you? Where might you now have been, had you been called away without repentance?"

"God is good, very good to me," she replied: "and I am the chief of sinners." As she said these words, she laid her head on her pillow with a look of much subjection.

James bent over her with a countenance of almost angelic pity. "Maria," said he, after some hesitation, "were my father living, do you think that you could now discharge the duties of a child towards him, and continue to do so when joy at his recovery had ceased to influence you? His health

would probably be daily becoming more infirm. He would require the sacrifice of what have been hitherto your favourite enjoyments. You could not leave him to visit Reading. Activity and punctuality would be necessary to make him happy, for his wants would be numerous. You must walk with him, read to him. You must watch his eyes, and prevent his every wish."

"All this," said Maria, "I know is foreign to my nature. I am by nature a lover of pleasure, self-willed, and impetuous. God knows what is best. I do not desire to rebel against his will. But if, James, my father had been spared to me, might I not have prayed for assistance to do my duty as a child? If I may ask for the pardon of sin through redeeming love, may I not also for grace to change my heart, and to enable me to do those things to which I am naturally averse?"

James looked satisfied. He paused. "Maria," proceeded he, "are you sure that our dear father is dead?"

"Why do you mock me, James? Did not I see that last convulsive start?"

"I do not mock you, my dear sister. But have you never seen my father since that day?"

"I thought I saw him once," said Maria: "but I believed it to be a dream. O, James! do not raise hopes you cannot realize; I cannot bear to be trifled with."

"Do you think I would trifle with you upon such a subject as this?" said James.

Here Maria raised herself up, with such a countenance of eager enquiry, as made James apprehensive that her feelings were too high wrought for her present state of weakness to endure.

"Maria," he replied, "if you will try to keep yourself calm, I will tell you every thing: but promise me this first."

"I will," said Maria, "I will;" and she laid herself down again on her pillow.

"The changes which you witnessed in my father, just before you fainted, were, probably, the attendants on some crisis in his complaint; for, from that

time, a favourable change took place and he began to amend. He is still recovering, but very slowly. On regaining his recollection, his first enquiry was after you; and as soon as it was possible for him to be moved, he was led into your room; but the interview was so exceedingly affecting to him, that we have not since dared to permit him to see you. But, if it pleases God that you should continue to gain strength, I hope you may soon be allowed to meet. Meanwhile, my sister, be satisfied with knowing that he is alive, and that the days may yet come when you shall, indeed, be his child again."

It is impossible, by any description, to do justice to the feelings of Maria upon this occasion. She exhibited every expression of joy and thankfulness that her feeble state of health would admit. At length they relieved themselves by abundant tears; but her recovery for several days was retarded by the great excitement of her feelings. These at length subsided, and her mind became gradually settled into something like peace and calm; feelings to which she had been wholly a stranger since she had lived with Mrs. Danvers. This composure contributed not a little to the establishment of her health. Youth, and a naturally good constitution,

lent also their help, and at the end of a fortnight, from the time that she had first conversed with James, she was enabled to visit her father's bed-room.

James had often filled his father's heart with gladness by the relation of the conversations which now daily passed between Maria and himself. Yet Captain Oakley was not prepared to meet her return to him with composure; for, on approaching him, she withdrew her arm from James, and throwing herself at her father's feet, she would not rise till she had heard him pronounce his forgiveness for all her past undutifulness towards him, and till he had given her his blessing. On this occasion the feelings of every one were highly excited, and will bear no description. Before they parted, Captain Oakley desired James to repeat aloud a prayer of thanksgiving for the double restoration to life of himself and his daughter, and the happy circumstances which crowned their present meeting.

As soon as Maria was sufficiently recovered to undertake, with the assistance of a nurse, the care of her father, James returned to Oxford to resume his studies, which had been too much interrupted: and, except occasionally for a few hours to watch

the improvement of the invalids, he did not return home till the beginning of the long vacation.

In what was most important, her spiritual concerns, he now found his beloved Maria rapidly improving: but both herself and his father were still in a state of so much weakness that he prevailed upon them to try the change of air: and the greatest part of the long vacation was spent in visiting Mr. Oakley and the sea coast; and at the end of September they returned home, Maria nearly as well as usual, and Captain Oakley in as good health as it was thought probable he would ever enjoy again.

