

THE CHINESE AND THEIR DUCKS.



# CONVERSATIONS

OF A

## FATHER

WITH

## HIS CHILDREN.

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The works of God above, below,  
Within us, and around,  
Are pages in that book to show,  
How God himself is found.—KEBLE.

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### VOLUME THE FIRST.

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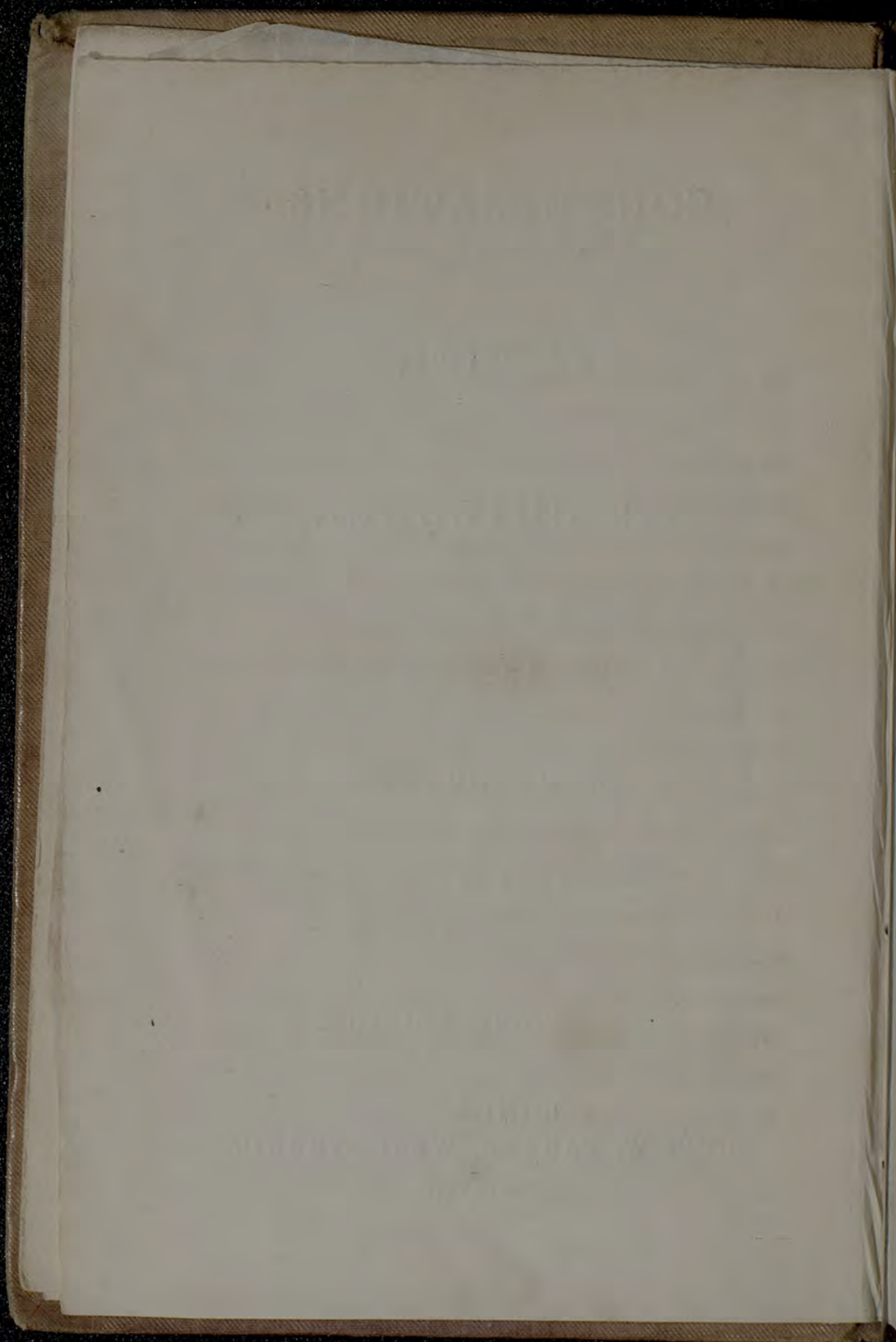
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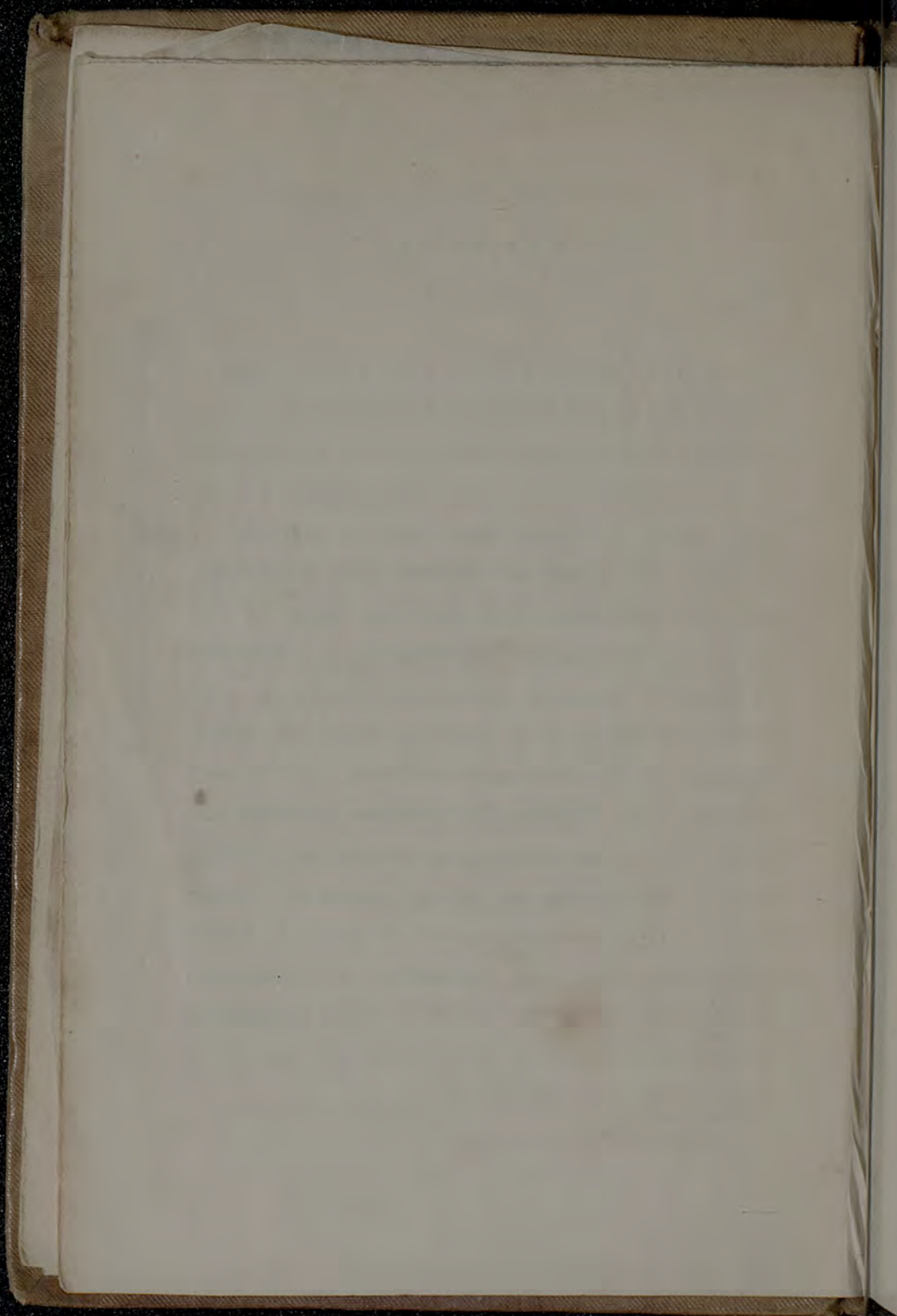


## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THESE Conversations were first written with a view to the gratification and improvement of the Author's own children. They are now published with the sincere desire that the perusal of them may afford to others also, whether parents or children, somewhat of pleasure and advantage. The principles here inculcated are those of the Religion of the Gospel. The little Work is intended to promote cheerful and fervent piety, a contented, obedient, and grateful frame of mind, feelings of affection and kindness towards our friends, and of active benevolence towards all. The habit, too, of deriving instruction and delight from contemplating the varied scenes of nature, and the ordinary occurrences of life, it is hoped may, at the same time, be instilled and cherished; whilst the maxim, the spirit of which the Author trusts will be found to breathe through the whole, is, BE GOOD AND BE HAPPY.







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# CONVERSATIONS.

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## CONVERSATION I.

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### NEW YEAR'S DAY.

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Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet  
With charm of earliest birds : pleasant the sun,  
When first on this delightful land he sheds  
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,  
Glistening with dew.—MILTON.

---

*Papa.* A HAPPY New Year to you, my boy ;  
where are your brother and sister ?

*Henry.* Mary is in her room, and Charles is  
still looking at the rising sun. He says it is so  
very beautiful, he does not like to leave it. He  
will be here, and Mary too, very soon. But why  
did you say, ' A happy New year,' papa ? Will  
you tell me ?

*P.* I should have thought you had remem-  
bered me saying so a year ago, and earlier. Do  
you not know that this is New Year's Day ?  
On the return of such days, it is usual among us



to wish each other health and happiness, and a very good custom it is. I hope, Henry, you will be before me in doing so another year. Do you remember any other time, when I have wished you, or Mary, or Charles, many happy returns of the day?

*H.* Oh yes, papa,—I remember, you do so on our birth-days. But why is this called New Year's Day?

*P.* It is the day on which we begin to reckon another year. Tell me, Henry, how old are you, and your brother and sister?

*H.* I was seven last November, Charles was ten in June, and Mary was eleven in March. We often talk of our birth-days, and so I remember them very well.

*P.* What were you in November, did you say?

*H.* I was seven years old, papa.

*P.* Well then, my child, seven New Year's days have passed over your head since you were born, and one will arrive just at the same time every year, as long as you live. What month is this Henry?

*H.* I think it is December. I remember you said yesterday it was a fine December's day.



*P.* Very true! But you are wrong, notwithstanding. Yesterday was the last day of December, and the last day, too, of the old year: to-day is the first day of January, and the first day of the New Year. But here comes Charles! and Mary too! A happy New Year to you both, my loves! Charles, Henry tells me that you have been watching the sun rising: What report have you to make upon it, my man?

*Charles.* Oh, papa! It was very beautiful indeed. I watched a long time before he began to peep over the hill; but it was very pretty all the while. The sky grew every moment brighter and brighter, till at last I saw a little streak of the sun, looking just like a blazing fire through those tall trees at the very top of the wood, and it grew larger and larger, and rose higher and higher, till at last it mounted quite above the trees, and was all round like the moon. I could look at it all the while without my eyes being dazzled. I cannot do that in the middle of the day. Will you tell me the difference, papa?

*P.* I scarcely think you can quite understand the exact reason now. It is enough for you at



present to be aware of the fact, that the heat and the light of the sun both grow stronger from its first rising at least till mid-day. But Charles, I wish to ask you a question. Do you remember one morning last summer, when I called you up on purpose to see the sun rise?

C. Oh yes, papa, that I do; I remember it very well. It was so early! And I felt so sleepy long before bed-time; and you told me I was drowsy only, because I was not used to rise so soon, like old David and his grandchildren, who were just going to work as we passed their cottage.

P. Well my boy—tell me, did the sun rise at the same time then, and over the top of the wood just where it rose to-day?

C. Oh no, papa! I know it was a great deal earlier; it was only about four o'clock. We could not see it from my bed-room, as I could this morning. We went into the grounds to watch it. And the sun rose then a great way off from the top of the wood, just over the old beech-tree, where you told the carpenter to put a seat for us to rest on when we go for a long walk.

P. On which side of the wood do you mean?



was it on your right, or your left hand, as you look at the wood?

C. Oh! It was a great way, indeed, on my left hand.

Mary had been studying a very pretty little book on Geography, and a very easy one too, and her papa, who always wished to bring their early lessons to bear on realities, and make them familiar by practice, said to her, Now, Mary, you must tell Charles and me, whether that was more to the North or more to the South, than the point where the sun rose to-day. You have very lately learned the points of the compass, and, I think, you understand them.

*Mary.* Indeed, papa, I like my Geography very much: it is not nearly so difficult as I expected: and it is very amusing. I think the point Charles describes, was more to the North than where the sun rose to day; because, if I am looking to the East, I know the North is to my left hand, and the South is to my right, and the West is behind my back: and we all know that the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. Charles, do you remember that pretty hymn?



When from the chambers of the east,  
His morning race begins ;  
He never tires, or stops to rest,  
But round the world he shines.

C. Yes, Mary, I remember that hymn very well, and do you remember another quite as pretty ? I think it prettier.

How fine has the day been ! How bright was the sun !  
How lovely and joyful the course that he ran ;  
Though he rose in a mist when his course he began,  
And there follow'd some droppings of rain.  
But now the fair traveller is come to the west,  
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best,  
He paints the sky gay, as he sinks to his rest,  
And foretels a bright rising again.

P. Thank you, my children ! It is a real pleasure to teach scholars who make such good use of what they learn. Some people seem to read only to forget, and never enliven either their own thoughts or their conversation with what they have read. You will find, as you grow older, how very pleasant and useful it is, to bring what you learn to bear upon the subject before you. In your little way, now, it was delightful to me to hear you quote from those pretty poems of Dr. Watts. But Mary, the sun does not



always rise exactly in the east you know. Charles has told us that already; otherwise, he would not in the summer rise over the old beech-tree, and in the winter, over the top of the hill. The east is between those two points. But I think we will not go further into the reasons of this now. You will know more about it when you are older.

Mary was so pleased with the subject, that she would not willingly let her papa leave it, and said to him in a very pretty way, "But papa, does not the sun always set in the west? Will you tell me?"

*P.* Not exactly. But let us ask Charles. My boy, did you see him set last night?

*C.* Yes, papa. It was just before we were called to tea. The day seemed so short, I could not help thinking of Cowper's words. Do you remember you told me once to learn the passage by heart: "Hurrying him impatient of his stay, down to the rosy west?" The sky was quite rosy last evening.

*P.* Well quoted Charles. But did you mark the point where he sank down?

*C.* Yes. I observed it was just over the old barn upon the knoll.



*P.* Now, Mary, do you remember last summer, the very day when we got up so early to see him rise, and your brother was so tired and sleepy, that we wished him good night, and let him go to bed, I took you to the top of the grounds to see the sun set?

*M.* Oh! I remember it very well. I think I shall never forget it. But he set then a long way off to the right of Charles's old barn; and I now know that to be more to the north. And so I suppose the west is just between those two points. I think I understand that now. But what a beautiful sight that was, papa! I was quite sorry that the boys were not with us. We were just in time, and we watched him sink gradually lower and lower, till we lost a part of him, and then half, and at last, he vanished entirely. But after he was gone, the sky was so clear and bright, and every thing looked so sweet and lovely, that I could scarcely come away. How well I remember your asking me to repeat that pretty hymn, which Charles repeated part of just now; and you explained it all to me as we went along. I remember, we walked very slowly, papa. And you told me the words were full of comfort



and consolation, such as nothing but the Gospel of our Saviour could bring to those who had lost their dear friends. Do you remember, papa?

*P.* I remember it well, my love. Such reflections are not soon forgotten. I should much like to hear you repeat the last verse now.

*M.* Just such is the Christian. His course he begins  
Like the sun in a mist, when he mourns for his sins,  
And melts into tears; then he breaks out and shines,  
And travels his heavenly way.  
But when he comes nearer to finish his race,  
Like a fine setting sun, he looks richer in grace;  
And gives a sure hope, at the end of his days,  
Of rising in brighter array.

*P.* Well, my dear, I should never be tired of that verse, were you to repeat it every day for a month. It is, indeed, a very sweet consolation, to feel assured that when a friend sinks on the bed of death, with his hope full of immortality, we shall only lose him for a time. We are then able to look onward from the moment of our loss, to the hour when we shall be united to our dear friend again, never to sorrow, never to be parted more. But this comfort can be conveyed only by the Gospel. All the learning of the



world never did, nor ever could assure us of a life to come. You will, I trust, my children, know and feel this comfort, if ever our Father in heaven shall try you by such a severe blow as the loss of your dearest friend. But, remember, whilst you pray to God for the consolations of His Holy Spirit, that you never fail to thank Him from the heart, for that blessed hope of everlasting life, which He has given us in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.



SUNRISE.



## CONVERSATION II.

## BREAD MAKING.

How often have I loiter'd o'er the green,  
 Where humble happiness endear'd each scene;  
 How often have I paused on every charm,  
 The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm;  
 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
 The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill.—GOLDSMITH.

“WELL, Mary,” said her father, one morning at breakfast, “how did your young pupil receive your lecture on bread-making yesterday? I dare say he is quite at home in it, and knows all about it as well as you or I. What say you Henry? Come! Speak for yourself.”

*Henry.* I don't know where to begin, papa. Will you tell me?

*P.* Your sister will put you some questions: that will be the best way to begin. Come Mary; it will be a good exercise for you; and it will be a great pleasure to me, if you and your brother acquit yourselves well. It is often quite as trying a task to put questions properly, as to answer them. Mind you put them very plainly.



*Mary.* Well then, Henry, can you tell me where that nice loaf of bread came from?

*H.* Yes: William brought it from the pantry, just before the servants came to prayers.

*M.* Very well. Now tell me how it got into the pantry?

*H.* Cook made it and baked it: and she put it into the pantry. I saw a great many loaves there yesterday, just taken from the oven.

*M.* So far right; but did she tell you how she made it, and of what?

*H.* I saw her make it myself. Papa wished me to go, on purpose to see her. Did you not, papa?

*P.* So I did, my boy. Do you think it was because I intend you to be a baker, like Mr. Flourman in the village? or why?

*H.* No, I do not think that: I think it was because you always wish us to know every thing. Was it not papa?

*P.* No, my child, not quite so. I cannot wish you to know every thing, because many things can never be known by any one, much less by such little people as you. But I wish you to become acquainted with all of what is good and



useful, that your young minds can learn. So tell us, Henry, of what did Cook make her bread?

*H.* She made it of flour, which she took from a large sack; the very same I saw the man in a white jacket and white hat bring on the little horse a few days ago. She first mixed it up with water in a trough, and put in something like thick dirty cream, which they call yeast, to make it work and rise, as she said. Afterwards, she worked it about with her hands, which she called kneading it, and then when the oven was quite hot, she cut the dough into loaves, and put them into the oven, and shut them up close; and then, after a long time, William called me again to see her take them out; and she put them on the shelf in the pantry. Is that all right?

*P.* Very well told, indeed, my boy. We have had enough about bread-making for the present; but I hope Mary will explain to you, from her very pretty little book on chemistry, what that yeast or barm is, which you said was like dirty cream; and what is the meaning of fermentation, or working and rising, as Cook called it. And Mary, be sure to explain what is meant in the Bible by unleavened bread; and if you cannot find it out yourself, ask me. But pray, Henry,



can you tell me where the man in the white coat and hat brought the flour from? We must trace it further than the little horse's back.

*M.* Oh, papa! I think you must allow Charles or me to answer that question. I did not explain it to my brother.

*H.* No, Mary, I know you did not; but I heard the man say he brought it from the mill, and Cook called him Miller. So I can answer the question myself.

*P.* Well, Henry; but can you tell me what a mill is, and what the miller had done to the flour?

*H.* I do not know that, papa; but the miller told Cook it was Farmer Careful's corn that grew in the large castle-field.

*P.* Oh! You are jumping, my master. We must trace it through the mill first, if you please, or we shall lose a link of our chain. Mary, my child, you must enlighten us on this point. I remember once showing you the great wheel of the mill down at the brook.

*M.* Oh, yes, papa. What a pretty mill that is! I remember it was a very hot day last summer, and the water, as it dashed from the wheel, looked so white and cool; it was quite refreshing: and the wheel turned round and round,



splashing the water about so very prettily ; and the ivy grew over the old wall, and was so green, and hung down in such large thick masses ; and the vine covered the whole end of the miller's house, and the miller's son was standing upon a ladder pruning the vine, as you told me. I thought it a great pity to cut off such fine large leaves, and I was afraid he would fall into the water ; but you said, he was quite old enough and able to take care of himself ; and was not hurting the vine, only making room for the sun to ripen the grapes ; and the ducks and geese were swimming so prettily and gaily on the pond, and appeared to enjoy themselves so much. Do you remember, papa ?

*P.* Indeed, Mary, you are almost drawing a picture. You are quite correct, however ; for it is a pretty mill, though not at all prettier than many I could show you in these parts. In other countries you may travel many a long mile without seeing one water-mill.

*C.* Oh, papa, I wonder how they get their corn ground !

*P.* They use wind-mills in many parts. You have seen the picture of a wind-mill. The wind turns the wheel round, just as the water does here.



And those mills grind the corn quite as well, only they are not pretty objects like ours. In this country, full of "valleys, which run among the hills," and wind about, and convey streams of clear fresh water always flowing through channels clothed with wood, and shrubs, and grass, and wild-flowers, to their very brink, many a water-mill is found; sometimes two or three on the same streamlet vary the landscape; and they are as pretty to look at as they are useful in their work. Painters often prefer a water-mill to almost any other object: and I hope, some time or other, to have from your pencil, my Mary, a very pretty drawing of the mill you have just painted so nicely in words. But you must now tell us the use of the mill, since you have not taught it Henry.

*M.* Oh, papa! You must help me then, indeed. I know little more than that the miller goes to Farmer Careful's for the corn, and grinds it into flour, and brings the flour, with some bran, to our house. I hope you will explain to us what the miller does: and as for the bran, if I am not mistaken, my young scholar can give us some account of it when it is brought home, as well as the flour.

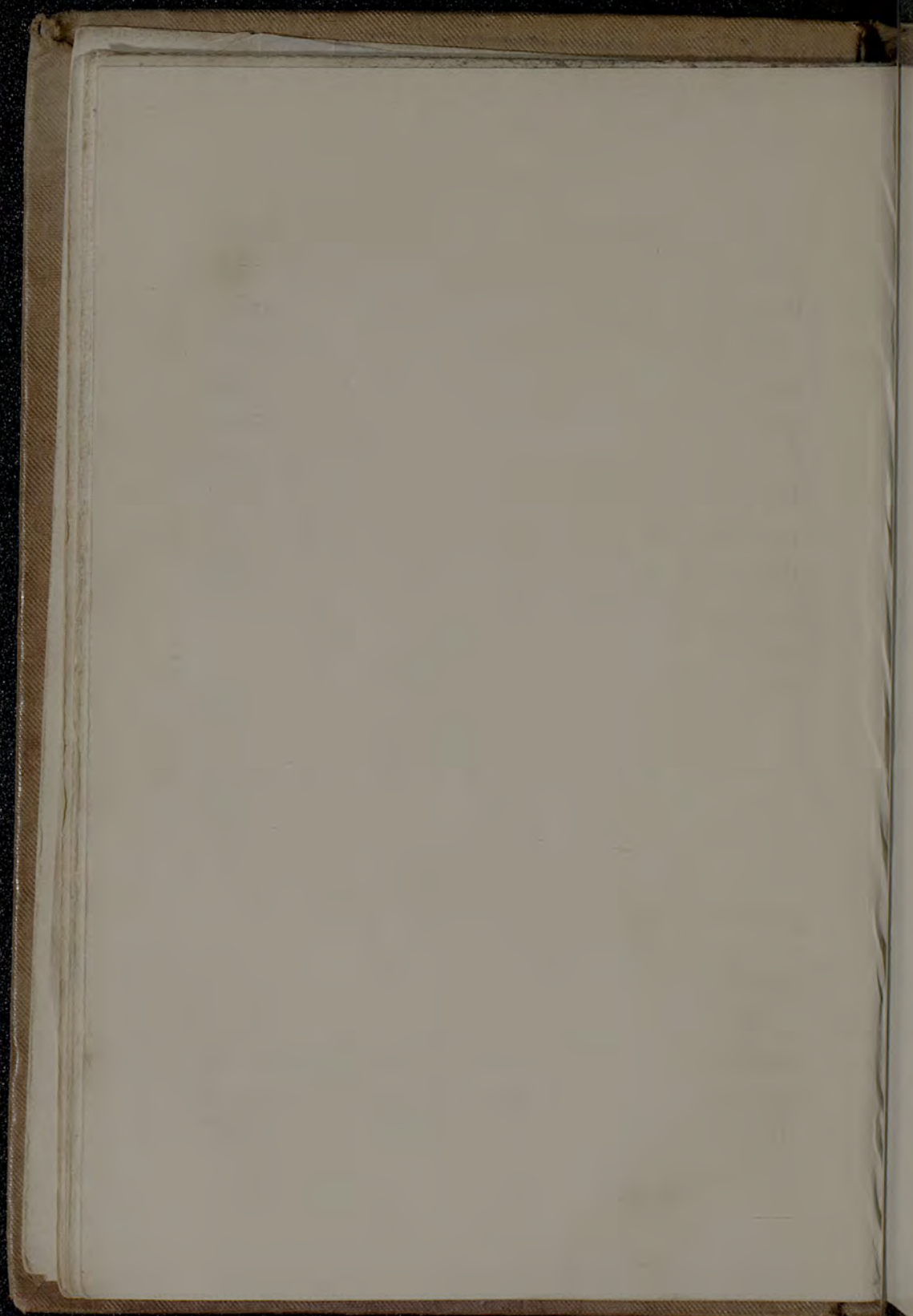
*H.* That I can. Cook always gives me some





THE MILL IN SUMMER.







fresh bran for my rabbits. The little things seem to enjoy it just as much as we do that nice new bread; though I do not exactly know what bran is.

*P.* Well! I suppose papa must take up the tale. The miller fetches the corn, when it is quite clean, from the farmer's granary, and puts it into a wooden frame like a box, called the hopper, from which it trickles very gently and gradually down a little channel, till it drops through a hole, and falls between two large heavy round stones, one of which is turned rapidly round by means of the wheel, and grinds the corn against the other, breaking the coat or shell of the grains, and bruising the flour and setting it free. This is then parted from the bran by a machine called a bolter, and is caught in a bag, and is then fit for baking. Now Henry, I think, can tell us what is the bran he begs of Cook for his little bunnies.

*H.* I think it is what you call the shell or coat of the wheat.

