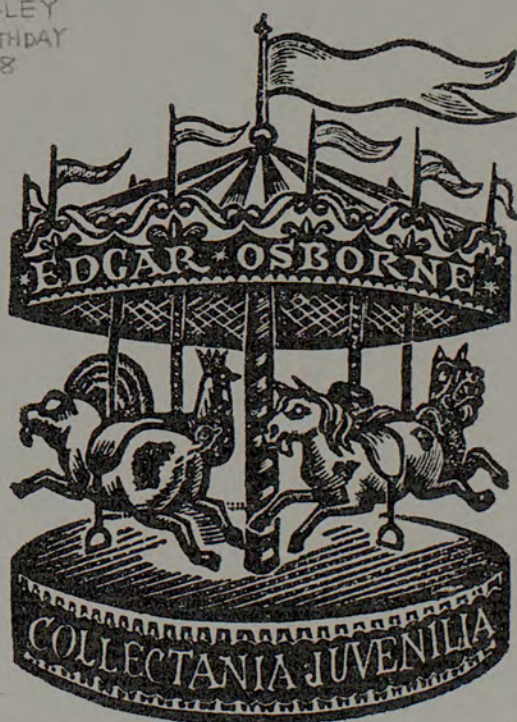


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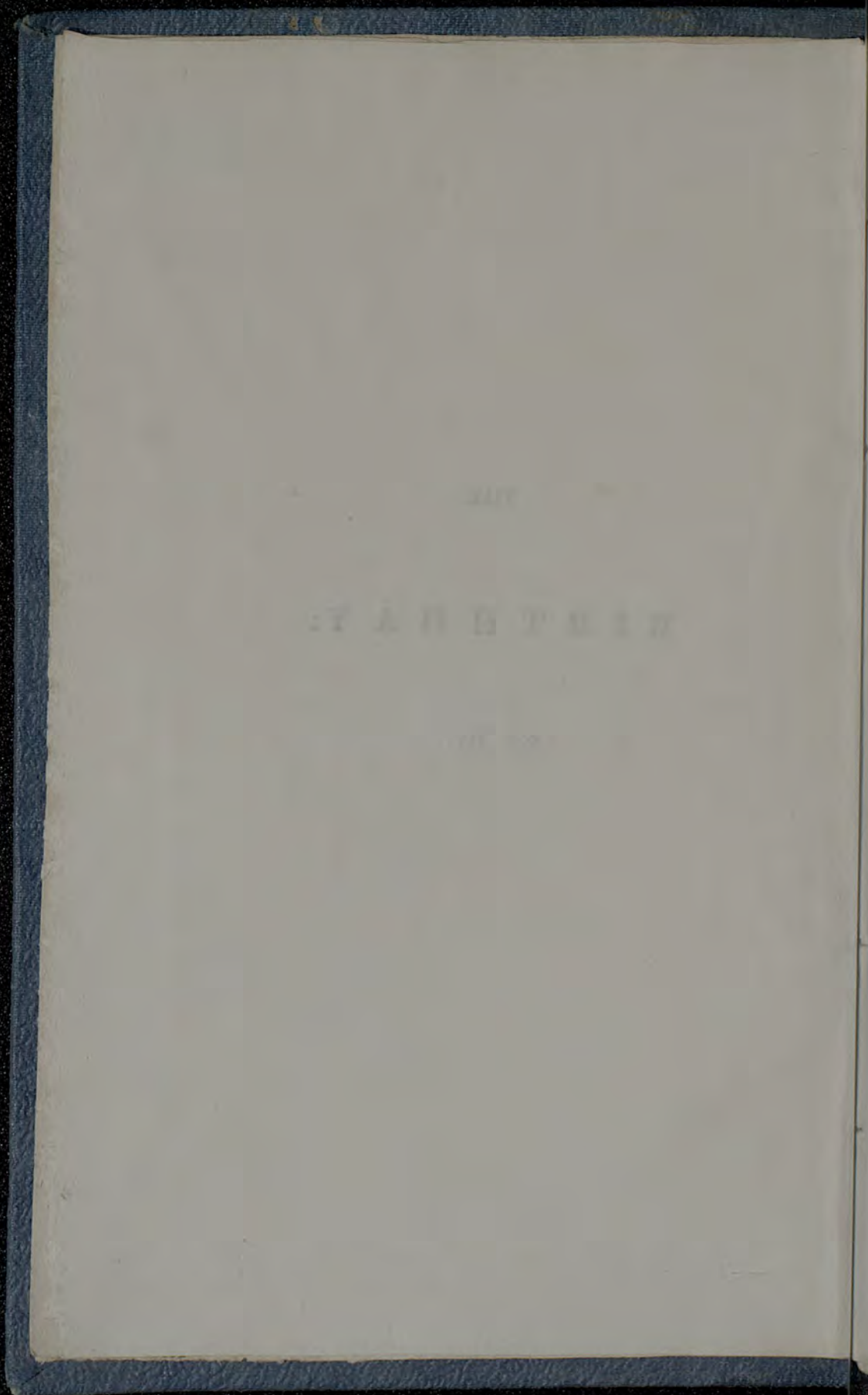
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THE
BIRTHDAY:

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THE
BIRTHDAY:

WITH
OTHER TALES.

BY ELIZABETH FRANCES DAGLEY,
AUTHORESS OF "FAIRY FAVOURS."

LONDON:
JAMES BULCOCK, 163, STRAND.

1828.

DIARY

C. SMITH,

ONE-BELL YARD, STRAND.

TO MRS. HEMANS.

MADAM,

ALTHOUGH I have not the honour and good-fortune of being personally known to you, the motives which induce me to take the liberty of dedicating this volume to you are, respect and gratitude. The first of those feelings I share with all who have read your works, or heard of your character; the last has been excited by the kind and obliging readiness with which you consented to contribute several of the most valuable articles in a recent publication of my father's*. I am

* "Death's Doings."

quite aware of the insignificance of the offering; but I am still bold enough to hope that, however imperfect the execution of my little stories, their object and tendency will not experience your disapprobation.

I am, Madam, with many apologies for this unsanctioned address,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

ELIZABETH DAGLEY.

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THE BIRTHDAY.

IT was the birthday of little Isabella Mortimer, who had just attained her sixth year, and who, even at that early age, discovered, that "fortune never comes with both hands full;" for, although the day produced a new frock, a new doll, a rich plum-cake, sweetmeats, &c., it brought also a new pair of stocks, a number of new books, very different, both outside and inside, from those she had been accustomed to. No pretty histories of Little Red Riding-hood, or the Children in the Wood, in each of which the number of pictures so fully explained the story, that they almost saved the trouble of reading it. These, on the contrary, bore a very unpromising appearance. They were spelling-books, French and English grammars, full of

hard words, and without any pictures at all to enliven them. But the worst of all was, the introduction of a governess, who happened to arrive while Isabella and her young companions, who had come to spend the day with her, were in the midst of a game of romps. The stately and rather austere look of Miss Loftus, considerably checked the noisy mirth of the little party, especially that of poor Isabella, who, conscious for what purpose the lady was come, felt much awed and embarrassed by her presence; and almost pinched a sprig out of her new muslin frock, as she stood gazing, in timid wonder, on the stranger, who being very tall, very fine, and very pompous in her manner, seemed a person of infinite importance.

Miss Loftus soon, however, relieved the young people of her presence, for having undergone the fatigue of a long journey, she retired to her apartment upon a plea of weariness, to the no small joy of the children, who resumed their sports with as much glee as ever; and Isabella, too young to meet

trouble half way, thought no more of her governess till the following morning, when she was awakened by Hannah, her maid, who, in a sharper tone than usual, desired the little girl to make haste and get up, for that Miss Loftus had been inquiring for her.

“ So now, Miss Bell, you must behave like a lady, for your governess looks terribly cross, and I fancy won’t let you go on as you have done—you must turn over a new leaf now,” continued Hannah, scrubbing away with a towel upon the poor child’s face in a manner that at another time, and under different circumstances, would not have been taken very quietly by her young lady. But, in the present instance, Isabella’s dread of the “ new leaf ” that was to be turned over, and of the new governess, made her submit patiently to all lesser evils.

Mrs. Mortimer and Miss Loftus were seated at the breakfast table when Isabella entered. The little girl, after running up to kiss her mamma, ventured to look up at the

stranger, who, on her part, smiled very graciously on the little girl, and took her by the hand; saying, she hoped they should be very good friends. All went on well during the meal, and Isabella, as she stole many anxious glances towards Miss Loftus, observing that the lady ate and drank like other people, and conversed very pleasantly with her mamma, began to hope a governess was not so terrible a being as she was led to suppose.

After breakfast, however, the table was spread with books, and a chair with an upright back, which prevented either lounging or fidgetting about, was placed for Isabella, whose courage began to forsake her at the sight of these formidable preparations for the commencement of her lessons, more especially as she was now to be left alone with her governess. For Mrs. Mortimer, very properly thinking that to remain in the way herself would appear like interfering with Miss Loftus's plans, resolved to go and pay some morning visits: very well satisfied with leaving her daughter in good hands.

Mrs. Mortimer was a lady of considerable fortune. All her pride and all her affections were centered in Isabella, who was her only child; and one of good promise; but Mrs. Mortimer had an idea, which is very common and very natural to parents, which was, that her daughter possessed very extraordinary abilities, and she accordingly resolved that she should be a little prodigy. No resolution, however, could have been more unlucky; for Isabella, though an intelligent child, had no pretensions to genius.

It happened that a family of the name of Spencer had come to reside next door to Mrs. Mortimer; the children of which family not only were said to possess, but really possessed considerable talent. The two families soon became acquainted, and when Mrs. Mortimer saw the clever drawings of one, heard the musical performance of another, and admired the elegant dancing of a little girl, a year younger than Isabella, she infinitely regretted the backwardness of her daughter's education, when compared to these gifted children.

No more time, however, was to be lost; and Mrs. Mortimer was determined to provide a governess and masters without delay; resolving, if possible, that all the accomplishments of all the young Spencers should be combined in Isabella.

A music and a dancing master were accordingly immediately engaged, and a lady, highly recommended as competent to the task, was secured as a governess.

Aware, however, that Isabella would feel most severely the restraints she must now undergo, Mrs. Mortimer had contrived to introduce the governess on her daughter's birthday, hoping, that by thus mixing the bitter with the sweet, the draught would be the more easily swallowed.

But we must now return to the poor little girl, whom we left with Miss Loftus, surrounded by all the terrible appendages of spelling-books, grammars, stocks, and dumb bells.

For some time, however, her lessons went on pretty well; Miss Loftus was tolerably

patient, and not very cross; but, unfortunately, Isabella being unaccustomed to confinement, soon began to show symptoms of weariness, by gaping, sighing, and moving restlessly about upon her chair. These hints, when Isabella used to read to her mamma, always produced the desired effect, a dismissal from her lesson; but they were entirely lost upon the governess, who appeared to have no feeling, either for her pupil or for herself. Miss Loftus would, indeed, have been a very proper person to manage a perverse or obstinate child; but Isabella was neither the one nor the other; her temper was good and tractable; she had no fault but the heedlessness natural to one of her age, in high health and spirits, and who had never experienced the least severity.

By moderate degrees, and some allowances, she might soon have been brought into proper training, but Miss Loftus was a person unused to make allowances of any sort; she seemed to think it was as necessary

to conquer the giddiness of a child of six years old, as the idleness of one of a more mature age. She continued, therefore, to ply her pupil with learning for the space of two hours, a tedious length of time for one who had never been accustomed to sit still for half an hour.

At last, to her great joy, Isabella was released, and sent out walking with her maid ; Miss Loftus having letters to write at home.

No sooner was Isabella outside the door, than she poured forth a torrent of complaints, all ending with how much she hated Miss Loftus, and how good she would be if her mamma would but send the governess away.

Hannah condoled with, and comforted her young mistress as well as she could, for which, however, there was not long occasion ; for no sooner had Isabella got into the fields, than she forgot her governess, her lessons, and her troubles, in running after butterflies and gathering flowers.

The afternoon went off better than the

morning had done, for Miss Loftus gave her but a moderate lesson, and her mother was at home, and praised her attention to her book, promising her all kinds of rewards if she took pains to learn; so that, upon the whole, the little girl began to grow something better reconciled to her governess, and at night went to bed, thinking more of her promised rewards than of what she must do to obtain them.

On the morrow the scene changed again. All was tribulation with the little girl; vexation with the mother, and anger with Miss Loftus; for the music master came to give his first lesson, and most intolerably stupid did the poor child appear. For all the pains that Mr. S— took, it was so long before Bell could distinguish between crotchet and quaver, or between lines and spaces, that the master nearly lost his patience, and Mrs. Mortimer was in despair.

By dint, however, of promises from her mother, prompting from Miss Loftus, and indefatigable labour on the part of Mr. S—,

in the course of a month Isabella had learnt notes sufficient to touch the instrument.

Still music was a terrible stumbling-block, and never did the deepest tragedy cause more tears than she shed over the merry tune of "Girls and Boys come out to play."

Time and perseverance, which overcome the greatest difficulties, at length got Isabella through some of hers; and a twelvemonth transformed the playful child into a steady well-behaved little girl.

In some respects, assuredly, the alteration was for the better. Visitors were no longer annoyed by the high-spirited turbulence of the spoiled child, yet many regretted the artificial manners adopted by one so young, and thought the bounding step of liberty more graceful, as well as more natural, than the measured pace and studied curtsy with which the little girl now entered the room.

In regard to her learning, Isabella was making moderate improvements, but moderate improvements would not satisfy Mrs. Mortimer, whose aim was to make her daugh-

ter surpass the rest of her acquaintance in accomplishments. To stimulate the child to exertion every device was resorted to, of a kind to render the object to be attained appear less worthy in itself than as a means of excelling other persons.

The family of the Spencers were the constant subjects of rivalry and emulation. Isabella was urged to endeavour to dance better than Miss Lucy, and to practise her music that she might surpass Miss Caroline. Then all her friends were put into requisition.

"My dear Bell," said her mother, one day, "Lady B— has been inquiring for you. I fancy she will call soon to hear you play—she is very anxious about your improvement. So, I hope, my darling, you will take pains."

"I hope so, too," exclaimed Miss Loftus, who generally took a different method from Mrs. Mortimer to excite her pupil to get on, "for I was quite shocked last week at the blunders she made in her new lesson be-

fore Mrs. Selwyn." In short, Isabella was taught to believe that her attainments must be of consequence to every body.

And now a fresh inducement to take pains was held out to the little girl. Her uncle and aunt were coming to town, and she was to surprise them and to surpass her cousins, Mary and Louisa Herbert, who were nearly of the same age with Isabella ; but as their parents had no idea of making them prodigies, they were at this period behind her in attainments.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert were quite as solicitous about their children's improvement as their sister could be, but their ideas were different from hers ; they did not consider that a good education consisted entirely of showy accomplishments ; while, in Mrs. Mortimer's opinion, they were every thing.

The first time that the family of the Herberts visited Mrs. Mortimer, after their arrival in town, was to be a day of display for Isabella, who had been in training for some time for this purpose.

Mary and Louisa Herbert, who had been used to find their little cousin quite as fond of play as themselves, were surprised to see an alteration in Isabella, who seemed quite contented to sit still, and took no notice of the various hints which the little girls gave her from time to time to get out of the drawing-room. Mrs. Mortimer, who saw that her nieces were doing penance, and who wished also that the display of her daughter's acquirements should appear accidental rather than premeditated, at length desired the children to go and amuse themselves in the garden.

This was a joyful release to the little Herberts; but Isabella, who knew the part she had to perform, appeared surprised when her mother told her to go and play with her little cousins, and went with such evident reluctance that her companions could not help perceiving it.

"You seem as if you did not like to come out of the room, Bell," said her younger cousin; "my aunt told you twice before

you would stir ; and I am sure I made all sorts of signs to you, for I did so long to have a run round the garden."

" My governess says that it's only low-bred children that wish to be always at play, and that cannot sit still in company."

Her cousins could not avoid taking this as a hint to themselves.

" I am sure," said Mary, " we can sit still when there is any occasion for it ; but you know we had been sitting a long while, and the ladies and gentlemen were all talking ; so they could not want us. Come, what shall we play at ?"

" Hide and Seek " was soon decided upon, and the children had just entered into the spirit of the game when a servant came with a summons for Isabella, as some of the company had expressed a wish for music.

The little Herberts looked rather disconcerted at this interruption of their amusement.

" You need not come," said Isabella, affecting to treat her cousins like children

much younger than herself; "you can stay in the garden till I return."

But Mary and Louisa Herbert, though they were fond of play, knew how to behave with propriety, and accordingly returned with their cousins to the drawing-room, where Isabella was immediately placed at the instrument, to the great satisfaction of her mother.

Mrs. Mortimer, though she had been anxiously desirous of displaying her daughter's proficiency, had yet found it very difficult to procure an opportunity for that purpose; for although, in the course of conversation, music was talked of, and though every one present knew that little Miss Mortimer was said to be making great progress in that science, yet nobody thought of desiring to hear her play; and Mrs. Mortimer at last was obliged to directly ask her sister-in-law whether she would not like to hear the proficiency her niece had made?

The company, of course, all took the hint,

and appeared most desirous of hearing the young lady play, and Mrs. Mortimer's wishes were now accomplished in seeing her child the object of general attention. Still she experienced some mortification ; for though the mother would have listened with satisfaction for any length of time to her daughter's performance, this was not the case with her visitors, some of whom began to whisper, and, from whispering, got into pretty brisk conversation. Others, who were too polite to talk, could hardly suppress a yawn, and many were anxiously watching the clouds, as if meditating an excuse for departing. In short, before Isabella had got through half the music with which the company were to be treated, Mrs. Mortimer could not help perceiving that they were heartily tired of the entertainment, and accordingly her daughter was dismissed from the instrument much sooner than had been intended.

Glad to be released, the visitors tried to make up for this want of attention by the

praises and caresses they bestowed on the little girl, who, too young to understand the reality of the case, felt delighted to be flattered and admired; and Mrs. Mortimer, also, was soon put into good humour, by hearing some of her acquaintance say that her daughter must have an extraordinary ear for music. To be sure this was said by some who knew nothing of music, and by others who had not been listening; still it pleased Mrs. Mortimer, who thought her sister-in-law must feel mortified to see how far Isabella had outstripped her cousins; but as next to her own child, Mrs. Mortimer certainly loved her little nieces, as soon as the company were gone, she took the opportunity of advising Mrs. Herbert not to lose time, but to let her children immediately begin to take lessons in those accomplishments in which her own daughter had already made such progress.

"Besides," added Mrs. Mortimer, "it would be an advantage to all of them, and your girls will get on the faster by trying to

excel their cousin, and the fear of their doing so will be a sufficient stimulus to Bell.

"But in that case," said Mrs. Herbert, "the children would not be so fond of each other as they are now. As soon as they become rivals they will cease to be friends. I trust, also, that my girls will have a better motive to urge their improvement than the wish of outshining others. A taste for music and drawing will be sufficient, and without this quality I should be sorry they should spend their time in acquiring these accomplishments."

"My dear Mary," cried Mrs. Mortimer, "how you talk! Mr. S— and Miss Loftus both say that children may excel in music without having any natural taste for it, and I am sure Bell is a proof of that. If you had but seen what a piece of work there was to make her learn—why, she used to cry all the time she was taking her lesson in music, and now you see how fond she is of it."

"Are you sure of that?" said Mrs. Herbert, "she may like to be praised and admired, without being fond of music."

Mrs. Mortimer finding she could not make her sister enter into her notions, dropped the subject, and turned the conversation.

Soon after this Isabella went to visit her cousins, and though no visitors were assembled to hear her play, or see her dance, yet the time passed most agreeably, and in the evening she returned home in high spirits, and gave an animated description of the pleasant way in which she had been entertained.

"I hope, mamma, I may go often to see my cousins, for we were so merry, and had such fun (Miss Loftus knit her brows at this expression); and in the evening my uncle showed us a curious book, with such amusing pictures!"——

Isabella then went on to describe one of the plates, as representing an event in history, that appeared to make a great impression on her young mind.

"Why, surely!" interrupted her governess, with a tone of astonishment, "you knew that before? have you not got the

circumstance at length in your 'Historical Catechism,' which you have so often repeated?"

"I never can remember what I learn by heart," replied poor Bell; "for I am always so afraid of not repeating the words exactly right, that I hardly think on what it is about. I should like to learn history and geography as my cousins do; they have not half the trouble that I have; they read to their papa, and he asks them questions about it, and they tell him what they can recollect, but not in the words of the book; and my uncle says that don't signify."

"Mr. Herbert has a peculiar method of instructing his children," observed Mrs. Mortimer; "he certainly contrives to make them very fond of their learning; but I do not approve altogether of his plan of education."

Miss Loftus perceived, however, that notwithstanding Mrs. Mortimer did not entirely approve of her brother's system of instruction, she yet paid great deference to his opinions in general, and feared that the

occasional interference of the Herberts might frustrate some of her own plans, which extended to more than her pupil's improvement: for, perceiving the character she had to deal with, Miss Loftus resolved, soon after entering the family, to govern the mother as well as the daughter.

Mrs. Mortimer was a well-meaning, but weak-minded woman—excessive fondness for her child was the prevailing feature in her disposition. She supposed, like many others, that what was so dear to her must be an object of interest to every one else. Thus, when Isabella was an infant, Mrs. Mortimer thought she could never better amuse her visitors than by having the child brought down from the nursery, to be noticed and admired; and those friends who would otherwise have been fond of the infant, grew weary and disgusted at being obliged to keep their attention awake, and their complaisance upon the stretch at its every action.

As Isabella grew older, matters mended,

and the mischiefs that might have happened from excessive indulgence were counteracted by a naturally good and affectionate disposition; so that she was generally liked better than most petted children are; and as every one knew that the best method of insuring Mrs. Mortimer's friendship was by appearing fond of her child, all who were interested to gain her good-will did not fail of using means in order to effect it.

Miss Loftus quickly perceived her advantage, and acted accordingly.

Isabella was the constant theme of conversation between the mother and the governess, and the extreme solicitude always expressed by the latter for her pupil's improvement, delighted Mrs. Mortimer, and made her consider retaining such a person in her family as Miss Loftus a matter of the highest importance; so that that lady soon acquired all the ascendancy which she desired.

We must, however, do Miss Loftus the justice to observe, that the anxiety she

displayed for Bell's attainment was real, and that her endeavours for that purpose were unremitting; but it was before remarked that she was one more calculated to deal with an idle or obstinate child than with Isabella. She might have conquered a violent and rebellious spirit, and brought it under necessary control; but, without any proper discrimination, she exercised the same discipline over a mild and tractable disposition, which she would over a refractory one.

Her own temper was unamiable, her manner dictatorial, and her ruling passion to govern, and bring all, within her circle, under authority.

Mrs. Mortimer would have wished her child under the guidance of one less austere than Miss Loftus, and would sometimes have infringed upon her rules, but the fact was, that, in many respects, she was as much afraid of her daughter's governess as the little girl herself was. Still the main point was advancing, according to her utmost

wishes. Isabella promised to be as accomplished as her mother could desire, and Mrs. Mortimer was not of that unreasonable class of parents, who, when their children are deficient in learning, set it down to the fault of those who instruct them, while, on the other hand, if they make a proficiency in their acquirements, attribute it to the children's capacity, and give no credit to the teacher. She therefore gave all the praise that was due to the indefatigable pains which the governess took with her pupil, and was alarmed lest any circumstance should occur that might render that lady dissatisfied with her situation. Upon the occasion adverted to, Mrs. Mortimer took care to soften down what might look like disapprobation of Miss Loftus's plans.

The governess, meantime, who never cared for recreation herself, nor liked that others should partake of it, took the opportunity of observing that much harm ensued from children having too frequent holidays. Poor Bell was aware that this hint was thrown out

to prevent her frequent visits to her cousins, and fearful that it should be supposed that her day's pleasure had rendered her idle or inattentive, took extraordinary pains to get on well with her lessons; but extreme anxiety defeated its own ends; she made several blunders in writing her English exercise, and could not repeat her "French Dialogues" so perfectly as usual; her memory having once given her the slip, the poor little girl knew it was all over with her. Fear and anxiety paralyzed her powers, and after conning over her task for half an hour, she made more blunders than at first.

Isabella now gave the matter up in despair, and cried herself into a fever; while Miss Loftus very quietly remarked it was just what she expected—frequent visits to her cousins had quite unfitted her pupil for her lessons.

The mother was sincerely grieved; but she took it for granted that the governess was right. "It was a sad thing that the little Herberts were so wild and ill-brought up—

Isabella would be spoiled if she went often to see them."

Mrs. Mortimer and her sister-in-law had many arguments upon their different plans of education, which ended, as arguments generally do, without either party altering her opinion.