For the first time in her life Maria saw Buckinghamshire again, and caught the first glimpse of the white cross, with real pleasure. She returned to her duties with a pleasure and alacrity she would once have thought impossible that she could experience. She found now a pleasure in setting her house in order, in directing her servants, in laying plans for their advantage, in forming her domestic arrangements in a neat and orderly manner: in every meal her father's taste and comfort were consulted, and the difficulties which were caused by her inexperience were remedied by her industry and

perseverance. Her little parlour, whence in spring the blackbird was heard to sing from the depths of the wood, became the scene of her cheerful industry. Punctuality had furnished her with some additional hours in the day, and these hours were not frittered away. James assisted her in forming a plan of reading, which should exalt her piety and improve her understanding. Music, drawing, or needlework, or books of an innocent and amusing cast, were ready to fill up minutes of leisure: and yet, with all this, she had time for walking. When out of doors, her eyes were open to see and admire the works of nature, and hence she was often led to other gratifications of a still superior kind, the contemplation of the Creator in the works of creation. During her last visit into Kent she had sometimes accompanied her uncle in his walks among his parishioners, and she had taken hence many a hint for her own practice. Poor people were to be found in Buckinghamshire also; many a rosy child who stood in need of instruction, many a pretty baby who wanted a warm frock, many an old man and woman to whom a meal of soup would afford much comfort.

Captain Oakley, with one arm leaning upon his

daughter, and with the other supporting himself by a stick, was extremely fond of accompanying her in visits to the poor. His little purse was always ready; and in his discourse he could throw in many seasonable and instructive hints, which Maria was yet too inexperienced to bestow.

The evenings were interesting, even after James was returned to Oxford. Captain Oakley had seen a great deal, and was fond of describing what he had seen. He had of late years thought much, and had made that improvement of what he had seen which travellers of a wise and thinking turn of mind will always do. Music and conversation filled up the intervals of reading, so that, although the short days had arrived, and the night closed in very early, the last hour of the evening, which was concluded with the Bible and prayer in the assembled family, seemed always to arrive sooner than it was expected. But the highest of all gratifications, those which Maria now began at times to taste in her closet and in the house of God, were of a nature still more new to her than those which I have already enumerated. These are enjoyments which the heart of man, in its natural state, can least of all comprehend. This is the joy with which a stranger

intermeddleth not, the peace which passeth all understanding.

When James returned home at Christmas, with what delight did he witness all this quiet happiness, the establishment of all these delightful habits!

The frost being at this season more severe than suited Captain Oakley's delicate state of health, the young people took their morning walks together, while he remained at home. On one of these occasions, when James and Maria had ascended the hill, where in former days she had been accustomed to look for Berkshire, Maria pointed to the stone where she used to sit; and reminded James of the discourse they had once had in that very place. "Your discourse at that time was not lost upon me," she said: "nor were any of the attempts you made for my benefit in my early days. The letter which you wrote to me on that evening when I pouted for the lemonade, is still preserved in my uncle's pocket-book, and the sight of it has often excited very painful feelings in my bosom when my thoughts have been improperly engaged. All these things prepared the way for that deep con-

viction of my guilt, which I felt on my return from Reading."

"What gratitude," said James, "do we owe to Him who has thus blessed these weak instruments of good!"

"And bestowed upon me, unworthy as I am," interrupted Maria, "a peace of mind, which I never tasted in the days of my highest worldly enjoyment."

It was on this occasion that Maria related to James some particulars of her visit to Reading, and the motives which had induced her to conceal his letter; carefully, however, avoiding any particulars of her vain and foolish conduct at the breakfast party, recollections which it was best to obliterate from her memory. Nor did she make any but the most distant mention of Henry Owen.

James made no further comment upon this recital than, merely to remark how Providence had overruled the consequences of her neglect to the promotion of her spiritual good, though in a manner most exquisitely painful to herself.

It was thus that a habit of the most perfect and entire confidence was established between James and Maria, and became a source of comfort and benefit to both the young people.