*P.* Right, my boy! And now let Charles tell us how the corn came into Farmer Careful's granary, for we have traced Henry's nice loaf of bread no further yet.



“Oh, papa,” replied Charles, “I think I ought to know that ; I saw them throw a rick of wheat into the barn just before Christmas. There was such a quantity of rats and mice, some old ones and some quite little ones. The men, and boys, and dogs, and cats, seemed all to try who could kill most, as the poor things tumbled off the rick. Farmer Careful complained sadly that he should be ruined by these vermin as he called them, and said they ate more than all his children together. At last the men had thrown every sheaf into the barn, and next day I saw old David threshing it with a great stick, which he called a flail. He told me all about it very kindly. As he beat the wheat, the corn came out of the straw ; but when he threw the straw out at the door with his pitchfork, and swept the corn to one side of the floor with a besom, there was a great quantity of chaff with it, which he said was good only for horses and cows, and must be separated from the grain. So he called his grandson Jonas, who was hedging just by, to come and help him. They fixed a winnowing-fan in the middle of the floor, which Jonas turned round and round as fast as he could, making such a wind with the flaps, whilst old David put the wheat and chaff



into a sieve, and poured out both gently before the fan. The wind carried off the chaff to the door, and the wheat fell down on the floor, and looked so clean and nice. And then they carried it to the granary, where there was already a great heap. But David told me they make it all run down a wooden frame, over some wires which let all the little bad grains fall between them, whilst the good full grains roll down to the bottom. He said the bad *unkind* grains, as he called them, were given to chickens, and ducks, and geese, and the good were sent to market, and to the mill to make our bread. Is not this all right, papa?"

P. Quite right, my child. I must now leave you. Next time Mary will tell us how the wheat, straw and all, came into the rick. You would wish, I am sure, to trace the process all the way, rather than stop short in the middle. And then perhaps I may tell you something more about it.

"Oh yes, papa," exclaimed all three at once, "we should like that very much indeed."

"Meanwhile (continued their father), what has been already described recalls some of the most awful similitudes of Scripture, drawn from the threshing-floor. You are going, I think, to remind us of one, Mary!"



*M.* I was thinking of the first Psalm, papa, "As for the ungodly, it is not so with them ; but they are like the chaff which the wind scattereth."

*P.* Very well, my love. You will find a still more awful one drawn out at length in the third chapter of St. Matthew, beginning with, "Whose fan is in his hand." But how beautiful a comparison is made in that first Psalm between a faithful servant of God, and some fair tree planted by the water-side bringing forth its fruit in due season, "Whose leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper."



REAPING.



CONVERSATION III.

---

GROWTH OF CORN.

---

Shot up from broad, rank blades that droop below,  
The nodding wheat-ear forms a graceful bow ;  
With milky kernels starting full, weighed down,  
Ere yet the sun hath tinged its head with brown.—BLOOMFIELD.

---

*Papa.* COME, my dears, I shall be glad to take a walk with you this morning; the air is clear and bracing, and though it is sharp and cold to those who stand still, we can keep ourselves warm enough by walking. Shall we go to the mill to day; your pretty mill, Mary, and see whether you know your old acquaintance in its winter's dress?

*Mary.* Oh yes, papa, I shall be so glad to walk with you. Will it be grinding corn to day? We may then see what you explained to us.

*P.* No: I rather think the frost is too hard, and has frozen the water, and stopped the wheel from turning round. However, we shall soon see.



*Charles.* Papa, if frost stops the mill, is not a wind-mill better? There is no water to freeze.

*P.* Very true; but both have their turns. Sometimes there is a calm and stillness for many days together, and the wind is scarcely able to make the leaves move, much less turn the sails of the mill. And the wind-mill stands as motionless as if the wheel were frozen. But then, in the summer sometimes, after a long continuance of dry weather, the brook has too scanty a supply of water to turn the wheel. So they cannot boast much one over the other. But let us start. Charles, bring Ranger and Phillis with you; they will enjoy the walk as much as ourselves: and I am sure my children will always try to give pleasure to every person, though it be a poor beggar; and to every creature, whether it be a dog, or a horse, or Henry's little rabbits.

*C.* I wish, papa, to hear what you promised to tell us about mills and corn. Will you talk about them whilst we are walking?

*P.* Yes, my boy, but unless I forget, your sister was to trace up the corn from Farmer Careful's rick, where you left us, all the way to what point, Charles, do you think?



*C.* To the harvest, papa.

*P.* Oh yes, beyond that. What do you say, Mary?

*M.* I think you mean to the ploughing and sowing. Do you, papa?

*P.* Just so. And if you prefer it, you may begin with the ploughing, and trace it downwards.

*M.* I should like that best. I remember it was in the autumn before last, Farmer Careful and his men were ploughing the Castle Field. It was very fine weather, and we walked there with Nurse every day. I used to love to see the yokes of oxen drawing the plough; they looked so steady and patient. After the men had done ploughing we saw them scatter the seeds all over the ground: and then they harrowed it, just as the gardener rakes over where he has sown the flower-seeds. And it quickly sprang up, and the red field was soon all one green. And then the snow covered it for a long time in the winter; and I thought it would kill the young plants, but the farmer told us it was a blanket to keep them warm from the cutting wind. And certainly, after the snow was all melted, the wheat



seemed more green, and fresh, and strong, than ever. When spring came on we saw the women weeding it; for we watched it very constantly, papa; and it grew higher and higher, till it came into ear. I remember one day you showed us the blossom. And then at last, when it was all like a yellow golden field, the reapers came one morning and cut it down. They began so early that they had reaped a great deal before we were up. The sheaves looked very pretty; and then Farmer Careful came with his wagons, and carried it to the barn till that was full to the roof; and of the rest he made the same rick which Charles tells us the rats and mice thought they had a right to share with the farmer. Have I traced it quite down, papa, as you wished?

*P.* You have indeed, my love; I hardly think the farmer could have told the story better: but there is one train of thought which you have omitted. Can you guess, Mary, what I mean?

*M.* Oh yes, papa! I think I know. I spoke only of the farmer, and omitted to tell you who made the corn to grow. You have often spoken to me on that subject; and I quite love to talk of God, and his goodness. I know He made



us all and gave us the ground to plough, and the seed to sow, and our hands to work with, and our understanding to guide them; and He sent his sun and rain to make the grain spring, and strike root, and grow, and ripen. All we have is from his kindness.

*H.* I know, papa, God is very good to us, we could not live without food; and we could not have it unless he gave it us. And you have often told us we ought to be good also to all his creatures. Did not God make the rats and mice, papa, as well as ourselves?

“Surely, my dear,” said his papa, wondering why he put the question; “and what then?”

*H.* Was it not very cruel in Farmer Careful and his men and boys to kill all the poor mice and rats they could catch in the rick? They could not live you know, papa, without food, and they cannot sow and reap for themselves like men.

*P.* Indeed, my dear boy, you have put the hardest question I have heard to day. However, I think I can answer it. God most certainly made rats and mice as well as boys and girls, and intended them to live on what grows on the



earth. But you must remember, Henry, that God gave the animals to man for his use, and he gave men authority and power to preserve their own lives; and if we did not keep under the vermin we should be overrun with them, and they would devour all our food. Just as if our forefathers had not killed the wolves, with which England abounded in old times, they would have mastered the inhabitants, who were, therefore, justified in killing them. But I hope the boys killed the poor things outright at once, without torturing them, as some cruel children, and (more shame, because they ought to know better,) as some grown-up people too often do. I think the farmer had a right to destroy them in self-defence; but then our right to do so gives us no right to put any thing to pain and torture, if we can avoid it. A man or a child of good feeling would never torment a worm or a fly.

*M.* Oh, papa, yonder is the mill! How very much it is altered since the summer. The leaves have fallen off the vine, and left the end of the house naked; and the water is all frozen, and the wheel is fixed as fast as if the blacksmith had bound it with iron; and the icicles are dropping



from the walls and from the wheel so long and clear: how very different! There is one thing quite the same, I wonder why. Will you tell me, papa?

*P.* You must first tell me, my girl, what excites your wonder. I see many things the same, the wall of the house, the windows and doors, and the pavement in the court are much as they were in the summer.

*M.* Oh yes, papa, but I mean the ivy which covers the old wall. It hangs down in clusters, with the leaves just as green and as fresh as they were in June, and such fine bunches of berries!

*P.* Well observed, my dear! Ivy is an ever-green. Not like the oak, and elm, and ash, and most other trees which shed their leaves in autumn, the ivy keeps on its summer-clothing all the winter. I dare say your little scholar can tell us of other trees that do the same. Come, Henry!

*H.* Yes, papa, I know there is the holly with which Cook dresses her kitchen at Christmas, and the yew in the churchyard, and the laurel in the shady walk.



*P.* Very well. There are a great many more; so many, that in various parts of the kingdom gentlemen have planted winter-gardens all of evergreens, and when brought together there is found to be a very great variety; and if planted with judgment and good taste, they are very pretty.

At this moment, "Papa, papa!" cried Charles, who was a few paces in advance, and near the brink of the pond, "What is that? There! there! there! One, two, three, four."

"What is it, my boy?" said his papa, and came to the place where Charles was. "Oh, I perceive now. Keep still, we shall see them play; they are swimming at the head of the pond, where the water is not frozen over. They are—"

Before he could tell Charles what they were, a shout from Henry, who saw a squirrel run up a tree close by, disturbed the flock; and they flew away over the wood, in great haste, to the amusement of all the party.

"What are those birds, papa?" asked Mary; "they look like ducks. Are they the same we saw sailing on the pond in the summer?"

*P.* No, Mary. These are ducks, but they are



wild ducks. Your summer friends belonged to the miller; and most of them, I dare say, have been carried to market. These birds are no person's property. They come down from colder climates, especially in hard winters; though some breed in this country. Wild geese never breed in England, I believe; and we seldom see them in these enclosed and wooded parts. Wild swans are still more rare. On some occasions, however, they make their appearance, even in the most southern parts of England. I remember a very pretty description of them, by my friend, Mr. T. C., of Brighton; which I will read to you, when we have leisure. I should be very glad to show you a flock of wild geese, where we could have an opportunity of watching them. They are very amusing and interesting in their flight: marshalling themselves, like a regiment of soldiers; sometimes cutting the air in the shape of a wedge; at other times, sailing like a long line of battle-ships. Charles, do you know of any other of these migratory birds?

C. What is migratory, papa? Will you tell me?



*P.* Migratory means changing their place of abode; going from one country to another.

*C.* Oh, then, I do know of some. I know swallows go from this country to another, towards the autumn.

“Indeed!” replied his papa. “You speak very positively, my man! on a point, about which older and wiser heads than yours have entertained many doubts. However, we will talk of them another time. If swallows migrate at all, they go into some warmer climates, when they perceive that winter is coming here. But can you recollect any other birds, which pay us a visit in winter, and make up for the loss of such as leave us then? There are many such.”

“No, papa,” replied Charles; “Will you tell us of some?”

*P.* The woodcock is one—which is a solitary bird, and is usually found near springs of water, in woods and retired valleys. Fieldfares, too, are foreigners; and come over in large flocks for shelter, when the severe cold drives them from their own country, and their native home. But we must hasten, I see, for shelter to our home, if we would not be caught in a snow-storm. I



see it coming over the hill, full gallop. Come along, my dears, put your best foot foremost. I think Farmer Careful's wheat yonder, is likely to have a thick blanket to keep it warm to-night.

The party soon reached the house, and after they had taken off their walking dress, her papa requested Mary to read Thomson's description of a snow-storm. Mary always felt it a duty, and made her duty a pleasure, to comply with her father's wishes on all occasions. And whilst she read these lines very prettily, her brothers, with their papa, listened with great attention, though Henry did not understand it all as well as he did the account of the little Robin Red-breast hopping about the room; and his papa was obliged to explain many of the lines and expressions to him afterwards.

The keener tempests rise : . . . . .  
And the sky saddens with the gather'd storm.  
Through the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,  
At first thin wavering ; till at last the flakes  
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day  
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields  
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.  
'Tis brightness all ; save where the new snow melts



Along the mazy current. Low the woods  
Bow their hoar head ; and, ere the languid Sun  
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,  
Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,  
Is one wide dazzling waste, that buries wide  
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox  
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands  
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of Heaven,  
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around  
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon  
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,  
The red-breast, sacred to the household-gods,  
Wisely regardful of th' embroiling sky,  
In joyless fields, and thorny thickets, leaves  
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man  
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first  
Against the window beats ; then, brisk, alights  
On the warm hearth ; then, hopping o'er the floor,  
Eyes all the smiling family askance,  
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is :  
Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs  
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds  
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,  
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset  
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,  
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,  
Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind  
Eye the bleak Heaven, and next the glistening Earth,  
With looks of dumb despair ; then, sad-dispersed,  
Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow.  
Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind ;  
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens



With food at will; lodge them below the storm,  
And watch them strict: for from the bellowing east,  
In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing  
Sweeps up the burthen of whole wintry plains  
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,  
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,  
The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urg'd,  
The valley to a shining mountain swells,  
Tipt with a wreath high-curling in the sky.

"Thank you, love," said her papa. "I think, the poet himself would not have been inclined to quarrel much with your reading of that passage. We will stop now; though, the next scene he describes, is very beautiful and affecting. You remember it, Mary?"

*M.* Oh, yes, papa, you mean, I think, the poor countryman who is overtaken and covered by a terrible snow-storm. Indeed, sometimes, I can scarcely read it without crying. His poor wife expects him every moment, and has made a blazing fire to welcome him; and all his dry, warm clothes at the fire; and his poor dear little children, peeping out every now and then, to see whether he is coming; and then crying, because their father does not return. I cannot help thinking, how we should cry, and how helpless



we three children should be, if God was to take you from us, papa, as he did the poor shepherd from his family.

*P.* My dearest girl, come and kiss me. We are in God's hands. He is very good and merciful; and if we are good, and love him, we shall be safe in his keeping, come what may. We ought to be very thankful to Him, for all his blessings. A grateful heart always becomes us, and pleases Him.



PLOUGHING.



## CONVERSATION IV.

## A SNOWY DAY.

Tomorrow brings a change, a total change.  
 Fast falls a fleecy shower; the downy flakes,  
 Descending, and with never-ceasing laps,  
 Softly alighting upon all below,  
 Assimilate all objects—Earth receives  
 Gladly the thickening mantle, and the green  
 And tender blade, that feared the chilling blast  
 Escapes unhurt beneath so warm a veil.—COWPER.

WHEN our young friends rose next morning, the ground was entirely covered with snow; and it continued to fall very thick, and in large flakes.

“There will be no going out to-day,” said their papa; “but you know how to amuse yourselves within doors.”

“Oh, yes, papa,” said Mary, “we shall not be at any great loss, especially, if you will help us a little.”

“Very well, my dears,” said their papa, “first, let us take care to have our morning business well done, and I dare say, we shall find something to talk about afterwards.”

Mary then went to her room, to study her



French lesson ; Charles took his Latin in hand : and little Henry sat down to his copy. They were very regular in their hours of study, and when they had done, they were sure to find a welcome in their papa's room. He delighted in making himself a cheerful companion and agreeable friend to his children, as well as being their monitor and teacher. The lessons were all learned with great care, on the day we were just speaking of, though the learners could not help, now and then, looking out of the window at the snow, as it continued to fall.

As soon as the morning's business was over, they hastened to their papa's room, and began to put questions to him much faster than he could answer them.

"One at a time, little people, if you please," said he, "we shall have plenty of time ; and I really cannot answer all at once. What does my youngest of all say ?"

*H.* Oh, papa ! I am so afraid this snow has covered all the poor sheep. They were in the meadow yesterday, just opposite my bed-room window, and I cannot see one to-day. Poor things ! I'm afraid they are buried in the snow.



*P.* No, my boy. I dare say, Farmer Careful has got them all safe in his fold, and has given them a good breakfast of hay before now. He would be a very poor farmer, if he did not take care of his sheep at such seasons as this. But, as Mary read to us from Thomson yesterday, a sudden and heavy fall of snow, drifted by a boisterous wind, has been often known to cover whole flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, and men, women, and children, and to bury them in one night. But this is seldom the case in our country.

*C.* Papa, I asked Mary to tell me the difference between snow and hail, and she could not. Will you, papa?

*P.* Why, Charles! you have put a difficult question. I believe snow and hail are nearly the same thing, in different forms. When the air is so cold, as to freeze the little drops of rain, as soon as they are formed in the clouds, they become snow. Hail consists of solid pieces of ice, formed from large drops of rain, driven together by the wind before they are frozen; or, as some suppose, afterwards. Sometimes the hailstones come down so large and heavy, as to



break the glass in windows, destroy the fruit, cut down whole fields of corn, kill birds, and do all sorts of damage. One thing you will observe: we never have snow in the summer; but hailstorms are more frequent in hot weather than in cold! Can you see any reason for this, Mary?

*M.* Indeed, papa, I cannot; but I never thought of it before.

*P.* Well, without entering very deeply into the subject, what say you to this? If snow is formed in the clouds in the summer (as I think it very likely is), being so very thin and small, it would melt long before it reached the ground. But hail, being so large and thick, reaches the earth before the heat can melt it; just as if you take a bit of that snow towards the fire, Henry, it will become water in a second: but if you bring a piece of ice, it will be ten times longer before it is melted.

*M.* I dare say, papa, that is the reason.

*C.* I think, papa, you have been in countries where snow remains all the year round. Will you tell us about it?

*H.* I should not like to live there, papa; I could not have my pretty garden, or go for a



walk; and, I am sure, I shall be tired in a very short time, if the snow lasts here.

*P.* Yes, Henry, I dare say you would soon be tired. But, I think, you would be pleased to see those fine large dogs, of which there is so pretty an account in the *Saturday Magazine*. I remember you read it to me, Mary.

*M.* Oh, yes, papa; I quite love those dogs. Poor things, they are very good to search for the poor travellers in the snow.

*P.* Indeed, Mary, I do not think you are wrong in calling the dogs good and kind; for they seem to take such a pleasure in saving the poor travellers. But, perhaps, you ought rather to call the monks good and kind, who pass so many years among the snows, on purpose to do good, and who train the dogs to help them. Do you remember where it is, Mary?

*M.* It is the convent of St. Bernard, I think, papa—among the Alps.

*P.* Yes, my love; It is quite delightful to see how contented and cheerful those good men are, and how kind to strangers. If ever any of you go there, look for papa's name. You will find it in July, 18—.



*C.* Oh, papa, do you think we shall ever go? I should so like to see the dogs! Will you take us next summer, papa?

*P.* No, my boy: I do not think you will go there so soon as that; but when I was a little boy of your age, it did not seem so probable that I should ever go there, as it is now that you may, some time or other, visit those parts; and, if ever you do go, I trust our good Father and Friend will protect you from all the dangers of snows, and avalanches, and every other evil. And, whether you stay at home, or travel abroad by sea or land, I hope you will think of what I have often told you, and will never omit to put yourself under the protection of God, by thanking him for having so long preserved you, and praying to him to be ever your guard and guide. It used to be said, "Prayers and provender never hinder a journey;" and a very true proverb it is, as you will find by experience.

*H.* Papa, I always love to hear you talk about God's goodness; but I am afraid you will not be pleased if I do not ask you the meaning of two words you have just used.



*P.* That's a dear boy;—you know papa had rather be interrupted twenty times, than either of you should omit to inquire into what you do not understand. But what were the two words: I guess the one was “avalanches;”—what was the other, Henry?

*H.* “Provender,” papa.

*M.* Oh, Henry! I should have thought you would have known that yourself, without asking papa. Do you not remember in the Bible, in the history of Joseph and his brethren, which we read together before Christmas, one of them opened the sack, which was full of corn, and it is said he did so to give his ass provender. Provender means food.

*H.* Thank you, Mary. I remember it very well: it is such a pretty story! So the proverb says, that prayers and food never hinder a journey. I do not quite understand that, papa. If we stop to dine on the road, it hinders us an hour.

*P.* Very true, my dear; but, if you do not stop to rest the horses, and refresh them with food and water, it would not only be very cruel, but you would stand the chance of their being jaded and knocked up in the middle of a stage;



and that would cause a much longer delay than the hour of dinner.

*M.* I understand that very well, papa. But, although I know we ought to pray to God, and bless him, I cannot help thinking the time we spend in prayer, when we are on a long journey, must detain us; the horses might travel over a great deal of ground.

*P.* Well, my love, it is always right to rest upon the highest motive; and we ought always to do our duty, and take pleasure in it, merely because it is our duty, without looking to any present advantage beyond. But still, who knows, whether the prayers which a Christian family had offered to God in the morning, may not have preserved them from dangers, which otherwise might have been suffered to overtake them. An overturn of the carriage, and a broken limb, or a bruised body, would hinder a journey a hundred times longer than our prayers occupied. But, what is much more, if any accident befall one who has previously put himself at God's disposal, even should the accident be fatal, he is sure of God's favour and blessing: even if an avalanche were to bury a sincere Christian, Charles, it would be no real



evil, for his Saviour would take care of his soul, and bless him for ever. And now, Henry, I must tell you what an avalanche is. In such places as those where our favourites, the St. Bernard dogs are kept, often in winter a large body of snow will slide down the steep hill, and cover a road, and all who are travelling along it, or a house, or a flock of sheep, in a moment. Sometimes the mass of snow will be as large as a church ; sometimes as great as one of our hills. And whether you are walking upon the snow that is loosened and rushes down, or are at the bottom of the hill, the danger is equally terrible. A friend of mine was ascending Mont Blanc, some years ago, with some other tourists and guides, when the snow under them rushed down without a moment's warning, and buried three of the poor guides, though all the travellers were saved. At a place called Andermatt, there was a wood of pines planted on the side of the mountain, just above the town, to stop the snow in its fall, which had been preserved and cherished with the greatest care for many ages ; but, when I was there, I saw only very young trees just planted : for the French, in the dreadful struggle



in that district, in 1799, cut down the wood, to the great distress of the inhabitants, who felt as though their chief protection was taken away. It was very cruel in the French to do so. But I have not heard whether the poor people have at all suffered any mischief in consequence. Yes! My dear children, we have many blessings in this land, which other countries have not; and are free from many dangers to which other people are exposed. We ought, indeed, to be more thankful to our great Benefactor than we are.

Henry, I think, seems almost tired of our long conversation; but, my boy, I must tell you a true story, which, I think, you will understand, and not be tired of. A poor woman, in Somersetshire, had been to Market, and was returning home very unwell. She went to a cottage, and asked the people to let her sit by the fire all night:—I cannot think how they could be so illnatured,—but they refused her: and she went out and tried to go towards home; but she was too weak, and laid herself down under a hedge: it snowed all the time very hard. A man, meanwhile, came by, and said, “Mistress, why do you lie there to perish of cold. Get up, and



try to walk homewards, it is not so far." The poor woman got up and tried to follow him, but she was too weak; and again threw herself down under the hedge. I am afraid this man did not give her all the help in his power, as he ought to have done. The snow fell very thick and fast, and she was soon covered all over with it. The man said nothing about it, for fear of being blamed, or getting into trouble, if she was dead: he certainly ought to have told her friends directly. At last her neighbours went out to search for her with sticks, and, after some time, a man heard her voice, crying out "Don't kill me." And there they found the poor woman, who had lain in the snow at least seven days. She lived, and did well afterwards. There is another story of a poor woman, who, I'm afraid, was tipsy, and who lay buried in the snow nine days, and was taken out alive.

*H.* Papa, what naughty people they were at the cottage to turn a poor sick woman out in such a cold night! And what a naughty man that was not to help her on, or send some neighbours to her!

*P.* Indeed, Henry, I am afraid, they were



not kind-hearted people. And I hope my dear children will always try to assist persons in distress. Most of us have an opportunity of doing a kind act some time or other ; and it is our duty, and we should make it our pleasure, to do good. A person who is actively employed in doing good, on right motives, is always among the happiest people in the world.



THE DOG OF ST. BERNARD'S MONASTERY.



## CONVERSATION V.

## FEBRUARY.—THE SNOW GIANT.

Let us leave him here awhile  
 Certain that he will not stray :  
 See ! the sun, with beaming smile,  
 Bids us warm ourselves at play.

Ah ! its beams do something more,  
 And the work, so late our boast,  
 Seems to melt at every pore—  
 Even now its form is lost.—ELLIOTT.

THE snow was very deep, and remained on the ground many weeks that year, far longer than enough to tire little Henry or others older and more patient than he, had it confined them to the house all the time. But such was by no means the case with our young friends; the roads were beaten by passengers, and their papa very often took his children for a walk, which they always much enjoyed. The wind had drifted the snow very much, so that whilst some open places were almost bare, in others it was many feet deep; and had assumed various shapes and forms; which, with a little aid of the fancy, our young travellers called make-believe houses, and churches, and alcoves, and all sorts of build-



ings, and caves, and mountains, and festoons of vines, and whatever else their little imaginations invented.

One great heap Mary called Mont Blanc, another Mount St. Bernard; and then Henry would tell Phillis and Ranger, which generally accompanied them, to go search out the poor travellers in the snow. In all this papa was as much a child as any of them; he never allowed them to go alone, for fear of accidents, but always either joined the little party himself, or sent his trusty man William, who was a very good substitute, always taking care of his charge, but always amusing and pleasing them, and joining in their little sports.

One day their papa told Charles to bring him Bewick's Birds, and found the vignette which gives a lively and humorous description of boys and girls making a giant of snow.

"Oh, papa," said Charles, "will you let us make one, it is so very pretty. I think we could make one, papa."

This was the very pleasure his papa meant to give them when he sent Charles for the book. "We will try then," said he. "Call William, my boy, and put on your strong shoes, and we



will lose no time; for I rather expect a thaw soon; and then our sport would probably be spoiled till next winter."

"What is a thaw, papa?" said little Henry, as soon as he returned ready equipped for their enterprise.

"It is when the weather becomes warm enough to melt the snow, my boy."

"Oh," replied Henry, "I shall be sorry when the thaw comes, papa; we shall lose Mont Blanc, and St. Bernard, and St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Giant's Cave, and all those pretty things."

*P.* But will you not be glad to visit your little garden again; I dare say you will find some snow-drops looking very pretty? And will you not be glad to see the poor sheep, for whose safety you were so much afraid, enjoying themselves again in the green meadows?

"Oh yes," replied Henry. "But come, papa, William is ready, and he says he is willing too, and likes the thought very much, and Charles has got a spade in his hand. Come, Mary, we shall have such fun."