The children, however, met less frequently, which was judged better on both sides; for Bell always came back from her cousins too full of spirits to please her governess; while, on the contrary, Mary and Louisa Herbert, after a visit to their aunt's, generally returned home discontented or mortified; for, whenever they visited their cousin, they were always treated with a display of Bell's treasure, and few children had such a profusion of toys and trinkets as she possessed, all of which had been bestowed either as bribes or as rewards. Such a thing had been given by her mamma, for practising a certain number of hours; Miss Loftus had made her a present of something else, for repeating her French verbs;

in short, there was a similar history attached to every one.

Neither Mary nor Louisa was envious, yet they could not help thinking it hard that the case was so different with them. After a day spent at their cousins', they generally went to their tasks with less alacrity than before ; and a few hints were thrown out to their parents, by describing the number of beautiful things which Bell Mortimer had got for taking pains to learn. No notice, however, was taken of these hints.

It was the plan of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert to make their children like what they learnt by other means than that of bribing them to their good ; and after a while the young folks thought no more of Bell and her trinkets, but followed their studies and pursuits as willingly as before.

Six years had now elapsed since the commencement of our narrative. Isabella was twelve years old, and, assuredly, was accomplished beyond those of her age in general. Her performances on the harp equalled her

execution on the pianoforte, and the drawing-room was decorated with her landscapes, splendidly framed, which would have done credit to much longer practice.

Her progress in the knowledge of languages was also considerable. While Mrs. Mortimer was chiefly anxious about her daughter's proficiency in more brilliant attainments, Miss Loftus did not fail to thoroughly ground her pupil in the knowledge of what she probably considered quite as essential; but, unfortunately, her method was not calculated to make what she taught agreeable; and those studies that were pursued under the direction of her governess, were generally afterwards regarded by her with aversion.

About this period Miss Loftus went to spend a short time with some relations, who lived at a distance, and during her absence, Mrs. Mortimer thought this a good opportunity to let her daughter pay a long-promised visit to her uncle and aunt Herbert, who, for the last two years, had resided in Hampshire.

When Isabella had been there a week, the time allotted for her visit, Mr. Herbert came to town, to request that his niece might remain some time longer; and, as Bell wrote to her mother, at the same time, saying how happy she was in the society of her cousins, Mrs. Mortimer could not deny her request. She knew that her brother disliked Miss Loftus, and did not approve her plan of education; but she thought that even he must confess his niece did credit to her instruction.

"I hope, brother," said Mrs. Mortimer, who was always eager to hear her daughter praised, "I hope you find Bell improved; I certainly think she has good abilities."

"Indeed she has," replied Mr. Herbert; "she is a very clever intelligent child, and has, I think, an excellent capacity."

Mrs. Mortimer was delighted with this acknowledgment of her brother.

"I know," said she, "that, at one time, you thought my girl had no ear for music."

"To say the truth, sister," replied Mr.

Herbert, "I am exactly of the same opinion now, and must own that I am astonished at her proficiency and execution in a science for which, I am convinced, she has no taste; and I cannot but regret the time and pains she bestows on a pursuit, which will never be a real source of pleasure to her."

"Really!" said Mrs. Mortimer, surprised and mortified, "I cannot imagine what you mean, George, nor why you think Bell has no taste for music. I suppose, indeed, that while she is at your house she does not practise quite so much as she does at home."

"Oh, no," resumed Mr. Herbert, "I do not draw my conclusions from any such thing: on the contrary, I do assure you, Bell never fails to devote two hours, every morning, to practise, which she sits down to as to a task. If we have company, then my niece will play with much animation and pleasure; but she will never touch the instrument when there is no one to listen; and though I must give her credit for the perseverance

she has bestowed, I am sorry it has been given to an accomplishment, which is only to be displayed to others, and will never prove a resource to herself. However, my dear sister, we will, for the present, drop a subject in which our opinions do not coincide: and as it is almost unreasonable to deprive you so long of your daughter's company, suppose you return with me to Hampshire, for the remainder of the time that Bell stays with us; Mary and the children will be rejoiced to see you; and I have also another scheme in my head, which is, to try and prevail on you to come and live near us. The country round about is delightful, and we have some very agreeable society. Bell appears fond of the place, and has more taste for the beauties of Nature than I should have imagined from a pupil of Miss Loftus."

Mrs. Mortimer willingly agreed to her brother's first proposal, but shook her head at the latter part of it.

"I shall be delighted," said she, "to see

Mrs. Herbert and the dear girls; but as to *living* any where but in the metropolis, it is quite impossible! otherwise, there is nothing I should like so well as living in the country: for really I am half harassed out of my life by living in town. You know that I wish to be quiet and retired, and to devote myself to the education of my child; but, I know not how it is, I have got such a wide circle of acquaintance, that I have not a minute I can call my own, from morning till night. Our neighbours, the Spencers, are very gay people, and they have introduced me to most of their friends."

"I thought," said Mr. Herbert, "that the Spencers had left your neighbourhood, for Bell never once mentioned them."

"Why, to tell you the truth," said Mrs. Mortimer, "we are not quite so intimate as we were. They are a very pleasant family, I confess: but the fact is, Mrs. Spencer does not like any children to shine but her own; and I fancy she is rather jealous of Bell's abilities. Her young folks may be clever—

I don't say but what they are, but so intolerably conceited!—that, to be sure, is no great wonder, in the way they are brought up; but the worst of all is, they are so envious. 'The two elder girls, who used to be such friends of my daughter's, have lately taken quite a dislike to her, because some one happened to praise her execution on the harp; and they do not excel on it. However, it is chiefly the fault of the parents, in making them think so much of themselves."

Mr. Herbert was rather amused to hear these observations from his sister.

"At any rate," said he, "the society of this family can be no inducement to keep you in town?"

"Not in the least," cried Mrs. Mortimer; "for when one grows cool towards those with whom one has been intimate, it is rather agreeable to be at a distance from them; so that, if it had been practicable to live in the country, I should have liked it very much. But, indeed, it is impossible, on many accounts. I will, however, get ready to accom-

pany you on your return home ; for I long to see my little nieces." —

This point was accordingly settled ; and on the following day, Mrs. Mortimer set off, with her brother, to Hampshire, where she was most joyfully received by the Herberts, and where she spent several days most agreeably in the society of her brother and sister ; for, not having met for some time, the family had much to talk about ; but, above all, Mrs. Mortimer was astonished at the progress her nieces had made, though she had heard nothing about it.

"Upon my word, your girls have come on wonderfully," said Mrs. Mortimer, "I had no idea of it ; besides, I always thought you despised accomplishments."

"By no means," replied Mrs. Herbert ; "we only would not have our children give up their time to pursuits for which they have no liking and no talent."

"Well, I do not understand this," said Mrs. Mortimer ; "for truly, I believe, there are very few things, in the way of learning,

which children do like : and, you see, that is one principal reason why I cannot think of living in the country ; for, were I to leave London, I know that Miss Loftus would not remain in my family ; and though, to say the truth, in many instances, she is far from agreeable, and domineers more than I think she ought, yet, on my daughter's account, she is a treasure. For, though Bell is a very good girl, and applies diligently to her studies (because she is, in a manner, obliged to do so), yet, I assure you, if it were not for the pains Miss Loftus takes, I rather fear she would be idle ; for whenever her governess is out of the way, I never can prevail upon Bell to go on with her lesson."

"I am not altogether surprised at this," replied Mr. Herbert.

At this instant, the entrance of the three girls interrupted the conversation. They had been getting ready to take a walk, in which their parents were to accompany them, when the very threatening appearance of the weather, for the present, post-

poned their plan; and not for the present only; the rain, which came on gently at first, set-in for the day, and the young people were obliged to seek their amusement within doors. This was not difficult for Mary and Louisa, who had their pursuits; and Isabella got over the time pretty well for that day; but when the next day, and the next, continued wet and dreary, and no company came to enliven the scene, she began to grow weary of her visit. Her cousins tried, in vain, to entertain her, and her uncle gave her books, which passed some hours very agreeably: and, during her stay in Hampshire, Bell acquired a taste for reading, which her uncle took great pains to direct and improve.

Mrs. Mortimer was delighted; for she declared that, till that time, she had never seen her daughter take up a book of her own accord. Still, as the weather continued rainy, and no visitors came, several hours of the day dragged on heavily; and now, however unwillingly, Mrs. Mortimer was obliged to

acknowledge, to herself, that her brother was right respecting his niece; for whatever excellence Isabella had acquired in the science of music, it afforded her no other pleasure than what arose from the praises she received.

With her cousins, indeed, it was widely different; they took a real delight in what others considered only as accomplishments; not only as affording entertainment to their friends, but as an unfailing recreation to themselves.

It was on the afternoon of one of those dreary days, while the weather precluded every chance of walking abroad, and Louisa Herbert was finishing a small pencil drawing, which she was executing for her aunt Mortimer, that Isabella, who had watched her progress with much interest, exclaimed:—"How delightful! I should like to draw as well as you do; I always was fond of drawing, and I wish mamma would let me take some more lessons in it."

"Oh, if you are so fond of drawing," re-

plied her cousin, "what a pity you have not practised it all this time. All my materials are at your service. I recollect, my father told me he had seen some very clever landscapes of yours; for he said you really had a taste for that."

Bell coloured, and her mother looked rather disconcerted; the latter, however, found it necessary to reply.

"I'll tell you exactly how it was," said she: "Bell always fancied she should like to draw, but I was never very anxious about it; for I thought it would hurt her eyes, and make her stoop. But as she appeared desirous to take some lessons, on seeing some very beautiful drawings, by a young lady, who seemed to have made a surprising progress—for she had only learnt six months—I consented that she should learn drawing also. But, though Bell appeared to like it, she made, as I thought, but little progress; so I referred the drawing-master to what Miss Hammond had done; but he told me, positively, the thing was impossible. I did

THE BIRTHDAY.

not, however, approve his method of teaching, so I employed another, under whose instructions she made rapid improvement; and when she had finished those landscapes which are hung up, I would not let her take any more lessons, and she has not practised her drawing since."

From Mrs. Mortimer's explanation, what Mr. Herbert had before suspected, was now pretty evident; which was, that his niece had very little to do with the drawings that passed for hers. It was equally certain that her mother was aware of, and consented to, the deception. This, also, accounted for Isabella's unwillingness to take a pencil in hand, which would at once have discovered her inability to do any thing at all corresponding with the performances which had gained her so much credit. By this means, Bell was prevented from following a pursuit, which would otherwise have afforded her much pleasure.

The time had now arrived for the departure of Isabella and her mother. Mrs. Mor-

timer felt rather dissatisfied that her daughter's accomplishments had met with so little admiration, and she began to be more of her brother's opinion than she chose to allow, and wished she had brought up her child more in the way her nieces had been educated in.

To emulate others, and to gain general approbation, may stimulate improvement, but should never be made a principal object; and Mrs. Mortimer found mortifications and inconveniences arise which she had not calculated upon.

Bell had much quickness of discernment, and easily distinguished between the compliments of those who meant what they said, and of those who praised her merely as a matter of course. Unfortunately, as her eagerness for praise increased, her acquaintance grew less willing to bestow it; for she was no longer a little prodigy. Accomplishments appear extraordinary in a child of eight or nine years of age; but, by the time that child becomes four or five years older,

though a proportionable progress has been made, its attainments are, comparatively, disregarded.

Every body allowed that Miss Mortimer was a highly-accomplished young lady; but she was only one among many others; and so much was thought now of the infant *Lyra*, and the infant *sisters*, that all the more advanced candidates for admiration were eclipsed by these precocious wonders.

Months passed on, and nothing remarkable occurred during the winter. Mrs. Mortimer frequently thought of her brother's happy circle in Hampshire, and wished it were possible to be nearer to them; as, assuredly, their society and advice would be very desirable; still, to quit town seemed impracticable; though why, it would have been difficult to give a reason: but Mrs. Mortimer was apt to raise imaginary obstacles; and, unless some strong motive occurred, not easily put out of her usual habits, though even to obtain a point she desired.

Spring was now advancing; Isabella was

approaching her fourteenth birthday; on which occasion Mrs. Mortimer resolved to give a splendid entertainment. But though her constant aim and wish was to see her child an object of admiration, she thought a good deal on the excellent way in which the Herberts brought up their family; and determined, in the present instance, it should not appear that the entertainment was given for the purpose of displaying Isabella's accomplishments. It should be merely a children's ball, in which her daughter would only take a part among others. A numerous party were invited, and all looked forward to the day with much satisfaction. The young people were delighted with the prospect of a dance, and the parents, as spectators, were no less pleased in the anticipation of their children's exhibition.

Although Mrs. Mortimer had resolved it should not be supposed that the ball was given to display Bell's elegant movements in the dance, yet she thought it absolutely necessary that her daughter should take

extra lessons from one of the most fashionable dancing-masters. Isabella's dress, too, for the occasion was a matter of no trifling consideration, nor was it a point easily settled ; for the governess was of one opinion, and the mother of another. Mrs. Mortimer voted for striped lilac gauze, and Miss Loftus for clear muslin. Bell herself strongly inclined to her mother's choice, and was strenuous for a frock of lilac gauze.

It was quite a new thing for Miss Loftus to be thwarted in any respect. The dress of her pupil, on her birthday, was a matter of little moment or interest, but the opposing of her opinion was a thing not easily got over. Mrs. Mortimer had done, as many people do, asked another's opinion, when she had already decided the matter in her own mind ; and Miss Loftus was so much mortified to have her advice asked, and not taken, that she determined to absent herself on the occasion ; and an invitation from a former pupil, which she styled a most pressing one, to come and spend a few days

with her, answered the purpose very well. "She was sorry to be away at such a time, but dear Lady Augusta would be terribly disappointed if she did not go to see her."

This was not exactly the case: Miss Loftus had never made herself beloved by any one; but she had always been feared; and the habitual dread of offending her was so strong, in some who had been her pupils, that it even operated after they were no longer under her authority. Thus, though Lady Augusta took no pleasure in the company of Miss Loftus, yet on no account did she fail to send her the annual invitation which she had been accustomed to.

Mrs. Mortimer felt the absence of Miss Loftus a relief, and Isabella was delighted to think that the pleasure she should enjoy on her birthday would be unalloyed by any restraint imposed by her governess.

In the meantime she was practising her steps from morning till night; for Isabella, not aware that her mother did not intend she should play too conspicuous a part, thought,

as a matter of course, that she was expected to excel all her companions.

The important day at length arrived; and every thing promised fair for the entertainment of the evening. The weather was cool and pleasant, and no disappointments occurred from the absence of visitors, or, what would have been still worse, from the failure of dress-makers. All were punctual, and all were in good-humour. The company admired the decorations of the ball-room, and declared that Miss Mortimer never looked so well in her life.

All went on smoothly, and, apparently, to every one's satisfaction. The parents of the young people were each delighted with their own. Mrs. Mortimer was charmed to see her guests so well pleased, and flattered herself with the idea that the company must especially admire Isabella's style of dancing, which, in her partial opinion, appeared greatly superior to all the rest.

The evening was now far spent. The figure-dances were over; and Isabella, who

had performed her part to admiration, was now flattered and praised as much as either she or her mother could desire.

Refreshments were handing about, after which, quadrilles and country-dances were to begin, for the amusement of the company in general. In the mean time, Mrs. Mortimer wished to give some directions to the servant who was taking the wine and cake around; and, that she might not disturb any one, she passed, unobserved, behind the seats of the company to the other end of the room, where she waited in the door-way, that she might speak to the servant when he came out. While thus waiting, she observed two ladies, in close conversation, sitting rather apart from the rest of the company. The words "graceful" and "elegant" caught her ear; of course they must allude to her daughter; and the fond mother could not avoid listening to a subject so pleasing as the praises of her child. She drew closer to the door; which, as it stood open between her and the ladies, effectually hid her from their view, and they continued their conversation.

"You are right," said one, "far beyond Miss Mortimer, without half her pretension."

"Her dancing," replied the other, "is like every thing else she does—the effect of great pains and study. Bell Mortimer has no genius for any thing; she plays with much execution, but with no taste or feeling, and she dances correctly, but without grace. Then she has so much confidence in her manner, that, if she had ten times the abilities she possesses, it would render her disgusting."

"That, poor thing! is chiefly her mother's fault, who teaches her to think so much of herself, and has made a show of her ever since she was six years old. Any body, who did not know to the contrary, would suppose that Mrs. Mortimer intended to bring her daughter up for the stage."

At this moment the music struck up, and the ladies moved to another part of the room.

Mrs. Mortimer stood completely con-

founded, scarcely believing the evidence of her senses. Her grief and mortification were, indeed, most severe, and her indignant feelings extreme towards the persons who had thus poured contempt and ridicule upon her daughter's talents, and accused her of folly in obtruding them on every body's notice. The former she could not forgive; but, to the last, her eyes were now fully open. But how, after so cruel a mortification, to keep up her spirits, and appear cheerful and complaisant, for the rest of the evening, she knew not; but, painful and difficult as was the task, there was an absolute necessity for this effort to be made; and, with an aching heart, and irritated nerves, but with a smiling countenance, she turned to re-enter the ball-room; by this time having quite forgotten her intended orders to the servant.

At this moment, to her infinite dismay, she beheld her daughter standing beside her. She would have spoken to her; but Bell, in the next moment, was out of sight,

and had mingled with the company at the other end of the room.

Mrs. Mortimer was at a loss to guess whether her daughter had been an ear-witness to what had passed. From the momentary glance she had, Mrs. Mortimer thought she discerned an expression of angry vexation on the countenance of Isabella; and her own mortification was become a secondary concern, when she thought what her daughter's feelings must be, supposing she had heard the terms in which she had been spoken of.

By this time, however, the dancing had recommenced with much spirit; and, as Isabella appeared conversing among the company, her mother began to hope that, perhaps, she had not heard the conversation between the two ladies; but, just then, there appeared a little bustle and confusion at the upper end of the room. Mrs. Mortimer, in great anxiety, hastened to the spot, and found, to her additional consternation, that Isabella was the cause of it.

The company were concerned and astonished ; for Miss Mortimer, who was so fond of dancing, and so fond of obliging her friends, absolutely refused to stand up, without alleging any reason for not doing so. Every one now crowded about her to know why she would not dance? was she tired? was she ill? had she got the head-ache? Inquiries and smelling-bottles were pressed upon her on all sides.

Poor Mrs. Mortimer was now in an agony. She knew, and was perfectly aware, what ailed Isabella ; but, shocked at the impropriety of her behaviour, she assented to all the suppositions of the company, and earnestly entreated her daughter to leave the ball-room, and retire to bed ; but to no purpose. On this occasion, Isabella appeared to have lost all sense of what was due to her mother or her guests. She would neither leave the room, nor join in the amusement of the company, but sat, the picture of ill-humour, declaring, all the while, that nothing ailed her.

It is not easy to describe what Mrs. Mortimer suffered. Not only had she heard her child's accomplishments set at nought, and the way in which she had educated her condemned, but, worse than all, that Isabella should have so little control over her temper, as thus to expose herself, and play the part of an ill-bred, humoursome child.

Mrs. Mortimer now attempted to draw the attention of her visitors away from her daughter, but most of the company were too polite for this. Aware that, in general, the least slight to Isabella was an offence to her mother, they imagined they could not show their civility more than by appearing highly concerned about Miss Mortimer; though nobody could guess what was the matter with her.

In short, the entertainment was destroyed; for though the dancing continued some time longer, yet every body seemed under restraint.

Mrs. Mortimer, indeed, tried to appear

cheerful; but her spirits had received too great a shock to be easily recovered; and it was so evidently an effort, that all present saw that something very remarkable must have happened to discompose both mother and daughter.

The party accordingly broke up much earlier than was expected; and thankful was poor Mrs. Mortimer to hear the last of the carriages roll off.

Such was the conclusion of a day, the pleasure of which had been so long anticipated.

Mrs. Mortimer was highly incensed with her daughter; but, as the night was far spent, and the servants were busily employed in extinguishing the lights, and putting away the things, there was no opportunity for saying any thing; and, indeed, Mrs. Mortimer found herself too angry to trust herself with speaking on the subject at present. She therefore retired, without noticing her daughter further than by sternly desiring her to go to bed immediately.

Bell, whose angry feelings had, by this time, given way to sorrow and regret, now willingly obeyed her mother's commands; for she longed to be alone, that she might give free vent to her tears. The more she reflected on what had occurred, the more angry did Isabella feel with herself, and ashamed of her late behaviour, in suffering her passion and vexation to get the better of propriety; especially when she considered how much she had grieved her mother; for whatever blame attached to Mrs. Mortimer, could only be traced to blind partiality and excessive fondness for her child. These painful reflections kept Isabella awake the greater part of the night, and she dreaded the morning, and the thoughts of meeting her justly-offended parent.

Meantime, Mrs. Mortimer had suffered equally with her daughter; but, as anger towards her child was the most painful feeling of all, she endeavoured to subdue it, by throwing the fault upon others. All her reflections, however, on the subject came to

this conclusion—that she had herself been, most of all, to blame.

At a late hour in the morning Mrs. Mortimer entered the breakfast-room, and Isabella followed some minutes after. The sight of her pale cheeks and swollen eyes banished all remains of anger from the mind of her fond mother.

Bell had entered the room sorrowful, indeed, but sullen, for she expected a severe lecture; but, when she heard her parent address her in a kind tone of voice, it affected her more sensibly than any reproaches could have done; and, throwing her arms round her mother's neck, she wept bitterly; acknowledging, with much contrition, her sorrow for her behaviour on the preceding night.

"But, mamma," said she, at length, "did you know, did you hear what Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Hammond said of me?"

"Hush, my child!" said Mrs. Mortimer; "I cannot bear to think about it. I vainly hoped, at one time, that you would have

been spared hearing their unjust and cruel remarks. We will endeavour to forget them."

Isabella felt greatly relieved and comforted to be reconciled to her mother. She could not, however, be so easily reconciled to herself; nor had Mrs. Mortimer, by any means, got over the mortification of the last night.

The breakfast, therefore, passed in silence; after which Isabella took her work, and her mother her writing-desk; both parties glad to be spared from talking.

It was a dull, rainy day; and, as Bell sat at the window, watching the splashing of the rain-drops, she could not help thinking of the difference of this and the day before—that had been fine and clear, yet how had she wished the hours away! now, dreary as the weather was, the time appeared to pass too quickly, as it hastened the return of Miss Loftus; and there would be all her inquiries to be satisfied about the ball, a subject, of all others, most unpleasant.

Miss Loftus, however, did not return till

late in the evening, and appeared so much wrapped up in her own importance, that but slight mention was made of the matter. She was full of herself, and of where she had been, and did not seem at all anxious to know whether her pupil had been admired, or how she performed her part.

At any other time, Mrs. Mortimer would have been offended at such a slight; but, in the present instance, to be spared talking on the subject was a relief; and Mrs. Mortimer, accordingly, listened patiently to the account Miss Loftus gave of the grandeur and splendour of the place which she had been visiting; the kindness of her former pupil; and the difficulty she had to get away as soon as she did; and it was very plain that the governess had returned with no small portion of self-consequence.

There was another reason why she made but cold inquiries after the entertainment of the birthday—she still resented having her opinion slighted respecting the dress of her pupil; and she imagined that her apparent

indifference upon the subject would punish both mother and daughter.

As matters stood, however, it had a contrary effect; nor were the attempts she made to evince her own importance more successful.

Arrogant and overbearing, Miss Loftus never rested till she had the entire command of those over whom she had gained an influence. And supposing that to retain so important a person as herself in her family was a matter of the greatest concern to Mrs. Mortimer, she did not fail, with the usual petty pride of a mean mind, to presume accordingly.

Miss Loftus, however, could not have chosen a worse time to enforce any further stretch of her power; for Mrs. Mortimer's thoughts were ardently engaged in pursuing a course quite different from that which she had hitherto pursued.

When the irritated feelings, which rendered it extremely painful to recur to the subject, had somewhat subsided, Mrs. Mortimer

wrote to her brother a circumstantial account of what had happened ; and also of her plans for the future ; one of which was, her intention of residing in Hampshire.

“To you, my dear brother,” said Mrs. Mortimer in her letter, after detailing the vexations of the birth-night, “however painful and humiliating it may be to me to recount this mortifying occurrence, I feel it a relief to my mind. In owning how mistaken I have been, I do not make my confession to those who will triumph in their own better judgment ; on the contrary, I am assured that both Mrs. Herbert and yourself will sympathise with my feelings, and assist me in endeavouring to counteract the effects of the wrong system upon which my poor girl has been hitherto educated. I trust this will not be impossible, though it may be difficult ; and we shall have no obstacle to encounter from the interference of Miss Loftus, who has left my family. I feel her departure a release, almost as much as Bell, who, I hope, you will not accuse of insensi-

bility, when I tell you she did not shed many tears on the departure of her governess. However glad I might be to be free from the society of Miss Loftus, who grew more assuming and overbearing every day, I yet felt grateful for the pains she had taken in instructing my daughter; as I am aware, in that, she did the best, according to her own ideas, and also according to the plan I myself chose. That she was an individual unfit to form the mind of a young person, I ought to have found out before. It would, however, have been extremely painful to me to have dismissed her, but I was spared the pain of so doing; for, no sooner did I mention my intention of residing, for some time, in the country, than she told me, very positively, she must decline accompanying me; and so far was Miss Loftus from being willing to conform to any of my plans, that I found she had returned from her late visit with the determination of being more absolute than ever. This would not do; and we parted accordingly.