When Captain Oakley was alone with his son, he often expressed his sense of his present happiness, and his lively thankfulness that his prayers had been so remarkably heard for his dear child. Sometimes when he spoke upon this subject the tears would run down his cheeks, and he would say, "Look at the generations of old, did ever any trust in the Lord and was forsaken?"

The Christmas vacation at length passed away. Before it expired, Captain Oakley one day enquired of his son, in the presence of Maria, why he never brought his friend Henry Owen to see him. "I was much pleased with that young man, and was glad to find that you have made so good a choice of a friend. From the little I saw of him, he appears not only to possess elegant manners and a cultivated mind, but pure and excellent principles. I trust you will receive benefit and pleasure from his friendship."

"I have often invited him," replied James, "to

accompany me, when I have been visiting you; but it has happened, that, whenever I have named a day for the purpose, some engagement has always prevented his coming out; and he has now left college."

Maria coloured, but the circumstance was not observed either by her father or brother.

The spring returned, and passed away as agreeably as the autumn had done; but Maria was surprised to find with what a new interest she welcomed the various delights of that lovely season. A worldly spirit often produces on the mind the effect of premature old age, while a sense of the divine favour, and confidence in the divine promises, bring back much of the simplicity of childhood, and the mind is enabled to taste a thousand pure and innocent enjoyments, which are disregarded by a heart panting after worldly pleasure.

At the long vacation James, having nearly completed four years of residence, returned home, purposing, in his father's house, to devote some time to those studies which were particularly to fit him for the sacred profession on which he was soon to enter. This was an event of no small interest to

Maria and her father, and his return was at a most seasonable crisis.

As winter approached, and approached with unusual severity, Captain Oakley shewed some symptoms of returning weakness and disease, which greatly alarmed his children: and though the best advice was procured, and every means was taken to defend him from cold, yet he seemed to receive little benefit from these precautions. In short, for we must not enter into too many particulars, his constitution was fast breaking up.

It was, indeed, most seasonable to Maria that her brother was living at home, for her duties were now becoming very arduous, and she was often tempted to be discouraged by difficulties, which, during the ardour of her first sanguine feelings, she had not experienced or not regarded. It was now that she was to learn those lessons of patience and pious submission which we gain by ascending the Hill of Difficulty, in our way towards the Celestial City. These are the lessons which educate the Christian, purify his heart, fill him with ardent desires for heavenly consolations, and prepare him for that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The winter was long and severe, and when spring returned Captain Oakley was still lying on the bed of sickness, almost on that of death.

During all this period, many kind letters of enquiry were received from Mr. Oakley and Mrs. Danvers. Maria had some time before written to Mrs. Danvers, expressing her sorrow for her very improper conduct during her late visit to Reading, with her hope, that she should never again occasion her friends the trouble and anxiety which she had hitherto done.

Mrs. Danvers had not again invited her to Reading.

In the beginning of June Mr. Oakley arrived in Buckinghamshire to visit his brother, as it began now to be apprehended, for the last time. He found him in the most desirable state of mind, humble, thankful, patient, and full of faith and hope. He told his brother that he had lived to see his every desire accomplished, and that he was ready to depart.

Mr. Oakley witnessed with real joy the con-

firmed change in his niece, the commencement of which he had before observed, and he joined with her father in glorifying Him from whom all good proceeds. Before his departure, he administered the Sacrament to his brother, surrounded by his family; and promised him that he would be the guardian of his children as long as either of them stood in need of his advice or protection.

Captain Oakley lingered several weeks after his brother's departure, and at last died, full of peace and hope, in the arms of his children. He had repeatedly assured Maria that the last twelve-month had abundantly made up to him for the trials of the preceding years. He entreated her to place herself under the guidance and direction of her uncle and brother, and for some time to separate herself as little as possible from them.

The grief of the young people was sincere and lively, but to James, at least, it was not bitter. They followed the remains of their father to their last earthly home, in the burial-place of his parents, a few miles distant from the cottage where he died.

Mr. Oakley had returned to be present on this

occasion, to testify his respect and affection to his brother, and to give every requisite comfort and assistance to the young people.

As soon as the funeral was over, he made an offer of his house as a temporary home, at least, to Maria. James would soon be twenty-three. Mr. Oakley proposed to give him a title for orders, consider him as his curate for a time, and to receive him also into his family till circumstances should point out to them a more desirable residence.