Poor Mary had caught a little cold, and at breakfast-time it had been voted prudent for her to keep house all day, and nurse it. Her papa



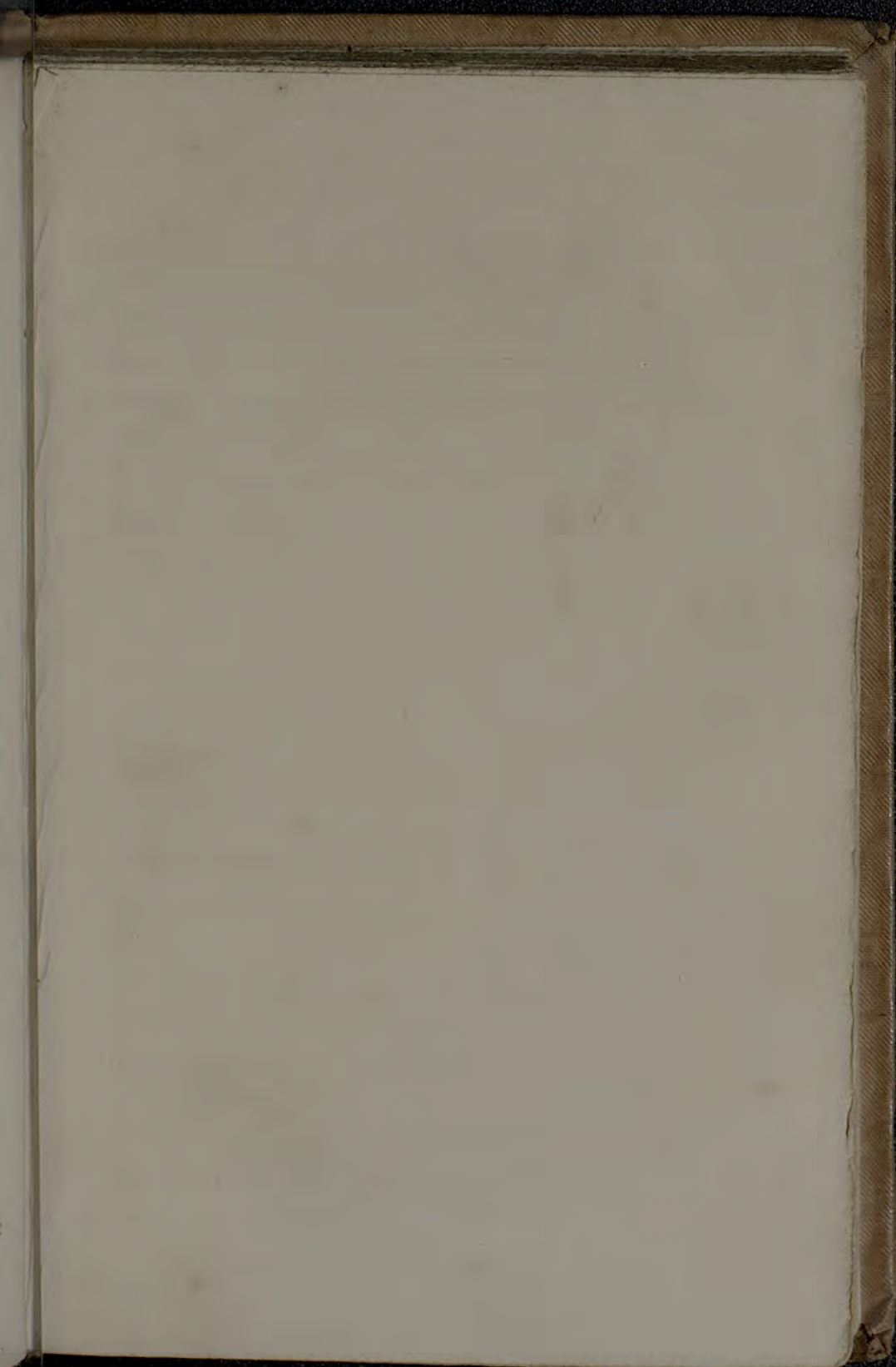
saw a slight look of disappointment on her face, and felt almost sorry that he had proposed the little plan for which all the rest were now ready. Mary was a very sweet-tempered girl; and even had her father offered to put off the sport till she was able to join in it, she would, on no account, have consented. She was not a selfish child, and was always, in her little way, trying to give pleasure to others and make them happy. She was, therefore, as much beloved as she was amiable; and every one—papa, brothers, servants, and all friends, took delight in being kind and attentive to her.

“Cheer up, Mary,” said her papa. “I should have been better pleased, if you had been able to join the party. But it is now better otherwise. We will, however, be workmen for you, and will build our giant in the lawn just before the window, where you may see all our operations.”

*M.* Thank you, dear papa, I shall watch you very closely, and enjoy the fun, though I could have wished to join you with my hands as well as my eyes.

The work went on very well, though Charles and Henry could do nothing but (what bricklayers’ boys do in a real building) bring the









THE SNOW GIANT.



mortar and bricks. They brought the snow; and papa and William built up the man, as high as they could reach: and then, when they found he had grown too tall for them, William was speedily despatched to get a pair of steps to enable them to reach his head. They placed two great pieces of cinder for his eyes, and put a pipe in his mouth, and they capped him with an old black hat.

As soon as their labours were over, the boys hastened to their sister, overjoyed with their morning's feat.

"Well, Mary," said Henry, "Is he not a very fine man; have we not worked well?"

"Yes, my masters," said she, "but I think Charles, you ought not to have disgraced your hero by such an old hat as that. You should have bound his brow with laurel. I quite wonder at your want of taste."

"Ah, my dear girl," said Charles, "if you had been with us —. But I hope, Mary, you enjoyed the work as it was going on."

"Very much indeed, Charles," said she; "I hope my cold will be soon gone, and then I shall be still more pleased to go out with you myself."



“ Well, Mary,” said her papa, “ I hope you like our performance ! We have just finished it in time ; for I think a thaw is coming. What say you to our giant ? ”

*M.* I think it looks like a grim monster, papa, enough to frighten one.

*P.* It does, my love. And whilst we were making it, I could not help thinking of those horrible monsters which the poor heathen make for their gods—large giants with many hands, each armed with an instrument of torture ; faces which appear full of fury and cruelty ; and many feet, seemingly swift only to shed blood. Oh, my dear loves ! How thankful ought we to be that we dwell in a land where the true light shines. The God whom we serve is full of power, but full also of love and kindness ; He delights to do good to his creatures, and to make them happy. Nothing is too great for his power to control ; no being is too small for his care and goodness to reach. He is our King and Governor, we must fear to offend him ; and we must obey Him with cheerfulness. He is our Father and great benefactor, we must love him, and be thankful to him, and trust in him. And if we



love Him, who so loved us as to give his beloved Son to die for us, and to be our Saviour; we shall show our gratitude and love to Him, by loving our fellow-creatures, and doing good to all as far as we are able, for his sake. It is no merit of our own; it is of God's mercy, that we are not now worshippers of idols. Can we do less than give up ourselves to his service, not as making any worthy return for such blessings; but as showing our gratitude to the one only God, our Father and Friend, our Saviour and Redeemer, our Sanctifier and Comforter!



OLD DAVID'S COTTAGE.



CONVERSATION VI.

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THE THAW.

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When from the hills the torrents, swift and strong,  
Deluge whole fields, and sweep the trees along,  
Thro' ruin'd moles the rushing flood resounds,  
O'erwhelms the bridge and bursts the lofty bounds ;  
While clouds descend in sluicy sheets of rain,  
And all the labours of mankind are vain.—POPE.

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THEIR papa was quite right in his expectations of a thaw. When Charles got up in the morning, he ran to the window to see the snow-giant, and there it was safe and upright, as they left it. But the snow was melting about the house, and it began to rain; and before he got down to the breakfast-room, he saw clearly, that there was no going out that day. The thaw was very sudden, and the rain poured hard; and at last, as they were all three looking at the giant, they saw his hat drop off, and his pipe fall from his mouth; and then his head rolled down, and was smashed all to pieces.

“Poor giant!” said Charles, “your life has been very short indeed.”



“How very glad I am,” said Mary, “that you did not put your work off another day, to wait for my cold to be gone.”

About mid-day, so rapid had been the thaw, the grass of the meadows began to make a show; the garden was almost cleared of its white covering, and Farmer Careful’s wheat had thrown off its warm blanket, and looked quite green and fresh.

“Oh, papa!” cried Henry, as he ran into the Library, “only look at the brook, it is quite full, and the little meadow is covered with water: and William says the flood is all over the road.”

“I expected it would be so,” said his papa, “the frost had made the ground so hard, and the thaw is so sudden, that the melted snow runs into the brook, as it would off the tiles into the spout. I fear, to-morrow, we shall have a great flood in the river; I shall be very sorry, because it will do much damage to many people; but it will be a very grand sight, and if it is a fine day, we will go to the top of the Castle Field to see it.”

Next day, the river, which is a very celebrated one, though we need not tell its name, came down in its full strength. Many mountains of Wales pour all their torrents into it; and it



is swollen by many a tributary stream, before it reaches the part where our three little friends were ready to witness it. The Castle Field rose very suddenly in one of its corners, from the bank of the river; and from the top of it they had a commanding view of the whole country, through which the river winds its way; and at the same time, they were near enough to see plainly whatever might be borne down by the flood.

“Oh!” cried Henry, “there is a very large piece of timber coming down—and such a quantity of sticks—but, what is that, papa, that shines so in the sun?”

*P.* That is a large piece of ice. The frost was so long and hard, that the river was frozen over, and now the flood is bringing it down; see, there is another much larger piece. But what comes here? Do you see, Mary?

“It is a barge, papa,” said Mary, “but I see no men in it: what can it be!”

“I dare say,” said her papa, “she is broken from her moorings. How very fast the river is rising! I fear it will reach poor old Nanny’s cottage. Come, my children, let us return home that way, and invite the poor old creature to come







is swollen by some extraordinary showers, before it reaches the point where our three little friends were ready to set out. The Castle Field rose very suddenly to one of its wonted, from the bank of the river; and from the top of it they had a commanding view of the whole country, through which the river winds its way; and at the same time, they were near enough to see plainly whatever might be borne down by the flood.

"Oh!" cried Henry, "there is a very large piece of timber coming down—and such a quantity of sticks—but, what is that, papa, that shines so in the sun?"

P. That is a large piece of ice. The frost was so long and hard, that the river was frozen over, and now the frost is melting, so that we see, there is a great piece of ice coming down. But what is that? Do you not see, Mary?

"Is it a large, papa," said Mary, "and what can it be?"

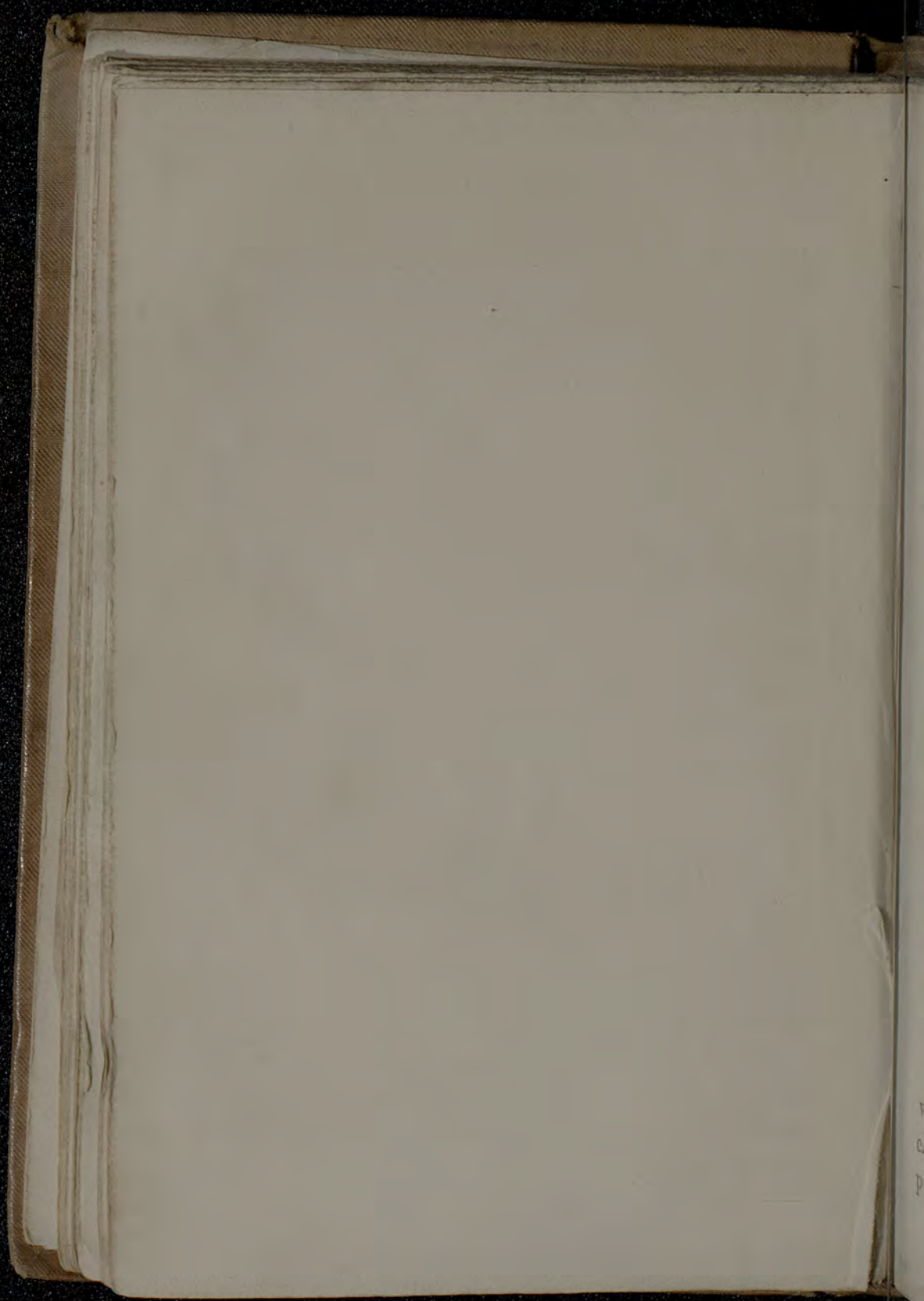
"It is a large," said her papa, "she is broken into two pieces. How very fast the river is flowing! I fear it will reach poor old Nanny's cottage before we can get home, my children, let us return home at once, and write the poor old creature to come."





THE FLOOD. OLD NANNY LEAVING HER COTTAGE.







up to our house, should the flood threaten to invade her little domain. I see it has crept to the corner of her garden already."

The party soon reached the cottage, and found old Nanny in sad trouble and fear. Her little cottage was the picture of neatness; and she was, on the whole, a very contented old body; but she was almost fretting at the idea of having her house flooded, and scarcely knew what she was doing.

"Come, Charles," said his papa, "return to the house, and call William, and tell him to bring old David with him, to carry poor Nanny's furniture up stairs. And you shall come, and take up your lodging with us, Nanny."

The poor old woman was very much pleased, and thanking the gentleman twenty times, said with a smile, "But we are too many, sir."

"Too many! Nanny; why I thought you lived alone."

"Oh, bless your honour," replied the dame; "there is my poor pig, and my cat. I must not run away, and leave them."

"You shall not leave them, Nanny; the men will drive the pig, when you have put your chairs and tables safe; and you may bring pussey, yourself."



The old woman was quite delighted with this arrangement, and so were our three young friends. Meanwhile, the water rose so rapidly, that the poor creature had just time to lock her door, and be off, when the cottage was surrounded. As they walked home, Mary observed to her papa, how very rapidly the flood rose, and that she had never seen such a flood before.

*P.* No, my dear child, in this favoured country we very seldom experience any of those violent visitations, which often, in others, carry desolation with them. But you may remember reading of a very dreadful flood in Scotland, a few years ago, which swept off whole flocks of sheep, and ricks, and houses, and carried away many human beings too. I forget the particulars; but it was told with very great feeling by an eye-witness at the time.—I well remember, in the July of the same summer, in which I saw the dogs of St. Bernard (and it was just at the time when I was there,) a most melancholy event happened in another part of Switzerland. During the winter before, a large barrier of ice had been formed across the valley, about twenty-four miles above a town called Martigny. This bank blocked up the river, and made a very



large lake above it. Just as when Charles and Henry stop up the brook in the summer, with stones and sods, to form a make-believe flood. But this was no make-believe; but a very large real lake. The inhabitants down the valley were aware of the danger; for the barrier of ice was discovered by some shepherds early in the spring; and they employed men at the risk of their lives, to cut, what they called a gallery, through the ice, and let the water off by degrees. They had got rid of one-third in this way; but what remained, was still a very great lake; and all on a sudden, when the fears of the people had abated, and their caution was slumbering, the barrier burst, and the water rushed down with dreadful violence, sweeping every thing before it; nothing could resist it. Numbers of cattle and sheep, and men, women, and children, perished in the flood. At a place called Burgh, eighty houses were swept clean away; and a few people there saved themselves in the church-tower. I saw some rocks as large as old Nanny's cottage, which were rolled down for a great distance. When I passed through the valley, which was before fertile and beauti-



ful, only a few weeks after, it was one unmixed scene of desolation; and in many places, the ground was covered ten or twenty feet high with house-timber, and trees torn up by the roots; and every other sign and relic of destruction. It was all the work of half-an-hour; and so dreadfully rapid was the flood, that it rushed down the twenty-four miles to Martigny, in an hour and a quarter; though it had before been calculated, that at least five hours' warning would be given. The tremendous roar, however, gave most people time to escape. I remember walking with a poor man up a hill which commanded this valley; poor fellow! he had lost his little store of cows, and his poor dear children too, in the flood; and as he turned round to look on the spot where his cottage once stood, he said very calmly, and without a murmur, "When I look upon my loss, I am troubled."

"Poor man," said Mary, "I hope God comforted him in his sorrow, papa!"

*P.* Indeed, my love, I thought I could perceive in his eye, marks of a resigned and pious spirit, and one that was ready to say in the words of his Saviour, "Not my will, Father, but thine be



done:" and if that were so, no doubt he felt the comfort within him, which God alone can give.

We are in great danger, my dears, of forgetting what we owe to God's providence, when we have been long free from trouble; and we ought always, when we hear of other persons suffering, to be very thankful to HIM, who alone preserves us. And whilst we are in health and safety, we should always pray to Him to be at hand, to help us in all dangers and troubles, whenever they might come. And never should we omit to pray also, that our good Father would succour, "help, and comfort all" our poor fellow-creatures, who may be in perils and afflictions, when we are free from them.

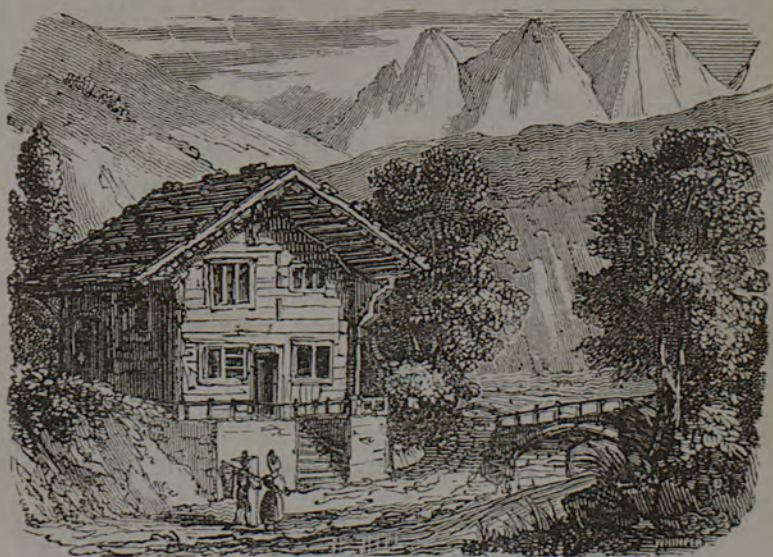
"Papa," said little Henry, "I am afraid, I cannot do that; it is not in my prayer."

"Well, my dear boy," replied his papa, "we can easily make up for that omission. Young Christians should begin with short prayers, and add to them, from time to time, as they feel their wants, or grow in knowledge. Suppose, Henry, you only add just now, 'God bless, and help all in trouble and danger.' So for the present, my dear children, good bye."

Our three young friends took charge of old



Nanny and her live stock, and made them all very comfortable. And although they were glad when the flood was gone, they felt a little sorry when the old woman's return to her cottage put an end to this little pleasing addition to their daily business. They did not, however, break off all intercourse with the objects of their care. Henry often begged a little phial full of milk as a treat for poor puss, and Charles as often took a few peas for master piggy, as they called Nanny's other treasure, whilst Mary seldom passed the Cottage without carrying in her little basket something or other for the good old woman herself.



SWISS MOUNTAIN SCENE.



## CONVERSATION VII.

## BIRDS AND THEIR NESTS.

The Partridge loves the fruitful fells,  
 The Plover loves the mountains,  
 The Woodcock haunts the lonely dells,  
 The soaring Her'n—the fountains.  
 Thro' lofty groves the Cushtat roves,  
 The path of man to shun it;  
 The hazel-bush o'er hangs the Thrush,  
 The spreading thorn, the Linnet.—BURNS.

ONE morning in March, little Henry ran in to his papa, exclaiming, “Oh, papa, we have found such a pretty bird’s nest in the shady walk; it is not quite finished, we saw the little bird carrying a piece of moss from the lawn, and we looked where she went, and so we found the nest. May I not bring it into the house, papa? I should like it very much; but Mary says I must not, and Charles says so too. I should like it, papa. Why will they not let me?”

“Mary and Charles are quite right, my boy,” said his papa, “I should have been very sorry if you had disturbed the poor little couple. Suppose I was building a house for you all,



and just as I had got it ready, how should we like a parcel of people to pull it down and carry off the materials for their amusement."

*H.* I should not like that at all, papa, but I never thought it was the same thing. At old Nanny's cottage there are two or three long strings of birds'-eggs, that look so very pretty: some white, and some blue, and some green, and some spotted; all sorts of eggs. Her grandson Robert brought them to her last year. I should so like to have a string of them in my nursery. May I, papa? Nanny said he should bring me some, if you would let him.

Mary and Charles came into the room just as Henry was describing the old woman's strings of eggs, and before his papa could answer Henry, Mary said,

"Oh, papa, I hope you will not let the boy bring any eggs here. I had rather give Henry one of my best toys. I think old Nanny's Robert is a very cruel boy. I heard him tell his grandmother how the poor birds cried all round him when he was taking their nests, and he seemed to be quite pleased in relating their trouble."



*Charles.* I am sure, papa, Henry is a very kind-hearted boy, and would not give pain to any thing if he knew it. And when he knows better he will agree with Mary and me. I remember the time when I wished very much to join in bird's-nesting with Robert, but I would not go now on any account. I once saw him take a poor wren's nest close to the shrubbery, and the little thing cried so pitifully, I felt quite sorry for her; and Robert only laughed.

Henry would not allow his papa to answer, but almost crying, interrupted him as he was going to speak. "Indeed, papa, I do not wish it at all now, I am sure. I never thought of doing any harm to the poor little birds, only the eggs looked so pretty in Nanny's cottage; but I would not have them now, on any account, if Robert were to offer me all the best he has; and I am sure we will let the little birds build their nest in the shady walk, without disturbing them."

*Papa.* I am very glad to hear you say so, my boy. Bird's-nesting is a much more cruel sport than most young people consider it to be. Indeed they do not seem to reflect on the cruelty



at all. Besides, I scarcely ever knew a boy fond of that amusement who would not rather be idle all day than work or learn, or who would not rather lounge about than go to church on a Sunday, or who would not be ready for any other cruel sport besides robbing the helpless birds of their little homes, and their eggs, or young ones.

But Charles, continued their papa, what little birds are they that are building in the shady walk, whose nest Henry desired to take. Do you know?

*C.* I thought, papa, it was a Robin Redbreast's at first, but I did not see the bird distinctly. Perhaps it is a Goldfinch's: I shall be very glad of that, for we shall see their pretty plumage, such beautiful yellow feathers, and hear their sweet song in the summer.

*P.* What say you, Mary? but first tell me how it is built? on the ground, or upon a spray, or where?

*M.* It is built on the fork of a hawthorn, papa, and I thought it looked like a Skylark.

*P.* Oh, Mary! you and Charles have a great deal to learn about birds. Without seeing either the nest or the builder, I can tell you it is



neither a Redbreast, nor a Skylark. Come, let us go and see what it is. Come, Henry, my man! we will not disturb your little friends, as I am sure you will now consider them; we can watch them, without hurting them, or spoiling their nest, or frightening them at all from their work.

At this moment, it began to rain hard, and since it seemed to be set in for the day, all thoughts of determining the question by visiting the nest were laid aside; and Henry having ventured his opinion, that the bird was a Swallow, Mary begged her papa to tell them how he could know it was not a Skylark; and Charles was equally desirous of learning why his first guess was so wrong, and why it could not be a Robin.

"My dear children," said their papa, "I am no great Naturalist myself, and I shall be sorry if you will not know a great deal more about the matter before you are grown up, than ever I did. It is a very pleasing and a very improving study. It conveys knowledge of a most instructive kind, whilst it affords constant innocent and delightful amusement: and in a religious pious mind, it is always lifting up our thoughts to the good-



ness and wisdom of HIM who made us all. I have often thought, that a person who is not only a good Naturalist, but also a good Christian, lives one of the most enjoyable lives we can spend on earth."

"But papa," said Charles, "will you tell me what is a Naturalist? I don't exactly know: though I think I can nearly guess."

*P.* We call a Naturalist, one who delights to examine plants, and all sorts of creatures, birds, and beasts, and fishes, and all the other works of nature, or rather the works of God in nature; to learn all about their habits, and food, and their young ones, where they live, and how they differ from each other; and where they agree—in short, all about them.

*M.* Oh, then, papa, a Naturalist would be able to tell us all about the nests of birds; and I so much wish to know how you could tell that Charles and I were both wrong, without seeing either the birds or their nests.