"But, to return to my own concerns:—
Isabella is delighted with the thoughts of
being near you. Her temper has been
somewhat ruffled by the late untoward cir-
cumstance; and she has grown difficult to
please, and is very suspicious of praise."

* * * * *

As the remainder of Mrs. Mortimer's let-
ter related to family affairs, we do not think
it necessary to transcribe it; but, in conclud-
ing this little history, it is satisfactory to
add, that the lesson which both mother and
daughter had received, on the evening of
the ball, although a severe one, was produc-
tive of benefit; and, as one birthday com-
menced a system of education, in which the
display of accomplishments was the only
aim, another gave rise to a more rational
plan, followed by happier results.

THE TEAPOT.

THAT pride is a strong characteristic of the nation among whom I derived my origin, I am well aware; insomuch, that even the clay of which the forms of myself and my brethren are composed is considered to partake of it; and even the circumstance of an old crazy teapot, supposing its history worth commemorating, will appear an instance of the fact: nor can I disown, but that a pretty good opinion of my own worth and qualifications had some share in my composition.

Surely, however, such a feeling may have been pardonable in the days of my youth and splendour, when, head and chief of a set, pre-eminent for beauty, placed in a conspicuous situation for display, in the window of one of the most fashionable shops in town,

I found myself an object of universal regard. The brilliant colours and glittering appearance of our set, attracting the attention, and fixing the gaze, of every passer-by, from the giddy child, in the midst of its play, to the aged matron, who seemed to have lost all interest in the gaieties of the world. From the man of business, who, with head full of weighty matters, seldom turned to the right, or to the left; to the lounging idler, who, from having little to do but to look about him, scarcely seemed any thing worthy his notice, all were surprised into a momentary admiration of us.

In thus dwelling on times long past, and the days of former glory, I shall, doubtless, be accused of egotism and vanity; yet, I trust, that in relating some of the strange vicissitudes which have occurred to me, neither pride, nor the wish of speaking of my own qualifications, will be imputed to me, especially when my present appearance and situation are considered. Cracked and chipped all over, my colours faded, and my gilding

worn off, I, who was once the vehicle for the most fragrant and refreshing beverage, am now become the receptacle for a root of orange mint; and my station is that of a parapet-wall, outside a garret-window; whence, in all probability, the first high wind would precipitate me into the street, were it not for the kind consideration of my present owner, who has prudently tied a piece of packthread to my handle, and fastened it to the wall, on purpose to prevent so fatal an accident.

Whether, indeed, this precaution has been taken for my especial preservation, or out of regard to the heads of passengers, I know not, nor do I seek to find out; having been long enough in the world to be aware that too close a scrutiny into people's motives is not always satisfactory.

How I came into my present very humble station may be a matter of surprise to many; but to myself, when I recollect the strange turns of fortune which have befallen me, and my numberless hair-breadth escapes, I

rather wonder that I am in existence at all; for, alas! I am the only survivor of my brittle family, having had the mortification to see all that belonged to me, at different times, fall victims to carelessness or mischance.

Yet my setting out in the world was most prosperous, nor could any thing then appear more unlikely than that I should occupy a situation like that of my present one.

It was at a christening, in the house of a noble family, that myself and partners made our brilliant debüt; but misfortune had early marked us; for, in the very first round, one of the company was awkward enough to break a coffee cup; and I was not more shocked at this loss in my family, than to see the extreme indifference with which the misfortune was taken—my mistress, and all the company using their utmost endeavours to make it appear a matter of no consequence. One person said the author of our misfortune might have scalded herself; another congratulated her on not having spoiled her silk dress; and a third declared she must have

been very dextrous to save the saucer: so that, at the last, the lady was pretty well persuaded that she had done something clever, rather than otherwise.

My mind misgave me, however, that, having once made a beginning, the breaking would not stop here; and, sure enough, so it proved. As we were being removed, the bell rang from the dining-room, where some of the gentlemen were still sitting over their wine; Thomas, who was carrying the tea-tray, called out to one of the maid-servants to take hold of it, that he might answer the bell.

Now, whether Betty was too quick, or not quick enough, I cannot take upon me to say; but certain it was that the tea-tray slipped between them; and never, surely, can I forget the horror of that moment! the screams! the crash! and, then, the deep low sound which rang and thrilled through the frames of all of us who had escaped.

The shrill cries of Betty brought her mistress out to see what was the matter; but the

fright and consternation of the servants prevented them, for some time, from explaining how the accident had happened. It must be owned that if, in the first instance, the mischief was owing to Betty's awkwardness, she had the merit of preventing all the tea-things from coming to the ground. When, at length, it was ascertained what was broken, and what was whole, it was discovered that only three cups and two saucers had been smashed; which, though a heavy loss to our fraternity, was yet less than might have been apprehended from the tremendous clatter.

The lady of the house, who was very good-tempered, made light of the accident; and, saying there should be no grieving for trifles on that day, desired Thomas and Betty to think no more about it. You may be sure they were willing enough to do as she bade them; so the matter was forgotten in less than five minutes.

The easy disposition of the mistress gave us but little warrant for our future safety;

but, fortunately, there was one individual in the house who fully appreciated our worth: this was good nurse Bennet, the person who had the care of the infant, whose christening we had such good cause to remember.

Notwithstanding the misfortune attending our outset, and the little probability there appeared of safety in such a place, we remained in this house full seven years. Certainly, it seemed a sort of miracle that things of such fragile substance should, for the most part, continue whole and entire for so long a period; especially considering our hair-breadth escapes, and the constant jeopardy we were in; for never could we deem ourselves secure but when snug in the cupboard. In justice, however, to nurse Bennet, I must acknowledge we owed our preservation chiefly to her watchful care; so that, from the evening when such terrible havoc was made in our family, during the whole seven years, we lost but two more of our number: one, a saucer, which a careless girl gave the cat to drink milk out of, and, in five minutes

after, set her foot on the unlucky piece of china, and broke it to pieces. Another, a tea-cup, which the same careless wench, who seemed born for the destruction of our race, carried away, for some purpose of her own; the fate of which, as it never again made its appearance, may be readily guessed. Excepting these accidents, we came off pretty well. To be sure we were, several times, put in the most imminent danger, from the strong admiration which our glittering appearance excited in the young heir of the mansion, whose infant fancy was so taken by us, that many a snatch did he make at one or other of our number.

Fortunately, good nurse Bennet kept so vigilant an eye on him, that no harm ever happened to us from that quarter; but, as little Frederick grew older, it required still greater caution; and, as I was the especial object of attraction, dame Bennet, fearing ill consequences to the child, as well as to myself, took infinite pains to represent me to him as a most terrific monster, that would

bite, and assuredly injure him, if ever he attempted to touch me. The boy, however, young as he was, had made his own observations on the subject.

In the first place, with the natural perverseness of those little urchins, he longed to do what he had been forbidden to do. Next, in the true spirit of a hero, he determined to brave the unknown danger; and, last of all, observing how harmless I was in the hands of his nurse, Frederick did not place the most implicit belief in what she had told him. Accordingly, one day, finding himself alone in the drawing-room, where the tea-things were just set, the child mounted a chair, and, in the next moment, I was seized, and lifted from the board. The horror of my situation may easily be imagined; I felt the extreme peril from the weak grasp of the tiny fingers which held me, and anticipated not only my own destruction, but that of, perhaps, the whole set; when we were fortunately relieved from our imminent danger by the timely entrance of Frederick's mother.

A few days after, the child had his finger bitten by a parrot, which had been lately introduced into the house.

"How could you, my darling," said the nurse, "go near that ill-natured bird? did I not tell you it would bite you?"

"Yes," replied the child, but I did not believe it; for you said the teapot would bite me, but it never did."

This was a lesson to nurse Bennet; who, though an ignorant, was a well-meaning, woman, and who never after attempted to deceive her young charge with false notions of danger or fear.

From this period, nothing very remarkable happened till Frederick went to school, when, nurse Bennet's service being no longer required, she retired into the country; and her mistress, among other marks of her liberality, presented the good woman, on her departure, with myself, and the remainder of our set; saying, she knew nurse would value us, for the sake of little Frederick. This was truly the case; independent of which,

however, Mrs. Bennet, as I before mentioned, had a high personal regard for us.

It was, nevertheless, a most unlooked-for change in our circumstances ; and it is with shame that I acknowledge, notwithstanding we owed our preservation to her kind care, the prospect of becoming the property of nurse Bennet was a severe blow to my pride.

At this distance of time, I detest myself for my ingratitude, and think how thankful I ought to have been for the protection she afforded me. But I can scarcely claim credit for my present humility, having nothing left to be proud of.

To proceed, however:—The first care of nurse Bennet, when she entered the cottage, which she had chosen for her residence, was, to place us in the cupboard, which was appropriated to contain her few valuables. Of course it was not so spacious and commodious as where we had been hitherto lodged ; but, then, it was infinitely more secure. In short, all but myself ap-

peared pretty well satisfied ; for, among us, as in many families, though there was a general resemblance and character, yet there were shades and varieties in our temper and disposition. For instance, we had, all of us, an especial good opinion of our own worth ; but this feeling did not prevail in each individual in the same degree. The tea-cups, though vain, were light and cheerful ; always looking forward with hope, and as well pleased to glitter on the humble board of nurse Bennet, and be admired by her country neighbours, as to shine in the circle they had formerly been used to ; and though, from the slightness of their frame, they were particularly liable to injury, yet they suffered nothing from the anticipation of evil.

On the contrary, the coffee-cups were grave and stately ; liked to be respected, but did not care to shine. They possessed an equal share of pride, but not so much ambition, as myself, and were satisfied with being valued and taken care of. The cream-jug was the most amiable of us all ; having nei-

ther the haughtiness of the coffee-cups, nor the vanity of the tea-cups, it was happy when useful, yet never discontented at being left on the shelf. Of the sugar and slop-basin there remains little to be said : the former, if it had not so much pride as some of us, had more selfishness than any, and would not have grieved to have seen the whole set of us demolished, if itself was preserved ; and the latter, with less pretensions to merit in the family, had quite as much vanity as the best of us.

It was not long before we were put into requisition, in our new residence ; for, as soon as the good dame had settled herself and her furniture, the next thing was, to invite her neighbours to a tea drinking, in order to display her handsome china ; which, in the pride of her heart, she hoped would be greatly admired by all her acquaintance ; and, I own, it was with some degree of pleasure I looked forward to the sensation our appearance would make among the village folks.

Upon this occasion, however, as it frequently happens on similar ones, we were fated to be mortified, and nurse Bennet disappointed; for the good people who came to visit her, instead of praising her beautiful cups, praised her excellent souchong; and, it was pretty evident, had far more taste for hot buttered toast than for rich china. The only person who appeared at all struck with our splendour was a young girl, niece to dame Bennet; and the aunt was so pleased with the admiration expressed by Mary, that she promised to leave us to her as a legacy, in which she faithfully kept her word. But to proceed in my narrative:—Good nurse Bennet, perceiving how little impression the sight of her treasured china made on her neighbours in general, determined to keep us safe in the cupboard, and produce us only on especial occasions, to a few favoured visitors; so that months, and even years, passed over, without our seeing the light; and whoever was honoured by our gracing the table, had, in return, to listen to a full, true, and particular account of us.

At first I felt flattered that our original rank in the world should be known; but I soon perceived that it made our appearance dreaded by dame Bennet's friends, who well knew that, whenever we were brought forward, our history would be brought forward, too, with a circumstantial account of Frederick Beresford's christening; a subject of particular interest to the kind old woman, but for which none of her visitors cared a rush, except to wish that Frederick had never been born, or the china broken; for it must be owned that, while dame Bennet was on that favourite topic, she forgot every thing beside, and would suffer the tea and muffins to grow cold, while describing the most minute occurrence of that memorable day. It is not wonderful, therefore, that while in the possession of good Mrs. Bennet, we could not be regarded, according to our merit, by any but herself; and, notwithstanding her due appreciation of our worth, and the care she had always taken of us, I began to long to emerge from the dark cupboard

where, for so many years, we had been immured; indulging my fancy in the hope of, some time or other, shining in the society to which we properly belonged.

At last our worthy mistress died; and we passed into the hands of her niece. I soon discovered that our change of situation was infinitely for the worse. What a difference does time make in people's ideas and tastes! The little girl, who, a few years ago, had viewed us with such strong admiration, beheld us now with very different eyes. Mary had become a busy, notable dame, the mother of a large family, and had no regard whatever for any thing that was more ornamental than useful.

I remember the mortifying remark she made when we first came into her possession:—

“ Ah! this is the old china, that, when I was a silly girl, I used to think so beautiful, and my poor aunt set such a store by. I am sure, now, except for her sake, I have very little value for such poor egg-shell cups

and saucers. I doubt if they will remain as sound in this house as they did in hers."

Respect, however, for the memory of her aunt, induced dame Morris to range us as ornaments upon her chimney-piece; where, fortunately, being out of the reach of her young folks, we remained for some time safe and sound, though totally disregarded.

It happened, however, that some visitors were expected, which, being a circumstance of very rare occurrence, put dame Morris and the whole of her household into more than ordinary bustle. On this occasion, therefore, aunt Bennet's favourite china was to be made use of, though our present mistress never failed to show her contempt of us some way or other; for, will it be credited, that I, who had ever been considered as the chief ornament of the tea-table, was, on the present occasion, left out, and my place supplied by a huge, ill-looking, metal teapot; Mrs. Morris observing that china ones made the tea good for nothing! My indignant feelings at this abominable affront may be

imagined; but the mortification I suffered was soon forgotten, in a new misfortune.

But, to proceed in a regular manner:— Dame Morris, who though, in general, a thrifty housewife, yet, whenever she had company, made a point of treating them with the best of every thing, had, on the present occasion, provided tea of the finest quality, rich cream, and every thing suitable for her guests. It was now near five in the afternoon; and Mrs. Morris, well knowing the punctuality of her friends, got all in order.

“For, poor souls!” said she, “they will be hot, and tired enough with their long walk, so, I am determined, they shall not have long to wait for their tea.”

Accordingly she went, and turned her cakes in the oven, for the last time; then, filling the cream-jug, “There,” said she, “I doubt whether this milk-pot ever held finer cream than it does now.”

At this moment the good woman beheld her guests entering the door.

“That’s right,” cried she; “they are

just in time; and, so saying, dame Morris went to welcome her friends.

In the interim, however, it unfortunately happened that two of the children remained in the room. One greedy urchin had his hand instantly in the sugar-basin; the other took a sip of the cream, as it stood on the table; but, being unable to take a second without lifting the jug from its place, she had just raised it to her lips, when the shrill scream of the mother, who was ushering her friends into the parlour, produced the catastrophe that may be supposed. The terrified child instantly let go her hold: the unlucky milk-pot was smashed, and the contents rolled, in a thick stream, on the floor.

It is needless to describe in detail what followed; to say in what language the child was scolded; or to number the blows she received; and how dame Morris raved and lamented by turns.

For my own part, I felt no commiseration for the little wretch, who had thus deprived me of one of the most esteemed of my kindred.

The pleasure of the afternoon was completely spoiled by this grievous accident; for Mrs. Morris, though most kindly disposed towards her friends, had not philosophy enough to recover her good-humour; and though, on the one hand, she neglected nothing for the accommodation of her visitors, yet, by her inflamed countenance, mournful shakes of the head, as she poured thin milk, instead of cream, into their cups; and, above all, by the killing looks, sent from time to time to her daughter, who, to fill up the measure of disagreeables, stood blubbering in a corner of the room; she never suffered her guests to forget the disaster; of which, like all visitors in such cases, they could not help uncomfortably feeling that they were, however remotely, yet, in some degree, the cause.

As to our unfortunate set, besides the grief of losing so valuable a member of our fraternity, we had constantly the mortification of seeing how ill we were appreciated by our present possessor, as she repeatedly

remarked how much more she regretted the loss of the cream than the breaking of the jug. In short, the longer we remained in this family, the less we were thought of; when, by another, and most unlooked-for, turn of fortune, we were rescued from the hands of these people, and placed in a suitable and agreeable situation.

An elderly lady, who had lived many years in the neighbourhood, happening, one day, to be passing the door of dame Morris, observed, through the open window, some of our glittering set on the mantelpiece. Mrs. L— had a passion for collecting china; and, with the keen eye of a connoisseur, she saw, with a single glance, that we were of no ordinary kind, and wondered how a person of such humble life as dame Morris came to be possessed of any thing so rare. Her next thought was, whether it would not be possible to induce the good woman to part with us; and this thought had no sooner entered Mrs. L—'s mind, than she resolved to make the attempt; introduced

herself accordingly, and, with many apologies, and much circumlocution, at length made dame Morris comprehend her meaning, which was no sooner understood, than the bargain was struck, to the infinite satisfaction of both parties; the old lady being delighted to get the china upon what she considered easy terms; and dame Morris no less so, to receive a sum of money for what, in her estimation, was of so little value. Nevertheless, she did feel a certain degree of remorse at disposing of what had been held in such veneration by her good aunt. But, even on this head, Mrs. Morris soon quieted her conscience, by the reflection that the china would be better taken care of in the lady's house than in hers. So the matter was settled; and in the afternoon of the same day, we were removed to our new habitation. While congratulating ourselves on our good fortune, we could not help regretting that our good mistress had not seen and rescued us sooner; for, besides the cream-jug, a cup and two saucers had fallen

victims to the haste or carelessness of the racketing family that we had just quitted.

Notwithstanding our reduced state, and the misfortunes we had endured, yet I felt a renewal of all my hopes at the present prospect; anticipating the pleasure of once more mixing in that society we were first intended to grace, and presiding at that social and pleasing meal, so truly enjoyed by all ranks of people. In short, we had so long been excluded, and nearly out of use, that it was with infinite satisfaction that we looked forward to the gay tea-parties of our new possessor; as it was understood that our present mistress was seldom without company.

Four days, however, elapsed before Mrs. L— drank tea at home; on the fifth she was to receive a party; and we were to shine on her table; when a perplexity arose, which was not easily got over. My mistress had invited nine visitors, which, with herself, would make up a party of ten; and, unluckily, of our number, there remained but

seven cups and six saucers. What was to be done? Mrs. L— was determined to display her new acquisition of china, and yet did not like to have any odd cups. In this dilemma, her favourite maid, Martha, was summoned, who quickly found a way of ending the difficulty; for Martha, being the counterpart of her mistress, was also a china fancier, and happened to have in her possession some family relics, which, she declared, would go along with us exceedingly well. They were produced accordingly; and, as Martha said, were of nearly the same pattern, and of equally fine quality.

This last observation, however, was ill-timed. “No, Martha,” cried her mistress, “there you are mistaken; the colours and pattern are alike, and will go together exceedingly well; but your china, depend upon it, is of inferior value to this.”

Martha’s face reddened violently at this aspersion on her china; it was next to depreciating the credit of her family; or, rather, it was the same thing; and she entered into a

warm disquisition on the merits and value of the subject in question ; when the entrance of a visitor, fortunately, interrupted an argument which threatened to end in a serious difference betwixt the maid and mistress.

As the hour of tea approached, the company began to assemble ; they were all maidens, and, for the most part, elderly. An uncommon degree of friendship appeared to unite the whole party ; for, though they were in the habit of meeting at each other's houses almost every evening, and had parted but the night before, at the distance of half a street's length, their inquiries after each other's health were as anxious and as earnest as though they had not seen one another for a twelvemonth.

The tea passed over most agreeably ; Mrs. L— was highly gratified at the admiration expressed by the ladies at her new purchase. After tea, as the cupboard in which we were placed was on one side of the fireplace, where we could not be put without incommoding some of the company, we re-

mained on a side-table, at the other end of the apartment, which gave us the opportunity of observing every thing that passed.

No time was allowed for general conversation; the card-tables were placed, and every one seemed eager to commence the game, which, by-the-bye, one might have thought any thing but play; and it was curious to observe the alteration that seemed to take place in the character of almost every individual in company. The gay and talkative became grave and thoughtful; and some, who to judge from the easy suavity of their manners, appeared as if nothing could disturb their equanimity, now looked as anxious and alarmed, as if the fate of an empire depended on how they should play their cards; and, as the game advanced, there was many a struggle between anger and politeness. One fat old lady, alone, regarded the game as if meant for amusement only; she laughed, and chattered, and blundered, much to the annoyance of the company in general, and of her partner in particular,

whose patience was put to a most severe trial; once, especially, when the rubber was nearly concluded, and the chances appeared pretty equal between the adverse parties; (for, notwithstanding the numerous mistakes, and careless play, of Mrs. —, fortune had rather befriended her) and her partner, who held an excellent hand, began to have strong hopes they should still win the game; but this extreme anxiety of Miss — proved unlucky; for, endeavouring to make up, by her own care, for her partner's want of it, she took so long in deliberating whether she should lay down the ace or the knave of trumps, that it afforded time for Mrs. — to begin the relation of a story, which, disturbing the attention of the anxious lady, eventually lost the game. The agony of poor Miss —, at this moment, would be difficult to describe. With a fixed smile on her lips, and rage flashing from her eyes, she saw the game wrested from her by the carelessness of her partner.

The most provoking part of all was, the

total unconsciousness of Mrs. S—; all the cutting speeches with which Miss — wished civilly to wound her to the soul, were entirely thrown away; and the good lady remained happily ignorant that she had done any thing to occasion the ill-will of any one.

At the other table, the partners were better matched, all appearing equally skilful and equally anxious; but I and my friends, as observers, were amused to remark the gradual change in the tone of their voices, from complaisance to petulance, and, in the expression of their countenances, from smiles to looks of malice and vexation.

At length the entertainment of the evening was over; wine and cake were handed round; after which, a general bustle ensued, as the numerous knocks at the street-door announced the footmen and servants that were come to conduct their respective mistresses home.

As they prepared to depart, it was evident these good people thought their lives of no small importance, by the excessive care they

took of themselves. At last, the ceremony of bonneting and cloaking, tying pattens, and clogs, &c. was over; the remembrance of animosity appeared over also: the various parties shook hands, with the utmost cordiality, repeating the warmest invitations to each other; and every one (poor Miss L— excepted) expressed her satisfaction at the very pleasant evening they had spent.

There certainly is no accounting for fancies; but it appeared to me strange that these people, who, in other instances seemed to me rational and kind-hearted, should make the chief pleasure of their lives consist in meeting to fidget, and almost quarrel, over a game at cards. There was, however, some charm in the pursuit, which I could never comprehend; for years passed over, and two or three evenings every week were spent in this manner by my mistress and her friends.

During that period, although, with time and use, our colours were somewhat faded, yet, thanks to the care of our possessor, our

number remained undiminished, nor did one among us get a single flaw; but, notwithstanding the security of my situation, and the esteem in which we were held, the monotony, and clock-work regularity of this house, made the time appear extremely tedious; and that restless desire of variety, incident alike to human clay as to that of china, made me often wish for a change.

After a while, however, this feeling subsided; and, as age came on, the love of admiration, and the wish to shine in gayer parties gave way to the love of quiet and security. But, alas! when I had become perfectly content and satisfied with my situation, I was again doomed to be thrown on the world, through the death of my poor mistress, who, in returning one foggy night from a card-party, caught a cold, which terminated her existence.

Of what followed I have but a very imperfect recollection. The late orderly house was now all bustle and confusion; in the midst of which, as we were being removed

from one place to another, the whole set were thrown to the ground, and every one, except myself, was broken to atoms!

I will not dwell upon my sensations, of being at once bereft of all my relations, and left alone; nor how much I lamented that strength of constitution which prevented me from sharing their fate.

Comparatively worthless as I had now become, had our good friend, Mrs. Martha, lived, who, as I before mentioned, was as great an admirer of china as her mistress, the old teapot would have been preserved, as a precious relic; but she had paid the debt of nature some years before.

After the furniture of my late lamented patroness was sold, myself, as well as some other odds-and-ends, fell into the hands of a broker. My own desolate condition, and the late misfortune I had suffered, made me perfectly indifferent as to my future destiny; but I was not aware of what I had still to endure; standing, day after day, in the open street, in company with cracked crockery,

brass candlesticks, dirty extinguishers, save-alls, &c. &c.; then, the remarks made upon me by the sort of people who came to the shop. One day, I remember, a terribly vulgar-looking woman, after purchasing some of the before-mentioned greasy articles, happened to cast her eye upon me; and, immediately seizing me, with her large, red, ungloved, hands, she inquired my price of the master of the shop? who, however, being tired of his hard-bargaining customer, fortunately asked more than she chose to pay; and so, with a toss of her head, she set me down again; observing, that she would be sorry to give so much money for such a queer, old-fashioned thing!