These propositions were made to James alone, and having duly weighed them he was to report them to Maria. Meanwhile, she received a most affectionate letter from Mrs. Danvers, pressing her in maternal language to return to Reading, and to consider her house once more as her home; adding, what was most of all persuasive, that she hoped now to receive from her some of those filial attentions which might recompense her for past solicitude on her account, intimating, that her health was rather on the decline.

When James, shortly after the arrival of this letter, came into his sister's little sitting-room to

acquaint her with her uncle's proposals, she, in reply, put the letter she had received into his hand, saying, with tears, "James, advise me, direct me: I know my own weakness: I wish to have no will of my own: shew me what is right to be done."

James read the letter with attention: he replied, "I will shew this letter to my uncle, if you will give me leave; he is our best earthly adviser. Meanwhile, I would advise you to pray for divine guidance, like Hezekiah, who spread the letter of the King of Assyria before God."

The following day was Sunday, that day when every sin, and care, and sorrow, is to be peculiarly brought before our heavenly Father. Maria was not forgetful of her brother's advice. She rose early on Monday morning, and wrote an answer, full of affection and gratitude, to Mrs. Danvers, entering fully into her brother's plans: adding, that it was her wish to spend the year of mourning in her uncle's house; but if, at the expiration of that time, her dutiful attentions could add any thing to the comfort of Mrs. Danvers, she might command them; or if, indeed, on any previous occasion she

should stand in need of them she would come to her at a moment's warning.

Having concluded this letter, she took it to James, saying, "Brother, I have followed your advice, and this letter is the result: if you and my uncle approve of it, it shall be sealed and immediately sent away."

James returned the letter soon afterwards to Maria, affectionately expressing his own and his uncle's approbation of the part she had taken.

A little time sufficed to complete a few arrangements which were necessary to be made before James and Maria took their final leave of the cottage, now become very dear to them. Maria shed many tears upon quitting those scenes where she had first learned to walk in the ways of peace.

We hasten to follow her into Kent, and to conclude what yet remains to be told respecting her and those with whom she was connected.

She was now capable of enjoying her uncle's

quiet habits, and of profiting by his pious example and his truly valuable conversation. Mr. Oakley was not only an experienced Christian, but a man of considerable learning, lively fancy, and great sweetness of temper; and his behaviour towards herself and her brother was that of a most tender parent.

Every day was marked with some progress in her feelings and habits of piety, in the general improvement of her mind, or in the acquisition of that composure, that softness, that courtesy of manners, which so generally adorn the real Christian.

James entered into holy orders at Christmas, and became the assistant of his uncle, and still sat at his feet as a learner in the exemplary discharge of his pastoral duties.

In the course of the autumn previous to this event, James was visited by a friend whom, at that time, he little expected to see. Some particulars of this visit I shall think necessary to relate. The visitor was no other person than Henry Owen, who happened, with his mother and sisters, to be at a

neighbouring sea-bathing place, within a morning ride of the rectory. The intelligence of Captain Oakley's death, and of the residence of James with his uncle, had accidentally reached him, and he was glad to embrace the opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with a friend whom he so highly valued.

The young friends met with extreme pleasure after a separation of many months, and they were soon seated together in Mr. Oakley's library. Half-an-hour had not elapsed, when Maria entered the room, not the least aware that James was engaged with a visitor. Henry, who had understood that she was returned to Reading, expressed no small astonishment, with some emotion, at her appearance; and she was so forcibly reminded of the sad circumstances under which they had last parted, that she found it impossible to restrain herself from bursting into tears. James was rather surprised at the behaviour both of Henry and his sister, but took no notice of it. After a short silence, Henry resumed the subject upon which they had been speaking before Maria's entrance, and she, soon recovering her composure, sat down in silence to her work.

Soon afterwards, Mr. Oakley entered the room, and James having introduced Henry to him as a very particular friend, he welcomed him to his parsonage with his habitual courtesy.

Soon afterwards the young men went out to walk till dinner-time.

Almost as soon as they were alone, Henry, as if desirous to give some reason for the surprise he had betrayed on seeing Maria, said to James, that he had understood Miss Oakley had returned to Reading upon her father's death.