*P.* I can tell you that, without being much of a Naturalist. You say the nest in the shady walk is being built on the branch of a tree. Now, as to Charles's Robin Redbreasts, I believe



they always build in a little hollow on the side of a bank, or at the root of a tree, or sometimes in a hole of an old tree; but I think they never choose to build their houses on the sprays. But we will ask our friend, Mr. F., about that. Well, then again, as to your Skylark, Mary, she always builds on the ground; generally by the side of a stone or clod, to shelter her little home from the cold and wind—and (such is the discernment given to her by nature) almost always on the south, or sunny side. I should not be surprised, if it were the nest of a Goldfinch, except perhaps, it is too early for that little mason to begin his summer-house yet. And now, my little man, I think you can inform us why it is not a Swallow. Where have you ever seen Swallows' nests?

“Oh, yes!” replied Henry, “I can tell that. Swallows build against the wall of the house: I remember, now, watching them last summer.”

*P.* Well, my dear children, I shall be very glad, this spring, to talk with you again and again upon this subject. I dare say, we shall all learn more than we know at present. There is a very pretty little book, written by Mr. ———. We



will read that together. But I dare say, Mary and Charles, you can tell me from your own observations, before we read a word on the subject, the difference between a Partridge and a Rook, as to the place they select for their nest.

*M.* I know, papa, that Rooks build on high trees.

*C.* And I know, that the Partridge builds her nest on the ground; because, last summer, the harvestmen found a nest whilst they were cutting the clover, and all the little eggs were there; and they left some of the clover standing to protect them.

*H.* Pray, papa, tell me about those poor Partridges. I saw such pretty little things running along the ground last year. Do you remember, papa?

*P.* Yes, my boy, I remember very well: and do you remember my showing you the two old birds flying so low, just before us; so near, that we thought we could have struck them down with a stick.

*H.* I remember that, papa, and you said it was to save their young. Will you tell me how that was?



*P.* The love of their little ones, my boy, is very strong in other creatures, besides man; and many birds and beasts show a most wonderful instinct, in protecting their young. It is very striking in a Partridge. She is a poor, harmless, weak bird, unable to defend her little brood; and so, when she sees either a dog or a man, or any other enemy, as she supposes, coming, instead of attempting, as an Eagle or a Swan would do, to defend them, she will pretend to be wounded, and will run along the ground shivering with her wings, or will fly a little distance before, fluttering and crying, in the hope of drawing the man or dog away from her little helpless ones. So strong is her love for them, and her anxiety to protect them from their enemies, that she will expose herself to attacks, and to the risk of being killed herself. Often, when a Kite has been hovering over a covey of their young, the old ones will fly up at the bird of prey, screaming and fighting with all their might, to save their brood.

I remember once, on the top of a mountain on the Alps, a poor mother-bird lost her own life in her attempts to draw off two travellers from her



young ones. The tourists came suddenly upon the brood, and one of them picked up a stone, and struck the poor bird, and broke her wing. It was a very pretty Ptarmigan; her wings were half white and half brown. I know the gentleman was very sorry when he saw the poor thing unable to fly; but the guide carried it in great triumph through the town of Andermatt, the same place, Mary, above which I told you there had been a wood of firs, which were planted to check the avalanches, but which the French so unkindly cut down.

*H.* Indeed, papa, I am very sorry the gentleman struck the poor bird; I wonder what he did with it: I dare say, he was very sorry himself.

*P.* I can tell you, my boy, what was done with it; The two friends ate it for dinner. But Henry, I must tell you of another point in which this instinct, the love of their offspring, shows itself very strong, though it is before the little birds are hatched.

“Oh, papa!” interrupted Henry, “pray tell me, what is instinct? I did not know the word, but I thought I saw your meaning.”

*P.* Instinct, my child, is something which



God Almighty has given to other creatures to serve instead of reason, which he bestowed only on man. An animal is said to be guided by instinct, when it acts without experience and without instruction. Perhaps, this poor mother-bird had never seen a man before, so she could not have learned from the past, the curious trick she practised; and certainly she could not be instructed as children are. Now, Henry, do you know what instinct is?

*H.* I think I do now, papa.

*M.* I believe, papa, you have told me, that it is by instinct, that the lamb runs directly after its birth to suck the teat of the ewe. And that birds build their nests, and sit so long, and with so much patience, on their eggs.

*P.* Just so, my love. This is not the first time Henry's question has led us to some very pleasant conversation; and though I was going to tell him of another remarkable instance of it, in his favourite birds, the Partridges, I think he will wait patiently till we have said a few more words about instinct.

*H.* Oh, yes, papa, I am sure I shall listen to you myself, without being tired.



P. Well, children, Dr. Paley has written very clearly on the subject. His chapter is too long, and perhaps, in some points, too difficult for you at present, but I hope you will read his book called *Natural Theology* when you are grown up. It is full of most interesting and improving facts; and shows so clearly and strongly the goodness and wisdom of God, that it affords delight to Christians again and again, every time we read it.

Perhaps you do not know that if eggs are kept in a warm place, not too hot, but about the warmth of a bird's body, little birds will be hatched there just as if the eggs had been under the hen herself. Well! now suppose two Sparrows were so hatched in an oven, they would proceed, when they were grown up, just like other Sparrows, to build their nest when the time came; the eggs would be laid in it precisely in the same way, and the hen would begin to sit just at the same time; all would be exactly the same, as if they had been hatched under their mother. And when their little ones came from the eggs, they would give them their proper food, and breed them up just in the same manner



as other Sparrows. This is all instinct. It is what God himself teaches them; and it has nothing at all to do with reason, or experience. How could these Sparrows know when they ought to build their nest, or what was in their eggs, or how sitting upon them would bring little Sparrows out of them? How could the parent-bird tell that the warmth of her body would, in its proper time, bring a perfect living bird like herself, out of a round white ball, that looks more like a piece of chalk than a Sparrow?

Indeed, to show that it is not reason, a poor silly hen will sit upon pieces of chalk, or upon duck's-eggs, and fancy them her own eggs; and when the little ducks come out and go into the water, even that does not tell her they are not her own; but she will run along the edge of the pond, calling them most piteously, as if she was afraid her little chickens would be drowned. And the little things, all the while, instead of obeying her call, swim about and enjoy themselves just as much as if they had been hatched under the same mother-duck which produced the eggs. Now what could have told these ducklings to take to the water? Their mother (who is



perhaps the only bird they ever saw,) is terrified at the very sight of their wetting their feet. This is instinct. It is the lesson which God alone teaches.

“Thank you, papa,” said Henry, “I quite understand it now. But will you tell me about the Partridge?”

*P.* Oh, my boy, I have only one thing to tell you now. The poor bird clings so fast to her eggs, or to her little ones in her nest, that she will suffer a mower to come close up to them, and even cut them or herself through with the scythe before she will desert them, and take flight to save herself. No mother or father would press their dearest child to their bosom, to save it from the attack of man or beast, more closely and firmly than this poor bird will to the very last moment sit unmoved upon her eggs, or over her little helpless ones, in the hope of saving them from the destruction which she feels is approaching.

*C.* Poor things, I think their house is not nearly so safe a place as a rook's. Dogs can easily find them, and men or cattle may tread upon them; but Rooks are so high that they are out of the reach of such dangers.



*M.* Very true, Charles, but now do you not remember last year, when there was a very high wind during the night, old David told us next morning that the ground under the elms was all strewn with poor little dead rooks, that had been tumbled out of their nests by the violence of the storm. So they are not safe from all dangers, Charles.

*P.* Well, my children, so it is with birds, and so it is in the life of us, men, and women, and children. There is generally in every station, and rank, and age, a mixture of good and evil. The poor man often thinks the rich man free from all trouble, because he is not suffering under the evils which distress himself: and often a rich man who is afflicted with pain and sickness thinks that a poor healthy man has no cause to complain. But if each knew all the real evils of the other's condition, they would be both more contented with their own. And when any of us reflect on the numberless dangers which surround us, we ought to feel grateful to the good providence of God which has hitherto preserved us; and to pray to him daily for his fatherly kindness and care. But now, children, as it continues to rain

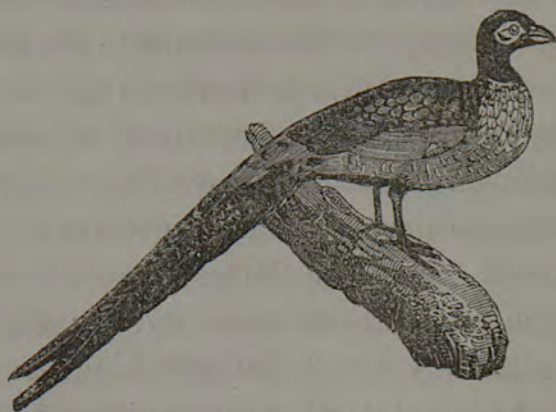


hard, and we cannot go out to day, you shall each choose a bird for us to talk about when we meet again in the afternoon. What shall yours be, Mary?

*M.* I think, papa, I should like to talk about an Ostrich. There is the picture of one in the little book you gave me some time ago.

*C.* I should wish you, papa, to tell us all about an Eagle. I remember there is one in the picture of St. John. I like a pheasant, too, very much.

*H.* I think I should like to hear you talk about a Swallow, papa. I remember what pretty little ones we saw peeping out of their nest last year, and chirping so nicely.



A PHEASANT.



## CONVERSATION VIII.

## THE WHISTLING SWAN.

I saw two Swans of goodly hue,  
 Come softly swimming down along the lea;  
 Two fairer birds I yet did never see,  
 So purely white they were,  
 That even the gentle stream the which them bare  
 Seem'd foul to them, and bade his billows spare  
 To wet their silken feathers, lest they might  
 Soil their fair plumes, with water not so fair,  
 And mar their beauties bright.—SPENSER.

IN the afternoon, the three children were quite glad to see it continue to rain; for though they were always pleased to go out and take a walk, yet they were so much bent on hearing what their papa had promised to tell them about the birds, that they much preferred being kept close prisoners in the house by the weather.

On their coming into the library their papa said, "Well, now for our feathery friends: shall we try our hand upon the Eagle first?"

"Oh, papa," said Charles, interrupting him, "I quite forgot what you once promised us. Do you remember, when we saw the Wild Ducks at



the mill, you said you would, some time or other, read to us a pretty account of some Wild Swans written by a friend of yours? I forget his name, papa."

*P.* Well, my love, his name is the Reverend T. C., a very old and good friend of mine. Do you wish me to read his story to you now?

*C.* Oh yes, papa, I should be very glad indeed. I should much rather hear about the Swans than about the Eagle, which I first chose.

*H.* I hope he does not use very long and hard words, papa.

*P.* No, my boy, he writes like a sensible man, to be understood, not to show off his knowledge of Latin and Greek, and fine, difficult, out-of-the-way expressions. But there are some words in his letter which will appear hard to you, and I think I had better just tell you what he says, and I am sure when you grow older you will read the whole letter with very great pleasure.

*H.* Is this a letter, papa? I thought it was a book. Did it come by the post? It looks like a book.

*P.* It is a book, my boy, but it was first written in a letter to a friend of his and mine. M. M.,



at whose house I once spent two or three days very pleasantly. I hope, Charles, if ever you travel, or are far away from us, you will give us an account of all you see. Young folks ought always to have their eyes about them, and observe what is going on every where\*.

What a great difference there is among young people in this respect. One boy walks along just as if he had no eyes, or as if he had put them into his pocket; and when he returns home he has nothing to tell us. We may suppose such a conversation as this between him and his friend. What have you seen, Robert?—Nothing at all. Where was the wind?—I did not observe. Has Farmer Thomas carried all his wheat?—I don't know. Does the late hail-storm seem to have damaged the crops that are still standing? you went through three or four fields of wheat and barley?—I really did not notice. Did you cross the top of the hill?—Yes. Oh then, you passed

\* Some friends who saw this in manuscript, thought it so like the story of *Eyes and No Eyes*, that they supposed it would be considered as having been borrowed from that book. The author, however, has never seen that much-admired work; and has left his own account as he first drew it.



close to that high tree; I was never there, and have often doubted whether it was an oak or a beech, which did you find it to be?—Indeed, I did not take any particular notice.

Then, again, another boy whose eyes are in his head, and who makes good use of them, comes back from his walk full of delight, and able to answer most questions put to him by his friend. How much more worthy a reasonable being would these answers in such a conversation be! What have you seen, Richard?—I really was very fortunate this morning: I watched a Hawk sailing so beautifully at the corner of the Castle Field, hovering so long over a particular spot, that I determined to see what she was looking after, and I found a very full covey of Partridges crouching under the poor mother, who seemed ready to die of fear; they would hardly stir when I came up to them. However, I drove off the Hawk, who darted away like an arrow. Where was the wind?—The wind has been very unsettled all day, it has veered almost round the compass. During my walk it blew from the south-west. I heard the bells of M. T. church so very plainly, and we never hear them except



when the wind comes from that quarter. Has Farmer Thomas carried all his wheat?—Not quite all: he has left about a third of the great close, which seemed scarcely dry. I should be afraid he cut it too soon; but I suppose it was beaten down very much, and he thought it would ripen better cut, than as it lay down. Does the late hail-storm seem to have damaged the crops that are still standing?—In some fields which were exposed to the west, (and you remember the storm drove from the west,) it has cut the wheat and barley both very sadly; but where they were sheltered by the Long Wood, the grain seems to have escaped almost entirely. It was a very partial storm. It did not reach L. at all; though they heard the thunder, and saw it look very black towards this part of the country. Is that high tree on the very top of the hill, an Oak or a Beech?—What seems to us one tree, consists of three beeches growing so close together, that their branches are entwined one with another. They form a most delightful shade; and some one has made a rough bench there, of stone. It must have been brought from some distance—for it is of limestone, and the country all round is of sandstone.



Now, Mary, which of these two boys, do you think enjoyed his walk most, or was the more agreeable companion after it, or could derive greater pleasure from thinking over it in his memory?

*M.* Oh, papa! I should think the first did not enjoy it more than a donkey going along the turnpike-road to market; and as for a companion, I am sure he is as stupid and dull as a post; and he laid up nothing at all to remember.

*P.* Well, Charles, and what say you to the other boy?

*C.* Why, papa, I should like to walk with him; he would be sure to point out all that was to be seen; and I should like to talk with him afterwards. I dare say, he would describe what he saw as clearly as Mary painted the mill-pond and the flowers on the bank, reflected in the water. And I am sure I should be glad to be able to store my memory with such pleasant things as he did.

*P.* But tell me, Mary, why I put before you the case of these two very different boys?

*M.* To show us, that we ought to use our eyes whenever we walk out; and to make observations on whatever occurs.



*P.* Very well; and do you remember, my little Henry, what we were talking of before, and what led me to speak of these boys?

*H.* Oh, yes, papa, you were going to read to us what your friend wrote in a letter to another friend, about the wild Swan. Papa, I think, he was the good boy, that used his eyes.

*P.* So he was, my boy; and now let us read short, as folks call it, when they skip and go on, and only read what is most needful.

My friend was sitting one day in his room, in Hampshire, (it was in the middle of a very cold winter, January 26, 1823,) when his ears were struck by the sound of a regular beating of wings, and of a loud shrill grating cry. Before he could look up to the window, a broad shadow darkened the room. It was a large flock of wild Swans; in such close flight, that the bills of those behind, seemed to rest on the tails of those which led the way. He reckoned about thirty, and they proved to be only a detachment from a body of more than a hundred. There was a large tract of land under water during the floods; and there these strangers settled. My friend describes in so



very interesting a manner, the opportunities he had of watching them, that he makes one long to have been walking and watching with him. "Sometimes," he says, "I fell in with them riding like a naval squadron upon the wide waters, which overspread the great Heron Meadow; at other times, stalking on the marshy swamps. With the assistance of a telescope, I could watch their movements from a considerable distance, and observe them when engaged at their toilette, 'bathing their snowy bosoms;' when eager in the pursuit of food, and when taking their turn of sleep, with their heads under their wings: whilst others of the party, like the watch-boats of a fleet, were sailing round to protect them."

"Oh, papa!" said Mary, "how very pretty that is. I should so like to have seen them."

"But tell me, papa," said Charles, "what does Mr. C. mean by their toilette! Have birds a toilette? I saw the picture of a Mermaid once, with a looking-glass and comb in her hand, and you told me that was only a fable, and all make-believe; have Swans any thing like that?"

"Oh, no, Charles," answered their father,



smiling; "Mr. C. has some poetry in his soul, and when he says these beautiful birds were at their toilette, he only means to tell us, in very pretty language, that they were washing and adorning their snowy plumage. It is a very good metaphor. And if we live, my boy, I shall have much to say to you about metaphors.

*H.* Oh! papa, I am so afraid these poor birds, in a strange country, would lose their way, and never get back home; or be killed by naughty boys.

*P.* You have cause for fear, though not from that quarter. Naughty boys would have the will but not the power to molest them; one of them was large and strong enough to beat off a dozen boys, and make them take to their heels. But, poor things, they had not been long in their new lodging, when all the country was up in arms against them. The watermen in the harbour got their muskets ready; and old guns that had been long rusting over the Farmers' fireplaces, were taken down; and boys actually used their playing-marbles, instead of bullets, to shoot at "the great creatures," as they called them. The poor sheep, and pigs, and cows, and horses, were frightened all over the country, with



such cannonading, and put in danger of their lives. But, as Mr. C. quotes,

To tell you the truth, no mischief was done,  
But spoiling the proverb, "As sure as a Gun."

However, one gentleman is reported, not indeed, to have "shot at a Pigeon and killed a Crow," but to have fired at a Swan and killed a Cow. Mr. C. then gives a very lively description of a large party joining together under the direction of a skilful sportsman; and at last, of a shot being fired, which struck one of the finest birds to the heart. He fell down splash into the water, and was carried into Mr. C.'s room; and here you have an exact portrait of him, and a very fine specimen it is. He is one of the class called Whistling Swans. Its plumage is beautifully white, studded with a few faint spots of a rust, or light orange colour. These birds, are not of the same species with the tame Swans, which you may see in our ponds; but they are tame in Russia.

"Oh, papa!" said Mary, "I wonder whether this Swan sang his dying chant before he fell, or was his death too sudden? You know what I mean, papa?"

P. Yes, my love, I do know what you mean,



and my feelings, in answering you, are mingled feelings of pleasure and pain. I love the sweet story to which you allude: it is interwoven with all my early and dear remembrances,—but I must love truth better; and I fear the real truth will not quite agree with that pretty classical tale. The voice of the Swan is very harsh and disagreeable; something of a mixture between a Cuckoo and a Gull. It is said, that the natives of Iceland compare the sounds of a Swan to sweet music; but it is believed, that they are pleased with its notes only because it tells them, that their long and dreary winter is nearly at an end; for the Swans return to their northern homes, just before the reappearance of spring. Mr. C. is a learned man, as well as a good companion and pleasing writer; and he has brought many passages from old books to prove, that the ancients did not agree in considering the Swan as a tuneful melodious creature. And I fear, we must regard the sweet dying song of this celebrated bird, as no less fabulous than the mirror and comb of the Mermaid.

C. Papa, I remember hearing somewhere that if one Swan of a company die, the rest will crowd around him, and like brothers and sisters, or



sons and daughters, lament his death in mournful songs. Is that true?

*P.* My dear boy, perhaps I have read to you this very pretty account of my friend before, and had forgotten it. He mentions this tale, too; and is obliged to deny it like the other. The companions seem to leave the dead ones to their fate, without taking any notice of them at all. I am afraid we must give up that pretty fable, which tells of the Swan singing its own dirge of death as the last notes it utters; and of the sorrowful survivors chanting their mournful requiem over his body. And, my dear children, you must accustom yourselves from your childhood to follow truth wherever it shall lead you, though it may break many a pleasing and affecting charm.

*H.* Oh, papa, I am so afraid of a Swan. I once saw one follow a dog that came near her young ones; and she was so savage, I thought she would eat him. And there is a little book in the nursery that says one blow of a Swan's wing would break a grown-up man's leg.

*P.* Well, my man, I wish you never to go too near the brink of a pond; but more for fear of falling in, than of the attack of a Swan. You know God has given to other animals, as



well as to men, a great love of their offspring; and the Swan will exert herself bravely in defence of her young ones. But her bones are hollow, and fitted more for flying than fighting: so I don't quite believe your nursery book. Mary, my love, will you fetch your Thomson's *Seasons* again; there is a very pretty description of Swans sailing along, ready to defend their little ones.

————— The stately sailing Swan  
Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale,  
And arching proud his neck, with oary feet  
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier isle,  
Protective of his young.

C. What do Swans eat, papa?

P. There is a great mistake on this point. It is often said they devour fish, and frogs, and whatever else they can get; but they only feed upon vegetables, I believe. To enable them to seek the roots and weeds that grow at the bottom of rivers, they have a very long neck, which adds much to their beauty, and which they can keep under water a long time\*. Virgil, who was a close observer and ardent admirer of natural

\* Since this was written, my friend has told me, that "Lord G. has this said bird quietly swimming and breeding at Petworth."



objects, well describes this Swan's habit of feeding, when, in reference to the neighbourhood of his own native town, he says:—

Or such a field as hapless Mantua lost;  
Where silver Swans sail down the watery road,  
And graze the floating herbage of the flood.

*H.* Are Whistling Swans good to eat, papa?

*P.* Indeed, my boy, I never tasted one; nor after our friend's account am I anxious to do so. He pronounces it scarcely eatable. But many people had them dressed, sending off joints and pasties to their neighbours. At Gloucester, we are told, there was a sort of Swan-feast at an inn, where the tickets were sold for a guinea each. There were a vast number of these birds in England that winter. A friend of Mr. C.'s saw sixty exposed for sale in London in one day. There had not been so many known to visit this country for thirty years. Mr. C.'s flock of emigrants all returned to their northern home in the spring. So regular are they in their seasons of leaving their own native haunts for the winter, and of returning to them at the opening of spring, that they serve as the poor man's almanac in the Orkney Islands. I



must quote to you, my dears, the very pious and beautiful sentiment which closes the account of my friend, Mr. C. "These birds know their appointed seasons, and observe the time of their coming. Let them remind us that we have here no abiding city; but that it is our duty and high privilege to prepare for a removal from earth to heaven."



THE WHISTLING SWAN.



## CONVERSATION IX.

## SWALLOWS.

Amusive birds! say where your hid retreat,  
When the frost rages and the tempests beat?  
Whence your return, by such nice instinct led,  
When spring, soft season, lifts her balmy head?  
Such baffled searches mock man's prying pride,  
The God of Nature is your secret guide.—Young.

“INDEED, papa,” said Mary, “I am quite sorry we have finished Mr. C.’s account of the Whistling Swan; will you now tell us about the Swallows, the birds chosen by Henry. I wish to hear about them more particularly, because when Charles mentioned them as a class of migratory birds, you seemed, papa, to doubt whether he was right or not. I have often watched them in the autumn gathering together for some days, and then all at once the whole company seemed to vanish. I thought that was a proof of their leaving this country for another.”

*P.* And so I think it is. And a friend of mine, who has been long acquainted with birds, tells me the evidence is so strong on that side



of the question, that he feels no doubt at all on the subject.

C. Is it known, papa, to what country they fly when they leave ours?

P. I believe that is not known: but they have often been found far out at sea, and have been seen to rest on the masts and rigging of ships, as if they were tired by their long flight. A very beautiful writer, Mr. White, in his *History of Selborne*, much doubts whether they do not stay here all the winter, and hide themselves in banks, and rocks, and ponds; and he is a very calm and judicious observer. However, they breed here, and form one of our many interesting objects during summer. And we may examine their character and habits without dwelling longer on the question of their migration.

“Oh, papa,” said Henry, “do tell me what old David meant one day. He said there was no fear of rain, the Swallows flew so high; and I remember old Nanny saying to us one day, ‘It will be sure to be wet, the Swallows fly so low.’ And I remember it was so. What is the reason, papa?”

P. The reason is this, my, boy. Before wet,



the air generally becomes thicker and heavier, and though we cannot perceive it ourselves, the little flies and insects do. They are able to mount up very high, and play about and sport there on a bright, clear day. But when the air is thick and damp they are compelled to come down almost to the ground. The Swallows, that feed on those little creatures, and that always feed on the wing, are obliged to follow them, up or down, just as they are to be found. And so, before wet, these birds are seen skimming along the surface of meadows, quite near the ground; and when it promises to be fair, you may see them far away up in the sky. Do you understand it now?

*H.* Oh yes, papa. But I did not know that they fed upon the poor flies.

*P.* Indeed, my boy, they are very useful friends of ours in doing so. If it were not for their constant feeding upon such things, gnats, and flies, and other insects would swarm in such countless masses, that the air would be quite choked with them; and they would very much annoy and trouble us; and we could never get rid of them ourselves. The Swallows come in



to our assistance, and though they only seek to please themselves, they are made to profit us.

*M.* Now, papa, will you tell us about their building their nests?

*P.* Yes, my love, and I am able to do so more correctly, from having lately had a conversation with a friend who has long watched them, and is very fond of them. White says, the swallow tribe is, of all others, the most harmless, entertaining, and social. Except one species, all the rest attach themselves to our houses, and amuse us with their songs, and the active and rapid use of their wings!

The House-Swallow, says my friend, differs from most other birds, in one point. Instead of seeking a retired secret spot, it builds in the most open and exposed situations. They seem to feel so little concern at the presence of man, that we may, without the least fear of disturbing the little architects, watch them all the time they are building and furnishing their home.

*H.* Papa, I thought an architect was a man? I have often heard you speak of Mr. M., the architect, who built the house at H.

*P.* Quite right, Henry; but we may call



Swallows little architects, because they do for themselves and their young ones, what Mr. M. did for our friends at H:—They build a very pretty, comfortable house. But I was remarking on the carelessness with which the Swallows observe us either watching them, or disturbing them. They will persevere again and again, to finish their dwelling in the spot they first fixed upon, though their work should be destroyed, and the materials thrown away.

When we come to talk of Mary's Ostrich, we shall find the strongest possible contrast between that bird and the Swallow. If Ostriches find the least trace of a man having approached the spot which they have chosen for their nest, they will desert it immediately; and even if they have the nest full of eggs, they will break the eggs, and decamp. How very different is the feeling with regard to mankind between them and Swallows, I cannot better show you, than by telling you what happened to my friend himself last spring. I had it from his own mouth, and I am sure he tells no varnished tales.