A few days after this occurrence, as I was standing at my accustomed post, a young man, of genteel appearance, made a sudden pause, with his eyes riveted to the table on which I was placed. Whether myself, or any of my companions, were the object of his attention, could not be guessed; but vanity whispered it was I; and a hope revived

that I should now be rescued from my degraded situation. The longer the stranger gazed, the more assured I felt of being the especial attraction.

At last the proprietor of the shop came out, and, observing the gentleman's steadfast regard fixed to the spot where I was placed, immediately took hold of me, in order to display me to more advantage.

This movement roused the stranger's attention, which, till that instant, appeared to have been completely absorbed.

"Don't touch it! don't remove it a hair's breadth! or you will spoil one of the finest compositions in the world!"

The broker stared in silent astonishment, and replaced me. The gentleman then took out his pencil and book, in which he began to scribble; all the while making strange grimaces, nodding his head, knitting his brows, and uttering various exclamations about light and shade and composition; all as perfectly unintelligible to me as to the master of the shop, who, I believe, thought the man mad.

In about five minutes, however, the stranger put up his book, and, turning to the broker, asked what he would take for the table, and all that was on it?

A price was named, which the stranger paid immediately, and without hesitation; and, giving his address, desired the articles might be sent home, with all possible expedition.

As soon as he was gone — “Come,” said the broker to his wife, “that was a pretty good job! I thought that there genius was crazed, from the first moment I saw him; and so I asked him twice as much as he might have bought the things for new out of the shop; and, would you believe it, he paid me the money without saying a word! and the best of the joke was, that, when I told him the things should be rubbed up a bit, he desired they might be left just as they were, or I should spoil their tone.”

In something less than an hour, myself, and the rest of the purchased articles, were sent to our new destination. During the journey I could not help speculating upon the future,

and wondering how I should be regarded in my new home. There was certainly something flattering in being, as I thought, thus distinguished. I began to hope I might, once more, lift my head up in the world.

On reaching our future residence, the door was opened by a maid-servant, who prepared to carry us down into the kitchen; when her master, hearing of our arrival, ordered that we should be immediately brought up stairs.

We were introduced, accordingly, into a handsome spacious apartment, but filled as I never beheld any place I had ever yet entered. The walls were so covered with pictures, that scarce an inch of the papering could be seen; and, out of a dozen chairs, not above two were unoccupied; some holding half-finished paintings, others empty frames or drawing-boards. Then, what with busts, plaster-casts, portfolios, books, and, I may say, lumber, of every kind, there seemed scarcely a corner in which we could be deposited. There was also a strange

mixture of rare and valuable things with others of the most worthless kind. For instance: a richly-wrought silver waiter was standing beside a common, red, earthen pitcher; and over the back of one chair was a piece of superb blue silk, with an old, threadbare, woollen, green cloak, hanging close to it. But, to enumerate all the singular furniture of an artist's study, would be too tedious; I shall, therefore, proceed with my own narrative.

My new possessor, after singling me out from the rest of his bargains, placed me on the table, regarding me, for some time, with great complacency; I now began to anticipate presiding at his tea-table.

Perhaps, thought I, the gentleman has got cups and saucers of the same pattern; and, though the dear companions I have lost could never be replaced in my affections, still there is an idea of comfort and respectability in being again the head of a family. I was wrong, however, in my conjectures in this respect. It was not for the purpose of

preparing his tea that my new owner had purchased me, but for one still more flattering to my pride, for I soon discovered that he intended to introduce me into a picture. This, certainly, was one of the proudest moments of my existence. It seemed to me that I had now attained the highest honour that a teapot could reach.

From the length of time he took, and the extreme pains the artist appeared to bestow, it was evident he thought the subject of the utmost consequence; and my great anxiety was now to get a view of the picture, and see whether the artist had done me justice.

The canvas was certainly larger than I should have thought necessary; but not understanding these matters, I rested satisfied that the painter knew better than I, and would place me in the most advantageous point of view. I then began to wonder whether my portrait would appear at the British Institution, or at Somerset House. Soon after, to my surprise and mortification, Mr. — began to arrange the rest of the arti-

cles he had bought, precisely as we were arranged when he first saw us at the broker's shop. I was now exceedingly puzzled; could the artist have so little taste or judgment as to place a rich India-china teapot in company with such associates as I have formerly described? If so, I hardly thanked him for painting me at all.

Day after day passed, however; still Mr. — was occupied with the same picture: which, at any rate, I imagined, proved its importance; and I still flattered myself with my own consequence, notwithstanding the vexatious circumstance of appearing amidst such vulgar company.

My curiosity had now arisen to a very painful pitch, to be acquainted with the precise situation in which I had been placed; when one morning, to my infinite joy, Mr. —, removing the picture to another part of the room, gave me an opportunity of beholding my portrait. But, judge of my astonishment, and, I may say, vexation! for a length of time I could not see any thing at all resem-

bling myself; and when, at last, I did, I discovered that, so far from being produced as a principal object, my place was in an obscure corner of the picture. And, to add to my mortification, the artist, so far from doing justice to my still bright colours, had made me look as dingy as if I had been covered with dust. What rendered this the more inexcusable was, that in some parts of the picture, the tints were as brilliant as possible, which proved that the fault was not in the colours.

I remember the observation that fell from the artist one day, when speaking to a friend, to whom he was showing the picture, about keeping down the subordinate parts; by which, I suppose, he meant a sort of apology for the muddy colours he had bestowed upon me. I thought I had been kept down long enough, and could not but regard the affair as a great affront; and set the painter down as a great bungler in his profession.

From this time I took very little interest in what was going forward, and was glad

when the ceremony of standing for my likeness was over.

I now took my station among other articles which had served for the same purpose, and soon grew as dirty and dingy as I had been represented.

After a period of about two months, during which time I remained a fixture, there was one day a great bustle in the house, which I discovered was in consequence of a sudden determination in Mr. — to travel. I fancy he had not too much encouragement in his profession; which, I thought, was not at all surprising, if he painted no better or more flattering likenesses than he had done of me.

When I beheld the preparations for his departure, and observed that I was left out of the things he meant to take with him, I cannot but say I felt it as a reprieve; for any chance that might befall me appeared preferable to remaining in the possession of such a crazy mortal; who, after paying a price for me that might well justify me in the suppo-

sition that my worth would be duly appreciated, had so cruelly disappointed my just expectations.

No sooner had Mr. — quitted the apartments, than the landlady of the house came to take a survey of the state in which things were left; and bitter were the lamentations of both her and her maid on the woful appearance of the furniture. Sally declared that it would take her a month to rub the tables and get the stains out of them; and as to the beautiful Brussels carpet, I think Mrs. B— could scarcely have grieved more for the loss of a child, than she did over the spots of paint and varnish, which certainly were sprinkled pretty plentifully about it; and which the servant, who seemed determined to make the worst of the matter, took infinite pains to discover and point out to her mistress, who concluded with a declaration that she would never again let her apartments to an artist.

In the thorough rout-out which was now making, I was discovered, enveloped in the dust of two months' collecting.

Mrs. — had not any particular taste for china; and my having been the property of her late lodger, by no means raised my value in her opinion. So she resolved to present me to a friend of hers, who was fond, as she said, of curiosities.

The old lady for whom I was intended, happened to call soon after, and her delight at receiving me was equalled only by mine, at having fallen into such hands; for, had I been made of gold, instead of china, Mrs. L— could not have regarded me with more satisfaction.

My new mistress made but a short stay at the house of her friend; for, like a child with a toy, she seemed scarcely to consider the new acquisition her own till she had got it safe at home. Arrived at the residence of my new owner, an apartment in the upper part of a house, I was little less surprised than when I entered that of the painter. Indeed, the room was more crowded (if that were possible), but with this essential difference, that every thing was in the most per-

fect order. It was evident, also, that my new owner had a great taste for the Arts, for not a square inch on the walls of her apartment was left uncovered ; pictures and prints, of various subjects and kinds, were hung, or rather stuck, by the side of each other.

My mistress had, indeed, a passion for curiosities of all sorts, but her particular fancy was for rich old china ; and, on this account, I esteemed myself fortunate in falling into her hands. The means of Mrs. — were slender, and her station humble, but she possessed a liberality of heart, which was better than wealth ; for, while she submitted herself to numerous privations, she treated friends with a degree of hospitality, little short of prodigality. No one could enter her doors without experiencing some marks of her kindness ; and it was truly exemplified by her conduct, that generosity consists less in the gift than in the way it is bestowed.

Mrs. — was what many people would call an oddity, having many peculiarities in her character ; but her weaknesses were those of

an amiable disposition. What I can say, as her highest commendation, is, that those who knew her best, esteemed her most.

For my own part, I never felt so thoroughly contented with my situation, as during my stay with this good creature; and when I was so unfortunate as to lose her protection, I had not, as in former instances, occasion to reproach myself with having undervalued the comforts I possessed while they were yet afforded me.

As there was not the least spark of changeableness or caprice in my mistress; and as she prized me highly, it may appear surprising that I should ever have lost my station in her cupboard, or her favour. Of the latter I cannot complain; for it was no fancy for a new or gayer teapot that exiled me from her table. Alas! I can accuse her of nothing but her too indiscriminate good-nature. A lady happening to call one afternoon, while Mrs. — was taking her tea, saw and admired the old china teapot. This was quite sufficient. Had I been made of gold,

or had my mistress valued me ten times more than she did, it would have been all the same; whatever satisfaction Mrs.— had in a favourite object, she experienced a still greater pleasure in bestowing it on another, who expressed a wish, or a fancy for it.

Accordingly, I was sent to the lady's house, where I soon discovered I had cause to lament my change of condition.

The lady, who was rich and whimsical, appeared, at first, so much pleased with me, that she declared no other teapot should be used at her table. But, after three days, I was discarded, as antiquated, and the housekeeper would not admit at her table anything that her mistress regarded unworthy of hers; so I descended to the kitchen, where, to my misery, I became the plaything of a little boy, of four years old, a child of one of the servants.

In the hands of such an enemy to our race, I should soon have been dashed to atoms, had I not been once more rescued, by a charwoman, who, observing my perilous si-

tuation, openly lamented that so pretty a teapot should be taken so little care of.

The servant said she was heartily welcome, if she could bargain with the little boy. Accordingly, a penny, for sugar-candy, settled the negotiation, and I was conveyed to the residence of my present owner.

Upon reaching home, however, my mistress discovered, to her infinite regret, that an unlucky flaw, which I had received while in the hands of the mischievous urchin, had rendered me totally useless for the purpose of making tea. But, if she was grieved at such a circumstance, it may readily be judged how deeply I must have felt the wrong; and, as I could never more hope to appear at the tea-table, I expected the dame would now regard me as mere lumber, and, probably, discard me altogether. In this respect, however, I was mistaken. My mistress was not in the habit of throwing anything away; but, when she discovered an article was unfit for one purpose, immediately contrived some other use for it. I was,

therefore, quickly converted from a teapot to a garden-pot, and placed in my present situation.

Assuredly, in proportion to the buffets one gets, in time one is rendered callous to blows; for, strange as it may appear, cracked and crazed as I am, I feel not only resigned, but contented; and am willing, as long as my destiny permits, to hold a place in this changeable world.

THE
EXPERIENCE OF A PUPPY.

"YOU and I, Trusty, have but a dull time of it," said the little puppy, Rover, to the old mastiff.

"I don't know what you mean, by a dull time," said old Trusty, "for my part, I think we ought to be very well satisfied with our condition. We have a good home, good food, and, best of all, serve a good master; and, to my thinking, lead a comfortable, quiet life."

"Quiet enough," replied Rover; "'tis, in fact, that which I complain of."

"Aye," said the old dog, "you talk like a foolish puppy, as you are; but when you have lived in the world as long as I have,

you'll tell a different story; and, instead of scampering about till you are out of breath, you will then be of my opinion, that, to bask in the bright sunshine, or to lie peaceably dozing before a good fire, with just enough consciousness of existence for enjoyment, is the greatest of luxuries."

"All this may be very true; and, perhaps, when I am as old as you, I may think the same; but, dear Trusty! if you had any recollection of your puppyish days, you would sympathize with me, and know what a feeling it is to have your heart dancing with glee which you must not express, often when, for very happiness, I do not know how to contain myself, and feel that I must start off for a frolic of some kind. Think how hard it is to be repeatedly checked, as I am, and bid to be quiet, which, to me, is the most terrible penance that can be endured; and, to my misfortune, quietness in our house seems to be the order of the day. 'Be still, sir!' 'Lie down, Rover!' are the sounds perpetually ringing in my ears from morning till

night; and I am eternally getting into scrapes, without the least intention of mischief. Yesterday the cook was at the dresser, and I took hold of the corner of her apron, and began to shake it, meaning no harm, but only a bit of fun: would you believe it, she turned upon me like a fury, and gave me such a blow, that, dearly as I love sport, will cure me of ever attempting to gambol with her again. And it is but a little time ago, that I got a severe beating for tearing the mat which lies at the street-door. Alas! I knew no better; and, seeing a great rough thing, which everybody that came in made a point of kicking and scratching with their feet, I determined to try my strength upon it: and when, after working with both teeth and claws for some time, I at last succeeded in making a hole in it, I thought myself very clever, to have effected what, I supposed, all the folks in the house had been trying at in vain. Even this morning, I was threatened with the horse-whip, if I did not leave off barking. This

was a most barbarous restriction; for I was only abusing some impudent sparrows, who were flying backwards and forwards purposely, as I believe, to insult me, because they thought I could not get at them."

"Aye, friend Rover," said the old dog, "this is a list of petty grievances, which are far outweighed by the advantages you enjoy. Think what a kind master and mistress you have; who if, at times, they may be rather particular in their notions with respect to your tearing the mat, or barking at the sparrows, are your best friends, and those to whom you owe both gratitude and affection."

"I acknowledge this, and I do love them dearly, when they will let me; but I am checked even for showing my fondness. The other day my master angrily drove me off, when I jumped up to caress him, because my paws were a little wet; and I am quite in disgrace with my mistress, for running away with one of her slippers, and, as she says, spoiling it. Then, if I go out with them

(and you know, Trusty, that a scamper in the fields is the delight of my life), even in this my pleasure is curtailed ; for, no sooner do I bound across the meadows, than I'm whistled back by my master ; and, if I do not instantly obey the signal of recall (which, to say the truth, I sometimes turn a deaf ear to), I am sure to be punished for it. In the streets, also, while I am forming acquaintance with other little dogs, before we have had time enough to say half the civil things we intended to each other, I am hastily and angrily summoned away ; that, in short, Trusty, it seems as if I could not stir without being called to account for something or other ; so that, at last, I grow tired of trying to please them. The only one in the family whose temper resembles my own is little Tommy, who is generally as ready for a frolic as I am ; and fine fun do we have together when we can escape into the fields, and scamper about to our hearts' content, making as much noise as we please."

"Yes, and pretty scrapes you get each

other into," said Trusty, "when you carry my young master's shoes into the pond, or tear his new hat."

"Aye, that was an unlucky piece of business; but, when I saw the tassel bobbing and dancing by the side of my little master's new cap, and when Tom, stooping down, gave me an opportunity of plucking it off his head, how could I resist such a temptation? and I confess, having once got hold of it, the exquisite pleasure of shaking and tearing it, rendered me insensible to Tom's remonstrances, and orders to bring it back. Besides, he laughed so heartily, while endeavouring to regain possession of his cap, that I thought the whole excellent sport. But I was soon undeceived; and severe was the correction for what I had done; nor did Tom escape a scolding for suffering me to do it."

"And heartily did you both deserve punishment," said old Trusty. "As for Tom, though I love him, as my master's son, yet I always feel his return to school as a special

release ; for the whole house is in an uproar while he remains at home ; what between his pranks and yours, there is not a moment's peace for any one. Now, my young master is a privileged person ; next week he is going to school, and then there will be no allowance made for noise or disturbance ; and I give you fair warning to try and subdue the exuberance of your spirits, or they will bring you into trouble."

" Well," said Rover, " I will try what I can do ; but it's a hard case ; and I cannot help wondering that such good people as our master and mistress should have any objection to see other creatures merry and happy. However, Trusty, as you have lived so long in the family, and know all their ways better than I do, give me a few instructions for my future behaviour."

" Willingly," replied old Trusty, who felt his importance flattered by having his advice asked : " attend to what I say, and you'll keep out of harm's way, and quickly become a favourite."

"In the first place, leave off that vile trick of scratching and gnawing every thing that you come near, and never attempt to seize and shake the fine flounces of the ladies' dresses who visit at our house; for, depend upon it, though they laugh, and pass it off out of politeness, they wish you at the bottom of the sea, with all their hearts. I need not, I think, caution you never to attempt a game of play with the servants, but I advise you never to revenge any slight affront you may happen to receive from them. They are not, in general, favourable to our species, and have it in their power to work us woe, if once they take a dislike to us.

"With respect to the heads of the family, it is the regard they have for you, and their anxiety to break you of bad habits, that makes them appear severe."

"I wish to my heart, then," replied little Rover, "they were not quite so anxious about me."

"You are a little fool," said the old dog, and will, I fear, notwithstanding all the pains

that are taken, rebel ; lose the favour of our good master, and, perhaps, get turned out of a place you may not soon meet with again. I speak from experience, having lived in it nearly twelve years."

"And pray," inquired Rover, "how did it fare with you in your younger days ; were you a better-behaved dog than I am ?"

"I cannot exactly pretend to say," replied Trusty ; "but certainly, to the best of my recollection, I did not fall so frequently into disgrace as you do. I well remember the day when I was first brought into the house, and how fondly I was caressed by dear little Edward, my master's eldest son, a child about three or four years old. Edward was a different boy from Tom ; lively, indeed, but as gentle as a lamb ; either my own spirits were then more buoyant, or, it seems to me, that Tom is far more heedless and reckless than his brother used to be ; or, it may be, what is gone is always regarded as best—for, sad to say, in little more than two years after I came into the service of the family, I lost my

dear young master. I never knew the particulars of how the child wandered away; but I have frequently heard my master lament that his faithful Trusty had not accompanied the boy in his rambles; and most truly might he grieve at the circumstance, for I would have lost my life, rather than a hair of the child's head should have been injured.

"The affliction caused by this misfortune has certainly made a great alteration in the family. My master and mistress are not what they formerly were; and, feeling no inclination to mirth in themselves, that which might once have amused, now only annoys them. This, in some degree, accounts for the quiet and dulness of which you complain. Therefore, my friend, endeavour to curb the wildness of your spirits, and restrain your rambling disposition. For the rest, be faithful in the performance of your duty, and you will have nothing to fear."

With this piece of good advice, the old dog concluded his harangue, and left little Rover to reflect on what he had said.

“Perform my duty!” thought Rover to himself; “I wonder, now, what that means. I have heard a great deal about it, but I don’t quite understand what is meant by it. If it’s so good a thing, I wonder it makes those who practise it so crabbed and disagreeable. The other evening, when that good-natured man was coming quietly over the wall, that he might not trouble the servants to open the gate, and though the poor fellow came with the kind intention of giving us a piece of meat, Trusty flew into such a desperate passion, that, if the man had not quickly retreated, I believe he would have torn him to pieces. As it was, the whole family were alarmed, and Trusty lay growling and rolling his fiery eyes in such a way, that even I did not dare approach him for some time. Still nobody was angry at the disturbance. Trusty was patted, and called ‘a good fellow!’ He had done his duty, forsooth! Another part of his duty, it seems, is to suspect every stranger that comes to the house. Now, to me, all this ap-

pears strange ; even among the human race, the performance of this same duty should seem equally unpleasant ; for instance : little Tommy calls me to go out with him, when off we both set, in high glee ; and, after a famous scamper over the fields, when we return, Tom is scolded for not staying at home and learning his task. Another time, my young master will take up his book, and, when I go near him, to entice him to a game of play, I am angrily driven out of the way ; but then, it seems, Tom is minding his book, or, in other words, doing his duty ! Well, after all, as I cannot tell how all this is, it is better that I should not puzzle my head about it."

At this moment, the well-known voice of Tom summoned his friend Rover ; and the puppy, forgetting the frequent troubles they got into, forgetting the advice of Trusty, and, in short, forgetting everything but the anticipated pleasure of a scamper out of doors, flew to answer the signal, and off set these two merry companions.

After some time spent in scouring the fields together, they returned through the town; where, by the way, Tom met with a playfellow of his own; and the two boys, who had not seen each other for some time, had much to talk about.

Now, though little Rover thought it very hard, when he himself liked a game of play, to be called away, and hurried on, yet he was very impatient if his master made him wait. He therefore jumped up, barked, and pulled Tom by the coat, but finding no notice taken of these hints, he at last trotted off, to seek his own amusement, without him.

A little farther down the street, there was a man with dancing-dogs, and a monkey and bear. The dogs were capering about, and the monkey playing his antics, much to the diversion of the crowd.

"What a merry life these dogs have of it," thought Rover, "with so kind a master, who makes it his sole employment to go about for their amusement. So far from checking

their gambols, he even gives them music to encourage them to jump about."

After some time, Rover reflected that it would be as well to look after his young master; and, not aware that Tom and his companion had come up to look at the same sport, he galloped off to the place where he had left them, and was in great consternation at not finding his master there.

After running about for a few minutes, to no purpose, he pursued his way down the street, where a number of people were following the man with his dancing-dogs. Rover went along with the rest, looking about, in all directions, though vainly, for his young master, till, at length, he attracted the notice of the owner of the dogs and monkey.

Rover was a dapper little fellow, just such a one as the man thought would make a useful addition to his live stock, and observing that he appeared lost, he whistled, and coaxed him to follow him.

In justice to Rover, we must say, that, much as he envied the condition of the

dancing troop, it would never have entered his head to desert his favourite little Tommy to go with a new master, had he not been in a manner thrown upon so doing.

Rover was of an affectionate disposition; but he had not been long enough in the world to attach himself steadily to his owner, and like the generality of puppies, was fond of any body that was fond of him. Now, Tim Trapwell was so well pleased to have found such a pretty little dog, that he made the best of his way out of the town, lest the puppy should be discovered by his rightful owner. Tim kept him close by his side, caressing and encouraging him to jump and caper all the way they went along. Rover was charmed with all this, yet he could not help remarking the lagging pace and jaded appearance of the little dogs, who had been the objects of his envy. All his endeavours to entice them to frolic by the way were unavailing; nor could he help observing how much the tone of the master was changed towards them. Instead of good-

humouredly snapping his fingers, to encourage them, as in the dance, he now, in anger, called them to come on. Rover could not account for this difference, nor, at present, did he trouble his head about the matter; but when, late in the evening, they stopped at a miserable hovel, their resting-place for the night, he observed, among other things, Timothy brandish a tremendous whip, at sight of which the poor dogs showed, by their terror, that they were too well acquainted with its power.

"What can such a good-natured man," thought Rover, "want with such a large whip?" Alas! he was soon destined to discover; for, the next morning, Rover received his first lesson, in order to fit him for future service.

It is needless to detail the cruel means used by such wretches as Timothy Trapwell, in order to discipline poor animals, for the purpose of (by their means, and at their expense,) leading an idle, vagabond life. Suffice it to say, that our inexperienced puppy

found the kind, merry master, a hard-hearted tyrant ; and the diversion of capering about to the pipe and tabor, an effort extremely painful ; and that, while the spectators were laughing at the frisky antics of the dogs, it was to the poor animals a period of actual suffering.

“ Ah ! ” thought Rover, “ I feel the truth of what my friend Trusty used to say about quiet and repose. The life I then thought dull, how delightful would it be now ! ”

As, however, he could not help himself, Rover was obliged to submit as well as he could to the hardships he was compelled to endure.

His master led a wandering life, having no regular home ; going from one town to another, and staying as long in each as he could pick up pence by his animal exhibition. The pleasantest part of the time to Rover was that employed in travelling from one place to another. For, notwithstanding what he suffered from ill-treatment, and even from hunger, still, on a fine sun-shiny morn-

ing, our puppy, whose spirits were not yet broken, forgot all his troubles as he cantered along in the train of his master.

Although Rover had not yet arrived at the honour of wearing a jacket, yet Timothy had taught him some tricks, and feats of agility, which the other dogs did not perform, and of which he used to make a separate exhibition.

One day, after Rover had played his part, and was allowed a short respite, he perceived, at some distance, a little boy, very like his young master. This happened to be some twenty miles from his former residence. It is not, however, to be expected that Rover could calculate on the improbability of seeing his young favourite alone, and in a strange place. A well-dressed little boy, in a dark blue jacket and nankeen trowsers, could, as he thought, be no other than his playfellow, Tom Seymour ; and he darted through the crowd, unperceived by Timothy, who was intent on the performance of his other dogs.

The young gentleman, who had thus attracted Rover's regard, appeared to be in great haste ; he did not stop an instant to look at what was going forward, but made the best of his way through the mob, and then took to running : so that, by the time that our puppy overtook the young stranger, they were at a considerable distance from the scene of exhibition.

Bounding, and barking with joy, Rover, jumped up to greet his young master, when, to his infinite consternation, he beheld a stranger!