"I am very thankful," replied James, "that she has preferred accompanying me into Kent."

"Why do you express so much thankfulness on the occasion?" asked Henry.

"I do not mean, in saying this," replied James, "to imply any disrespect to Mrs. Danvers: she has always intended to act the kindest part by my sister, and I am certain that Maria feels the highest gratitude towards her; but Reading," proceeded he, confidentially, "has certainly been a

place of temptation to Maria, and I am thankful that she is aware of its dangers."

Henry made no reply, and other subjects were introduced.

Not long afterwards, some accidental allusion was made by James to his sister, when Henry remarked, that he thought Miss Oakley did not appear to be in such good health as when he had last seen her.

"She has had a long confinement with my poor father," answered James: "and, indeed, I think she has never perfectly recovered her appearance of high health since her severe illness."

"Has she had a severe illness?" asked Henry.

"Upon her return from her last visit to Reading, where, I think, she met you, she was so extremely affected by the state in which she found my poor father, that, in addition to a cold she had previously taken, a violent fever was the consequence. Good, however, is produced from evil; and though she has hardly yet thoroughly recovered

from its effects in one sense, I am certain that she is yet reaping advantage from her illness in other and far more important respects."

A silence again followed, and Henry appeared to be lost in thought.

"The air in this place is delightful," added James, "and I trust that Maria will soon regain her accustomed strength. My poor father's state of health was very trying for a long season, and her attention to him was most assiduous. From these attentions it has now pleased God to discharge her."

James now entered into some particulars relative to his father's behaviour in his last illness, in which Henry expressed a lively interest; and soon afterwards they returned towards home.

In the course of another week Henry again visited Mr. Oakley's parsonage; and before his friends had completed their two months' residence at the sea-coast, his many visits to James had been frequently repeated. Upon these occasions he had many opportunities of observing Maria ac-

curately, and was now fully satisfied that a real and important change had taken place in her opinions, habits, and tastes: and he was astonished to find how much mind and intellect were now evident in all her remarks; and though she spoke much less than she had formerly done, yet she displayed more good sense in a single remark here than could have been gleaned from two hours' discourse while at Reading. She was now gentle, composed, and unaffectedly good-humoured. Lately she had been pert, flippant, and affected, and manifested in all she said and did that she was occupied only with herself; there was now a genuine seriousness in her whole manner when speaking of religious subjects, which proved, not that she was anxious to appear religious, but that she felt the deep importance of religious truth. Yet, with all this, her wonted gaiety and liveliness of manner, though chastised and disciplined, were not wanting to embellish her other excellencies.

Henry Owen took his leave of his friends in Kent with a resolution, almost entirely formed, of communicating to his father his present sentiments respecting Maria. He was studying the law, and was generally resident with his parents.

It may be supposed that Maria was not now disposed to dislike Henry Owen, merely because he resembled James; and when listening to his conversation she was often astonished that she could once have preferred the language of vain and unmeaning flattery to his rational, lively, and intelligent discourse: yet she never permitted her thoughts to dwell upon his many excellencies, or upon the remembrance of any attention he might have paid her, till an alteration of circumstances required a change of duties.

Towards the close of the year of mourning he paid another visit to the parsonage, when he obtained permission from Mr. Oakley to make the offer of his hand to Maria.

Maria was not wholly unprepared for such a circumstance, yet she requested to be allowed a few days' consideration before she returned a decisive answer. She was not satisfied with receiving the full and entire consent of Mr. Oakley and James; she wrote to Mrs. Danvers, acquainting her with all that had passed, and adding, that if Mrs. Danvers's state of health made her childlike attentions necessary to her, she would enter into no

engagements inconsistent with her duty towards her, which she should ever feel to be that of a child to a mother.

Mrs. Danvers replied immediately to Maria, congratulating her upon her happy prospects; affectionately thanking her for her kind wishes and intentions towards herself; but assuring her, that she would never stand in the way of what she so much desired for her, a good establishment. That at present she herself was in good health, and that for some time to come herself and Mr. Danvers should spend all the seasons at Bath, which place had been very serviceable to her husband's complaints, and that these frequent changes were so advantageous to the spirits of both, that she stood in need of no further assistance than good old Wilson could supply.