A pair of Swallows fixed upon the corner of his window, as a snug spot for their clay-nest



and, "I dare say, (he observes, in a note I have before me,) they thought it a very comfortable nook for them; but I soon found them to be very dirty, troublesome, and noisy neighbours. So, to induce them to change my window for another place of abode, I pulled down their nest, when it was about half finished. They were not to be thus driven from their purpose, and, next morning, I found the damage nearly all repaired. Well! I was determined to have my way, and they were as resolved to have theirs. So I pulled down, and they built up again. And this sort of warfare was carried on for some weeks. My curiosity was now alive to see how long they were determined to persevere. I therefore allowed them to make some progress, before I destroyed their labours; and once they had completed the outward case of their nest. I then thought their patience must be exhausted. No such thing. I was surprised, next morning, to find these poor birds had again begun to lay the foundation of their house. Still I was resolved not to be outdone; so I suffered them to finish their nest entirely, the eggs to be laid, and the parents to begin to sit.



I then took the nest down entire, without breaking it; but the piteous cries of the poor birds made me repent that I had done so; and I resolved, if possible, to repair the mischief myself. So I drove two nails into the wall, and then, with a piece of string, I succeeded in replacing the nest; but it was in so clumsy a manner, that a wide opening was left all round the top. Through the whole of this time the parent-birds kept flying round me with most bitter wailings, reproaching me for my cruelty. Scarcely had I closed the window, before they flew to their home; and, finding the eggs uninjured, the female immediately took her station upon them, while her partner fell instantly to repairing the injuries their house had suffered; and, in a very few hours, he had succeeded in closing up the opening I had left. It was quite affecting to witness them. Every time he returned with the materials, which he busied himself in collecting, he was cheered and greeted by the affectionate chirpings of his mate. She, poor bird, had her own duty to perform, which she did faithfully; and, I have no doubt, he felt rewarded for his toil by her kind and loving



salutations. After this, (says my friend,) of course I molested them no longer, but gladly allowed them to bring up their young ones in quiet and comfort, resolved to put up with any inconvenience rather than disturb and give pain to so industrious and faithful a pair."

What a lesson is given by these two poor birds, to many who have reason to guide them, but who allow their passions to stifle it! We know, Mary, of a couple, not far from us, who are always jarring and crossing each other. Every thing goes wrong with them. Instead of cheering each other, and doing each their duty, with marks of love and affection, they seem never in their element, but when they are quarrelling. And so they are always unhappy, and never thrive. And, Charles, do you remember me taking you to the cottage by the side of the hill, one evening last summer, where the good couple seemed to have but one mind and one heart? The wife was preparing her husband's supper, and he was digging in the garden to set some vegetables after his hard day's work elsewhere.

C. Oh, yes, papa! and I remember you were



particularly pleased with him for planting some rose-trees just by the window, because she was fond of them, and some laurels to hide the pigsty. I remember he asked you to let him have some cuttings and layers from your garden.

*P.* Yes, my child, I was much struck with the scene. And the consequence of their affection for each other is evident. They pull together, instead of contrary ways; and, while their house and children are all clean, and in their persons they are neatness itself, they are doing very well in the world, in their humble way. It is quite a pleasure to visit them. The same thing exactly holds good in higher life. The happiness or wretchedness of many a couple will turn upon this.—‘Do they, like the Swallows, assist and cheer each other, and have one object and interest; or do they thwart each other?’ It is a most bounden Christian duty to bear each other’s burdens; loving God, loving each other; doing good; trying to be happy, and to make happy.

The Bible invites us, again and again, to live in peace together, and in mutual offices of kindness. How often, Mary, have I repeated to



you that beautiful little poem, the 33rd Psalm!  
“Many things (as Bishop Horne writes) are good, which are not pleasant, and many pleasant, which are not good. But unity is productive both of profit and of pleasure; of profit, because therein consists the security and welfare of every society; and pleasure, because mutual love is the source of delight, and the happiness of one becomes the happiness of all.”



THE HOUSE MARTIN.



CONVERSATION X.

---

OSTRICHES.

---

Unmindful she that some unhappy tread  
May crush her young in their neglected bed ;  
What time she skims along the field with speed,  
And scorns the rider, and pursuing steed.—YOUNG.

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*Mary.* Now, papa, it is my turn, if you please. My choice, you remember, fell upon the Ostrich. They are noble birds : I shall like to know all about them.

*P.* The Ostrich is the largest bird known in the world ; and the engraving you have, will give you a very good idea of it. A full-grown bird measures seldom less than eight feet, reckoning from the top of the head to the ground, and they often are ten, and even twelve feet high.

*M.* Is it the same bird from which those beautiful feathers come, which ladies wear on their heads ?

*P.* Yes, my child, unfortunately for the poor animals, the great value of their feathers is the cause of the death of numbers every year.



They are so great a prize that the natives of the countries where they breed are constantly engaged in hunting them. They prefer taking them alive; but this is so very difficult, that, in general, they shoot them.

*H.* Are there any in this country, papa?

*P.* None, except what are brought here as prisoners. They have never been known to breed out of their own regions.

*C.* Where do they live when they are at home?

*P.* Their native haunts are the burning deserts of Africa and Arabia, where they are seen in large flocks, to the astonishment of the traveller.

*M.* The wings of this Ostrich look very small; I should hardly have supposed they were large enough to carry so very heavy a bird. They do not seem much larger than a swan's.

*P.* You are quite right, my love; those wings cannot raise their bodies from the ground: when they move they use their feet only, and in this, as well as in some other points, they seem to be a sort of link between the feathered race and quadrupeds; just as some have considered the little creature, the bat, to be at the other end of the chain.



*M.* Then, papa, if they cannot fly, I should have supposed they could be very easily taken, having such a large bulky body to carry on two legs. Any little boy could overtake a Swan running on dry ground. Is it so with an Ostrich?

*P.* Quite the contrary. The Ostrich is the swiftest animal known: he will outstrip a horse most easily; and, were he to act wisely in his flight, he could never be caught by the same set of hunters. But, foolish bird! when he finds he is pursued, he runs off indeed, but he is sure to make a very large circle; so that, instead of all the huntsmen following him, some of them cut across, and meet him. Still the chase, even with this advantage against the poor bird, is often kept up two or three days.

*C.* Is not this the foolish bird, papa, that hides his head in a bush, and fancies, because he cannot see his pursuers, that they cannot see him? I think I heard you say so once, papa.

*P.* So it is said, my boy. When, after a chase of perhaps two or three days, he is spent with fatigue and hunger, he will endeavour to hide himself in the first thicket he can reach, or even by covering his head in the sand.



M. I remember, papa, you said, at the same time, that many persons who would laugh at the folly of the Ostrich, were guilty of greater folly themselves. Will you tell me what you said? I do not quite remember.

P. I think I must have been talking of those people, who try to forget what they have done wrong, and foolishly act as though they fancied because they had forgotten it themselves, that God would forget it too; or because they shut out God from their thoughts, his eye would not be upon them. I am sure, Charles, you can repeat a portion of that hymn which describes the all-seeing eye of God, and is quoted in our *Daily Readings from the Psalms*.

C. Oh, yes, papa, I have learnt it quite by heart; it is so very beautiful.

Thou, Lord, by strictest search hast known  
My rising up and lying down:  
My secret thoughts are known to Thee;  
Known long before conceived by me.

O! could I so perfidious be,  
To think of once deserting Thee,  
Where, Lord, could I thy influence shun?  
Or whither from thy presence run?



If I the morning's wings could gain,  
And fly beyond the western main,  
Thy swifter hand would first arrive  
And there arrest thy fugitive.

Or should I try to shun thy sight,  
Beneath the sable wings of night,  
One glance from Thee, one piercing ray,  
Would kindle darkness into day.

*P.* But to return to the Ostrich. From their habits of always living in the wildest deserts, no wonder if we do not possess the same correct knowledge about them, as we have of birds that breed nearer the dwellings of men. However, much information, on which we can rely, has been gathered by eye-witnesses. When the time of laying their eggs and hatching their young ones approaches, they make a hole in the sand, in the most desert spot they can find; and three or four hens will lay their eggs in one nest, and will sit upon them in turns, in the most kind and friendly manner possible. Just as if two neighbours here agreed to watch their children in turns, whilst one of them went to the mill for flour, or to the town for marketings. In these nests there are sometimes thirty or forty eggs. But the most curious thing of all



is, that a number of eggs are laid round the nest, never intended to be hatched, but for the purpose of feeding the young ones, which cannot at first either provide for their own sustenance, or eat the hard food on which the old ones live.

*H.* But papa, when you were talking about my Swallows, you said they were, in one point, very unlike the Ostrich. What was that, papa?

*P.* You remember, though my friend broke down the poor Swallows' nest half a dozen times, they began to rebuild it in the same place; and even when he took away the nest and the eggs, upon which the female had begun to sit, no sooner did he tie it up again, than she began to sit again. On the contrary, if the Ostrich finds the eggs at all disturbed, or if her eye or her nose inform her that any human being has been to her nest, she not only deserts it, but will smash all her eggs to pieces with her feet, trampling upon them with great fury.

*H.* What do Ostriches eat, papa?

*P.* Their natural food is vegetables; but they are such greedy creatures, that they will eat almost any thing, rags, and stones, and even pieces of iron. It is said, that one silly thing



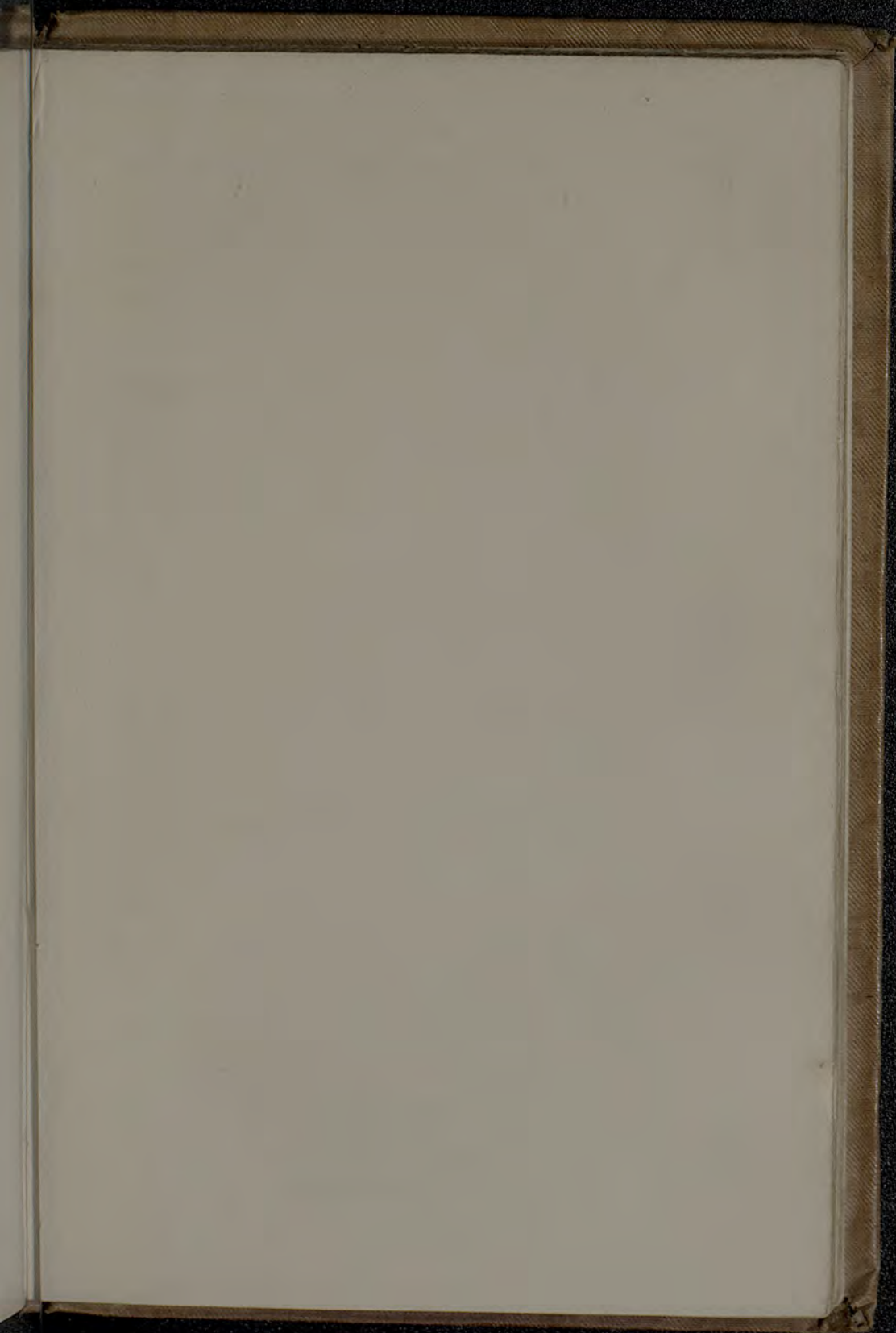
killed herself by swallowing a great quantity of quick-lime. They are quite as mischievous as a herd of pigs in a corn field. Very often, in Southern Africa, a whole flock will attack a field of corn, and crop off every ear, leaving nothing for the poor farmer but the bare straw. So that these people have two strong reasons to wage war upon the whole tribe; in self-defence, and to sell their plumage.

*C.* If they are so shy of men, I wonder how they can ever be tamed, and yet I think I have heard you say they are often tamed; and, I remember hearing you say, that the King gave a very beautiful pair of Ostriches to the late Lord Londonderry.

*P.* Yes. The Earl used to boast, that he was the only subject at the Coronation of George the Fourth, who wore a plume of feathers from his own Ostriches. They become very tame, and often afford great amusement. A gentleman of the name of Adamson, tells us a story, which I think may amuse us, though if I am not mistaken, we should all, children and papa together, have rather seen what he describes with our own eyes.

*H.* Oh, papa! do tell us what it was: you









AFRICAN VILLAGE. OSTRICHES AT FULL SPEED.



have made me quite fond of hearing all about the Ostrich. I think it is as good as the Swallow, or the Swan.

*P.* Mr. Adamson was on a visit at a place called Podor, near the river Niger, where there were two Ostriches, so tame, that two little black boys mounted on the back of the largest. No sooner did the giant feel the weight of these youngsters, than he trotted off with them several times round the village, just as easy as your pony, Charles, could carry you and Henry. He seemed so pleased with the fun, that nothing could stop him, till they blocked up the passage. I dare say, the little urchins of Negroes were as much delighted, as their two-legged pony.

*H.* Oh, papa! I hope they were tied on. Had they a saddle or bridle?

*P.* No—the Ostrich would be a very useful bird indeed, if they could but guide him. I dare say, they would use him instead of a mail-coach. But like balloons, when you once mount them, you must go wherever they please to carry you. Mr. Adamson directed a full-grown Negro to mount the smallest, and two others, I hope youngsters, to cling to the largest.



Neither seemed annoyed by the burden, and away they set; at first, only at a sharp trot; but when they became warm, they opened their wings like a Swan, as if to catch the breeze, and posted off with such amazing fleetness, that they seemed scarcely to touch the ground. It reminds us of the book of Job, and its powerful language, "What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider."

C. Papa, I think you said the Ostrich was found only in Africa and Arabia, I thought they were in South America too.

P. There is a bird in that country very like the African Ostrich; and perhaps it may be fair to call them American Ostriches, but there is a great difference in the foot. The real Ostrich has only two toes; whilst the American bird, which is also much smaller, has three. Oh! I must not forget one funny stratagem by which the Africans were said to catch them. They used to hide themselves in the skin of a dead Ostrich; and passing one hand up the neck, moved it up and down, to imitate the motion of a living bird; with the other hand they scattered grain about, to entice the birds into the snares.



But, my dear children, we must not end our conversation about this astonishing bird without referring to the passage in the Book of Job, just before the sentence I have already quoted. Some people are disposed to think that the account there given differs from the reality, because they find that the Ostrich is very anxious to keep her eggs and her young ones from the touch of man or beast. But the accounts on which these very people rely, fully make out the reality of what is said in these words of the Bible. Charles, will you read them?

“Gavest thou wings and feathers unto the Ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust; and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them? She is hardened against her young ones as though they were not hers.”—Job xxxix. 13.

*P.* Some have supposed these words to mean that the Ostrich does not sit upon her eggs; but the word “warmeth” implies that she does herself heat them by sitting upon them. And instead of returning, like the Swallow, to her eggs or her young ones, if once disturbed she



will desert both. The Arabs often meet with whole nests forsaken; and much oftener they fall in with a few straggling little-ones, half-starved and moaning about, like so many distressed orphans, crying for their mother. So that the very words of Job are most fully made out by the accounts of travellers. Thus, objections are often raised against the Bible, by persons who know just enough to see a difficulty, but not enough to remove it. It is quite wonderful how clear a light modern researches have thrown on various parts of Holy Scripture, confirming its accounts of mankind in former ages, and of the countries in which they lived.



OSTRICH'S NEST.



## CONVERSATION XI.

THE BOOK OF NATURE, AND THE BOOK  
OF GRACE.

God, merciful and mild,  
 As erst, beholding, loves his wayward child,  
 He opens Nature's book,  
 And on the glorious Gospel bids thee look.—KEBLE.

ONE morning, as our young friends were returning from Mary's pretty mill, where they had been much amused by seeing the young ducklings swimming about the pond with as much ease, and pleasure, and fearlessness, as if they had already had the experience of a full year in life; their papa, who had accompanied them in their walk, recalled to Mary's mind the widely different appearance which the mill and pond, and all its accompaniments, had worn when they visited it in the last winter. "Do you remember the Wild Ducks, Charles," said he, "which your brother frightened by his outcry at the Squirrel?"

*Charles.* Yes, papa, I remember it very well.



How very wild they were! They flew off in an instant. And how very tame those little things are now, sailing about the pond. They will come to the bank and pick up the crumbs we throw in, without any fear at all.

*Henry.* They are not half so much afraid as the old ones. Shall we come to see them again to-morrow, papa?

*Papa.* Perhaps we may. I can make no promise; but what were you going to say, Mary? I think you want to ask something.

*Mary.* If those Ducks were neglected for a long time, would they become Wild Ducks?

*P.* I have no doubt they would, Mary. Most tame animals would, I suppose, fall back into a state of natural wildness, if they were long left to themselves. But Mary, tame as these Ducks are, I have a notion that they would become much more so, less timid and more obedient, by a little discipline. You have just reminded me of an account which a gentleman, who reported only what he had himself witnessed, lately gave me of their kindred in the East. He was in Canton, and he was much amused by the curious mode the natives there adopt of keeping and feed-



ing their Ducks. They build a boat with many floors, or stories, one above the other, which are intended for the Ducks' sleeping apartments. A boat will hold, he thinks, five or six hundred. Well, every morning they bring the boat alongside the shore of the river, and put out a wide plank for a bridge. The bed-room doors are then opened, and the Ducks march out very orderly, and landing on the bank of the river, soon scatter themselves over the paddy-fields in search of food.

"Pray stop, papa," said Henry eagerly, "I do not know what paddy-fields are. Do they belong to Irishmen? Mary and Charles, you ought not to laugh at me so. Ought they, papa?"

*P.* Never mind, my boy, I will punish them as they deserve. Come, if you laugh at your brother's question, you must answer it; or confess that you deserve to be laughed at yourselves.

*M.* Indeed, papa, I cannot tell you, and I am sure Charles cannot, but I think they can have nothing to do with Irishmen; it is so far off.

*P.* Well Henry! You see they are not much wiser than yourself. Paddy-fields are the



grounds in which they plant rice. And over these the swarms of Ducks rove about all day, feeding upon what they can pick up. And when night comes, they all return to their houses to rest and sleep. And it is very curious, that though there are often six or seven boats in sight, they never mistake another's home for their own. Just as the Salmon, when they return from the sea every year, are sure to find their own native rivers. You know that Charles, do you not?

*C.* Yes, papa, I have heard you say so before. It is very curious.

*P.* It is very curious indeed. Though the Usk, and the Wye, and the Taff, all fall into the Bristol Channel, a fisherman will (and I believe he can with safety,) pronounce upon any one fish, whether it was a native of one river or another. Sometimes, though very rarely, a stray fish is found; one that perhaps was driven by a storm, or that by some accident has mistaken his way. But they immediately detect it. Just so these Ducks. I must tell you however what part of the story amused me most. As night comes on, the master of each boat sounds a sort of loud



whistle, or little trumpet, and the Ducks are seen trotting home directly as fast as they can. As they get near the bank, they try to outrun each other, and push, and rush through the crowd, the stronger knocking the weaker off the plank, splash into the river, who must swim to shore, and try again. The struggle becomes more and more serious towards the end; and all this bustle is, because one of their attendants stands by the side of the plank with a bamboo in his hand, which the last duck is sure to feel to its cost. He invariably gives a sharp blow to the unfortunate lagger, who mounts the plank last.

*H.* How very funny that is, papa! I should like to try whether Ducks in this country would learn to be so obedient and clever.

*P.* I dare say they would, Henry. But I think you would do well to omit the flogging part of the system. I must tell you another anecdote of a very different animal, told me by the same gentleman. He was in a ship, sailing at the rate of eight knots an hour, when a great fish, three feet long, sprang out of the water and fell upon the quarter-deck, where was a poor fellow mending a sail. The fish had a very pointed beak, and struck the sail-maker on the



arm so severe a blow, that he cried out piteously, and the blood began to flow fast. His ship-mates hastened to his relief, rolled the fish in the sail, and cut it up for dinner.

*M.* How very strange, papa! Was it a Flying-Fish. I have a picture of one.

*P.* No it was not a Flying-Fish. They called it a King-Fish.

*C.* Do you think he aimed at the man, papa, to make a meal of him?

*P.* Oh, no. He was probably in chase of his prey, or escaping from his enemy, and the ship going at so great a rate, came too quick upon him, before he could check his spring. I remember when the gentleman told me the story, we were sailing along the Isle of Wight, watching the Porpoises rolling and sporting about; and that reminded him of the incident.

“Mary,” said her papa, during their walk next day, “do you recollect any passage in the Bible, of which the docility and attachment of domesticated animals might have naturally reminded me? You remember we were talking about them yesterday.”

*M.* I remember you read to me a passage



once, in Isaiah, about the ox and the ass. I do not recollect all the words, papa; but I think you mean that passage.

*P.* You have fixed upon the very passage, Mary. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." What is taught us, do you think, in these words?

*M.* I think, papa, God means us to understand, that a wicked man is condemned by the ox and the ass. How very striking that lesson is, papa!

*P.* It is, my love, very melancholy, to witness among God's reasonable creatures, so much determined resistance to His will. Many parts of Scripture employ a similar argument. Indeed, it is quite wonderful to reflect, how much we are reminded of our duty, by every thing we see around us; and how many expressions in the Bible instruct us in the art of turning all we meet with to good. The Book of Grace enables us to read the Book of Nature: and the Book of Nature bids us apply to the Book of Grace, for a knowledge of God and of our own hopes, which can be found only there.



C. I think I know, papa, but I do not know *exactly* what you mean by the Book of Nature, and the Book of Grace.

P. Tell me first then, my boy, what you think?

C. I think the Book of Grace is the Bible. Indeed I am sure of that. And I think that the Book of Nature is what we see about us, when we walk in the fields.

H. Oh, Charles, then, that is a make-believe book, I am sure.

P. Charles is right, Henry. And it is a real book, not a make-believe book, though it is not made with paper and ink; and the lesson it teaches us, is a real lesson too. And it requires as much instruction and practice to read that book, as it does to read a history. I have often read to you a lesson out of that book, my loves. And our blessed Lord has taught all Christians how to read it.

M. Oh, papa, I so long to hear you give a specimen, as you call it, of that sort of lesson. I think you once told me, that our Saviour sent us for truth to the Book of Nature, when he said "Consider the Lilies of the field."



*P.* That is exactly a lesson, my child, from the Book of Nature: I should wish you to repeat the whole passage. It is so full of comfort, and assures us so abundantly of the care and love of our heavenly Father. I am sure you can recollect it, Mary?

*M.* Oh, yes, papa; I remember it very well: "Consider the Lilies of the field. They toil not, they spin not—and yet, I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

*H.* Papa, I almost think, I know what you mean by a lesson from the Book of Nature, and I can repeat one myself. Shall I, papa?

*P.* I shall have sincere pleasure in hearing you, Henry.

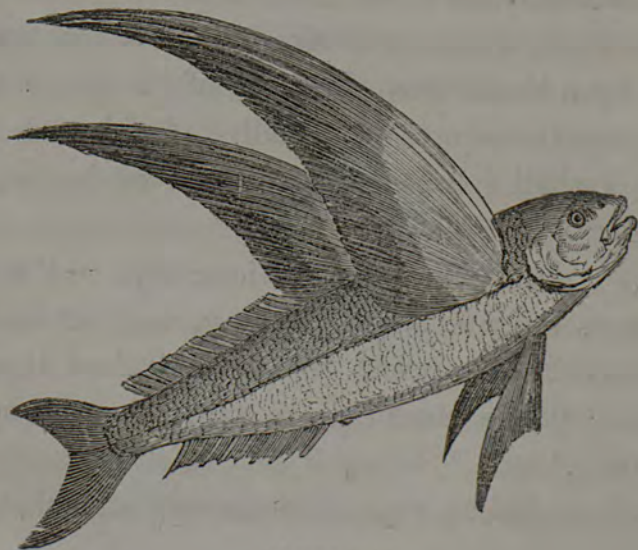
*H.* I mean when our Saviour says, "Two Sparrows are sold for a farthing, and yet our heavenly Father careth for them." And then he says, "We are of more value than many Sparrows."

*C.* I remember, papa, what he says after that:



He tells us that "the very hairs of our head are all numbered."

*P.* Well, my dears, we must now adjourn our conversation till another time. I quite delight in finding you making such progress in the knowledge of the Bible. We shall, if we live, read together many lessons in the Book of Nature, and in the Book of Grace. I trust God will enable us to turn what we read to good account. You will very soon learn, that the chief and best use of the Book of Nature is, when we can employ it as a kind of handmaid to the Book of Grace.



FLYING-FISH.



## CONVERSATION XII.

## THE MOON.

Who am I that shine so bright,  
With my pretty yellow light,  
Peeping thro' your curtains gray?  
Tell me, little girl, I pray.—ANON.

“Oh, papa!” exclaimed Charles, as he ran into the room where his father was sitting, “pray come, and see the Moon. It has just risen over the side of the wood behind the tall trees. It is quite round, and is as large as the Sun: and I really think it is as beautiful as the Sun was, when I watched him rise over the top of the hill. Pray come, papa. It is all so lovely.”