The young gentleman seemed much pleased with the familiar fondness of the dog, with the real cause of which he was, however, unacquainted. He patted, stroked, and made so much of him, that Rover, who had no great love for his last master, was easily prevailed on to follow the little boy.

After walking on briskly for some time, they turned out of the main road into an avenue, leading to a spacious mansion ; when the young gentleman, who had hi-

therto seemed anxious to reach home, now suddenly slackened his pace, and appeared thoughtful; probably considering what kind of reception his new friend might meet with.

Meanwhile Rover, who was troubled with no such considerations, trotted along by his side as confidently as if he was going home.

Arrived at the house, George Maitland, which was the name of the young gentleman, stood some time consulting with the footman, before he went up stairs. Their conversation was evidently about the dog, and the servant, every time he looked at him, shook his head. Rover was at length consigned to his care, while George, in the mean time, went to plead the cause of his new favourite with his mother, and to entreat her to let him keep the very pretty little dog that had followed him home.

The fates, however, were against poor Rover, in this respect. Mrs. Maitland was a sickly, nervous lady, and, unfortunately, had a particular terror of dogs; and, though

George was a darling, and an only son, no entreaties of his could prevail upon his mother to indulge him in this instance. It was, she said, dangerous to have any thing to do with strange dogs; the weather was hot; there had been some talk of mad dogs; this one might go mad, or might be bitten by one that was mad; and it might bite all the family. In short, Mrs. Maitland was so determined, that her son, though very unwillingly, was obliged to give up the point. All that he could obtain, in favour of poor Rover, was leave to keep him shut up for a few days, in case he might be owned; or that they might find some one who would take him.

"Aye, master George," said the footman, as the young gentleman acquainted him with his ill-success, "I told you how it would be; I was sure my mistress would not let you keep him."

"Well, Frank," replied the little boy, "you must shut the poor fellow up in the stable, and give him plenty to eat, and, perhaps, we may hear of a place for him."

This being settled, Frank, according to his young master's orders, took Rover to the stable, who, not having had a plentiful meal for some time, rejoiced not a little at the plate of meat that was set before him.

Having had a good deal of exercise in the morning, Rover, after clearing the well-filled platter, laid himself down and slept for several hours. In the evening Frank brought him another substantial meal.

"Well done!" thought our puppy; "I have got into the land of plenty this time, however." Again, after eating as much as he could, he curled himself up in a corner to sleep; but, by the next morning, he began to grow impatient of confinement.

"This life will never do for me," thought Rover; "all the good living in the world will not make up for the loss of liberty;" and, accordingly, he began to scratch at the stable-door, barking and whining alternately. It was, however, to no purpose; no one heard or attended to him; and, after tiring himself, in vain, to effect his liberation, Rover

crouched down, with his nose close to the opening of the door, resolving, at the first opportunity, he would endeavour to regain his freedom.

At length the servant brought to Rover his accustomed meal, whose determination had been to rush out at the first opening of the door, but the sight and smell of the meat was a temptation too strong to be resisted. It happened, however, that the man who brought his food was hastily called away before he had time to fasten the dog in the stable, and, while he was gone, Rover, after quickly swallowing his food, did not fail to take the opportunity of making his escape.

Not having seen George Maitland since first making acquaintance with him in the street, Rover did not feel sufficient interest in that young gentleman to make him linger about the place. The loss of liberty was to our puppy the greatest of all evils ; and, having once got outside the stable-door, he darted across the yard, squeezed through a narrow

railing, scrambled up a high bank, leaped over a ditch, and ran on till he had fairly lost sight of the house and all that belonged to it. "And, now," thought Rover, "I will take care how I follow little boys again;" for he felt himself tolerably independent.

It was a sun-shiny day; he had taken a plentiful meal, so that, under the present circumstances, food, and a home appeared of small importance; but while, in mere sport, gamboling about, poor Rover was deserted by a parcel of mischievous boys, who desired no better fun than that of worrying any helpless animal that came in their way. At first they began to pelt our puppy with stones, and then, with loud shouts, pursued him, calling out that it was "a mad dog!"

An alarm of this kind would have soon proved fatal to Rover, who was in a fair way of being driven really mad, or killed on the spot, as such a report would have gathered others to join in the pursuit.

From this persecution, however, he was relieved by the good-nature of a country-

man, who was going along, and who took compassion on him. A few threats, and a few flourishes of the man's whip, dispersed the pursuers ; and Rover, perfectly understanding that the countryman's interference was in his behalf, kept close by the side of his deliverer, hoping that he had found a friend. "For, after all," thought Rover, "though liberty is a fine thing, yet a home, and a master to take one's part, are rather necessary for one's comfort."

Rover was, however, this time, mistaken in his calculations ; the countryman was poor, and could not afford to keep a dog ; and, after the boys were dispersed, he warned him away, not supposing, indeed, that a well-fed, well-looking puppy, was without a home.

Rover was sadly disappointed, and for some time persevered in following the man, till threatened with a stroke of the same whip which had succeeded in sending off his persecutors.

Again the puppy was puzzled to understand that which appeared to him a strange

inconsistency of behaviour; and he stood for some minutes looking after the stranger, whom he would fain have had for a master.

Evening was now coming on; and Rover, hungry and tired, experienced a considerable change in his feelings since the morning, when he had bounded along in all the happiness of regained freedom. Having just entered a village, the way at every step became more populous; and Rover, bewildered, trod upon by one person and kicked out of the way by another, knew not which way to turn.

At length he slipped into a dark corner, in which he resolved to shelter himself for the night.

In the morning Rover crept out of his resting-place, shook his ears, and sallied forth in search of a home, which, he supposed, there would be no difficulty in obtaining.

Observing the doors open of several houses, he made various attempts to enter,

but met with such rude rebuffs, that our puppy quickly discovered that this mode of introducing himself would not succeed.

We will not, however, follow poor Rover through all his repulses and adventures, nor does it signify to relate how often his hopes were disappointed, when, from the casual notice of some stranger, he was induced to follow him home, and then found the street-door shut upon him, nor how frequently, even after gaining admission into a house, from the compassion of one individual of the family, the poor dog was objected to by others, and sent out again to wander.

For nearly three weeks he lived, or rather existed, in this wretched manner, picking up a morsel by chance, and resting in any place that offered a temporary shelter.

Winter was now approaching, and the misery of cold and hunger was felt by Rover every day, with additional pain. All inclination for fun and frolic was over, and scarce any one who now beheld him, could have recognised, in the starved little animal,

looking frightened and suspicious at every one that passed, the wild, heedless puppy, so full of glee, and fearless of harm.

One day, as poor Rover was gnawing a bone, by the road-side, a mendicant-like boy passing along, stopped an instant to look at him. "Poor fellow!" said the lad, in a compassionate tone, "there's not much to be got off that dry bone;" and, so saying, he threw him a crust.

Rover snapped up the bread, and then looked up in the boy's face, as if to thank him for his kindness.

"I have no more for you, poor fellow," said the lad, walking on. But our puppy was not to be got rid of so easily. Having of late experienced but little in the shape of kindness, Rover was determined not to lose sight of one who appeared to feel compassion for him, and, accordingly, followed his new friend, notwithstanding all the boy's endeavours to prevent him. Even the menace of a stone failed to intimidate him, further than to make him stand still for an instant, then run

after his new acquaintance, and look up so beseechingly, that the lad could not find in his heart to use any further method to drive him away.

"My poor dog," said he, "it is of no use your following me; for I have hardly a home for myself."

This was truly spoken; for Ned (that was the lad's name) served a hard master, who was little disposed to show kindness or compassion. The boy's principal employment was to tend sheep; and even the tedious hours passed on the bleak common, in a cold winter day, were preferable to those passed under the roof of his employer, where Ned was the 'scape-goat of the family, on whose head every individual of it thought he might lay the burden of his ill-humour.

Thomas Webster, his master, was uniformly severe; and dame Webster, though a good sort of woman, was apt, when things went wrong, to scold Ned; and even the children, though not particularly ill-dis-

posed, took the tone of their parents, and exercised all their petty tyranny over the poor friendless boy.

It may well be supposed that, in a place where he possessed so little influence, Ned did not dare introduce his new favourite, however he might wish it; and on reaching home he made another attempt to drive the dog away.

"I must not let you in; I dare not let you in," said he.

Rover, however, wagged his tail confidently, as if he had said, "we'll see what's to be done;" and pushed himself in at the door, in spite of Ned's endeavours; and in this instance Rover's perseverance succeeded. Dame Webster compassionated the starved appearance of the animal; the children were delighted with his good-natured familiarity; all pleaded for him; and Thomas Webster, being in a remarkably indulgent humour, to please his children, consented that the dog might remain for the present.

Rover, whose happiness was never damped by apprehensions of the future, did not a little enjoy basking in the influence of a bright fire, a luxury he had of late been unaccustomed to. He had, by this time, had sufficient experience of hardships to be of old Trusty's opinion, that quiet and repose were comforts not to be despised.

A very little time, however, discovered to Rover that these were comforts not often to be enjoyed in his present place, among noisy children, a bustling mistress, and a cross master. To escape from kicks, or being trod upon a dozen times in an hour, he used to follow Ned to the common. To this boy, as to his first friend and benefactor, he most especially attached himself; insomuch, that he was called Ned's dog; a distinction for which, however, poor Rover paid dear; as Thomas Webster, whenever he was angry with the lad, never failed to make the dog share his ill-humour.

In proportion, however, to the ill-usage they experienced from others, these constant

friends and companions became more attached. His faithful dog was the only creature that showed fondness for Ned; and, in return, Ned was the only one to whom Rover could look for uniform kindness and protection. They were inseparable companions, and our puppy, not having lost his freakish disposition, would play a hundred gambols, beguiling the weary time while Ned was tending the sheep.

It happened, however, one afternoon in the latter end of January, that just as Ned was about to lead home his flock, so dense a fog arose, as rendered it extremely difficult to collect the sheep, and it was considerably past the usual hour, even with the help of Pincher, the sheep-dog, and with the assistance of Rover, who had learnt part of that duty, that the boy at length succeeded in bringing the flock to their accustomed place of shelter.

His master, who had met with something which had ruffled him, previous to Ned's return, was enraged at him for coming so late.

The lad tried in vain to explain the cause. Thomas Webster, having once happened to detect Rover endeavouring to entice old Pincher to a game at play, now obstinately insisted that the vile cur had been at some of his tricks, and decreed his death on the ensuing morning; for, at present, Rover was not to be found, having, with an instinctive sense of an approaching danger, made his escape at the sound of his dreaded master's angry voice.

To the fate pronounced against Rover, and which Ned was but too well aware his violent and determined master would not mitigate, there was a threat added of Ned's dismissal; but this menace had been too often repeated to be much dreaded, and, on the part of the boy, it was now disregarded. The expected fate of the poor dog determined him; and the following morning, instead of beholding him at his accustomed post, found him and his faithful follower some miles on their journey, to try their fortune in another quarter.

Emancipation from his hard service for

some time buoyed up the spirits of Ned. He and his dog trotted on briskly, and even merrily; but, towards the decline of day, cold, hunger, and fatigue quelled his spirits, and even gave rise to some repentant feelings for having left his place, wretched as it was; not that Ned's conscience reproached him with having done wrong by his master, who could not be at any loss to supply his place, and from whom he had never received any more than merely food and bare clothing. Nevertheless, the poor lad began to feel that even an uncomfortable home was better than none at all. But then to have remained, and given up his faithful dog to his master's unjust anger, was not to be thought of.

The shades of evening were now fast coming on; and our traveller saw no better shelter for the night than was afforded by an old, half-broken-down shed, which stood in a field, and had been built for the accommodation of cattle. Ned, however, who had been accustomed to endure hardships, was well enough satisfied with his lodging, and

Rover was happy to be any where with his master.

The morning dawned, and with it brought something like a hope that they might find a meal—as a village appeared at a small distance—the only one they had tasted being the supper of the evening before, which the poor boy's heart was too full to allow him to eat at that time, and this Ned and his companion had despatched before they had got four miles on their journey.

At the first cottage, where he made an humble application for a piece of bread, a benevolent-looking old woman, who opened the door, instantly complied with the request, and gave him a plentiful breakfast, which he divided with Rover.

The old woman then asked him several questions respecting where he had come from, and whither he was going? Ned told her his whole story, and the good dame listened, wondered, pitied, and blamed him by turns; one instant was indignant at the cruelty of his master, and, in the next,

thought Ned had done wrong to quit his place for the sake of a dog.

Having finished his meal, and expressed his gratitude to the hospitable dame, Ned and his companion again set forward. The kindness he had experienced from the good old woman, who dismissed him with advice for his future conduct, and gave him, moreover, a few pence to help him on his journey, encouraged the poor lad to hope that he should be able to find friends everywhere, and soon get into service. But in this he was cruelly disappointed. A ragged boy, and a half-starved, dirty-looking dog, were objects of universal suspicion.

"A pretty story," said one, "that you left your master because he was going to hang your dog! more likely, you have been turned away for idleness or bad behaviour."

"A likely matter," said another, "that a boy should expect to be taken into service, who has the impudence to own that he ran away from his place!"

In short, Ned found there were few who credited his tale or pitied his distress.

For three days did the poor boy, and his faithful follower, wander from place to place, houseless and friendless, subsisting upon the chance charity of strangers, and sheltering themselves at night in any outhouse or barn they could find.

On the fourth day from that on which they first set out, after travelling many miles, one of those singular chances, which sometimes occur, brought them to the neighbourhood to which our adventurous puppy originally belonged; and not far from the spot from whence Trapwell first enticed the unsuspecting Rover away, did poor Ned now seat himself on a door-stone, to rest his weary limbs, and to ponder in grief and hopelessness on what was to become of him and his affectionate follower.

While thus musing on his hard fortune, he was roused by the voice of a gentleman, who was passing along, and who inquired where he had found that dog? Ned looked up, but rather hesitated in his reply; for, of late, his story had been so ill received, that

he grew timid and fearful of repeating it. Mr. Seymour, who, notwithstanding the altered appearance of the dog, immediately recognized in him the puppy his son had lost three months before, repeated his question; giving Ned to understand, at the same time, that the animal was his property.

The poor lad burst into tears; for, although he had no means of providing for his faithful companion, yet the thoughts of having him taken from him, was a circumstance to which he had never made up his mind.

"It seems, then, that you do not like to part with the animal," said Mr. Seymour; "and yet, my lad, to judge from your appearance, and the lank sides of the poor dog, you can hardly keep him."

"That's true enough," replied the boy, as if struck with the consciousness that it was cruel to make his favourite the sharer of his own hard fate.

"And so you may have him, sir; for I ought not to hinder the poor brute from getting into a good place, when I have no

home to take him to, nor food to give him; and yet," added he, caressing the affectionate animal, "it is very hard to part with the only living thing that ever was fond of me."

Mr. Seymour not only compassionated the distressed condition of the poor lad, but there was something, also, in his voice and manner that particularly struck and interested him; and in a tone of kindness, to which Ned had of late been little used, Mr. Seymour now made further inquiries into his history.

The boy told his story, which was but a brief one; all he recollected of his early life was, going about the country with a woman, named Judy Tramper, whom he called his mother.

"But," said Ned, "I do not much think that she was my mother; for she used to beat me, and be very cross when I did not sell as many matches as she expected; and I never could love her."

"And where," interrupted Mr. Seymour, "is this woman now, and when did you last see her?"

"I have not seen her for a very long time," replied Ned; "not since I went to live with Thomas Webster, to mind his sheep."

"But how came you to leave your mother, as you called her?"

"I remember, it was one day when we had been walking a great way, that my mother was grumbling, said I was idle, and brought her no money; so I told her what the people used to say to me when I knocked at their doors, that 'I was too big to go about begging, and that I ought to work.'"

"And so you may," said she, "for you are of no use to me now."

"A little while after, we came to the farm of my late master; and Judy asked dame Webster, who was standing at the door, for a piece of bread; and she gave us something to eat, and let us sit down and rest ourselves, and asked my mother a good many questions, who told her a great deal of what I know was not true; but dame Webster believed all she said, and seemed to pity her very much, and told Judy that they were in

want of a lad to look after the sheep. While they were talking, Thomas Webster came in, and, hearing what had been said, it was agreed that I should remain there."

Ned then related the subsequent part of his story, including his meeting with the puppy, and the circumstance which made him leave his place.

Mr. Seymour listened attentively to the boy's narrative, and at length bade him follow him, and he would see what could be done.

The boy gladly obeyed, and they proceeded towards the house of Mr. Seymour, who appeared thoughtful during the walk.

On reaching his house, the gentleman told the boy to wait awhile in the hall. Mr. Seymour had scarcely left him, when he heard the furious barking of old Trusty, mingled with that of the puppy's; and recollecting that the ragged appearance of the poor lad might subject him to a rough reception from his old house-dog, he hastened back to call the animal to order; but there was no occa-

sion; Trusty's angry bark was changed into a whining fondness; and, while leaping up to lick the face and hands of the astonished boy, displayed all the tokens of affectionate recognition.

Perhaps the reader may have anticipated, that the sagacity of old Trusty at once discovered what Mr. Seymour dared not allow himself to hope—the recovery of his long-lost child! whose identity was sufficiently proved by the likeness he bore to his family.

The scene that followed, and the happiness of the parents on the restoration of their elder boy, may be better imagined than described.

We cannot, however, conclude, without taking notice of our little friend Rover, who, having partaken of the hard lot of his young master, now shared his better fortune.

If time and experience had not cured our puppy of all his wild pranks, he was fortunate enough never to be called to account for them; as, from this time, Rover was privileged to tear hats, run away with shoes,

and, in short, play what tricks he pleased ; for, if old Trusty was valued and loved for being the first to recognize and welcome his young master, Rover was no less regarded as having also been instrumental in restoring Edward Seymour to his family.

PROPOSING AND DISPOSING.

"I HAVE been thinking," said Mary Hobson to her husband, one evening—as they were sitting by the fire-side, enjoying the short season of quiet leisure after the day's labour was over—"I've been thinking what a famous thing it would be if ever we were able to keep a cow."

"Aye, Mary," replied her husband; "or, rather, if we could afford to buy one; for the keeping it would be no such difficult matter. I know that farmer Wilson would let me have the little meadow behind the house, upon very easy terms, for part of the year; and then, you know, for the other part of the year, the low pasture is free for

all cattle; so, I think, we could manage pretty well, in that respect."

"And," rejoined Mary, "there is the old barn, which is all tumbling to pieces, that might easily be put into repair, and would make a capital cow-house."

"That it would," said Hobson; "and I could fetch thatch, and do all that is wanting to it myself; and, indeed, it seems a pity to have such a place, and be able to make no use of it. But, dear me, what a folly it is to be planning in this manner, when there is not the least likelihood, as far as I can see, of our ever being able to raise money for such a purpose."

Mary, however, seemed by no means willing to relinquish her scheme of castle-building.

"Well, surely," said she, "there is no harm in talking about it. All that I say is, if ever we should be fortunate enough to buy a cow, how soon it would repay itself over and over again. For do but consider, the cream we could always dispose of at

squire Morgan's; or I could sometimes make butter, and sell it at market. So you see what a profitable concern it would be; and then the comfort of having milk without sending the poor dear children such a distance for it as we are obliged to do now, which is so dangerous in this frosty weather. Indeed, it was but last week that little George fell down and broke the jug, and spilled all the milk, and it was a great mercy he did not hurt himself. I'm sure I'm always in a terror when the boy goes, lest any accident should happen to him. And yet, what can be done? It would be still more dangerous for me to go and leave the children alone in the house with the fire, and all that."

Dame Hobson, perceiving that her husband began to listen more attentively to her enumeration of the various advantages and comforts which would arise from their keeping a cow, went over the ground again, repeating, in still stronger terms, the arguments she had before used in favour of her plan.

This, however, was perfectly needless. William Hobson was perfectly aware, as well as his wife, of the convenience and profit it would bring, but urged the utter improbability of their ever being able to accomplish their wishes.

“For consider, Mary, we are but poor working people, who get our bread just from hand to mouth, as I may say, and seldom have as much as five shillings beforehand. How, then, is it likely that we shall ever command a sum of money sufficient for the purchase of a cow, which would cost eight or ten pounds? Think of that, Mary — ten pounds!”

Mary, however, was not discouraged by hearing the magnitude of the sum required, nor easily persuaded to give up her hopes respecting this favourite project.

“It is certainly a great deal of money,” said she; “but still I do not see the impossibility of being able, some time or other, to save as much.”

The husband shook his head.

"Why, now, listen," cried Mary; "suppose we were to put by a trifle every week, or just when it may be convenient."

"Aye, Mary," said Hobson, "I wonder when that will be; for, if ever I earn a few shillings more, there is sure to come some want at that very time; a pair of shoes for one of the children, perhaps; something or other, at any rate, that cannot be done without. No, Mary, depend upon it, it will never be convenient for us to save the least trifle in the world. If we put any thing by, we must do it whether it is convenient or not."

"Well, then, so we must," replied dame Hobson, "and we'll begin next week, as you are going to work over hours; for though, as you say truly, all the money we could get would not be too much for our wants, yet, as there will be something in addition to what we have lived upon for some months past, I think we may very well save it up. I have an order, from old Mrs. Barnet, to knit her half-a-dozen pair of yarn stockings, which she likes better than what are bought at the

shops. The money for them we may lay by also ; and suppose it should be even two or three years before we get sufficient to purchase a cow, still, in my opinion, it will be well worth trying for."

William agreed to this, and began to think there might be something more than mere castle-building in this scheme of his wife's. Accordingly, as proposed, they put by, from time to time, what they could spare from their necessities ; and though it was not without some privations that they did this, yet the sum was very slow in accumulating. The prospect, however, was before them of one day being able to fulfil their hopes. That prospect was sufficient ; and the convenience and comfort they should enjoy in keeping a cow, became the never-varying theme of their conversation.

It was about six weeks after the project had been first started, that one afternoon, as dame Hobson was sitting at work, her attention was attracted by the loud shouts of her two eldest children, who were playing in the garden.

Hearing the voice of contention, the mother ran out to see what was the matter, and found George, the elder, holding something, wrapped in his pin-a-fore, which he was endeavouring to keep out of the reach of his sister, who, in her turn, was trying to get possession of it.

Dame Hobson was assailed by the appeal of both children at once.

"Mother, George won't let me carry it in, though I was the first that saw it."

"And, mother, as I caught it, may I not keep it?" said George.

The object in dispute was a beautiful bird, something of the parrot kind, which the children had discovered among the bushes in the garden, and which, being remarkably tame, suffered itself to be easily caught.

Dame Hobson soon put an end to the matter in question by taking the bird into her own hands, and depositing it in a wicker cage, which had formerly belonged to a favourite blackbird, and which, though not of a very accommodating size for the gay creature, served to keep it out of the cat's way,

and pacified the children, who now seemed to have an equal claim to it, and who, much to their mother's annoyance, would not stir out of doors again for the remainder of the day, but kept an incessant clatter about the bird, calling her attention every instant to come and admire the pretty creature.

When Hobson returned home in the evening, the children eagerly showed their father the new pet, and gave him a detailed account of how it was secured. "For, there it was, just under the gooseberry bush," said George. "And I helped to catch it," cried Fanny; "for, while George crept quietly up to the bush, not to frighten it, I went round on the other side, and held my frock out, that it might not get away; and so, at last, we got it, and brought it in-doors; and mother luckily thought of putting it into poor Dick's cage; and she says we must not quarrel about it; and it is to be George's and mine, too."

"Yes, darlings," said the mother; "and now it is time for you to go to bed; so, come along."

"I think, Mary," said her husband, when the children were gone, "you have hurried the poor things to bed earlier than usual."

"Why, indeed, William," replied the dame, "you would not wonder that I am glad to get them off, if you knew what a noise I've had about my ears ever since they brought that plaguy bird into the house."

"It's a very handsome parrot," said her husband; "I should not wonder if it was worth something."

"Fiddle-stick, for what it may be worth," cried Mary; "I wish it had found its way into any garden but ours. Not but that I should be sorry for any harm that should happen to the poor thing—only I heartily hope we shall soon get rid of it."

"I'm afraid it will be a terrible grief to the poor children to part with it," said Hobson.

"Aye, that it will," returned the dame. "But, the moment I saw it I guessed what a plague it would be. As to keeping such a troublesome noisy bird as a parrot, it is im-

possible; yet I know what a piece of work Fan and George will make when it is taken away; and the longer they have it the worse it will be. I declare I've a great mind to carry it to old Mrs. Smith, who is so fond of birds. She is more likely to find out to whom it belongs than we are; and, if she should not, I know she'll be glad to keep it."

Hobson, however, objected to this proposal; he was almost as much pleased with the bird as the children were, and would not give into such a treacherous scheme, as making off with the new favourite when they were out of the way. So here the subject dropped.

The next day was Sunday; and dame Hobson sincerely lamented that her husband had not permitted her to put her plan into execution, of getting rid of the parrot the preceding night.