During the delay occasioned by this application to Mrs. Danvers, Maria had made her present circumstances the subject of earnest prayer, and she was now satisfied that she was in the path of duty by accepting the proposal of Henry Owen.

Maria continued under the protection of her be-

loved uncle till every arrangement was completed for her marriage. Before that event took place, she was introduced to her future mother and her two daughters, persons calculated, by perseverance in religious habits, to be her guides and companions.

Mr. Oakley performed the ceremony, and James gave his sister to his highly valued friend with a feeling of the warmest thankfulness that such a companion and protector had been provided for her.

She soon afterwards took possession of a house, prepared for her, adjoining to that of her husband's parents, by whose means she was introduced into a society where she had as little to encounter of the dangers of the world as can be reasonably expected in any society.

Not long after this event, she received a letter of congratulation from Mrs. Danvers, informing her that she was now at Reading; requesting that Henry Owen and herself would pay her a visit, and that they would prevail upon James to join their party.

All parties felt it right to comply with this request.

Mr. and Mrs. Danvers received their young friends with much affection. Upon the first occasion that Maria found herself alone with Mrs. Danvers, she was beginning to enter into some retrospect of her last visit to Reading, and to express anew her sorrow for the trouble she then gave her; but Mrs. Danvers interrupted her, and taking her hand affectionately, replied, "Let us have nothing dismal now. You have done at last exactly what I wanted you to do. Only think of that sly old uncle of yours achieving the affair which I could not accomplish! Well, I believe, he is the best educator after all; yet I shall never be reconciled to his manner of setting about it.

Maria was desirous to introduce some account of the change that had taken place in her mind since they last met; but whether any little bird had, on this occasion, told any tales, or whatever else might be the cause, Mrs. Danvers seemed to be always on her guard, whether in the company of Maria, or in that of James and Henry, against the introduction of any thing like serious discourse.

It was the opinion of Mrs. Danvers that religion should be carried to a certain point, but to exceed that point was almost as bad, in her eyes, as being very wicked.

Mr. Danvers was in a very different state of mind from his wife. It was evident to those who had not lately seen him, that a very great change had taken place in his general feelings and habits. He had never been a proud or very worldly man, though always exceedingly dull and ignorant. He was more conscious of his increasing bodily infirmity than were those who lived with him, and he was fond of getting by himself and being very quiet. James would often steal away and converse with him in the library. He found him pleased with his attentions, and glad to listen to him; and though, through long habits of ignorance and increasing dulness of capacity, he did not understand much of what was said, yet he expressed such a true humility, and received so willingly the leading doctrines of Christianity, that James felt much hope respecting him.

Although Maria was not permitted to speak her mind to Mrs. Danvers, yet she found opportunities

of doing so to the maid. She had in *no* part of her life stood in awe of this person, and she determined not to do so now; and when the poor woman, as was often her custom, visited her room, and made a tender of her services, she would give her an account, as opportunities served, of many of her own thoughts and feelings, and especially of the dying language and behaviour of her beloved father.

Wilson was always ready to listen; and certainly there was such an improvement, obvious even to *her* eyes, in the whole conduct of Maria, as bore a favourable testimony to the superior excellency of her present principles.

Mrs. Danvers could not shut her eyes to these improvements, though she did not like to attribute the effect to the true cause. She more than once remarked, with a smile, "Who would have expected to see the wild, giddy Maria converted into such an excellent wife and sister? Really this Kentish or this Buckinghamshire air has worked wonders. We should never have brought all this about in Berkshire."

On taking leave of her young friends, Mrs.

Danvers promised, that, after her next journey to Bath, she would bring her husband to return their visit. But during that next residence at Bath Mr. Danvers's disorder grew rapidly upon him, and he died before his wife was by any means convinced of his hazardous state.

Mrs. Wilson afterwards reported that he often spoke of James Oakley in his last hours, and was heard to repeat to himself some texts and promises which it was supposed James had read to him, mixing with these earnest prayers for mercy.

No affectionate attention was wanting on this occasion from Maria to Mrs. Danvers: and not long afterwards Mrs. Danvers made her young friends a visit of some length.