*Papa.* Indeed, my boy, it has been a very lovely day; one of the sweetest spring days, I ever felt; the air has been so soft and warm, and yet clear, that all Nature seemed to enjoy herself. I am rather tired after my long walk, but I must come, you invite me to so great a treat. Did you see the Sun set, Charles?

*C.* I saw him just as he was going to set. It was very nearly the same time with the Moon



rising to-night. Last night, the Moon was up nearly an hour before sunset; I don't understand that, papa, will you explain it to me?

*P.* I will only come and just see the Moon to-night, over your favourite high trees, Charles; and we will talk about her to-morrow. Where are Henry and Mary?

*C.* Mary is so very careful of Henry, papa, she is gone up stairs with him. She thought he had a little cold, and she promised him, you would go up and kiss him. She is coming down to you again, to wish you good night; but we are all rather tired, and shall be glad to go to rest.

Charles led his papa just round the corner of the house, and showed him the Moon with much delight; and having received from him a hearty confession, that it was very beautiful indeed, felt no reluctance in retiring to rest. They met his sister at the foot of the stairs, bearing an invitation from little Henry to go up and kiss him before he was asleep. They all three went up together. As their papa wished them good night, he said to Charles, "Now, my boy, since you have asked me to talk to you to-morrow



something about the Moon, let me give you a question, and Mary may help you in answering it. How would the thought of next Sunday tell me that the Moon was very near its full to-night; and, if it was full Moon, how could I know that the Moon rose just at the time the Sun was setting, without my seeing either the Sun or the Moon?"

"Oh, papa," said Mary, "you have put two questions instead of one, and I am sure I cannot answer either of them. I love the Moon, she is so very soft and gentle in her looks, and I shall be glad to hear all you will be good enough to tell us about her. I delight in that painting of a moonlight scene which hangs up in the dining-room. I really think I love the Moon better than the Sun. Good night, papa. I am sure I shall not be able to answer your question, if I think of it all night; so I will forget it, and go to sleep. All I know of it is, that next Sunday is Easter-day, but what that has to do with the Moon, I cannot imagine."

*P.* Good night, my dear loves, I hope you will soon be asleep, and rise up to-morrow with clear heads, and cheerful hearts. Heaven bless you.



If the fair Moon was the last in the thoughts of our young friends when they fell asleep, it was the first when they awoke next morning; and no sooner did they see their papa, than Mary said, "Oh! papa, I cannot help Charles at all to answer your questions, they are quite a riddle to me. I hope you will explain them yourself to us, papa."

"Indeed, papa," added Charles, "I cannot guess at all what you can mean."

*P.* Well, my children, we will see what can be done presently. But I must remind Mary of what she said last night: that she thought she loved the Moon more than the Sun. I do not intend to find fault with your choice, Mary, but in drawing such comparisons I think you ought to recollect how much more we are indebted to the Sun than to the Moon; and, indeed, that we owe to the Sun even the light of the Moon itself. You must, however, understand me correctly, children, when I say we owe any thing either to Sun or Moon. I mean that our debt of gratitude, in each case, is due to God, who employs these bright and beautiful creatures as means of conveying his blessings to us.



"Oh, papa," cried Henry, "are the Sun and Moon creatures? I think you called them so."

*P.* I did, my boy, and so they are, because they were created and made by the Almighty. But they are not creatures like cows and sheep, because they have no life. I am sure Charles can remind us of a sentence where we use the word creatures to mean things without life.

*C.* I think you mean in our Grace before Meat, papa; "Bless, O Lord, these thy good creatures to our use."

*P.* Just so, my boy, and God has blessed his good creatures, the Sun and the Moon to our use; and I trust he will "bless us to his service," as the grace ends, Charles; His faithful servants are always happy.

*M.* But, papa, will you tell me how we are indebted to the Sun for the Moon's light? She seemed last night quite on the opposite side of the sky; very far off from the Sun.

*P.* That is the very thing, Mary; the further she is from the Sun, the more light she gives to us, and yet she borrows it all from him. Let us try to make this out, step by step. Do you know what is called reflection, Mary?



*M.* Yes, papa ! I remember you explained it to me last summer, at the mill. The pond was quite smooth, and the water was very clear, and we saw all the trees, and the bank, and the flowers upon it, all as plain in the water, as the real objects themselves ; and you told me, papa, that was reflection. I thought it was one of the prettiest pictures I ever saw. It looked so calm, and cool, and soft. And then when you threw a stone into the water, every thing danced up and down so prettily.

*P.* Very well, my child, that was, I remember, a very beautiful mirror ; and a very good instance of reflection. The Moon is, in that sense, a mirror, because it reflects the light of the Sun. You know we have mirrors in this room.

*H.* Pray, papa, tell me what is a mirror ? We can see no pond in this room, or from the windows, I think.

*P.* No, my boy, but a looking-glass is a mirror, and so is the case of my watch ;—come here, Henry, look at this. What do you see ?

“ I see my own face,” said Henry, laughing, “ but I cannot see my face in the Moon, papa ! ”



*P.* No Henry. I remember when you were a very little boy, you used to call it your own Moon, and Papa's Moon, just as you felt inclined to claim every thing around you: but I allow, it was not because you saw your own face or mine, in the Moon. It is the Sun's light which is reflected to us by the Moon, and gives those beautiful night-scenes of softness and sweetness, which Mary has so much admired.

*C.* I do not quite understand this, papa. If we look into a mirror, we see the image of the things reflected; just as Mary describes the trees and flowers on the mill-pond; but we do not see the image of the Sun in the Moon!

*P.* Very true, Charles, we only see his light reflected. It is only from a polished surface that an image is reflected; but the Moon is very much like this earth, with seas, and mountains, and valleys. I shall much like to make this clear to you.

Their papa then took a small looking-glass, and holding it in the Sun, showed them the Sun's image reflected from it; though they could scarcely look upon it, the glare was so strong, and the bright dazzle went flash, flash, like



lightning, round the room; as the glass was moved about; and if it fell on any book or shelf, that was before in shade, it brought it out and made it almost as clear and bright, as if the Sun shone direct upon it.

He then took a sheet of white paper, and held it slanting about a foot off from the corner of the room, just by the side of the window, and the children were quite delighted to see how much the corner was lighted up by the rays reflected from the paper, though they could not see the image of the Sun in the paper. And they all, in turn, held it towards the light, and took it away again. At last, even little Henry said, "Oh, papa, I quite understand it now; the Moon reflects the light of the Sun upon the earth, just as this paper does upon the corner."

"Well, my boy," said his papa, "that is exactly so."

"But, papa," said Mary, "this does not account for the Moon being sometimes full, and sometimes only half lighted up, and sometimes only a very little part lighted. Will you explain it to us, papa?"

*P.* I think you can understand it. Let us



try. The Moon moves round the Earth once in a month, (or very nearly,) and in this journey of hers, she comes once between the Earth and the Sun; and then moves on further and further from him, till she is just on the opposite side. Last night, as you saw, when she rose on one side, the Sun set on the other, and that was Full Moon; but when she is between the Earth and the Sun, it is New Moon, and there is no reflected light from her at all. You shall learn the reasons of this, when you are a little older. And now for Easter Sunday.

*C.* Oh, papa! I have been wondering a long time, whether what you have said, has any thing to do with Easter Sunday. I thought you had forgotten it.

*P.* Mary, you know what Easter is?

*M.* Oh, yes, papa! It is the day on which our Saviour rose from the dead.

*P.* Quite right, my love; the word Easter, means a rising; just as we call that part of the world the East, where the Sun rises. Though some derive the word from a Pagan feast. Well! you know, our blessed Lord was crucified by the wicked Jews, at their Passover: and that



feast was kept always on the Full Moon. And it was the Full Moon that comes next after the twenty-first of March, according to our reckoning; and Christians have always kept Easter by the Paschal Full Moon, that is, the Full Moon which regulated the Jewish Passover. Now, Mary, what say you to my question?

*M.* It was not one question, papa, you put two; I will try to answer one, and let Charles try the other.

*P.* Very well; you shall have your choice.

*M.* You asked, why my knowing that Easter was next Sunday, would tell me that it was near Full Moon? Because, Easter Sunday is always the first Sunday after a Full Moon.

*P.* Very well. Now, Charles, for your "Why and Because."

*C.* Why does my knowing that it is Full Moon, tell me that the Sun was setting near the time of the Moon's rising? Because, the Moon is then always on the side of the Earth opposite to the Sun.

"Quite right; and now what have you to say, my man?" said his papa, addressing Henry.



*H.* What was the Feast of the Passover, papa?

*P.* It was a very solemn feast, to remind the people of God, every year, of His mercy and goodness in saving them from their enemies the Egyptians. Mary, my love, I think you can teach your brother all about that very interesting event. At least I hope so.

*M.* Oh yes, papa, you have taught it me so often. Henry will very soon know it well, I hope.

*P.* But mind! my child, on no account forget that we Christians have a much stronger reason for heartfelt gratitude to our heavenly Father, for his mercy, than ever the Children of Israel had. He saved them from Egypt, where they were cruelly treated, but he has saved us from the bondage of sin. He brought them into the land of Canaan; but, although that was so beautiful and fertile a land, that it was said to flow with milk and honey, it is not to be compared to heaven—that place of rest, and peace, and joy, and love, to which our blessed Saviour will bring all good Christians.

*M.* Indeed, papa, I am quite glad Charles asked you to explain all about the Moon to us;



because, it has led you to talk about our Saviour. But I remember once, you told me something about the Full Moon at our Lord's death, and about the Sun being darkened; but I forget quite what you said about it, will you tell me again, papa?

*P.* I dare say the point you have in your thoughts is the miracle of the Sun being darkened, when Christ died. I told you that it could not have been from an eclipse of the Sun, because an eclipse only takes place at the New Moon, and our Saviour's crucifixion was at Full Moon. Was that so, my child?

*M.* Oh, yes, papa; and so you said the darkness must have been caused by some act of God, beyond the common course of nature, and that is what we mean by a miracle.

"But, papa," said Henry, "I think you said the Moon had mountains, and seas, and valleys, like the earth; I never saw them."

*P.* No, my man, but there is little doubt to be entertained on that point. By means of telescopes, persons who know how to use them can very plainly distinguish all those things, and can measure how high the mountains are.



*C.* Have they ever been able to discover any inhabitants there, papa, or houses?

*P.* No, my boy; there is good reason to believe that the Moon has inhabitants; but whether there are men, or women, or any other animals, no one can tell. If there are, you will feel pleasure in learning that this earth repays to them the light they give to us, with manifold interest; because the Earth is so much larger than the Moon. Just as if I throw the rays of the Sun from a very large looking-glass into a room, it will give many times as much light, as if I used a glass so much less.

But there is one curious circumstance which is beyond all doubt. The Moon, as she travels round the Earth, always keeps the same side turned towards it; and of course the other half is always turned away from us. So that the people on that other half, which we never see, can never see us; but if they want to see the Earth, they must take a journey longer or shorter just as they happen to live further from the part we see, or nearer to it. How very strange that would be to us, would it not, Charles? Tell me, do you understand it?



*C.* I think I do, papa; it is just as if we were obliged to go to Spain, or Italy, or the East Indies, to see the Moon. I dare say, papa, if there are steam-carriages, or any other conveyance there, they take up many parties of pleasure. I'm sure I should like to be one of the company.

*P.* Those would be very agreeable expeditions, I dare say. But good morning, for the present, my children. We have almost forgot that there are lessons to be learned. I hope, however, our time has not been misspent.



CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER.



CONVERSATION XIII.

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SHEEP WASHING.—RIVER BATHING.

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And many a tomb, like Hamilton's, aloud  
Proclaims "Prepare thee for an early shroud."—COWPER.

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"OH, papa," cried Henry, one fine morning in May, "Farmer Careful is going to wash his Sheep in the river to-day. I should so much like to see them: and it is a beautiful morning, may I go, papa?"

*Papa.* Do you know, Henry, why the farmer takes so much pains to make his Sheep clean? I fear it is not merely to make them comfortable.

*H.* I know, papa, he is to have a Sheep-shearing very soon, and perhaps it is to prepare for that. I should be very glad to see the shearers.

*P.* It is so. The fleeces, from want of washing, become very dirty, and it would be much more difficult to clean the wool after it had been shorn, than whilst it is on the Sheep's back; and the farmer could not sell it, unless it was cleaned. So, though Farmer Careful is a very good sort



of a man, it is for his own sake, and not for the good of the poor animals, that he bathes them in the river. I suppose the farmers would grudge the time and trouble, or else it would be far better for the Sheep's health and comfort, if they would wash them often; and they would thrive so much more, that even the farmer's time and trouble would be fully repaid. However, Henry, I shall be glad to go with you, and your brother and sister shall accompany us.

"Well, Charles," said his papa, as they were walking leisurely to the bank of the river, where they saw the farmer's flock pent up by hurdle fences on the land side, but at perfect liberty to take to the stream, "do you think those poor things look pleased at the prospect of a bath this morning?"

*Charles.* Indeed, papa, they seem to be quite afraid of the water—see how they crowd against the hurdles: they don't know how very refreshing it will be. How clear the river looks! I should like to bathe myself, papa.

*P.* It is rather too early in the season, my boy; besides, I think you are yet too young to trust yourself, or for me to trust you, to a river.



Bathing is at all times dangerous: and even grown men should be always very careful: and boys ought never to venture in without very great caution; and never, if the river is deep, without having a man, and a good swimmer too, on the bank. A river is much more dangerous than the sea; for there are holes, and deep places in almost every river, suddenly sinking from shallow water. Whilst in most sea-bathing places, the sands fall so very gradually and gently, that there is no danger of going beyond one's depth before one is aware of it.

*Mary.* Do not ladies bathe in the sea, papa? I think I have heard so.

*P.* Yes, my love; and some day or other I hope to take you to the sea; and then you may all enjoy rambling on the sands when the tide is out, and a good refreshing bathe when it is high water.

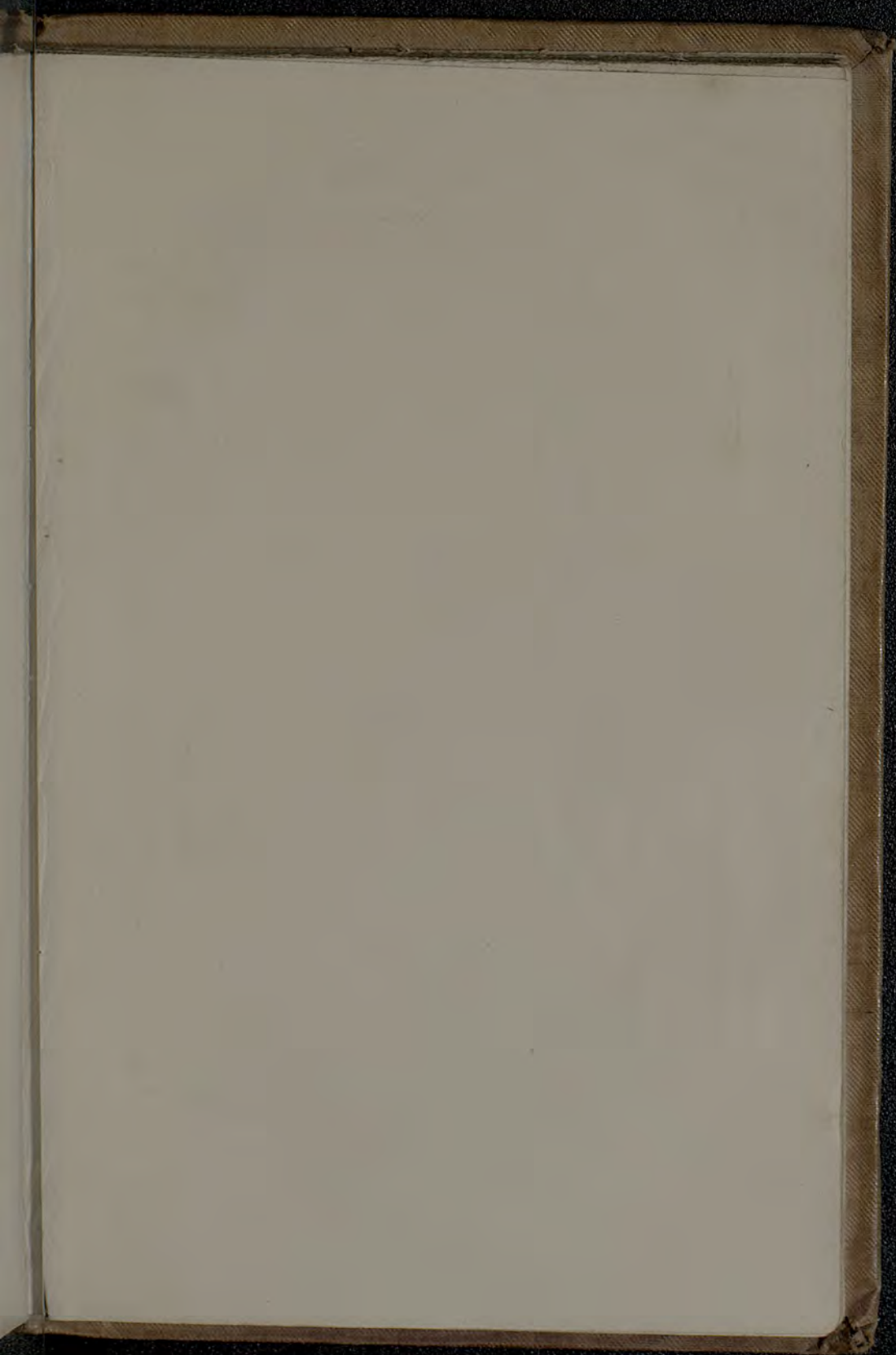
*H.* What is high water, papa? Is it when there is a flood in the sea? I am sure when it is high water in the river, it is too muddy, and the stream is too strong for a grown man to bathe.

*P.* Right, my boy; high water at the sea-side is a very different thing. Some time or



other we will talk about the tides, and I dare say you will be able to understand something of their nature. But we were speaking of the danger of river-bathing. When I was a school-boy, much older than Charles, I remember a sad event happening in this very river, which threw an amiable family into sudden and deep affliction. It was on a Saturday, in the middle of September, a very beautiful day, when the family, consisting of the father and mother, two brothers, and two, or perhaps more, sisters, were coming down this lovely stream, all enjoying the little voyage and each other's pleasure, and the mother, who had been an invalid, feeling refreshed by the soft air as the boat passed along. At length they reached a favourite spot, where parties often landed, and having spread their cloth under the shade of a branching oak, for many oaks are there, they enjoyed their social meal together. After this repast, they all joined in a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the restoration of health to the mother: and then the father said, 'Come, ladies, you may walk gently in the shade, and pick your nuts. I will attend the boys whilst they bathe.' The









THE YOUNG MAN'S TOMB ON THE RIVER'S BANK.



boys swam very well: but poor John felt tired whilst returning from the opposite shore, and sank never to rise again alive.

The affliction of his parents, and brother, and sisters, was beyond the power of any tongue or pen to describe; but happily for them they knew where to rest their sorrow, and seek consolation; and they were comforted. They afterwards raised a tomb on the bank, near the place where he was drowned, and the inscription upon it bids us hope and believe, that they were all sincere Christians, and that whilst they said from the heart, "Thy will be done," God gave them consolation, in the sure hope that their beloved departed one, when he was so suddenly snatched from his friends on earth, was received, through the merits of his Saviour, with mercy by the dearest of Fathers, and the best of Friends, into heaven.

"Oh, papa," said Mary, her eyes moist with tears, "I hope you will let us see the tomb, and the place. Is it far off?"

*P.* No, my child, it is not a great way off. But I fear it is much injured by time. We have a very pretty drawing of the spot, which you shall see when you return home. You have



forgotten, Mary, that I once read the account to you in a pretty poem, whose author gives us the inscription in a note upon the lines :—

But why in verse attempt to tell  
That tale, the stone records so well.

“Poor boy !” said Charles ; “it is a sad tale, papa.”

*P.* Come, my children, let us walk nearer to the sheep. I see the shepherd and his boy are going to begin.

“Oh, papa,” said Henry, “I am afraid they are hurting the poor things very much. Do you see ?—They pull them by the wool down into the water, just as if a man were to pull me by my hair, papa ! I hope it does not hurt them much. Oh ! how well that old one swims ! I am afraid the stream will carry him down and drown him.”

*P.* You have no cause for any of those alarms, Henry. I believe the shepherd does not hurt them ; and do not you see they have so contrived the pen, that about ten or fifteen yards below, there is a good landing-place, on nice clean ground. See, the old sailor makes for it :—now he is on shore.



*M.* How very nice and white he looks. I am sure he is more comfortable. There, my poor fellow, shake yourself dry.

*P.* Well, my dears, the farmer says he shall begin to shear them on Friday; you will take care not to forget; and we will watch the process, from the washing of the sheep to—what do you think, Charles? and you, Mary?

*M.* I was thinking of the flannel jackets the men were dressed in.

*C.* And I, papa, I think you mean to the cloth of which our coats are made. Is it so?

*P.* Both right, children.

*M.* It is a very interesting subject, papa.

*P.* Well, my dear child, we will soon return to it; but now let us hasten homewards. This diversion has broken in upon our morning's work; and we must now make up for it—I was going to say for the lost time—but I cannot regard that time as lost which is spent innocently, either in refreshing amusement, or pleasing conversation. However, my dears, we must all of us remember, that sweet is rest after labour, and pleasure after exertion. I believe no one enjoys life really who has not some occupation worthy of himself.



And of all secrets for happiness, one of the best is, "to make our duty our pleasure; and never, for the sake of present ease or enjoyment, to neglect it." And now to your studies, my children.

It should be added, that whilst the party were watching the sheep, one after another plunged into the stream, two salmon-fishermen sailed down in their coracles, and gave additional interest to the morning's amusement.



EARLY BRITONS WITH THEIR CORACLES.



CONVERSATION XIV.

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SHEEP SHEARING.

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Then the Farmer comes at last,  
When the merry spring is past,  
And cuts my woolly coat away,  
To warm you on the winter's day.—ANON.

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THE Sheep-shearing soon came, and afforded great delight to our young friends. But Henry, who seems to have been more subject to fears for another than for himself, could not help exclaiming,—“I am very much afraid they will cut the poor things’ flesh, papa. You have told me that shearing off the wool gives them no more pain than I feel when my hair is cut; but those knives are large: I am every moment afraid the poor things will be cut, and bleed, and cry out for pain.”

*P.* I have no doubt, Henry, if you or I were to attempt to use those shears, we should either cut the poor sheep’s body, or snap our own fingers off; but those men and women have all learnt how to use these formidable weapons skill-



fully, and there is no more fear of their hurting the sheep, than there is of the hair-dresser cutting your head. You may rely upon it, if they were giving pain to them, the poor creatures would not lie so still and quiet.

“Oh, papa,” said Charles, “I see the next process towards a coat. Those men and women yonder are rolling up the fleeces into round balls. Will you tell me what comes next?”

*P.* The wool is then put into sacks, and either taken to the fair, where merchants, called woolstaplers, buy it; or the farmer sends it direct to their warehouse. Here it is sorted by women, and boys, and men, who learn to distinguish not only the good from the bad, but all the different degrees of goodness: in careful houses, they separate the wool into seven sorts. The best is intended for our superfine cloth. The second best for what our great-coats are often made of: and so on. And to what use do you think the worst of all is turned?

*H.* Perhaps to make the rough coats the poor old men wear.

*P.* A fair guess, my young master; but it is to a much more humble service than that. It



is sent off to the places where they make mops: but, I dare say, a careless unthrifty person would throw it away as useless.

*C.* Well, papa, what is done with the best wool afterwards?

*P.* The woolstapler sends it to the manufacturers, either into Gloucestershire, or Yorkshire, or some other parts, where the clothing-trade is carried on; and there it undergoes many curious processes, before it comes into the tailor's hands. I shall be very glad to take you, if ever we have an opportunity, to see a cloth manufactory; but when we return home, I will see whether we have not a tolerably good account in some book which I will read while you are at your studies, and will endeavour to cull a few facts which may serve to explain the process generally.

But, Mary, my love, we cannot leave this scene of sheep-shearing without recalling a very beautiful passage of the Bible. Do you know to what I allude?

*M.* I think you refer to the passage in Isaiah, where the Prophet says of our Saviour, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." We read the passage together.



*P.* Quite right, my child.—Do you remember *when* we read that chapter together?

*M.* Oh, yes, papa, it was on Good Friday; I learnt the whole chapter by heart, and I love so much to repeat it: it describes the sufferings and death of Christ so very plainly. It brings him quite before our eyes.

*P.* Charles! I know you have been reading the Acts of the Apostles lately. Is this passage quoted any where in that book?

*C.* I was just thinking of it, papa. It is in the chapter where the Ethiopian is reading in his chariot when Philip joins him. He was reading this passage of Isaiah; and he asks Philip whether the Prophet was then speaking of himself or of some other man.

*P.* I need not ask you, Charles, what answer Philip made him?

*C.* It is said that he preached unto him Jesus.

*P.* Yes. There was no other person on earth, nor ever had been, to whom these words would apply, except Christ; and every word agrees in him so exactly, that nothing could have been made to suit the circumstances of his death more fully, had it been written on purpose after the event. But how are we sure that it was not so



written? It is really so evident an act of providence, that we cannot too early become familiar with it; nor too sincerely be thankful for it. I think you can understand it, my dears. Those very words which we read in our Bibles now,—the same which the Ethiopian read, and which Philip explained to him,—were written seven hundred years before Christ was born, and have, ever since they were written, been in the care and custody of the Jews:—the very words are now read in their Synagogue, though their eyes are still blinded, that they cannot discern their real meaning. What a providential circumstance that is! The Jews have been our librarians, and kept that book in safe custody for us. If the Book of Isaiah had been in the hands of Christians only, it would have been said, that they had forged that chapter; but now such a charge is impossible. Do you understand what I have said?

*C.* I understand it very well, papa.

*M.* Oh, papa! I should be so glad for the Jews to become Christians! I think they would be so happy.

*P.* They would, indeed, my love, if I may reason from those whom I have known; for I have been acquainted with some myself, and they



assured me, they never felt the comforts of religion before their conversion. It was most gratifying to converse freely with them, and hear their expressions of satisfaction and gratitude. How beautifully, and soundly, too, has our dear friend, in the *Christian Year*, spoken of their conversion:—

He shall redeem them, one by one,  
Where'er the world-encircling sun  
Shall see them meekly kneel;  
All that He asks, on Israel's part,  
Is only that the captive heart,  
Its woe and burden feel.