Twice during the morning did its shrill scream awake the infant; a circumstance not easily forgiven by mothers or nurses. Then, in the afternoon, while Hobson was reading

to his family, the mother's patience was again most sadly tried; for George would keep putting his fingers through the bars of the cage, to entice the bird to play or to fight: and Fanny was endeavouring, every instant, to slip away from her mother, to join in the same diversion.

Again did dame Hobson wish the parrot a hundred miles off, rather than it should have come to them; and most firmly did she resolve that it should not remain there much longer.

On the following morning, when her husband had gone to his usual occupations, dame Hobson recollected she had to go to the neighbouring village, some half-mile distant. Having sent the two eldest of her children to school, and leaving the youngest in the charge of a neighbour, she sallied forth. On her way to the village she observed a printed paper stuck against the wall, at the top of which, in large letters, appeared, "TEN POUNDS REWARD!" This was all that caught the eye of dame Hobson.

"Some pocket-book, I suppose," thought she: "'Ten pounds reward!' just the sum that would be the making of us, if we'd had the luck to pick it up. Perhaps some one has found it who does not want the money; well, it's no use thinking about such things;" and she began humming a tune, to drive away some unpleasant thoughts that obtruded themselves.

On reaching the town, dame Hobson saw, in the window of the first shop she came to, another of the printed bills which had at first attracted her notice. Although she had as little curiosity as any body, and no time to spare, yet, as the sum mentioned was exactly that which was the ultimatum of her desire, she could not help stopping to read the paper.

It ran thus:—"Lost, on Friday last, a green paroquet, ringed with scarlet round the neck," with other particular marks, calculated to identify the lost bird; and went on to say, "whoever has found, and will bring the said paroquet to Lady B—, Or—

chard House, shall receive the above-mentioned reward."

Mary Hobson perused the bill twice over, rubbed her eyes, doubted her senses. It was an exact description of the bird which had come into her possession by such a mere chance! a chance, too, which she had wished had happened to any house but hers! Still, however, she thought she must be under the influence of a dream. It seemed scarcely possible to her that such a sum should be offered for the recovery of a bird. To ascertain the truth, and make further inquiries, she went into the shop, where she heard the circumstance fully corroborated.

It may readily be believed that dame Hobson lost no time in returning home; apprehending, however, that some mischief might have happened to the bird during her absence. And now she recollected the window was left open, and the fastening of the cage was so slight, that the parrot had opened it with its beak on the preceding day, and, in all likelihood, it might have made

its escape, and she would have lost the only opportunity which might ever occur of being so suddenly enriched.

Arrived at her cottage, with a beating heart did Mary Hobson lift the latch of the door, scarcely daring to believe she should find the bird safe in the cage. Safe, however, it was, to the infinite joy of the good woman, who immediately set forth, with the prize in her hand, to the house directed; where, when she arrived, she felt so confused and bewildered, as scarcely to make the business which she came upon intelligible to the servant who opened the door.

The sight of the bird was, however, explanation sufficient, and dame Hobson was ushered into the drawing-room, where the lady to whom the bird belonged was quite as pleased to recover it as Mary was to receive the promised reward. When she once more found herself at home, actually in possession of the sum which had been the utmost of her wishes, she again almost doubted her senses, so extraordinary did the circumstance appear.

It is not to be wondered at that the joy and astonishment of the morning's adventure should confuse dame Hobson's wits, to such a degree, that she forgot some of her usual household concerns, and knew so little how the hours went, that, when her husband returned in the evening, she inquired, with some surprise, what had brought him home so early? Never was question more inaptly put; poor Hobson had returned very tired, out of spirits, and full half an hour later than usual. Observing no preparation for his evening meal, added to the remarkably gay humour of his wife, served, by no means, to put him in better temper; and he replied to her question with so much irritation, not to say anger, that dame Hobson was obliged to relinquish a good joke she had been planning to surprise him with, having diverted herself all day with contriving how she should acquaint him with the luck that had fallen to them. As matters stood, however, she found it best to communicate to her husband, as expeditiously as possible, what had

occurred; and it may be concluded that Hobson's ill-humour was speedily converted into surprise and delight at the news.

Nor did he, in his turn, fail to rally his wife on her having so often lamented the parrot's flying into their garden. Dame Hobson willingly joined in the laugh against herself; and the children were easily pacified for the loss of their favourite by the promise of cakes and toys.

The evening was passed in clamorous mirth, repetitions of wonder at the extraordinary good fortune, and various compliments which all passed on themselves for their share in the business.

"How lucky it happened to be our half-holiday," cried little Fanny; "I dare say, if we were to play in the garden every afternoon, instead of going to school, we should often find something."

"And how fortunate," said the mother, "that we had not burned the old cage, which, if you recollect, you wanted me to do the day before."

"It was so," replied her husband; "and rather fortunate, also, that I prevented you from getting rid of the bird in such a hurry as you were at first inclined to do."

"In short," said the dame, "it was a piece of good luck altogether, that I hope we shall know how to make a proper use of."

"And it is singular enough," observed Hobson, "that the cattle-fair will be a month earlier this season; so we may have the cow next week."

This intelligence was replied to by an exclamation of delight by the little boy and girl, who had heard the subject so often descanted upon by their parents, that they naturally supposed that all the happiness in the world was centered in keeping a cow.

Dame Hobson, however, received the information with something more of indifference than might have been imagined; and what is, perhaps, rather strange, the cow, so long the object of their hopes and wishes, had never been recurred to till this moment.

Whether they had wearied themselves with the theme, or that the acquisition being now in their power, made it of less importance, is uncertain; but, after the first ebullition of their joy was over, and the excitement of their spirits had, in some degree, subsided, all went on again much as usual for two or three days; and nothing was said on the subject till, one evening, Hobson observed to his wife that he had been endeavouring to do something with the old barn. "But," added he, "I'm afraid I shall make but a bad job of it, for the place is in a sad ruinous condition."

"Indeed, I feared it," replied Mary: "Well, we must do the best we can. I'm sure it would be madness to go to any expense for such a place; besides, we have not got the cow yet, and there's no telling what may happen. You may not be able to meet with one to our price at the fair, or something or other; at any rate, while we have the money, we can buy the cow at any time; but when once we've bought the cow, we cannot have the money again."

Hobson assented to this sage reflection; and certain it is, that the prospect of so soon possessing, what they had anticipated with so much pleasure, did not appear so delightful as heretofore.

The day arrived on which the cattle-fair was held, which was at a village about six miles off; and William Hobson, having made a holiday for the purpose, was preparing to set out on his journey. A small leathern bag, with the money for the proposed purchase, was lying on the table, which the boy was opening and shutting, and fingering the gold, with all the delight which children feel who hear sufficient about it to gather a very high, though an indistinct, idea of its power.

"Are you going to give all these guineas for one cow?" said he.

"Ah, my dear! you may well say so," cried his mother. "Bless the boy! he knows the value of money; and it does seem a prodigious sum to give. I do say, we ought to think twice about it, after all."

"Think twice!" exclaimed Hobson;—"why, Mary, we've thought about it a hundred times; was it not your own thought in the first instance?"

"Certainly it was; and for that very reason I should be sorry for you to go and make a purchase, perhaps against your own better judgment, on my account."

But Hobson, on the present occasion, having made up his mind to a pleasant jaunt, was very determined not to give it up.

"Well, Mary," said he, "the wisest thing I can do is to go and see how the market stands; and, depend upon it, if I cannot make a good bargain, I will bring back the money; and I shall call on your cousin in my way, for we have not heard of them a good while; and I am anxious to know how they are getting on."

And, with these sufficient reasons for going, he accordingly set off.

Dame Hobson passed the day in a sort of fidgetting anxiety; recollecting a thousand cautions she meant to give her husband, re-

lative to the proposed purchase. "To be sure it would be a great comfort to have a cow of our own," repeated she to herself, half a dozen times; thus endeavouring to make her mind up to what, a short time before, she would have thought the greatest good that could have happened.

At an earlier hour than his family expected, William Hobson came back. To the eager question of the children, whether he had brought home the cow? and to the inquiring looks of his wife, he replied by throwing the still full purse on the table.

"Well," said he, "sure enough, I could not make a bargain." An exclamation of disappointment broke from the little boy and girl at these words. But a pocketful of gingerbread, which the father had brought them, soon turned the current of their thoughts.

"No doubt you had good reasons for what you did," cried his wife. "I suppose the market was high, or you did not see any cattle that you approved of?"

“Why, no, that was not exactly the case,” replied William; “the cattle, certainly, were good; and there was one cow which I liked exceedingly; a nice young, healthy creature—every body admired her.”

“And a fine price, I dare say, they asked for it,” cried Mary.

“Why no, the price was not altogether out of the way; the owner asked ten guineas, and would have taken pounds; and most people said it was well worth the money; and I believe it might be; however, I bid him something less, but he would not agree; so I thought I would consider a little more about it, and, accordingly, took a turn round the fair; but, when I returned, the cow was sold. Several others were then recommended to me, which our neighbour Barnard, who is, I believe, a tolerable judge of cattle, said were just as good. But the truth is, I had set my mind on the one that was gone;—’twas such a beautiful, mild-looking creature, that none of the rest seemed any thing to compare with it. And so, Mary, I e’en re-

turned as I went; for I thought of your words, that while we had the money, we could at any time buy the cow."

"Aye, you thought very wisely," said the dame; "but did you not call anywhere?"

"I was going to tell you," continued the husband. "Finding there was nothing to be done at the fair, I did not stop long, but made the best of my way to your cousin's, who were very pleased to see me, and on all accounts I'm glad I went, for they are coming to spend the day with us on Sunday; so you know, Mary, it is rather lucky that we are aware of their intention, that we may be prepared accordingly."

"Aye, truly," replied dame Hobson, "for I should like to treat them well, and let them see things at the best; for you know, William, they live in a very different style from what we do. My cousin Kate can afford to buy new gowns for herself, and new frocks for her children, whenever she likes. They live in a better way, and eat and drink of the best of every thing. In short, they are very fortunate people."

"As for that matter," observed the husband, "I do not know that they are so much more fortunate than ourselves. It is true they live in a larger house ; but it's in a dark smoky street. They may have better food, but, I warrant, we have a better appetite. Your cousin Kate is often ailing—the children are cross and sickly, and do not look half so well in their handsome clothes as our brats do in their shabby ones. So I don't see what great advantage our relations have over us."

Dame Hobson, however, in speaking of her cousin's way of living, had no idea of being discontented with her own inferior station. She was aiming at another point.

"I only meant," cried she, "that as they are in such different circumstances, I should like them to see that we are not worse off in the world than we were."

"Oh, certainly," replied Hobson ; "and they will see that ; but you know, Mary, that for us to pretend to vie with them would be ridiculous ; and were we to put ourselves

to an expense, to entertain our relations inconsistent with our own station, it would appear like foolish pride in us, and not kindness towards them."

Dame Hobson made no reply. The fact was, from the moment she heard of her cousin's intended visit, she had determined in her own mind to indulge in a little display; the idea of which would have never entered her thoughts but for the present opportunity. Dame Hobson had been always frugal, and never gave in to the least extravagance. On the present occasion, however, the temptation was too strong. A sum of money had come too easily into her possession to be duly appreciated; for, from the time they had received it, both husband and wife had been speculating on different ways of laying it out; although they did not communicate their ideas to each other. But Hobson, supposing his wife had set her heart on keeping a cow, would not place any obstacle in the way.

Mary, or dame Hobson, since the acqui-

sition of their wealth, had allowed her thoughts to wander over various articles of finery. She had seen various capital bargains, in the way of wearing apparel, that might suit herself and children. Then circumstances, which before had been unnoticed, now disturbed her ; such as observing a neighbour's wife with a new bonnet, while she had not had one for three years. This, with other matters of a like kind, became sources of mortification. But, having so long talked of the advantages of keeping a cow, she felt some awkwardness in letting her husband know that she had changed her thoughts on the subject ever since the accomplishment of this advantage had been in her power. The news of their cousin's coming to see them, at once, however, appeared a justifiable reason for giving way to a little unusual expense.

"At any rate, William," said she, "we must do the thing properly, and give them a good plain dinner."

To this Hobson readily agreed.

"And it is equally certain," continued the dame, "that we must have some new plates and dishes, for ours are so flawed and chipped, that I should not like my cousins to see that we have no better."

Hobson could not see the necessity of this last motion. Mary, however, carried her point.

"And now, William," said she, "do not think me extravagant, but there is one thing more—your Sunday coat is so very much worn, that, indeed, you ought to treat yourself with a new one."

Hobson acceded to this last proposal even sooner than his wife expected. The truth was, the thought of his wanting a new coat had crossed his mind more than once since they had become so suddenly enriched.

Here the conversation ended, but, on the following evening, returning from his work, the first thing that caught Hobson's eye was the display of a glittering, new, japaned tea-board.

"Now, pray don't be angry, dear Wil-

liam," said the dame, observing a frown gathering on her husband's brow, "I got it such a bargain, that it would have been a sin and a shame to miss of it. Martha Grey, our neighbour, who is so famous for bargains, said she never saw any thing so cheap. Now do guess what it cost."

Hobson did guess so much above the price of the tea-board, as highly delighted his wife, who again congratulated herself on having effected such a bargain. But Hobson, though he confessed it was very cheap, began to repent that he had not purchased the cow.

Sunday arrived; a day of great pleasure and importance to the dame. All went on smoothly; the weather proved fine; her relations enjoyed themselves; admired her children, and admired her tea-board, and invited the whole family to visit them on that day week.

As soon as the guests had departed, "Come," said dame Hobson, "I think we have managed famously, altogether: I'm

sure, William, you do not regret now that I bought the new tea-board."

"No, truly," replied her husband, who felt his pride gratified by the respectable way in which he had been able to entertain his relations, "it is proper to have things a little decent, if we can; for certainly it does make one seem poorer to see nothing but broken crockery and worn-out furniture about us."

This was assuredly true; for if those in a low station have not some degree of decent pride and regard to appearance, they will soon, without doubt, sink into squalid wretchedness. But this was far from being the case with the Hobsons. On the contrary, with a decent regard to credit, they had always preserved an appearance rather above their condition; not, however, in any inconsistent degree, or to make them objects of envy, but only so much so as to make them respected by their neighbours.

In the present instance, however, there appeared some danger of their outstepping

the bounds of consistency. The acquisition of one new thing brought on the want of another; unluckily, too, Hobson had caught from his wife the spirit of wishing to vie with those in better circumstances, notwithstanding the observations he had made on the folly of doing so; and now deemed it highly proper that, when his family returned the visit, their dress and appearance should credit them.

"Come, Mary," said he to his wife, "I am sure you ought to have a new gown; and as clothes must be bought, some time or other, it will be as well to get what is wanting at once; for it would not be right to disgrace them by our appearance."

It may well be imagined how pleased dame Hobson was to hear her husband speak thus, especially as she had been studying, for some time past, in what way she should bring him to this point. Delighted with the commission, she set off to make the necessary purchases; and it may also be supposed that she extended the license

given by her husband beyond its limits. William had desired her to buy what was wanting; and the wants, accordingly, were numerous.

Hobson took the alarm when he heard the sum that had been expended, which was twice as much as he thought would be required.

"Indeed, Mary," said he, "I think you have been very extravagant."

Mary acknowledged the charge in a degree, but pleaded a mother's pride as an excuse. Then the various articles were produced; and Fanny and the little ones looked so pretty in their new bonnets, that Hobson kissed his children, and felt so proud and pleased in their appearance, that he could no longer blame his wife.

In high spirits did the whole party set out on the Sunday to pay the visit to their cousins, where they were most cordially received, and the day passed as agreeably as it could. Towards evening, however, dame Hobson felt her pleasure somewhat damped

by the threatening appearance of the weather, and she thought with much anxiety of their distance from home, and their smart new ribbons.

At an earlier hour than was at first proposed did the family take their departure, in the hope of escaping the threatened rain. The walk home was far from being agreeable. The children, who had been running about all day, complained bitterly of the fatigue. George's shoes pinched him, and the father was obliged to carry Fanny, to enable them to get on the faster. Poor dame Hobson, though heated, and almost out of breath with hurrying, kept congratulating herself on her near approach to home.

"Well, William, I do hope we shall clear the rain, for we've got but a little way to go now," said Mrs. Hobson.

Hobson, however, could not reply to his wife's hope, for at that instant he felt some heavy drops begin to fall; and in less than half a minute it pelted, so that, although not a quarter of a mile from home,

they were as completely wetted as if it had rained all the way.

Arrived at their cottage, and having changed their apparel—"After all," said Hobson, "there is no great harm done; the children are tolerably hardy, and do not soon take cold. Indeed, Mary, you need not be uneasy about them."

In this instance, however, though dame Hobson was an exceeding tender mother, her uneasiness did not proceed from anxiety on account of her children's health; but she could not help reflecting, with much vexation, on the unnecessary expense she had been at for their dress, some part of which was completely spoiled. But there was no use now in indulging regrets. "At any rate," thought she, "I have had the satisfaction of seeing my children dressed as well as the little Brookmans. We have been able to entertain our relations in a respectable manner, and now that is over, we must be careful again."

Having, however, once given way to the

folly of appearing above their condition, it was not so easy to draw back. They had hitherto been in the habit of exchanging one visit in the course of the summer; but this custom was now likely to be infringed upon.

"I declare," said Mrs. Brookman to her husband, as soon as her guests were gone, "I'm quite pleased to see how well my cousins Hobson are getting on in the world; they dress so much better than they used to do, and look so respectable. I should like to invite them to come and see us oftener; it will make a change for poor Mary, who does not go out much; and I'm sure they made us very comfortable the day we went to visit them."

"Yes," rejoined the husband, "and it's a pleasant walk to their house. I think the next time we go, little Kate may go with us; it will do the child good; and if she is too tired to walk home again, we may leave her there for a day or two."

Accordingly, in little more than a month,

the Hobsons were surprised with another visit from their relations, who, as proposed, brought their eldest daughter along with them; and, considering the healthful situation in which the Hobsons lived would benefit their child's health, it was settled she should remain there for a week.

The good-tempered dame Hobson felt flattered by having the child intrusted to her care.

Mrs. Brookman begged that she would not put herself, in the least, out of the way on account of the little girl, but treat her as she would one of her own children, who looked so charming and healthy. This, however, was not to be done. Kate Brookman was a sickly, pampered child: she could not eat brown bread, nor salt butter; put up her lip at the sight of fat bacon, and in short, would not feed as the family did: so that it was necessary to provide for her separately. Then, for the first two days, she was crying every half hour, and wanting to go home. Her cousins were constantly,

though unintentionally, affronting her in their play; and poor dame Hobson found herself more put of her way than when the parrot was an inmate of the house.

Towards the latter end of the week, matters mended. Kate Brookman began to find herself more at home, grew fond of her cousin Fanny, and was very well pleased to be running about all day in the garden; and when, at the end of the week, the Hobsons, as agreed, took the child home, the parents were so much pleased with the improvement in her looks, that they settled in their own minds it would be a good place to send her to frequently.

For the present, they thanked the Hobsons for their care of the child; hoped she had not been troublesome; and, by inviting Fanny to spend some little time with them, thought they had acquitted themselves of all obligation; though, in truth, it was a very different thing; and the Hobsons now began to feel some inconvenience from the increasing intimacy of their more opulent

relations. Their daughter, too, returned from her visits with a few inconvenient notions in her head. She, also, had grown dainty in her food, and discontented with her ordinary apparel.

"I wore my best frock every day while I was at my cousin's," said she.

"Aye, truly, it shows you have," replied her mother; "and, I must say, it was very thoughtless of Mrs. Brookman not to make you wear a pin-a-fore with it. She ought to know that we are in very different circumstances from them; and cannot afford to let our children have new clothes as often as theirs have."

But dame Hobson had quite forgot that she had led her relations into an erroneous idea of their circumstances.

As the winter approached, the Hobsons found themselves poorer than ever. Not only had the ten pounds, by degrees, been exhausted, but what little they had before saved was gone. Provisions were not dearer, nor Hobson's wages less; nevertheless, so

far from proposing to lay any thing by, they found themselves involved in difficulty. The weather was again frosty, and the ground slippery. Another pitcher was broken; another quart of milk wasted; and deeply did Hobson reproach himself with having missed the opportunity of purchasing the cow.

Dame Hobson, however, would attach no blame to themselves.

"It was very hard," she said, "that they could not afford to have a cow. But if," continued she, "we had laid out the money for one at that time, I know not what would have become of us since; for I'm sure we have not had any thing we could possibly do without."

Her husband could not in conscience agree to this; but he said nothing, knowing that, in many instances, he had been as much to blame as his wife.

"It's a shame," continued his wife, "that farmer Thomson does not pay you better. He ought to make you his foreman, instead

of Martin, who is not able to look after things properly. It often makes me angry when I think of that old man, who receives double your pay for doing so little; and has, besides, sufficient to live upon, I dare say."

"That I know nothing about," replied her husband; "Martin has worked hard in his time, and now reaps the benefit of his industry. Besides, our own distress should not make us unjust; and if ever I had that situation, we should think it hard to give up in old age the advantage of what we had earned by past services."

Mary acknowledged the truth of what her husband said, and asked, at the same time, if there was any probability of his holding the place, in case Martin should ever voluntarily give up the situation?

Hobson thought there was a likelihood, as he understood all the farming concern so well, and was upon excellent terms with his master. This was something to build a hope on, but nothing for present necessity,

and having once gone behind-hand, matters got worse; for dame Hobson's temper began to grow irritable, and she seemed to have lost the power of being as frugal as formerly, and had become more careless as they had become poorer.

The rent-day was approaching, for which the Hobsons had never before been unprovided.

"Well, Mary," said the husband, one evening, "I laughed when you prophesied trouble and vexation from the parrot's finding its way into our house; but you spoke more truly than I was aware."

"What nonsense," replied dame Hobson, peevishly; "how, in the world, could that have any thing to do with our present difficulties?"

"Why, this much," said her husband, "that the money which we got for the bird not only is vanished, but has carried along with it all our former savings."

"You never will persuade me," cried Mary, "that having ten pounds given to us,

as we may say, would make us that much poorer."

"It certainly is true, nevertheless; because, instead of making the purchase we proposed, we gave way to expenses, which, when the money was exhausted, we still continued. In short, we attempted to appear better off than we were."

Dame Hobson, however, was very unwilling to agree to this; she threw the blame on every thing else; said her husband ought to be better paid; then abused old Martin for continuing his situation; and, last of all, declared the times were such, that poor people could not live in them.

Hobson saw there was no arguing with his wife in her present mood; and so the matter dropped.

When the rent became due, although unable to pay it, they found no difficulty in obtaining a respite from their landlord, who had the most perfect confidence in his tenant. Still he could not help expressing some surprise; as, from certain circum-

stances, he, as well as others, had supposed the Hobsons were mending in their condition. This, however, was far from being the case, although matters were something better ; for dame Hobson had felt the truth of what her husband had said, and also the absolute necessity of retrenching in several things which she had supposed impossible. But the privations she had formerly borne without complaint, now appeared great hardships.

At last, however, old Martin declared his resolution of quitting his situation, and going to reside with his son, who lived at some distance. But although the thoughts of being able to retire from business had always been the summit of his wishes, still, like many, who find it difficult to relinquish old customs, he talked of going a great while before he put his resolution into effect.

Nevertheless, the hope of her husband filling Martin's situation kept up the spirit of dame Hobson, for of his succeeding to it there appeared no doubt; as Hobson's good

management and trust-worthy qualities were duly appreciated by his master; and he had acted for Martin so much of late, as to render him fully qualified to take his place.

Several months had passed away, and the patience of the wife began to be exhausted at the procrastination of old Martin, who still lingered in the place.

"Depend upon it," said she, one day, "Martin has no intention of giving up his situation; the old miser is too fond of getting money, especially since you are so foolishly good-natured as to assist him so that he has hardly any thing to do. I suspected, for some time, that he only talked about going, and now I'm positive of it."

"And now, Mary, you are wrong in being so positive; for our good neighbour Martin is going next week. He has received a letter from his son, to say that every thing will be ready for his reception by that time; and all is settled."

The delight of dame Hobson at this information was excessive.

"Well," said she, "now we may look forward to being comfortable, and having things like other people. Don't look so serious, William. You need not fear my giving way to extravagance, or trying to appear better than we are; I've had enough of that. It was true as you said, I believe that the ten pounds did us no good; if we had worked for the money we should have made a better use of it. But I'm sure you will not object to my plan, in this instance. The first thing I propose, when we have paid our rent, is to buy the cow, which I have often repented we did not do when we had the opportunity. I know it was my fault."

"Not entirely," said Hobson; "I had a share in the blame."

"Never mind," cried his wife, "we shall be wiser in future, I hope; and when we have settled what's best to be done, never alter our plans again; and this I am determined, that the very day you commence your new situation"—

“Stop, Mary, do not determine any thing; what we so strongly propose is generally frustrated.”