For some years she continued to mix, as she had always done, in the gay society of the world, and there appeared no improvement in her religious views. She made a point, however, of paying an annual visit to Maria, and sometimes extended it to Mr. Oakley and James.

James, meanwhile, had married entirely to the

satisfaction of his uncle, as well as for his own real happiness; but he still continued to live in his uncle's parish, though not in his house: for as Mr. Oakley advanced in years he became daily more in need of assistance in the discharge of his ministerial duties, as well as of other filial attentions, which James was always ready to pay.

Mrs. Danvers continued to turn a deaf ear to every thing which her real friends might suggest for her benefit. Poor Wilson, on the contrary, always profited by a residence in Maria's family. She was sincerely attached to Maria, who, on her part, was very sedulous to repair, in the best way she could, the trouble she had given her in former days. She gave her many valuable books, and conversed freely with her on religious subjects. Maria's prayers were unceasingly poured out for Mrs. Danvers.

About eight years after her husband's death, this lady was attacked with a painful and lingering disease. For some months she endeavoured to forget all her uneasy sensations at the card-table; but sufferings increasing upon her, Maria and Henry prevailed upon her to take lodgings near

them, and to place herself under the care of London physicians. Their view in doing so was from other motives than mere regard to bodily health.

She was now removed from her little coterie of intimate friends, who would play at cards with her even in her bed-room; and the visits of Maria and her mother-in-law became doubly welcome. For some time she would not permit any religious conversation to be introduced in her presence, and would even repel, with an acrimony unusual to her, any effort for this purpose.

It happened that about this time Maria received a visit from her venerable uncle, Mr. Oakley, upon which occasion she described to him the present state of her former protectress. In reply, he observed, that it was probable she was now aware that her earthly props were sinking: that she felt religion to be the only real one, but dared not admit the truth lest it should lead to consequences she feared to encounter.

At Maria's earnest request the good old gentleman consented to prolong his visit, and during this period he often called upon Mrs. Danvers

alone; and it is believed that he then spoke his mind very largely to her—that he declared to her the whole counsel of God, and earnestly and affectionately entreated her to fly to the Saviour of sinners while the day of grace lasted.

He remained with Maria nearly a month, and at the end of this time it was hoped that some change was taking place in the mind of the poor sufferer. It was the most unequivocal proof of this change that, towards the close of her illness, she lamented to Maria the worldly education which she had given her, and expressed her thankfulness that Providence had removed her from under her care at a crisis so important in her life. But still there were seasons when the world seemed to retain all its former power over her mind, when she manifested great irritability of temper, and a distressing indifference to religious conversation.

The week before her death she expressed so earnest a desire to see Mr. Oakley, that he was accordingly sent for, and he did not leave London till after her funeral. For several days, Maria rarely moved from her bedside.

Her death could by no means be called peaceful, but it was not without hope, because she manifested a deep sense of sin, with a reliance, (at times indeed darkened with very distressing doubts,) upon a Saviour's merits."

Mr. Oakley lived to a venerable old age, and died, as he had lived, in the peace, and hope, and joy of the true Christian.

On his death, James removed to a living, situated to his taste, in one of the sweetest and most secluded parts of the same county where he had so long resided. His living, indeed, was but small, but as, in addition to his own little patrimony, he was the heir of his uncle, he wanted for nothing which was requisite to the comfort of a plain country clergyman.

James and Maria, with their respective families, continue to live in habits of the tenderest affection, and spend as much time together as their active employments will admit. James receives benefit from the society which surrounds Maria, and she in return enjoys the stillness of the little woody valley where her brother's office as

shepherd of his Master's sheep has been allotted him.

They have both learned, from the experience of their very opposite educations, the most important lessons with respect to the instruction of their own children. In the cultivation of these immortal plants they are not contented with lopping off the exuberant branches, but they give their attention to the root from whence the branches spring, and add, to the diligent use of every outward means, continued earnest prayer that the heavenly Husbandman will dig about the tender seedlings and water them with the refreshing dew of his Spirit. The trees of his planting are like the trees which grow by the river of the water of life, each of them bringing forth fruit in his season: while the plants of nature can bring forth nothing good, and are fit only to be plucked up by the root, and cast out and burned.

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