SHEEP-SHEARING.



## CONVERSATION XV.

## CLOTH-MAKING.

Weave, brothers, weave!—Swiftly throw  
The shuttle athwart the loom,  
And show us how brightly your flowers grow,  
That have beauty but not perfume.—WEAVER'S SONG.

“WELL, Charles,” said their papa, a few days after the sheepshearing, “we all seem to have forgotten that we left our Wool in its raw state, just landed at the manufacturer’s. It is not our practice so to leave our work half done.”

C. I assure you, papa, neither Mary nor myself had forgotten it: but we have been very busy with other things. And Henry too would not let us forget it. He wishes very much to learn how wool is made into cloth.

P. You must bear in mind, that in our present state of manufactures in England, improvements are constantly being made; and that the method pursued now, is very different from any thing which prevailed a hundred years ago. And who knows, but in another hundred years our suc-



cessors may have surpassed us, as much as we have improved upon those who have gone before us! You are aware, Mary, by what means the chief improvements have taken place.

*M.* I believe by machinery. Is it not?

*P.* Yes. Formerly almost every thing was done by hand: and now they have a machine for almost every process. This is a very important subject, and perhaps, your attention may be directed to it, as you grow older. You know, that the steam-engine has been one means of carrying on these improvements, to a degree beyond the conception of former times.

*M.* I wish very much to understand, how a steam-engine works. Can you explain it to us, papa?

*P.* Perhaps so, my child, at some future time: I think now Henry is rather impatient to follow his sack of wool. Where did we leave off, Henry?

*H.* We saw the sheep washed, and shorn, and the fleeces rolled up, and packed off to the manufacturer; and now we are to learn what he does with it, before he sends it to the tailor.

*P.* I ought to have told you, that it is only



the short wool which is made into broad-cloth—the long wool serves for bombazines, used chiefly to make gowns, and for camlets, such as my travelling-cloak is made of. The short wool is first carded, and formed into small round rolls,—then this is spun into threads by a machine, called a spinning jenny. It used to be spun, chiefly by women, with a large-spinning-wheel. These threads are then woven—very much as linen is woven. The cloth is then scoured: and afterwards made more close and thick, by what is called fulling. Then comes a process which is chiefly curious because the utmost ingenuity has not been able to invent any thing artificial to perform it. And the manufacturer is still obliged to use what nature supplies.

*M.* What can that be, papa? I thought art had left nature nothing to do in making cloth.

*P.* Look at this cloth on my sleeve; you see it has a sort of down upon it. This they call the nap, and it is raised by carding the cloth with a kind of burr, which is very common in our country. Do you know what I mean, it is called the teasel.

*C.* I think it is that sticky, prickly burr that



we saw hanging on the colts' tails in the green-lane. Is it not, papa?

*P.* Exactly the same. Well, they have tried many contrivances to produce the nap on broad-cloth, but all have failed: nothing will do except the teasel. Every invention of art employed instead, tears the cloth, or injures the surface: and so I believe, this is the only production of nature which is used in the manufacture of cloth, just in the same state in which it grows in the field.

*C.* I suppose then, papa, they want very few, for there are not many about this country; and I never see any persons gathering them.

*P.* You are quite mistaken as to the numbers required: fifteen hundred, or two thousand, are requisite to complete a piece of cloth. And in some countries, to supply this great demand, they raise them from seeds in a field, with as much care of cultivation, as our farmers raise their crops of wheat. There is a very clear account of this branch of husbandry in the *Journal of a Naturalist*; but I think the writer is quite wrong, in supposing that there were no teasels in England before they were



brought here from foreign parts, on purpose to be cultivated for the cloth-trade.

*H.* Well, papa, I should never have thought those burrs could be of any use at all. I suppose every thing might be useful, if we knew what it was fit for.

*P.* Indeed, my boy, the more you know, the more you will be surprised at the use to which many things are put, which you before would have thought perfectly useless. Who would ever have thought, that the nasty grub-looking thing, the leech, could be used in sickness—and often, perhaps, so as to save a person's life who would otherwise die. There are many such instances. Every thing, I conceive may be turned to some account.

*C.* But, papa, have I not heard that our countrymen use much foreign wool in making cloth? Ought they to do so?

*P.* I am sure they do: and I think they ought, if it makes better cloth. But we must not enter upon that question: if the tastes and studies of people do not change, you will hear such questions discussed quite enough, and quite soon enough, when you will be better able to



understand them. But as to the fact—the most beautiful wool comes from Spain, where there are vast flocks of sheep, which are taken many hundred miles to feed upon the wide high grounds through the summer months, and return again for the winter. I ought to tell you, that they do not wash the sheep in Spain, before they shear them.

*C.* Has not the manufacturer much more to do then, papa, in cleaning the wool when it comes here?

*P.* No, the wool comes into his hands in a much cleaner, and more pure state, because the Spanish farmers scour it after the fleece has been shorn, much more thoroughly than our people clean it in the river or brook before shearing. Mary, I shall wish you to read an account of the Spanish shepherds, and their flocks, and their long journeys; I am sure you will be much pleased with it.

*M.* I am sure I shall, papa. There are so many beautiful parts of the Bible, which I always think of, when I see a shepherd and his flock, or read of them in foreign countries.

*P.* There are, indeed, my child, most lovely



passages in that best of books, to which our thoughts may be often drawn by what we see in the fields and meadows; but none more beautiful, than those which place our Saviour before us as the Shepherd of his flock. In enclosed countries, the shepherd's care is much lessened; it is in wide tracts of mountain-pasture, or very large downs, that we see it to the best advantage. And, especially, you will find some truly interesting particulars in the accounts of the Spanish migratory shepherds and their flocks. But, Mary, I think I have heard you repeat that lovely passage of the Prophet; I shall never be tired of hearing it. Let me hear you once again.

*M.* "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

*P.* Very well, my love, does not this speak to our heart, when it so sweetly assures us of God's love and tender care for us all? There is another passage in the forty-ninth chapter of the same Prophet, which you will find very exactly to agree with the account of the Spanish shepherds.

*C.* I don't know that passage, papa. Will you repeat it?



*P.* It is this, "They shall feed in the ways, and their pasture shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them, for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." Mary, you have often repeated the twenty-third Psalm, "My shepherd is the living Lord." What a beautiful little lesson Bishop Horne teaches us on that verse:—"Every flock should remind us of our wants, and every pasture should excite us to praise that love by which they are so bountifully supplied."





CONVERSATION XVI.

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MILK, BUTTER, AND CHEESE.

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And now the dairy claims her choicest care,  
And half her household find employment there ;  
Slow rolls the churn, its load of clogging cream  
At once foregoes its quality and name ;  
Streams of new milk thro' flowing coolers stray,  
And snow-white curd abounds, and wholesome whey ;  
Thus wanes the morn, till each with pleasure sees  
The bustle o'er, and pressed the new-made cheese.—BLOOMFIELD.

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“PAPA,” said Mary, one morning at breakfast,  
“Charles and I wish very much to learn the  
history of Butter and Cheese; we know they  
both come from Milk, and are made in the dairy,  
but neither of us can tell much more about the  
matter.”

*Papa.* I should have thought, Mary, you  
had often heard people speak of churning, and  
cheese-presses; indeed, I thought you had been  
to Farmer Careful's, and seen his wife make both  
Cheese and Butter. Is it not so?

*Mary.* Yes, papa, but I really do not quite  
understand it: at least Charles has asked me  
some questions which I cannot answer.



*P.* Well, Charles, tell us first what you do know, and we shall be better able to start from the right point.

*Charles.* Indeed, papa, my knowledge is very scanty. I have often seen the Milk taken into the dairy, and Cheese and Butter brought out; but how they bring both from the same Milk, I do not know.

*P.* Perhaps you do not quite know what Milk is.

*C.* I know it comes from the Cow, papa. Is that what you mean?

*P.* Milk not only comes from the Cow, but is produced by Sheep and Goats, and a vast number of other animals, for the nourishment of their young. We need not enter into what are called the chemical properties of Milk. It will be time enough for you to study them some years to come. But any child who is willing to learn may understand the evidence which the production of Milk bears to the wisdom and goodness of God. And as I have often told you, the habit of tracing the hand of a kind and benevolent Providence in his works, is not only very improving, but very full of interest and



pleasure. And I am sure you are convinced already that children cannot begin too young. It will never interfere with their innocent amusements, whilst it will often supply them with much enjoyment and delight.

*M.* I do not quite understand how Milk bears any stronger evidence to God's goodness than many other things. Will you show us, papa?

*P.* I did not say stronger evidence, my love; for numberless other provisions of nature combine in giving the same proof: many which force themselves upon our notice, and others which only want a skilful examination on our part to add their testimony. Take the case of a poor little Lamb. When it first sees the light, it is far too helpless to support itself. Its mouth has no teeth ready for grazing; and it must pine and die were it not for the supply of nourishing food which its dam has ready for its support and comfort. And how beautiful is it to see the poor little thing make directly for the teat of its mother, and in a moment, without any instruction or experience, begin to suck just as well as a milk-maid draws milk from a Cow after many years' practice!



It is exactly the same with that pretty creature, a young tender Calf: so it is with the little ones of all that class of animals. They have not been in the world five minutes before they begin to draw upon the stock of sweet nourishing food, which has already been prepared fit for their use. How very different is this from the case of birds! and yet each shows the very same wise and kind provision of our Maker. If you watch a Swallow's nest, you will see the old bird returning again and again with a fly, or a gnat in its mouth, and feeding all the little clamorous chirpers one after another, just as regularly as a good Christian mother would divide her meal among her children around her table. It is, my dears, very pleasant and instructive to watch these things. A study of them not only affords an innocent amusement, which never tires, but lifts up one's mind to the great and good Power above, who guides the Lamb to the teat of its mother, and directs the Swallow to feed its helpless offspring.

*M.* I believe, papa, you call this study Natural History. It is so delightful, I am quite happy when our conversation turns this way.

*P.* There is this great advantage too, that



whilst many of its truths are such as may be understood by a young child like you, or even Henry, it supplies the oldest and best-informed persons in the world with increasing and most pleasing subjects of inquiry and contemplation.

*H.* Papa, you said the Milk was intended for the little animals; I am sure we rob the Calves then, for most of the Milk from the Cows goes into the dairy, and those poor creatures get very little.

*P.* Milk, in one form or other, is more generally used for the nourishment and enjoyment of man, than almost any other substance whatever. We ought to be very thankful for such a bounteous supply of so wholesome and palatable an article of food. Undoubtedly it was first designed for the nourishment of the young animals, but God, who gave to us authority over the other creatures of the world, and supplied us with the means of employing this production of theirs in various ways to our comfort, no doubt intended us to use his bounty with care and thankfulness. Through this country, in our time, there is very little use made of any other than Cows' Milk. Formerly the Milk of Sheep and Goats was em-



ployed in England as it is now in many parts of the Continent. I remember, among the Alps, seeing very large flocks of Goats which came home from their mountain-pastures as regularly before night, as our Cows come to be milked in a dairy-farm. The guide called them, in one place, the Grimsel Cavalry. And at a very picturesque spot, called Gais, a large number of invalids and others assemble and take lodgings every summer for the sake of drinking the Goats' Milk, which is considered most beneficial to health. We tasted some, but it was intolerably nauseous to the palate. Probably the same herbage which made it peculiarly useful as a medicine, gave it the disgusting taste.

*H.* I think, papa, nothing can be sweeter than the Milk we sometimes drink, fresh from the Cow. Is it not very wholesome?

*P.* Yes, I believe it is, and medical men generally recommend it as food for young children: but sometimes it is found too rich and heavy for delicate stomachs. When you, Mary, were a very little girl, we were obliged to have Asses' Milk for you; and the poor donkeys used to come every morning and evening to give you



your breakfast and supper ; and we used to call them Baby's Cows.

*M.* What is the difference between Asses' Milk and Cows' Milk.

*P.* Asses' Milk is much thinner and lighter, and gives nourishment without loading a delicate stomach beyond its strength ; and they say it will not curdle.

*C.* Papa, I think we all know what Milk is now. Will you tell us the difference between Butter and Cheese ?

*P.* Well, let us first take Cheese. Milk consists of different substances, and it is by separating some of them from the others, in different ways, that we make either Cheese or Butter. To make Cheese, the Milk is poured into a vat, or tub, and an acid liquid called rennet is mixed with it, which very shortly separates the curd, or what is called the Cheesy matter, from the watery parts. I should much wish to show you this process: it is a very easy experiment. Charles, I see the vinegar-cruet on the sideboard, bring it here, my boy, and then bring a wine-glass, you will see it better than if we use a tea-cup.

*C.* But, papa, must we not have what you called rennet ?



*P.* No, my boy; vinegar or any other acid will do for our purpose, though it might not suit the Cheese. Now, Mary, pour the Milk into the wine-glass till it is half full: well, you see it is quite liquid, and all of one consistency. Taste it, Mary!

*M.* It is quite sweet, papa.

*P.* Well now, Charles, pour into the milk a tea-spoonful of vinegar.

“Oh, papa,” said Henry, who was watching very carefully, “it is all clotted; how very suddenly it is changed!”

*P.* Yes: To hasten the experiment, we put more acid in proportion to the Milk than would have been necessary merely to curdle it. Now, Mary, for you shall be our Dairy-maid, pour the watery part out carefully into this cup, resting your spoon against the glass. Just leave space for it to run, but do not allow the curd to escape.—Very well done. Now put the curd into this napkin, and squeeze it between two plates. There—look—you have a Cheese. Well done, our first experiment!

*M.* Oh, papa! how very clear you have made it to us. But what does the Dairy-maid do, instead of what we have now done?



*P.* As soon as the rennet is poured into the tub, which I think they call a cowl, they stir it about to mix it as well as possible, and when the curd is formed, or as they say, when the Cheese is come; they break it up, and squeeze it together, to form the curd into a more solid substance; which they then put into a Cheese-vat, and afterwards press with a very heavy weight or screw, to squeeze all the watery particles out. This is to be done very carefully and effectually, or the Cheese will not be good. After it has been turned and pressed enough, they put it on clean boards to dry, and it is soon fit for use.

*C.* Indeed, papa, you have explained it so clearly, that I think I could make a Cheese myself: Do you think I could, papa?

*P.* Whether you could or no, I cannot tell: but I knew a very celebrated personage, now dead, (he was indeed a great man, Charles, in the best sense of the word;) who went himself into the Dairy, when he was on a visit at the house of an excellent lady, and intimate friend of his and mine; and made, or helped to make, a Cheese with his own hands!



*C.* Oh, papa! I wonder why so great a man should do so. Was it not beneath him?

*P.* He was a most excellent judge, and was very well informed on most subjects; and he was impressed with the great advantage of a judge being familiar with every thing that came within his power to learn. And, on one occasion, I think, in trying a prisoner, he regretted much that he did not know how Cheeses were made. because some part of the evidence turned on that point. You may rely upon it, my dears, a person of ability and care will some time or other, be able to employ with advantage, any knowledge he can glean. It is very idle and unwise to say, "Oh, that can be of no use to me." I recommend you to start in the world, with a desire of learning every thing that is taught.

*M.* Now, papa, how is butter made? Can you show us with the wine-glass? The experiment made every thing so plain about the Cheese.

*P.* Perhaps we may be able to do something of the kind. But first, let me tell you, that instead of putting the milk into the cowl, as if to make Cheese, when they mean to make Butter, they pour it into wide shallow vessels (called



skeels), and there they allow it to remain for some hours. During this time, a thick oily substance collects on the surface; which we are very fond of, and call what, Henry?

*H.* Oh, papa, it is Cream, which is used with your tea.

*P.* Just so. Well, this Cream is taken off from the Milk, and put into a vessel by itself, and when a sufficient quantity is collected, it is poured in a very thick state into a churn. The object is then to beat it about and agitate it as thoroughly as possible. This process separates the Butter from the watery particles, and as soon as this separation is effected, the Butter is taken out, and is immediately fit for use. The part which remains, is called Butter-milk, and is a favourite beverage in Ireland, and the mountains of Scotland.

“Papa,” said Henry, “you did not tell us the name of what remains, after the Curd is taken away?”

*P.* It is Whey; and very sweet and delicious it is. In London, and many large towns, in the Milk-shops, they turn the Milk, not for the purpose of making a Cheese, but solely to have



Curds and Whey to sell. It is reckoned very wholesome as well as pleasant to the taste. In the country, the Whey is usually given to the farmer's pigs. One thing is very remarkable in the making of Butter; though the Cream may be sour when put into the churn, the Butter, when taken out, is perfectly sweet.

*M.* I suppose, papa, Butter and Cheese have always been in use every where! I remember reading of them in the Bible.

*P.* You have hit upon a very nice point, Mary; and one, that has raised the curiosity of many older than yourself. Cheese, in some shape or other, I believe, has been generally made and used, wherever Milk could be had in sufficient plenty. But with Butter it is certain that the ancient Greeks and Romans were not at all acquainted, as the produce of their own country. And, as some say, it is easily accounted for; in those hot regions, Butter cannot be kept in a solid mass as it is here, but will melt into a kind of oil. In the East Indies, the natives have no Butter, for the same reason. They have something in its place, which they call Ghee, a very disagreeable substitute. The English there, however, have



delicious Butter churned every day. Perhaps, therefore, we ought to seek for some other reason, why the Greeks and Romans had it not. With regard to those passages of the Bible, in which our English word "Butter" occurs, it is supposed, that either thick Cream, or a sort of running Cream-Cheese is meant. The word "Butter" is derived from the Greek language, and means precisely, "Cow-Cheese." We may account for the use of the word, thus; the cheese from the Cow was reckoned the best kind, and so when they found a delicious substance made from Milk, which was before unknown to them, they gave it the name of "Cow's Cheese."

*H.* Oh, papa, I thought you promised to try to show us how to make Butter, as you made the curds in the wine-glass?

*P.* You have seen the churn at Farmer Careful's,—it is a round barrel, supported lengthwise on two stands, and it is turned round and round, for a long time; in the inside, are pieces of wood fastened to the sides, and standing out, so as to dash the Cream about at every turn. Another kind of churn is an upright cask, with a hole at the top, through which they move a stick up and down; to the bottom of the stick is



attached a round flat board with large holes in it; and this motion tosses the Cream about effectually enough. I remember in a very small dairy, the dairy-maid put the Cream into a large earthen jug, and stopping up the mouth close, tossed it about as steadily as she could. It seemed very hard work; but the Butter was quite as good. Now the little experiment we can try, must be very much like this last method. Charles, ask for a phial-bottle.—Now put the Cream out of the cream-jug into it. It must not be much more than half-full. Put a cork in; shake it about, just as you have seen Nurse shake a bottle of medicine.

“Oh, papa, I am tired,” said Charles, after a little while.

“Let me go on with it?” said Mary.

Soon it was delivered to Henry; and at last, to the great joy of the party, they saw the Butter formed—and tasted it—as well as the Butter-milk.

“Thank you, ‘papa,’” said Mary, “I think I understand it all.”

“And so do I,” added each of the boys, with thanks.

*P.* Well, my children, we must now go to our



studies. The two experiments have kept us very long at breakfast. But I must first tell you a little true story about Cream. I had it from a gentleman who was at Constantinople at the time. When Mr., now Sir Robert —, was our ambassador to the Sultan Selim, he was desirous of having some cream with his tea; and such a thing was not to be found in the whole of that great city. So the Sultan's officer sent off a Janissary to a farm some distance in the country to fetch some. A quantity of the very best was put into a bottle, and slung upon the messenger's back. Away galloped the Janissary with his treasure; but when he arrived at his journey's end, the Cream was all churned into Butter. The good people were as much astonished as if the Cream had been changed into ready-made coffee; and putting it all down to witchcraft, threw it away forthwith, in great terror. They had never seen Butter. This happened about forty or fifty years ago.

*M.* In the countries where Butter is not made, what do they use instead, papa?

*P.* For many purposes they use oil. Henry, you remember what oil comes from?



*H.* Yes, papa. You told me very lately, when we were talking of the Whale-fishery.

*P.* Oh, my man! The people in Italy would scarcely thank you for that oil, to eat with their salads, or dress their omelets in. The oil they use, is drawn from olives. You remember, Mary, I have often shown you the leaves which a friend of mine gathered on the Mount of Olives, and was good enough to give me. The Mount is still seen there, just as it was in our Saviour's days.



JAN'SSARY AND CREAM-BOTTLE.



## CONVERSATION XVII.

TRAVELLING IN FORMER DAYS.  
CIVIL WARS.

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The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased.—COWPER.

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“I AM so glad, papa,” said Mary, “that you intend taking us to the sea; I quite long to have a view of it; and see the waves, and the shipping, and the shells, and sands, and seaweed; and I hope you will let me bathe: there are very good machines. I have heard so, papa, and very careful women to attend on children and ladies.”

*Papa.* Well, my love, we will talk of those things when we arrive at the coast. We start, you know, to-morrow. You will all be ready.

*Charles.* Oh, yes, papa; I think there is no danger of our not being ready. We are all so desirous of starting. I dare say Henry will hardly sleep all night, from fear of not being called time enough to start with us.

*M.* Ah, Charles, and what did somebody



else say? You know whom I mean. I think I heard one not a mile off say, he should like to dress over-night, and be ready to jump into the carriage the moment he awoke.

*C.* Well, Mary, if we must tell tales, I think I know a young lady who said, she wished we were off, for fear of some accident happening to prevent us.

*P.* Well, loves, if you are never guilty of worse tale-telling than that, I shall not be displeased with such good-natured raillery: but we must be always careful not to make a jest the groundwork of a fault. And amiable young people cannot be too much on their guard against the habit of tale-telling. It grows upon those who indulge in it by degrees; and it makes them disliked by others, whilst it has a very bad effect on their own dispositions and tempers. A tale-bearer can scarcely be an amiable character in himself, and certainly he is never beloved by those who know him. They will listen to his stories and seem pleased, and all the while hold him in contempt, and never trust him. But your tale-telling was only make-believe. So, good night, my dears, we must be



up with the sun, and begin our journey before he has long entered upon his, or we shall not reach the end of ours before he has sunk to rest.

“Oh, dear papa, how very beautiful a morning it is,” said Mary, as she returned from taking a farewell peep at her flower-garden. “The breeze is so cool, and my flowers smell so sweet, and look so fresh and lovely, and every thing around is so smiling, I cannot help feeling a little sorry at parting with them: and I cannot bring Henry away from his rabbits. There he stands, papa, repeating, ‘Good bye, bunnies! good bye. I hope they will be good to you, my poor little dear things, now I am gone. I hope they will keep the cats and dogs from you, and give you your breakfast and supper every day. I wish I could take you with me. I wish I was coming back to see you. Good bye, my bunnies;’ and when I try, papa, to bring him away, he says, ‘Let me stay only a little minute longer,’ and he is filling their hutch with parsley and clover.”

*P.* I know Henry is a very affectionate boy, Mary, and I had rather be detained by him, than not witness his kind feeling to his little pets. Why, Mary, it is the very same feeling



that made you look back again and again (I saw you) upon your flower-garden. But, Mary, where is your brother Charles all this time? Have you seen him lately?

*M.* No, papa, I have not seen him since he left the breakfast-table, when I went to say good bye to my flowers, and my poor little canary. I will go and see for him; shall I, papa?

"Oh, papa," said Mary, returning almost immediately, "I found Charles in very great trouble, and almost ready to cry. He was giving the servants particular orders about the two dogs; and he said he could not bear the thought of leaving them behind, he was sure they would be hurt, or perhaps killed. 'The farmer's great dog,' he said, 'had a spite against poor Rover, and would certainly bite him if he could catch him.' Poor boy! he is in great trouble. But I see he is now coming."

"Well, my dear boy," said his papa, "I delight to see your regard and anxiety for your faithful servants; but I trust there is no great danger. They will be taken good care of, and I hope we shall find them well when we return. I dare say they will be very glad to see us."



“Poor things,” said Charles, “I hope no harm will happen to them. Pray, papa, give the servants strict charge not to let the farmer’s great dog come near them. Poor Rover, I am most afraid for him!”

The children and their papa were soon bowling along the road. It was a beautiful summer’s morning. The late rain had laid the dust, and every thing looked quite fresh and green; and so many interesting objects came rapidly one after another before their eyes, that rabbits, dogs, and flowers, were soon for a time dismissed from their minds, though by no means to be forgotten afterwards.

“Papa, papa,” said Henry, “look how very fast the hedges run by us. Look at that tree, I declare it is passing us at full gallop.”

“Oh, Henry,” said Charles, “what a silly boy you are—the hedges and trees cannot move. How could you think so?”

“I’m sure,” replied, the young traveller, “they seem to me to fly by us as fast as a bird. Will you tell me, papa? Don’t those hedges move? Do look, papa, at that gate.”

“I think, my young master,” said his papa to



Charles, "you were rather too sharp upon your brother. The hedges *do seem* to move: and *you know* that they stand still, and that we are the only things that move. But still if you did not know that the trees, and gates, and hedges were fixed, to your eyes they would seem to move. And you now see, that whether you stand still, and the objects you look at move fast by you, or whether they stand still and you move fast by them, it is the very same thing *in appearance*."

C. Yes, papa, I see that now: but I never thought of it before.

P. Very likely not: but I think Mary knows what I tried once to explain to her by this apparent motion of the hedges as we run rapidly by them ourselves.

M. Indeed, papa, I forget what it was exactly; but I think it was something about the sun. Will you be good enough to tell me again? I am sorry I have forgotten.

P. Well, never mind, my love; you have just remembered what it was about, though the particulars have escaped your recollection. I do not wonder at it in the least. But I think if I tell you now again, the journey, and Henry's remark, will fix it in your memory.



*M.* Oh, papa, I think I shall not forget it again.

*P.* Well, you know that the sun rises towards the east every morning, and sets towards the west every night; and seems to us to be travelling all day through the sky from east to west.

*C.* Yes, papa, I have often watched him pass by the tall fir-tree near the coach-house. Mary and I sat upon two chairs, one behind the other, last week, and put ourselves just in the shadow of the tree, so that we could not see the sun at all; but in a very short time, we saw him on the west-side of the tree, and we were obliged to move our chairs, it was so hot and glaring: he seemed to both of us to move very fast. It was Mary's plan, papa.

*P.* I am very glad you did so. The sun seemed to you to move: and supposing the sun were fixed, and you moved, would not the same thing have taken place.

*C.* Yes, papa, I see that.