“Well, but surely,” said the dame—

“I tell you again,” interrupted her husband, “whatever you have to do on that day is impossible; for I’ve held the situation these six months. While you accused old Martin of getting his money at the expense of my labour, he was kindly directing me in my new employment. My master, for some reasons of his own, did not wish it known that I had succeeded to Martin’s place till he was gone; and to say the truth, Mary, I had also my reasons to desire it might be kept secret for a time, till we had, in some measure, recovered from the effect of our last summer’s ‘good luck,’ as we called it.”

Dame Hobson was actually silent from astonishment, and, for a moment, felt almost inclined to be angry with her husband for serving her such a trick, as she termed it. But though again baulked in her proposed plan, joy quickly overcame the slight resentment of

the moment; and the comfort and respectability of their future lives proved that the Hobsons had gained advantage from their experience, and found, that wealth acquired by labour was productive of solid enjoyment; while sudden or casual good fortune commonly evaporated in fruitless attempts to acquire consideration.

CONSTANCY.

It was the latter end of October, when the trees were nearly stripped of their leaves; and though a few autumnal flowers still lingered, the garden looked dreary and desolate; but in one sheltered corner there grew a monthly rose, and this shrub alone was fresh and blooming.

The rich colour of its opening blossoms, and the verdant green of its leaves, formed a striking contrast to the faded and withering state of the plants all around.

"What a beautiful flower is a monthly rose!" exclaimed the owner of the garden, as she gathered one of the buds, and placed it in her bosom.

As winter made its advances, the scene

became still more forlorn; the bleak winds blew the few remaining yellow leaves from the branches, and but little token of life appeared in the vegetable world. Still the monthly rose looked gay; and at Christmas, when no other flower was to be seen, it still bloomed, and, amidst the branches of holly and bay, the lovely roses, as fragrant as if fanned by the soft breezes of July, and as bright in colour as if beneath the rays of a summer sun, now cheered the eye, and enlivened the scene. Again its owner repeated, "What a delightful shrub is this ever-blooming rose!"

In the month of February, a few mild days gave promise of approaching spring; but soon the keen easterly winds prevailed; the earth was again hardened by frost; and the few buds that ventured to peep out were nipped by the inclemency of the season.

But the monthly rose, tender and fragile as it seemed, possessed a strength and hardiness beyond those of many plants more vigorous in their appearance; and though

its leaves were falling, and its buds were drooping under the severity of the weather, still the stem was of a healthy green, and its flowers, when a gleam of sunshine encouraged them to open, were as brilliant as in summer.

With the most assiduous attention did the mistress of the garden watch the growth of her favourite tree. The root was carefully earthed up, to protect it, as much as possible, from the cold, the decayed leaves cleared away, and the bending boughs supported.

At length the weather grew more mild and genial, and, under the influence of gentle showers and warm sun-beams, the vegetable creation burst forth into life and beauty. The subject of my fable, also, sent forth fresh shoots, and its buds were daily increasing; but though the lady still admired her beautiful tree, it no longer possessed so much of her notice and care, for other gay and fragrant flowers appeared to share her attention, and claim her admiration;

and when, in the month of June, all the varieties of Flora's gay assemblage were displayed, the poor monthly rose was totally disregarded, eclipsed by her more beautiful rivals of the same species. The Burgundy rose, with its fairy flowers, so small, and yet so perfect in form; and the moss rose, pre-eminent in elegance and brilliancy, the acknowledged queen of summer; and the lovely blush rose, whose uncertain tints and delicate bloom make it even more attractive than those of a richer colour; while the damask rose, and the white one of Provence, beautifully contrasted, heightened each other's attraction.

In the midst of such splendid candidates for admiration, our poor monthly flower had little chance for attention. Her decayed blooms, instead of being cleared away, were suffered to remain, and the ground beneath was strewn with her faded leaves; the younger branches were no longer supported, or trained into proper growth; while the blossoms opened and withered, without any one remarking their beauty or decay.

But, worse than even indifference and neglect, the poor rose soon experienced contempt; for the mistress, who once cherished and loved it, now regarded the plant as unworthy of holding a place in the garden; and, as she compared its fainter hues and less powerful fragrance to the rich and luxuriant flowers that bloomed around, she observed, "What a worthless shrub is the *monthly rose*! its blossoms scarcely open before they fall and litter the ground; and how weak its perfumes to the other roses! I wish something better grew in its place."

But, as time passed away, again the scene changed. Even before the end of summer the roses had disappeared; and the trees now presented nothing but straggling branches, scantily furnished with leaves, half green, half brown. But though the pride of the garden was nearly over, it was yet rich in variety; for the spicy scent of the carnations now filled the air, and their gay and various tints charmed the eye; but, when their season was over also, and after a hot

and dry summer, the garden presented a parched and withered appearance. The lady was one evening walking round it, and regarding, mournfully, the altered aspect of what had lately been so fresh and lovely, vainly did she cast her eye on every side, in search of a flower, to keep up the remembrance of the summer gifts, which had so quickly flown, when, chancing to pass the spot where grew the neglected shrub, the verdant colour of its leaves, and the warm glow of a half-opened bud, once more attracted her regard.

“Ah!” cried she, “how foolish and ungrateful have I been to despise this beautiful shrub. It has not, indeed, all the attractive qualities of those fairer, but short-lived, blossoms for whose sake I have neglected it, but it possesses a merit far beyond theirs—it is the true friend—constant in every season.”

THE DIAMOND AND THE ROSE.

A DIAMOND and a rose were lying side by side on the dressing-table of a celebrated beauty, when the costly jewel, viewing with contempt the beautiful, but fragile flower, began proudly to vaunt its own value and wonderful properties.

"Nothing in the world," said the diamond, "can be compared with me, who am unassailable, even by the elements, and unimpaired by time. I bear no resemblance to any thing but the sun in the firmament of heaven, whose rays alone rival mine, and

whose unchangeable nature is only equal to mine !”

“ With this difference,” replied the rose, “ that his beams are all his own, while yours are borrowed, and that the sun’s blessed influence sheds not only light, but life and warmth on all around ; while the brightness of the diamond, though it may fix the wondering eye, can never cheer the heart. In short, vain and arrogant boaster, notwithstanding the high value set upon you by the pride and caprice of mankind, it will be difficult for you to prove your intrinsic merit ; for, surely, the mere qualities of being invulnerable and unchanging, without they were joined to some of real use, can never render you truly estimable.”

The diamond flashed fiery rays of indignation at the idea of being held so cheap.

“ What ! shall my worth,” exclaimed the bright gem, “ be weighed by an insignificant flower ! Know, then, that I was brought from the mines of Golconda ; infinite was the toil and labour which first drew me

from the depths of the earth; then, what time and pains were bestowed to polish and perfect my form, which, once effected, nothing henceforward can dim my lustre or injure my beauty. With what regret was I relinquished by my first possessor, although he received gold in exchange that might have satisfied the cravings of a miser! Have I not been the admiration of all that beheld me? and am I not declared worthy to embellish the diadem of a monarch? a destination which may, doubtless, one day be mine; for though, at present, I belong to the fair Julia, whose capricious folly shows her unworthy to possess a gem so rare, yet the time may arrive when one who better knows how to appreciate my value shall become my owner; for, long after the bright eyes, which flatterers declare rival my rays, are closed in the sleep of death, I shall still shine in all my unalterable brilliancy."

"Selfish wretch!" exclaimed the rose, "can you, then, look forward with satisfaction to the idea of surviving whatever is amiable

and beautiful? Let me rather rejoice that, though my span of existence is so brief, it is a season of enjoyment, unclouded by the regret of seeing those who bloom along with me fade before me: and far happier do I deem myself to share the general fate, than to remain and shine in solitary splendour, witnessing the decay of all around. But in what way does our lovely mistress merit the contempt with which you mention her?"

"How," cried the diamond, "could she more deserve censure than on this day rejecting my aid to decorate her person, and choosing, in the stead, a worthless flower?"

The rose, for some time, kept indignantly silent at the contumelious expression which fell from the diamond; but recovering, at length went on to observe: "A diamond may be valuable as property and wealth; but I shall ever be esteemed for myself alone; and though I would not willingly vaunt my own praise, yet it is well known that beauty and fragrance are not the only properties of our race; nor is it in a place

where luxury abounds that our respective merits can be proved. Pray which would be chosen by human beings in an unsophisticated state—or which would be most missed in the world—*jewels* or *flowers*?"

SPIRITS:

A WINTER'S TALE.

"I CAN'T remember the story," said George Merton to his two little sisters, Louisa and Fanny, as they were all sitting, one winter's evening, before the fire; "I know it was something about a haunted house; but, indeed, I don't recollect enough of it to tell you the story: so it's no use teasing me."

"Well, but do try, George," said Fanny, the younger of the girls; "only just begin, and, I dare say, you will remember as you go on."

"Yes, do," added her sister, "and never mind if you can't recollect all about it:

make something out of your own head; but do, there's a dear brother, tell us a story about ghosts and spirits."

Though the conversation was carried on in a half whisper, it attracted the attention of their father, who was sitting at a little distance.

"What's the matter, George?" said Mr. Merton, observing that his son's patience was nearly exhausted by the importunity of his sisters.

"Why, papa," replied George, "they want me to tell them a story, which I once heard at school, about a haunted house, and I've quite forgotten it; besides, we were told, afterwards, that it was not true."

"Ah, but," interrupted Louisa, "I'm so fond of ghost stories, that I don't mind whether they are true or not."

"Well," said Mr. Merton, "I will try myself if I cannot tell you a story about spirits."

"Oh, dear papa," exclaimed all the children, at once, "that will be delightful."

"Well, then, listen; mine is a true story." And the father began:—

"There was, once upon a time, a gentleman, who lived in a house, part of which was occupied with spirits."

"Dear me!" exclaimed little Fanny, "I would not have lived in such a house for all the world."

"I dare say," interrupted George, "the gentleman did not know the house was haunted when he first went to live in it."

"The fact is, my friend's house was not haunted when he first took it; for the person of whom I speak was an intimate acquaintance of mine. These terrible spirits had never taken up their abode in the house until Mr. Sanders went to reside there."

"Then, papa, I suppose Mr. Sanders was a very wicked man," said Louisa; "or else, why should the house have been haunted only when he lived there?"

"On the contrary," replied her father, "Mr. Sanders bore an unblemished character, and was a very good man; never-

theless his house, or a part of it, was filled with them."

"I wonder what part of the house that was," cried Fanny; "do you know, papa, whether they ever appeared to people when they were in bed?"

"Never that I have heard of, my dear; though, I believe, these spirits were a good deal about at night. The part of the house they principally occupied was a large subterraneous vault; and it is well known that ghosts and spirits generally confine themselves to such dark and dismal places. In this vault, however, at different times, lights were seen moving to and fro, and strange noises were heard, not only by Mr. Sanders and his family, but also by the neighbours; for the fact of the place being under the influence of these spirits, was not unknown; and, what may appear still more extraordinary, it was well understood that Mr. Sanders, so far from living in dread, held a sort of dominion over them. I cannot take upon me to say that he had any parti-

cular skill in magic, but certain it is, that through their means, Mr. Sanders became a rich man."

"Very true," observed George, "we have heard of spirits appearing to people, and discovering hidden treasures to them."

"This was not exactly the case, with respect to my friend," replied his father; "these spirits would never have discovered treasures to any one of their own accord; for they were generally mischievous in their nature, and mostly disposed to do harm to those who had any communication with them. Mr. Sanders, well understanding their real character, kept them in due confinement."

"How? papa," exclaimed Fanny and Louisa; "did he keep them chained down with strong iron chains?"

"No," said Mr. Merton, "no such formidable materials were requisite for their confinement."

"But did they never get out?" said the children.

“Not without the knowledge and permission of Mr. Sanders, who found it expedient and advantageous to let them appear sometimes abroad; and the mischief they sometimes did, when thus liberated, is incredible. Numbers of people have been killed by them, and others driven mad; so that you may judge of their malignant nature.”

“But, papa,” said George, “did they never try to hurt Mr. Sanders himself? I should think they would have had a particular spite against him for keeping them in confinement.”

“Most assuredly my friend would have had no better chance than many others; but, as I before observed, he was so well aware of their disposition, that he never allowed them to have any power over him.”

“I wonder if they were very frightful,” said Louisa: “Did they ever appear to Mr. Sanders?”

“Undoubtedly, my dear,” replied her father, “my friend must have seen them

frequently: I never, indeed, heard him describe them very minutely. I know these spirits were by no means so horrible in their appearance as they were evil in their nature. They are, however, different in their complexion; one, which was dark and fiery, was very dangerous to encounter: others were white and pallid, as you know spirits are mostly represented. Now, the latter, though not so furious as the first, were more subtle, and quite as malignant. The white spirit, for instance, which looks extremely innocent, is said to have done as much mischief or harm as all the rest. Indeed, it one day nearly strangled a little child!"

"How dreadful!" exclaimed George; "but, papa, how came the little child to go down into the subterraneous vault?"

"It did not go down," replied Mr. Merton, "the white spirit happened to be in another part of the house, where the poor child met with it by chance; fortunately, my friend came in before his son got any

serious hurt from the spirit, though the poor little boy was sadly frightened."

"And did not the spirits try to hurt Mr. Sanders; or do they never attack grown people?" inquired Louisa.

"My dear," said her father, "these spirits, mischievous as they may be, never are first to meddle with any body; and I'm rather of opinion that the little boy, deceived by the harmless appearance of the spirit, commenced the attack."

"What a strange boy he must have been," cried little Fanny; "I'm sure if I had seen such a spirit any where, instead of touching it, I should have run away as fast as I could. But go on, dear papa, and tell us something else about these terrible spirits."

"Well, then, another time," continued Mr. Merton, "a man, named Thomas Wright, who lived with Mr. Sanders, nearly lost his life in an encounter with the dark fiery spirit. One day Thomas was out of the way for a considerable time; his fel-

low-servants, however, concluding that his master had sent him on some errand, thought nothing about him till late in the day, when Mr. Sanders himself happening to inquire for Thomas, his long absence became matter of surprise and alarm. All inquiries after the poor fellow were to no purpose, and the family began to be truly apprehensive that some serious accident had befallen him; when one of the children recollected that he had seen Thomas, with the key in his hand, go down the stairs that led to the subterraneous vault I before told you of.

“ Now, Mr. Sanders was fully aware that it was not safe to allow any except himself to have general access to this place; yet, by some unaccountable chance, the key of the vault was left where Thomas happened to find it, and, tempted by curiosity, or, I suppose, by the presumptuous desire of learning how to deal with these spirits, he determined to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded him.

"No sooner was it understood which way Thomas was gone, than immediate search was made for him. Lights being procured, Mr. Sanders, and some of the servants, went in quest of the unfortunate man. It was some time, however, before they discovered him. At length he was found, lying nearly senseless, in a corner of the dreary place. He still breathed, but was unable to stand, or even to speak; having had, as he afterwards confessed, a desperate engagement with these fiery spirits.

"The poor fellow being brought into the fresh air, began gradually to recover, though he suffered, for a long time after, from the effects of this encounter; and made a solemn promise to his master, which, I understand, he faithfully kept, never again to have any dealings with these spirits."

"Well," said Louisa, "after all, I cannot help thinking Mr. Sanders was a very strange man, to like to have these terrible creatures in his house, when he knew how dangerous they were; for it seems they did

sometimes make their escape, and get into different parts of the house; or the poor little boy would not have met with one of them."

"Or else," interrupted little Fanny, "why did he not have an iron door, fastened with a great padlock, that he might be sure they could never get out?"

"With regard to that," replied Mr. Merton, "it would not have answered my friend's purpose to have them always confined; on the contrary, as I before mentioned, he used to send them abroad; for some people are aware of their nature, and never entirely put themselves into their power; but to those who suffer themselves to be, as I may say, bewitched by them, they have, for the most part, proved fatal; and many persons, through their influence, have been driven to the commission of horrible crimes; nevertheless, there are some instances in which these spirits have proved beneficial to mankind; but the little good they do (I am sorry to say) is far overbalanced by the

mischief they cause. In justice, however, to Mr. Sanders, I must tell you, that, if he had never permitted the spirits over which he held dominion to escape, still there are others of the same kind in the world, nor could he be answerable for the harm they caused; for if every body kept them in the subjection he did, no mischief could ensue."

"I know," cried Fanny, "how I would manage such wicked spirits, if they were in my power; they should be all thrown into the sea, and then they could never come up again to do any more mischief."

"You are right, my little girl," said her father; "you have hit upon the surest method that can be of destroying these spirits. *Water* has more power over them than any thing; as it takes away their strength, and renders them, comparatively, harmless."

During the latter part of Mr. Merton's relation, George sat in apparent consideration. "I do think," said he, at last—"I do believe, papa, you have been joking all this time about the evil spirits. Louisa, can't

you guess? Mr. Sanders was a wine or spirit merchant. I began to suspect something about it when I heard of poor Thomas's adventure."

Though somewhat disappointed that the haunted subterraneous vault was only a wine and spirit cellar, and the hobgoblins only rum, brandy, and gin, the children had, however, been amused: and, laughing heartily at their own credulity, their father took occasion to impress upon their minds that all stories of ghosts or spirits had no better foundation; and, instead of terrifying, and filling them with needless fears and apprehensions, would, when truly known, only excite laughter.

THE
DOG AND THE LINNET.

A DIALOGUE.

"CEASE your senseless chirping, you little noisy fool!" said the dog, as he lay upon the hearth, to the linnet, who was singing merrily in his cage. "I wonder in my heart what can induce my master, who is a very poor man, to keep such a useless thing as you!"

"Why surely, friend Carlo," replied the bird, "you do not suppose that the little which I consume can be any object to our good master? Consider, that as much as

goes down your enormous throat at one meal, would serve to keep me for a month."

"That may be true," replied Carlo; "it is not what you cost that signifies much, I confess; but it is the utter inutility of your life, and the way in which you are pampered and caressed, that disturbs me. You are the only one in the family that is privileged to do nothing, and care for nothing but your own pleasure and amusement; and the only one that is regularly provided for, whether there is little or much. How often your trough is full when the cupboard is empty; and how frequently, when the children are hungry, are you, in mere wantonness, scattering your food in all directions; and, notwithstanding the kindness you experience from the whole family, what an ungrateful return you make, and how totally insensible you are to the interest of the house to which you belong. When our master was ill, you kept on singing just as usual; and the other day, when the child broke the tea-things, and the whole place was in an up-

roar, there you sat upon your perch, straining your throat, and rattling away, with as much glee as if, in truth, you delighted in the mischief that had been done; and whatever troubles our poor master, you hop about your cage so unconcerned, as plainly proves you care nothing about the welfare of the family."

"You are mistaken, Carlo; I take no delight in mischief; but as my grieving for what goes wrong would do no possible good—and it is not in my nature to be melancholy—why should you envy me the capacity of being always cheerful, in defiance of crying children and a scolding mother? In respect to the family, I feel as much attachment for each individual as it is in the nature of a linnet to feel, and, assuredly, a double share for my kind master; who, notwithstanding all that he has to do, never fails, with considerate care, to attend to my wants, and feeds me with his own hands, nor even for a single day, forgets the poor little dependant on his kindness. I

must, indeed, be ungrateful not to love such a master."

"Yes, indeed," replied the dog, "it is that which surprises and provokes me. The importance which our master attaches to such an insignificant creature as you, seems truly astonishing."

"It is," replied the linnet, "because I am to my master what no living thing is"—

"How! you presumptuous little wretch!" exclaimed Carlo, "do you, for one moment, suppose that such a good man as our master, who has a wife and children to love and care for, can yet prefer a worthless bird to his own family and kindred?"

"Be not so hasty, good Carlo," said the linnet, "nor suppose I am foolish enough to imagine such a thing. I am perfectly aware of the small degree of merit I possess, and that my master does not value me beyond it. His wife and children deservedly possess his fondest affection; he justly esteems his kind friends, and truly values his faithful dog. Nevertheless, there is no

being besides myself, however dear it may be, but gives my master occasional vexation and anxiety. His children are often refractory; his wife is sometimes out of humour; his friends are frequently unreasonable; and even Carlo, though a trusty servant, is not always a merry companion. Now, the poor linnet, though possessing no qualities to make it essentially serviceable, is an object of never-failing satisfaction. My kind master beholds in me a creature whose wants and wishes are so limited, that he can easily provide for them; and, in return, I cheer with my song his hours of unremitting toil; for none but the poor mechanic, who sits from day to day in the same place, and sees no variety of objects or employment, can judge of the beneficial influence which the song of a bird has to beguile the tedious hours of labour. The notes of the wild lark, however sweet, would remind him of the joys of liberty, and make his weary task appear more irksome; but the tuneful lay of the contented

prisoner is soothing to his mind, and invigorating to his spirits. Even the momentary relaxation of looking up to, and talking to his bird, is a relief to the monotony of his incessant toil; and the countenance of my master brightens at the cheerful chirp with which I answer his kind call."*

But perceiving that, during the latter part of their dialogue, Carlo had fallen fast asleep, the linnet dropped the argument, and renewed its song.

* The writer is indebted for the hint of this little dialogue to the picture of Mr. Fraser, of "The Contented Cobbler," exhibited in Suffolk-street, in the year 1826.

THE
ROBIN AND THE SWALLOW.

A FABLE.

IT was in the latter end of September—
but not one of those mild, beautiful days,
when the varied and rich tints of the land-
scape, and the balminess of the air, make
autumn appear the sweetest season of the
whole year—it was a gloomy afternoon, when
the loud and hollow wind, driving every in-
stant a shower of the seared and yellow
leaves from the trees, gave notice of the near
approach of winter.

Yet, notwithstanding the cheerlessness of the scene, a robin, which was perched on the branch of an aged oak, although the keen wind ruffled his plumes, and sometimes drowned his song, continued his merry twittering, in defiance of cold and gloom.

At length he made a pause, and a swallow, which had, for some time, hovered restlessly about the spot, drew near.

"My good friend," said the swallow, "I have been waiting an hour for the conclusion of your song, which I thought would never come to an end, that I might have a bit of chat with you. I am no great singer myself; and, truly, one had need a good heart to sing in such weather as this; and I must own, friend Bob, I thought you a bird of better sense than to sit caroling away with so much glee in the midst of such a dreary scene."

"In truth, my friend," replied the red-breast, "the glad feeling which prompts me to sing is independent of outward circumstances; and I see no particular sense in not

allowing oneself to be happy till one has considered whether there is sufficient reason to be so; for in that case, I fear, there would not often be occasion for singing, between trouble for the present hour and anxiety for the future."

"Why, indeed, neighbour," said the swallow, "circumstanced as you are, perhaps you do wisely in not looking forward; for, alas! what a dismal prospect is before you. With regard to me, it is widely different. To-morrow, I shall set off, along with my companions, to a different country, where a new spring will welcome our approach, and we shall exchange the dark season of rain and fog for a warm sun, bright skies, and green meadows. Doubtless you must envy our lot."

"Not at all," replied the robin; "our tastes differ; and what is enjoyment to you would not be so to me. Liberty, it is true, is dear to all birds, but, with us, the power of flying from one place to another is quite sufficient. The love of change, and desire

of variety, which characterize the swallow, form no part of our nature."

"Ah! that is because you never tried it, my friend," said the other; "but think what a life of delight it must be, to make oneself a home in various parts of the world, our appearance hailed as the harbinger of fine weather; for the swallow and summer are always associated. It is true that, in our journey, we occasionally experience fatigue and hardship; but they are well repaid by the pleasure we enjoy, on our arrival, in a fresh climate. For who, that has wings, and his senses into the bargain, would remain a year round in a country like this, where the seasons are so changeable, that you cannot depend on having two days alike?"

"I wonder, then," said the robin, "that you favour us with so much of your company; for, considering that foreign parts are so preferable, you seem, generally, rather in a hurry to return to this country; as it is, I believe, become even proverbial, that 'swallows are often before-hand with summer.'"

"Why, that may be the case, sometimes," answered the swallow; "but, in fact, variety is the greatest charm in life, and the most beautiful scenes in nature tire one in time."

"Exactly so," returned the robin; "your eternal summer does not afford you half the enjoyment which is felt by those who have experienced the winter. Even the changeableness of climate, which you complain of, is to me a source of pleasure; an unexpected gleam of sunshine is more delightful than its uninterrupted blaze; and an occasional mild day in the middle of winter cheers and enables me to endure rugged weather afterwards."

"Well, Bob," said the swallow, "you must have a strange fancy, to prefer the chance of perishing with hunger, the certainty of suffering with cold, and all the miseries and privations of bleak winter, to the pleasures of a new world, smiling seasons, and friends everywhere. Be persuaded; enter our society, and, to-mor-

row, try your wings in search of a more genial climate."

"Thank you," said the robin; "but I am perfectly satisfied where I am. It is true we endure hardships, and, as you say, some of our tribe often perish from the severity of the weather; but no anticipation of future evils ever damps our present enjoyment, and, in the worst of seasons, we look forward with hope to better times. Our society is indeed, contracted; but our friends are dear, for they are tried and chosen."

"At any rate," replied the swallow, "you might, even in this country, choose a more pleasant and agreeable situation than in the neighbourhood of that wretched cottage; and, surely, you might also find a handsomer tree than that, shattered oak, where you so contentedly station yourself, day after day, as if it were the finest place in the world."