*P.* Well, now, whether the earth on which we live moves from west to east, the sun being fixed; or the sun moves from east to west, the earth being fixed, will not the same thing happen?



*M.* I think I understand that quite well, papa: but does not the sun move, then, papa? for I think you mean that.

*P.* It is now held for certain, that the sun is fixed, and that the earth turns round itself once in twenty-four hours; which makes the sun appear to travel round the earth in the same time: and the effect is just the same; he is always shining upon one half the globe; and when it is day here, it is night on the other side.

*M.* I think you explained this to me once before, papa. Did you not use an orange? I think I remember that.

*P.* Yes, my love. If I take an orange in a dark room, with only one candle, and hold it by its two ends between my finger and thumb, and then twirl it gently round to the candle, you will see the case exactly. And if a little fly were on the orange, and could tell us what he saw, I should not be surprised if he were to say, that the candle rose on one side of the orange, and after travelling over it, set upon the other. But we could tell him, "It was the orange, and you upon it, that moved, and the candle stood still all the time."



“Pray, papa,” said Henry, “do show us that to-night.”

*P.* You shall have an orange, my boy, and your sister and brother will show it you ; and if they cannot make you understand it, I will try. But I wish them to try first, for their own sakes, and to prove to me that they have understood my explanation.

The first stage was soon passed over ; the horses were changed without delay, and the party were again on the road between hedges of the wild-rose and clematis, studded, too, with cottages, in the midst each of its garden ; the general appearance giving the pleasing idea of industry, neatness, and comfort.

“How very quickly,” said Mary, “we have passed over the first stage, papa ! We shall soon be at the sea.—Shall we not, if we go on at the same rate ?”

*P.* The roads are so much improved in every respect, and the inns are in so much better order than formerly, that travelling is far more expeditious ; and they are still going on improving year after year. If some of the good people who lived here a century ago could rise from



their graves, and see what has been done, they would not know it for their own country: and yet they thought, no doubt, that they had improved very much upon those who went before them.

“Oh, papa,” said Mary, “I have read in some book lately, that some years ago there were no turnpike-roads in England. How did people travel?”

*P.* The book was quite correct, Mary. People did not travel then much; not one for a thousand that move about the country now; and when they did, it was chiefly on horseback, or even on foot. There were few carriages, indeed: only the very rich and great folks kept them; and if they travelled to any great distance, they were obliged to take their own horses with them; there were none ready at all, much less as we found them, ready at a moment's notice at an inn. So they were obliged to stop to rest at every stage; and a journey which is now easily done between breakfast and dinner, would have taken those steady travellers three whole days. There are a great many curious facts about travelling in former times, in various parts of the



country ; and, indeed, the greatest start has been made in the memory of those who are now alive, and by no means the oldest neither. What say you to this, Charles?—We can now travel from London to Brighton easily in six hours ; and not fifty years ago, the stage-coach used to start early, rest the first night at East Grinstead, where the landlady was famous for her boiled rabbits, which never failed to supply the passengers with a supper, who next day started betimes, to reach the end of their journey before night.

*M.* I should think it was very tiresome, papa.

*P.* I dare say it was ; but you remember they travelled very little in those times : so I suppose it did not return often enough to be felt as a great grievance. At Gloucester, they used to wait till they had enough passengers booked to pay ; so that an Oxonian going up from Herefordshire or Wales was often detained there (as I have heard from an individual whose patience was so tried), not as he might be now, because there was no room, but because there was too much room, and not enough places taken. When the member for Monmouthshire was asked in the House of Commons, on the passing of the



Turnpike Act, what sort of roads they had in his county, he said, "None! We travel in ditches." I remember once, a very old Somersetshire gentleman told me that his great-grandfather was taken prisoner in the Civil Wars, and carried off to London; the soldiers had also forcibly taken away all the coach-horses, and every horse they could find. His good wife wishing to ransom him, like a woman of a warm heart and strong mind, resolved not to allow any such difficulty to stop her. So she put eight oxen to her carriage, and, setting out from Somersetshire, after a fortnight's journey arrived safe with his ransom. How long a team of oxen would be now coming over the same ground I have no idea; but a carriage in those days, drawn all the way by one set of horses, resting at every stage, would have been a full week on the road; and a stage-coach would not have accomplished the journey in less than five days.

"And how long are the coaches now upon the road, papa," said Charles; "not more than half the time, perhaps?"

*P.* The mail starts from London at eight o'clock, in the evening, and it arrives with its



load of letters and passengers, at about noon next day : and that town is not more than a very few miles from the mansion where the good lady lived ; and had all her horses taken away.

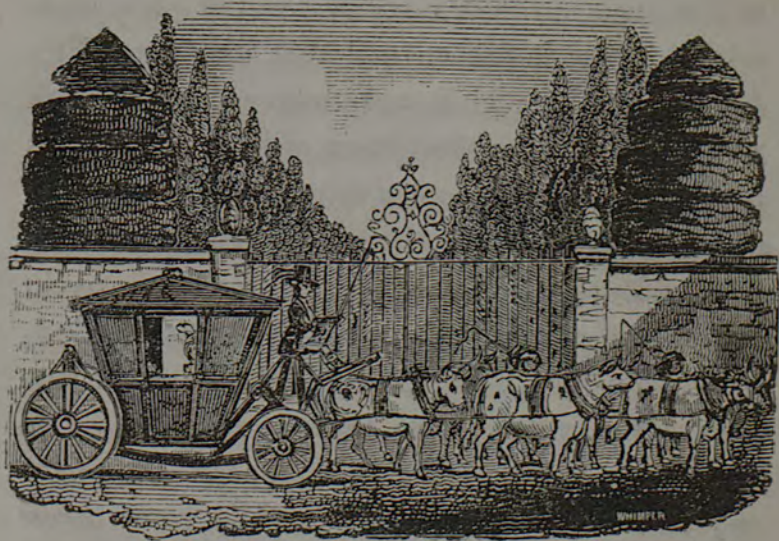
“ Oh, papa,” said Mary, “ how very shocking it is to read of those times, when Englishmen fought with each other in battle, and took each other prisoners, and carried off all their horses and provisions, just as though they were savages, or foreign and cruel enemies, as we read of it, in the *History of England*.”

“ My dear love,” said her father, “ I trust, God will defend our poor country from another such trial. There is not an evil that man can inflict or suffer, which civil war does not bring with it. I hope our countrymen will, under God’s guidance, be led to better things. He alone, who rides in the midst of the whirlwind, and directs the violence of the storm, can preserve us in safety and peace. We do not deserve such kindness. Justice, if alone, would bring down the destroying, rather than the guardian Angel to our land : it is so full of wickedness. We have no claim on his providence. We must throw ourselves on his mercy, and hope, that he will



direct the counsels, and strengthen the hands, and pour his grace into the hearts of our rulers; and teach us all to obey Him, and love Him, and be contented, and do good."

If Englishmen only knew how to set a right value upon the blessings of which their country is in the actual possession, they would be ever offering the tribute of grateful thanks to their great Benefactor.



SOMERSETSHIRE LADY ON HER JOURNEY.



## CONVERSATION XVIII.

## DANGEROUS TRAVELLING.

Let not thy father still advise in vain,  
Son, spare the whip, and tightly use the rein.

\* \* \* \* \*

The frightened horses, plunging several ways,  
Break all their tire \* \*.—OVID.

“OH, papa,” exclaimed Henry, “here is a coach coming after us, the horses full gallop. I hope they will not run over us: will you tell our driver to get out of the way, and stop the carriage?”

“Indeed, my love,” said his father, “that coach is coming at a frightful rate, and loaded so high with luggage! Look, how it sways to and fro; it is quite alarming. Driver! keep as near to the edge of the road as you can.—I am glad it is gone by: but, I fear it may meet with some accident. Did you observe, Mary, how frightened the poor old lady seemed, who was looking through the window?”

*Charles.* And did you see the gentleman on the outside? I heard him call to the coachman to stop; but he did not hear him.



*M.* Papa, I thought I saw that lady put her hand to the door, as if she was trying to open it, and jump out. Indeed, papa, I think I should have been so frightened, that I could not have staid inside.

*H.* I think, papa, the horses are running away; do you think the coachman can stop them?

*P.* Indeed, my children, I thought the coach in considerable danger; but if you were in it, you would act very foolishly to attempt to jump out. You could scarcely avoid a broken arm or leg, or, perhaps, you would be killed. The safest and best plan, is always to remain quite quiet, and never attempt to jump out, if you are in the inside, or to throw yourself off from the top. I dare say, we shall see another coach racing after it very soon; for no doubt competition is the cause of the coachman driving so furiously.

*H.* What is competition, papa, will you tell me?

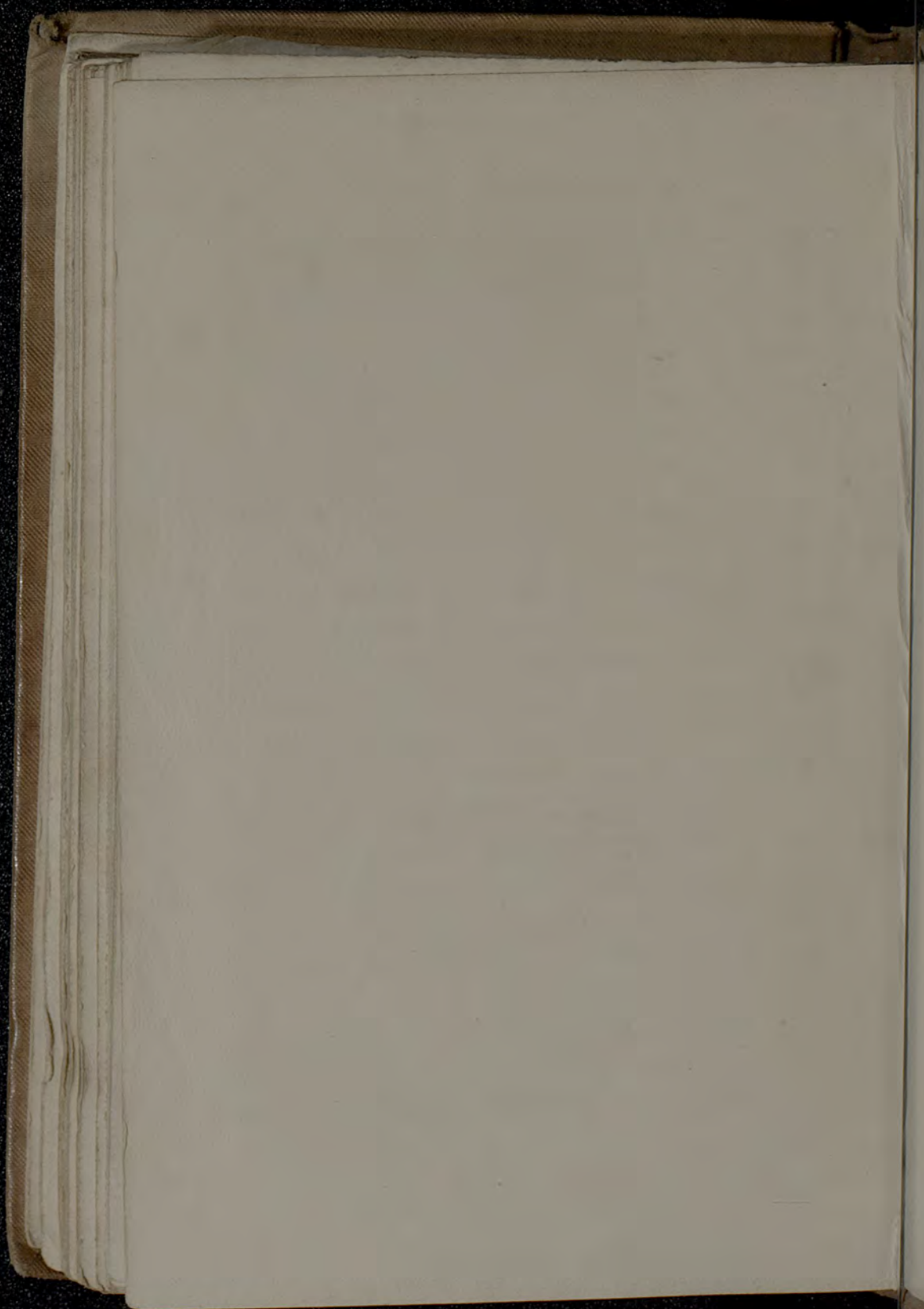
*P.* We call it competition, when two persons are desirous of the same thing, and each struggles to secure it to himself, and to exclude his rival. There is, in every branch of trade and business, much more competition now, than formerly.





COACH PASSING AT DANGEROUS SPEED.







To a certain extent, it is of much advantage to the public, and supplies us with what we want cheaper and better. But, when carried to excess, as it seems to be now, it ruins the parties, and in the long run, injures the public. That coach wishes, by taking the lead, to catch up passengers on the road; and so to take them from the other; and the proprietors hope, either to ruin their rivals, or to drive them from the road, and so have all the custom to themselves. I fear, they are now carrying it on this road much too far for the safety of the passengers. I shall not be surprised at all, if we hear of some accident. The coachman did not seem to me to have the horses in his command, as he passed us.

The event too well justified these forebodings; the coach violently struck against the post of the next turnpike-gate, and the horses dashing on, threw it, in a second, against a bank, and overturned it with a violent shock. Many of the passengers were severely bruised, and as our young friends left the inn, at the next stage, the life of one was despaired of.

“Well, papa,” said Charles, after they had again advanced some way on the road, “I really



think now, with all the expedition of the present travelling, things on the whole were better in former days, when there were no stage-coaches, nor turnpike-roads. Accidents were seldom heard of then, I suppose; and now we hear of them every day."

"Charles," replied his father, "you must learn never to argue against the prudent use of any thing from its excess or abuse. I have no doubt that state of society had some advantages which we have not; but I have no doubt, also, that the sum of advantage, when you take all the *pros* and *cons* into account, will be much in our favour. You are taking a very partial view of the subject, my boy."

"Pray tell me, papa, what are *pros* and *cons*; do they belong to the coaches or the roads?" said Henry, to the great amusement of the rest, who could not forbear laughing.

"Indeed," said he, "I don't see why you laugh at me. Will you tell me, papa?"

P. My dear boy, we were not laughing at *you*, but at *your curious question*; and you will, too, laugh *with* us at your own blunder some day or other, when we remind you of it. *Pros* and



*cons* means all that can be said for and against any thing—the arguments on both sides. There was once, we are told, an old justice, who used to say he never heard both sides, for it always puzzled him so; if he heard only one side, he said, he could very comfortably make up his opinion.

“So you mean, papa,” said Henry cheerfully, “that all things considered, as to travelling, we are better off than they were in former times. I am sure travelling as we do is very pleasant. How many things have we seen to-day, papa! I shall have so much to tell our cousins when they come to see us on our return.”

“Why, Henry,” said Mary, “you will not know where to begin. But, papa, these are very sad accidents. I should have preferred the old roads, and slow journeys, if you had not told us to hear both sides.”

C. I was almost of your opinion, Mary; but you see we have ourselves all the advantages of good roads and quick travelling, and we are in no danger, because we are contented to go at a moderate rate. I dare say the old gentry of Monmouthshire, who used to travel in ditches, would say we were galloping.



*M.* You forget, Charles, that we were in some danger of being upset when that coach passed us so furiously down the hill. The mischief is by no means confined to the coach itself, and its passengers.

*C.* Papa, did you hear them in the inn talk of the poor gentleman who was so terribly hurt? He is not expected to live.

*P.* No, I did not hear any thing further than that he was a middle-aged gentleman, and lives about twenty miles off.

*C.* The waiter told me he was known very well, and much respected in these parts, and that he had a large family at home. How very melancholy, papa, for his poor children! Perhaps they will never see him again. Poor things; I could not help thinking of what we read in Thomson about the snow-storm. Do you remember, papa, you desired us to learn it by heart?

*P.* Oh yes, my boy, these are awful visitations for a family. God help them! Their home is changed from the dwelling of comfort and happiness into the house of wailing. Poor lady! I hope his wife knows where to look for support and solace. She will feel desolation in



her home, and in her heart. The shock must be very dreadful at first; but I hope she is under the influence of true Christian principles, and then she will not be left to sorrow as one without hope. Religion is a city of refuge—whose gates are ever open to an afflicted soul: I trust she will find rest and consolation there. And, in after-days, may her children be her comfort! You, my dears, know nothing, and can understand but little, of such losses: but you cannot be too young to learn how much the comfort of parents through life depends upon the disposition and conduct of their children. Mary, my love, do you remember my reading to you a passage in the *Lady of the Lake*? It is very touching.

*M.* I remember it very well, papa; but I cannot repeat it. Will you, papa?

*P.* I have so often read it with deep interest, that some of its lines, I think, will scarcely ever escape from my memory.

What woful accents load the gale?  
The funeral yell, the female wail!  
Within the hall where torches' ray  
Supplies the excluded beams of day,  
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,  
And o'er him streams his widow's tear;



His stripling son stands mournful by,  
His youngest weeps, and knows not why.  
The village maids and matrons round  
The dismal coronach resound.

You know what the coronach was, Mary?

"I think," said Mary, "you told me it was the funeral song. But I never hear of funeral songs now in our neighbourhood."

*P.* No; the custom is quite strange to us: but you will soon learn not to regard any practice as bad, or foolish, or indelicate, merely because it is not our own. The very same thing which would raise only feelings of disgust in our country and age, might in another be joined with thoughts of propriety, and respect, and regard. How very striking are some expressions in this stanza of the coronach!

The hand of the reaper  
Takes the ears that are hoary,  
But the voice of the weeper  
Wails manhood in glory.  
The Autumn winds rushing  
Waft the leaves that are searest;  
But our flower was in flushing,  
When blighting was nearest.

The first stanza is very beautiful, but I think the poet might have thrown somewhat more of



Christian hope into it, without at all lessening its poetical force.

He is gone on the mountain,  
He is lost to the forest ;  
Like a summer-dried fountain,  
When our need was the sorest.  
The fount re-appearing  
From the rain drops shall borrow ;  
But to us comes no cheering,  
To Duncan no morrow.

I confess it appears to me that Walter Scott might have put a more religious and Christian sentiment into the coronach of a Christian chief, whose widow seems to have been under the influence of Christian feelings ; for she says,

Yet trust I well, his duty done,  
The orphan's God will guard my son.

I cannot help contrasting with these sounds of despair the cheering words of Milton. We will read the whole poem soon, Mary :—

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,  
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead . . . . .  
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love,  
There entertain him all the saints above,  
That sing, and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

*Lycidas.*



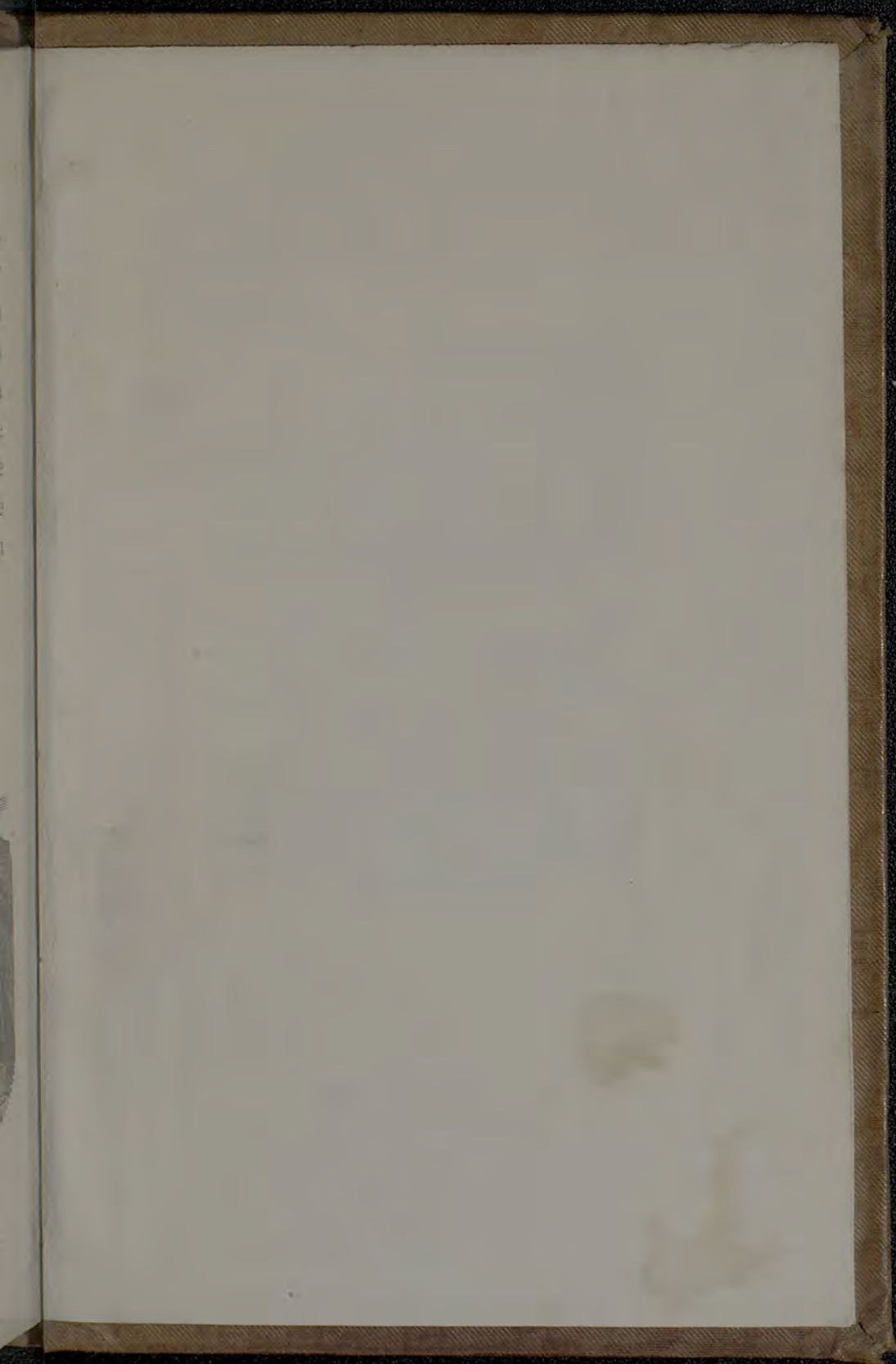
Yes, my dear children, if Duncan died a Christian, "a morrow" awaited him, a far better and brighter day than ever shone upon him on this earth; and to the mourners there was a "cheering," if they knew where to seek it, a "fountain" never dry. Mary, you remember these words; may they ever be the consolation of me and mine! "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

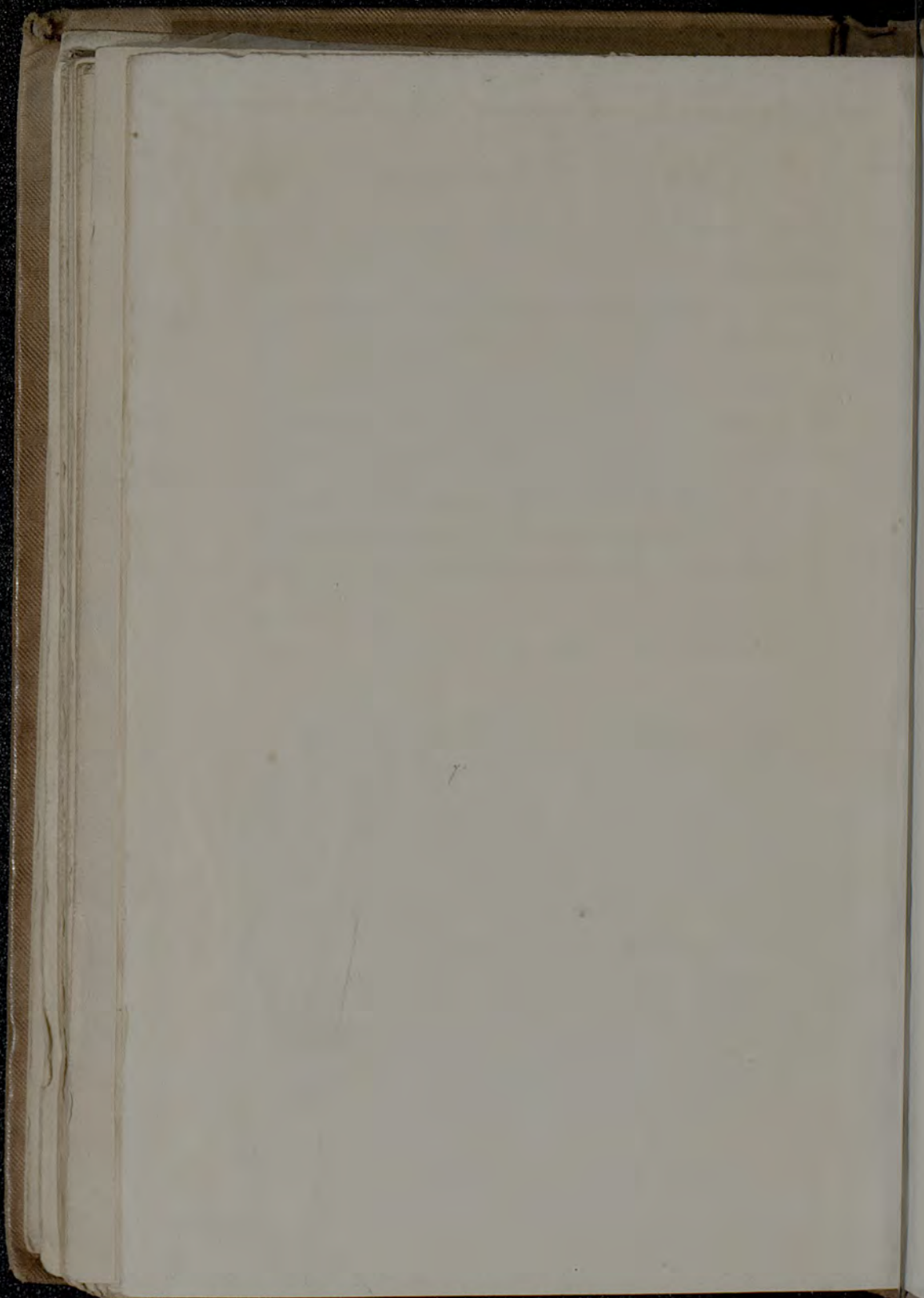


LONDON:—JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.











(SB)  
CONVERSATIONS OF  
A FATHER WITH  
HIS CHILDREN  
V. 1  
1834



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