"With regard to the country," said the robin, "bleak and changeable as it may be, it is my native land; and this neighbour-

hood is endeared to me by ties, of which one of your roving disposition can have no idea. The inhabitants of that cottage are kind beings, who never fail, in inclement seasons, to supply the wants of the robin ; and this oak, with its stunted branches, in the hollow of whose trunk my nestlings have been reared for so many summers, possesses, in my mind, a charm, far beyond any that you can name—for it is *my home !*"

[The following beautiful poem, by Mr. BOWLES, is subjoined, as, in the conduct of her fable, the writer imagines a sufficient resemblance may be traced to subject her to the charge of plagiarism ; but she trusts she will be credited, however proud she may be of her thoughts running in a similar channel to that admirable poet, that she could never have presumed, AFTER reading his elegant production, to have attempted her slight sketch, even in prose :—]

THE
SWALLOW AND THE REDBREAST:

AN APOLOGUE.

BY THE REV. W. L. BOWLES.

THE swallows, at the close of day,
When autumn shone with fainter ray,
Around the chimney circling flew,
Ere yet they took a long adieu,
To climes where soon the winter drear
Shall close the unrejoicing year.
Now with swift wing they skim aloof,
Now settle on the crowded roof,
As counsel and advice to take,
Ere they the chilly north forsake.
Then one disdainful turn'd his eye
Upon a redbreast, twittering nigh;
And thus began, with taunting scorn:
"Thou household imp, obscure, forlorn,
Through the deep winter's dreary day,
Here, dull and shivering, shalt thou stay,
Whilst we, who make the world our home,
To softer climes impatient roam;

Where summer still, in some green isle,
Rests, with her sweet and lovely smile ;
Thus, speeding far and far away,
We leave behind the shortening day."
" 'Tis true (the redbreast answered, meek,)
No other scenes I ask or seek ;
To every change alike resign'd,
I fear not the cold winter's wind.
When spring returns, the circling year
Shall find me still contented here ;
But whilst my warm affections rest
Within the circle of my nest,
I learn to pity those that roam,
And love the more my humble home."

THE
PEACOCK AND DOMESTIC FOWLS.

A GREATER contrast could scarcely be imagined than appeared between the farm of Thomas Gray, and that of his next neighbour, Wilson. The grounds of the latter were laid out in the most tasteful manner, and filled with various kinds of rare and beautiful plants. The house was ornamented with climatis and honeysuckles, and shaded by an elegant acacia.

The fore-court of farmer Gray, on the contrary, was uncultivated. On one side, a huge dunghill rose so high as totally

to exclude any prospect from the lower windows of the cottage; on the other, a large pigstye was erected; and the whole place was left for the accommodation of the poultry, who kept it in a constant state of litter and disorder.

The remarks frequently made by strangers, as they passed by, on the taste displayed by Wilson, and the different appearance of his neighbour's residence, were a great annoyance to Gray. Although he prided himself on despising every thing in the shape of ornament, yet a portion of envy was mingled with the contempt with which he viewed his neighbour's house and grounds.

"Aye, aye," said he to himself, "it is fine to be Harry Wilson; he studies nothing but show; I think of what may be useful. A fine dunghill, like this, would be an eyesore to him, forsooth! he cultivates his tulips and auriculas with far more anxiety than his grain or potatoes. Well! we shall see what it will all come to!"

With this sort of compliment to his own judgment and practice, farmer Gray generally concluded his soliloquy.

The difference of character between Gray and his neighbour seemed to extend to every thing which belonged to them. Among other articles of fancy, Wilson kept a gay peacock, which, as it plumed its feathers and spread its resplendent tail in the sun, was an object of great attraction and admiration.

The domestic fowls of farmer Gray, partaking of the plodding disposition of their master, were raking and scratching from morning till night; always intent on gain; yet they beheld with rancour and jealousy the graceful form and bright plumage of the peacock; and took every opportunity to insult or torment him.

"Fine feathers are fine things!" said a dingy-looking fowl; "but I'd rather wear my brown jacket, which looks always alike, than be smart at one time, and have a shabby ragged train at another."

"Silly children may stand and stare at the peacock," said another of the feathered railers; "but it is pretty evident we are of the most value. See what a place we have to roost in, while our gay neighbour is left to shift for himself as he can. Then we have our regular meals provided; while he must be content to pick up a morsel by chance."

The peacock, in reply, observed only, that, as they were so well satisfied with their own condition, he wondered they should disturb themselves about him.

But the peacock's forbearance served only to increase the impertinence of the poultry; and a young capon, which was advancing to the dignity of a crowing cock, was most of all insulting, and was even forming among his companions a plan to drive the bright bird from his station, when a stop was put at once to the clamours and the life of the pert capon, whose fate had that morning been decided on.

The object of their abuse, who observed

all that passed, might now have retaliated on his saucy neighbours, and remarked that the condition of birds that were fed and cherished only to have their necks wrung, was not so very enviable; but the peacock was too noble in its nature to triumph over a fallen enemy, or to resent the petty hostilities of inferiors.

In the course of time farmer Gray's predictions respecting his neighbour were verified.

Wilson's circumstances became so embarrassed, that he was under the necessity of giving up his beautiful cottage. The garden was now left to run wild; the choice flowers were choked up by rank weeds; the gravel walks overgrown with grass; the honeysuckle and climatis hung in tangled confusion about the windows; and the whole place appeared a scene of ruin and desolation.

The cattle and poultry had all found ready purchasers, but no one would have the poor peacock, which remained to complete the mournful picture.

No longer in the pride of its splendour, erecting its glittering plumage, but, as if conscious of the change that had taken place, the forlorn bird slowly trailed its bright feathers along the ground; as if it no longer cared for notice or admiration; and it was frequently seen perched on the handle of the old plough which had belonged to its former master.

Farmer Gray, who had long prophesied the downfall of his neighbour, did not fail to pride himself on his sagacity and foresight, with all the satisfaction which a base mind derives from such events; nor less did the fowls, in corresponding disposition with their owner, neglect, on every occasion, to triumph over the degraded condition of the bird which had formerly been the object of their envy.

At length a new tenant came to occupy the place; and, as he was looking at the long-neglected garden, and projecting in his mind the alterations he would make, farmer Gray addressed him:—

“My good friend, I will give you a piece of advice, to begin with. You see what a ruin you are come to; and what do you suppose brought it on? why, it was my former neighbour’s fine taste. Harry Wilson laid out his pleasure-garden before he ploughed his fields, and when he should have sowed his corn, he was planting choice flowers. Now, be persuaded; pull down that ragged climatis and honeysuckle—they hurt the walls of your house—but, above all, wring the neck of that trumpery peacock. Wilson never had any luck after that emblem of pride and folly came into his possession.”

“Thank you,” replied the other, “for the advice, which is well meant; nevertheless, I do not see the necessity of destroying what is beautiful and ornamental, to enable one to succeed. My predecessor unfortunately made the decoration of his cottage and garden his principal business, which ought to have been only his recreation. But, next to neglecting our first duties, I hold it almost sinful to despise what was assuredly

given us to admire and enjoy; and I hope, with good management, my corn and vegetables will grow, without my discarding the flowers; and, I trust, that allowing this beautiful bird to retain his place, as an ornament to my garden, will not prevent my poultry from thriving."

THE
LABURNAM AND LAUREL:

A FABLE.

A SINGLE seed of laburnam, carried by a bird, or perhaps borne by the wind, happened to fall in the midst of a spacious plantation, where, in the course of a short time, it began to grow. There seemed, however, many chances against it, for the first leaves were nibbled away by the slugs, and more than once it received a severe bruise from the iron rake of the gardener, by which, also, it was in frequent peril of being quite rooted up. Although, from these repeated rebuffs, it increased but slowly in its upward growth,

the little plant yet contrived, in the mean time, to shoot its roots strongly into the ground, and thus gained a fixed hold on its parent earth.

It happened, one day, as the owner of the plantation was walking along, he observed the young laburnam, which had by this time sent forth two or three leaves, sufficient to denote its species. It was the only one of the kind in the place ; for the gentleman to whom the ground belonged was not partial to laburnums, and had never allowed one to be planted in his garden. But when he saw the pale green leaves of the slender little sprout, contrasted by the healthy and vigorous appearance of the plants and shrubs by which it was surrounded, it seemed to him like a weakly infant struggling for life ; and he could not have the heart to pull it up, but suffered it to remain and take its chance.

By the following spring the young seedling had greatly improved in strength and height, though still delicate and fragile. In

the course of three years it topped some of the lilacs, which grew near, and had hitherto protected it from the wind. At length it bloomed, and though there were but few flowers upon it, they were so large, and their colours were so rich, as at once showed the shrub to be one of the finest of its kind. The master of the garden congratulated himself that he had not destroyed a tree, which was already an ornament, and promised to be the pride of his plantation.

Six years had now elapsed since the laburnam had first struck root in the ground, and none that then beheld it would have believed that the poor, worm-eaten, sickly seedling, could in that period have become the tall, graceful tree, which now grew there, with its boughs of waving gold, the attraction and admiration of every passer-by.

It can scarcely appear surprising, however, that the other shrubs of the plantation beheld with some degree of jealousy the new favourite, which had thus quickly

started into notice, more especially as some of them were discarded, to make room for the increasing growth of the gay shrub.

It is true, indeed, none of the neighbouring trees could accuse the laburnam with assuming any airs of pride or arrogance. On the contrary, nothing could be more mild than its demeanour. With its gracefully-bending branches, waving slightly to the breeze, the laburnam appeared an emblem of gentleness and humility; nevertheless, it was observed how willingly it appropriated to itself the ample space allotted it, and how gaily it spread its luxuriant branches over the very spot from whence those trees which had sheltered its infancy, were lately torn from the earth, in order to make room for the more perfect display of the elegant laburnam.

Throughout the whole garden, however, none seemed to deplore its own obscure state, contrasted with the conspicuous station and prosperous condition of the laburnam, so much as a laurel, which grew in a more retired part of the plantation,

This tree, which had attained its full growth ere the laburnam had started from the earth, and had, in its early days, been carefully and tenderly reared, felt severely, now that it had reached maturity, its comparatively neglected condition.

“What avails it,” soliloquized the evergreen, “that I hold a place in general estimation, when, individually, I am left to pine in obscurity! What avails it to be the reward of the victor, and to crown the brows of genius! Even those whose greatest hopes are to gain the laurel leaf, will yet pass me, unregarded, and give the tribute of enthusiastic admiration to yon glittering shrub. Had it been my happy lot to have grown beneath the bright laburnam, I might perchance have shared with her the voice of praise, more refreshing than the dews of evening, and more cheering than the summer’s sun.”

So much did the poor laurel partake the feelings of such as court it as their best reward, that although growing in strength and verdure, it pined for the vain tribute of public approbation,

It happened, soon after, that the laurel was removed, and, to its infinite satisfaction, placed beside the laburnam. Probably the owner of the plantation thought the beautiful evergreen deserved a more conspicuous station, and that its rich emerald foliage would contrast advantageously with the light graceful form and golden blooms of the laburnam; but whatever circumstance led to its situation, the laurel's wishes were gratified. The two trees seemed formed by nature to grace each other, and, for a short time, flourished, the admiration of all.

The evergreen, no longer disregarded, now shared the notice, and partook of the praises, which had hitherto been bestowed exclusively on the laburnam. It was, however, but for a short period; too soon did the unfortunate laurel experience the baneful effects of its neighbourhood to the poisonous shrub; for, while the laburnam, more splendid than ever, waved its sunny blossoms around, and bowed its branches, in apparently friendly protection, over the ever-

green, the latter discovered the malign influence of its treacherous compeer, and felt the chill of death at its core, while its leaves were in their fullest verdure.

Long might the laurel have flourished in its native spot, but the attainment of its desires proved fatal; for the deadly qualities of the laburnam were strengthened by prosperity; and though holding the highest station in general favour, it was too base in its nature to endure that any of the advantages it enjoyed should be shared by another.

Thus it often is with those who court the patronage of the rich and powerful, or hope to gain, through their favour, any benefits which will not be dearly purchased.

THE

BEE AND THE GNAT.

ONE fine, warm evening, in the month of July, a bee, loaded with honey, happening to rest, for a short space of time, on a full-blown rose, met a gnat, which had also stopped for an instant on the fragrant flower. "Foolish insect!" said the bee, "I know not whether most to blame or pity you, for the idle and useless life that you lead."

"Believe me," replied the gnat, "your compassion or blame are equally misapplied; for, surely, I require no pity for enjoying

every moment of my existence, nor do I deserve blame for idleness, seeing I possess neither the knowledge nor the power to become industrious; and, in truth, I frequently pity your busy tribe, for the task which never seems ended. I see you constantly on the wing, from sun-rise to twilight, at the same wearisome employment, panting with heat and fatigue, and never allowing yourself a minute for either rest or sport. This, to me, appears the real waste of time, or, at least, an indifference to the delights that surround you in this glorious season, which seems intended by nature as the holiday of the year, when all is beauty, fragrance, and sunshine."

"But consider," said the bee, "that it will not always be summer. In the giddy pleasure of the present moment, you forget that bleak and desolate season when the leaves and blossoms are all withered. In vain you will then seek for the sweets which exhale from every flower, and equally vainly regret the hours that you have spent

in idleness, which might have been employed in providing for a time of need. For what, but the prospect of repose and comfort could induce us to undergo our incessant labour? what, but the glad thoughts of home, provisions for ourselves and little ones, make even the severest toil a pleasure? Besides, have we not the credit and satisfaction of being quoted as an example of industry by the human race, who own our usefulness, and, in return for the honey with which we supply them, provide us with convenient houses in which to lay up our stores?"

"All this is true," replied the gnat; "yet recollect, my friend, that if butterflies, gnats, and the rest of our species, were to make honey, the bee would no longer be so highly esteemed, nor would the flowers be sufficient to supply us, nor would mankind provide hives for all the winged insects who employed themselves in this manner. Let us no longer despise nor condemn the pursuits of each other, while both fulfil

the destiny assigned them. Your duty is your happiness—my happiness is my duty. The power which endued you with foresight and industry, bestowed on me a disposition to enjoy, in an eminent degree, my little span of existence; and if I possess no thought or knowledge to provide for the future, every passing hour is an age of pleasure, from the moment when, with my happy tribe, I float on the morning breeze, expand my wings to the noontide beam, or enjoy the sweet stillness of a summer's eve, when no sound is heard except our hum of gladness."

"Truly," observed the bee, "these are very harmless delights; but I doubt whether you are always so innocently employed. Weak and trifling as you appear, I know it to be a fact, that you are held in dislike, and almost fear, by mankind, for the sting which you inflict indiscriminately, and without the smallest provocation. Now, the weapon which I possess is never employed but in self-defence. You, who can boast

no one useful quality, can yet presume to exercise the power of being mischievous!"

"Not always for mischief has our sting been inflicted," replied the gnat, with some asperity; "if the bee has been quoted by mankind for its industry, there is also an example on record, in which our species are mentioned as instrumental, not only to the welfare of a human being, but to the saving of a life. You may remember the passage, as sung by one of the sweetest poets that ever graced the fields of Parnassus."

The gnat went on to relate the manner in which Spenser had introduced the subject; and ended with repeating these lines from the poet, in which one of the species is thus mentioned:—

"Whom thus, at point, prepared to prevent,
A little nurseling of the humid air,
A gnat, unto the sleepy shepherd went,
And, marking where his eyelids, twinkling rare,
Showed the two pearls which sight unto him lent,
Through their thin covering, appearing fair,

His little needle there infixing deep,
Warned him awake, from death himself to
keep.*"

The gnat went on, at some length, to show that the poet described the little insect as having lost its life from the hand its warning was intended to save.

"That," observed the bee, "may be a very pretty poetical tale; but my time has been better employed, I trust, than in reading these effusions in verse, which, for the most part, are but beautiful or embellished fictions. I believe the gnat has never before been instanced for its good intentions. Indeed, it is generally lamented that the power of annoyance should be given to such an insignificant fly."

"Even that power," said the gnat, "is not bestowed in vain; the sting of the smallest insect has its use, as it conveys to the human race a lesson of humility, and

* Virgil's "Gnat."

impresses on them their own dependant condition. It shows proud man that, in the midst of pomp and luxury, surrounded with all that wealth and power can bestow, he is yet unable to defend himself against the annoyance of a weak and insignificant insect: But it were worse than folly in me, out of my short life, to spend any longer time in vain arguments with you."

So saying, the gnat flew off, to join her merry companions, who were sporting in the crimson beams of the setting sun; while the bee, equally well pleased with her own condition, directed her flight towards her own happy home.

THE

THRIFTY CABBAGE.

THERE was once a poor man, of the name of Smith, who, having a tolerable-sized piece of ground belonging to his cottage, used to take great pains in the cultivation of it.

He planted cabbages in one part, potatoes in another, and pease in a third. But, of all the vegetables that grew in his garden, George Smith found nothing that turned out so well as his cabbages. In the first place, they were his favourite vegetable; in the next, they took less trouble to cultivate than pease or beans, and they were much more ornamental, in his opinion, than pota-

toes; beside which, they were healthier than any other thing in his garden. Smith resolved, therefore, for the future, to give up a still larger space to his cabbages, and make them the principal produce of his ground. "And then," said he, "beside what I shall want for my own family, and to help a neighbour with, there will be plenty to sell at market; so they will turn out a good profitable concern."

In the following spring, accordingly, Smith planted a large portion of the garden with young cabbage-plants, which, every evening, when his day's work was over, he took care to well water, hoe up, and clear from weeds.

His pains were well repaid; the plants grew fine and strong, and were the admiration of every passer-by.

Now, although there might be some emulation among these cabbages, each striving to get on as fast as it could, yet there was no envy nor ill-will, but the most perfect harmony and good-fellowship prevailed through-

out the whole plantation, except in one individual instance. This was a cabbage that, by some chance, grew apart from the rest; but, being of a selfish and unsocial disposition, rejoiced at the distance she was placed from her companions, and would have been glad to have stood quite alone, lest the roots of the other plants should draw any thing from her. Nothing, in short, gave this heartless cabbage so much satisfaction as the idea of being better off than her neighbours; and the warmth of the sun, and the refreshing dews of the evening, were not so much enjoyed by her for the blessings themselves, as in the supposition that she had a greater share of their influence than some of the other plants; and she was continually congratulating herself on the many advantages which her situation gave her over the rest of her companions. "What a lucky circumstance," thought she, "that my master did not plant me along with those wretched cabbages next the road. How grievous it would have been to see my handsome green leaves covered with

dust, like those dingy-looking plants which are growing there; or, if I had been stationed in the middle, how very unpleasant I should have found it to exist in such a crowd, where I could not have had room to strike my roots and spread my ample leaves in the form I do now. Then, as for those poor wretches that are planted near the trees, losing under their shade the benefit of two hours' sunshine every morning, and liable to all the blights and caterpillars which drop from the branches—much good may it do them to be in such a place! I had rather they than I."

Notwithstanding, however, these disadvantages, the objects of the selfish vegetable's pity and contempt were far happier than herself. Gay and contented, they enjoyed each passing hour, bore patiently unavoidable evils, and rejoiced in the sunshine or the rain, as each, in its turn, strengthened and refreshed them; and as no one endeavoured to hurt or overreach the other, there was neither jealousy nor animosity among them.

The subject of my tale, on the contrary, was in perpetual anxiety about her own convenience and preservation; for though she beheld with the most perfect indifference all the devastation which snails and caterpillars made upon the leaves of her kindred, she was in the greatest alarm if an insect approached the spot where she grew. In short, she would not have cared if the whole race of cabbages had been extinct, herself excepted.

The nearest cabbage to this ill-conditioned plant happened to be one, which, although the same pains and cultivation had been bestowed on it as on the rest, was yet, from some circumstance or other, of a smaller and more weakly growth than any of them, and was, besides, more eaten away by the slugs.

“What a miserable object!” thought its proud neighbour; “it is quite a disgrace to the name of cabbage, I wonder my good master does not root it out at once; I should then have a larger space to grow in; which, doubtless, would be highly beneficial to me;

and, truly, it would be a charitable deed to put such a poor wretch out of its misery." And, having taken up the worthy notion, that the annihilation of the unlucky vegetable would prove advantageous to herself, she resolved to do all that was in her power towards its destruction. Accordingly, spreading out some of her largest leaves, so as to shade it as much as possible from the warm beams of the sun, she rejoiced, in the selfish cruelty of her nature, to see how, day by day, the poor little cabbage dwindled away, and grew paler and more sickly in its appearance.

One evening, however, as George Smith was walking round his garden, and viewing, with infinite satisfaction, the flourishing condition of his plants, and carefully examining the roots, to see if they were free from grubs and snails, he approached the spot where grew the selfish plant, who now exulted in the hope that he would assuredly pull up the obnoxious neighbour, as a thing utterly worthless! But how contrary to calculation do matters sometimes turn out!

Smith had a very strict sense of justice, and had known too well himself what it was to struggle against oppression, to suffer it even among his vegetables.

Observing how matters stood, "Come," said he, "this is not quite fair;" and, without more ado, the good man snapped off two of the largest leaves from the overreaching plant, which intercepted the light and air from the weakly one, the root of which he then carefully earthed up; and the poor little cabbage, taking heart from this timely assistance, soon began to grow strong and healthy.

Such an unlooked-for turn of affairs was a most severe mortification to the subject of our fable. Not only had she been divested of the ornament of two of her most showy leaves, but she had also the vexation to see her despised neighbour cherished and taken care of.

This occurrence might have been a lesson to the overgrown plant; that, endeavouring to work ill to another, sometimes recoils

upon ourselves, and that too much anxiety for self often defeats its own purpose.

As the season advanced, and the weather grew warm, George Smith found it requisite to water his garden pretty frequently.

"We shall have a hot summer," thought our overprudent cabbage; "it will be proper for me to take care of myself, and provide for the future:" so she curled up her broad outer leaves, in the form of a cup, so as to hold a considerable supply of water; but this contrivance she carefully concealed, lest any of the other plants should profit by her example.

The summer did, indeed, prove hot and dry; and the gardener, finding his water-butt running low, was under the necessity of watering his ground but sparingly; so that, when it came to the share of our manœuvring plant, she received no more than just served to replenish the receptacle she had made for what the sun had exhaled the preceding day; and though suffering from want, not one drop would she permit to fall and refresh her root.

Her companions, on the contrary, not anticipating future ills, thankfully received the portion afforded them from time to time.

"Ha! ha!" said the cunning plant to herself, "I shall have the advantage of you all by and by, and be able to hold up my head when you are all parching with thirst."

Time passed on; still no rain came to refresh the earth; the water-butt now was empty, and there being no water to be had but from some distance, George Smith could only get sufficient for the use of his family; so that his poor cabbages were obliged to take their chance.

They, however, stood the siege pretty well; for, having been well cultivated, their vigour was sufficient to enable them to bear the present drought, without any very material harm.

Now was the time when our managing plant had promised herself to enjoy the hoard which she had saved, so much at the expense of her health and comfort; and truly the necessity could not be stronger;

for, having deprived herself so long of needful sustenance, her strength was much impaired. But the passion of avarice had now taken full possession of her mind; and she thought, like other misers, "I shall want it still more at some future period."

Among other things, this wretched plant, although she held no friendly intercourse with her friends and companions, yet sheltered at her root a worthless dangling weed, which nestled closely to the cabbage, and fondly clung round its stalk; so that any one observing, might have supposed that the most perfect friendship united them. This, however, was far from being the case; each concealed in its disposition, under a show of kindness for the other, its own interested motive; for the cabbage protected the weed only for the purpose of preserving herself from the depredation of insects, hoping that the caterpillars would feed upon it, instead of demolishing her own leaves; and the weed, in return, hid herself beneath the broad leaves of the cabbage, merely to shrink from the watchful eye of the master,

who, otherwise, would have soon rooted her up; and, while she preserved her protector from the slight harm of snails and grubs, she secretly sapped her strength, already much wasted by excessive heat and drought. Of this circumstance, our would-be cunning plant was not in the least aware; for though dreading the approach of one of her own kind, she flattered herself that the slight fibres of the insidious weed could not possibly draw any support from her; and thus, mutually deceiving and deceived, these seeming friends continued the delusion.

At length a change appeared in the weather; a slight haze tempered, in some degree, the heat of the sun during the day; towards evening the clouds gathered, and the long-hoped-for rain descended; at first gently, but at last steadily and heavily, to the great joy and satisfaction of the gardener Smith, who, in defiance of his wife's earnest remonstrances to the contrary, would walk round the garden in the thickest of the shower, to rejoice in the effects of this timely rain — and, truly, it

was a gratifying sight, to behold all vegetation revive under its beneficial influence!—his favourite vegetables, especially, seemed to feel its powerful aid, as they struck their fibres more firmly into the earth, and erected their now-crisped leaves.

Not so the contriving cabbage, who had wasted her powers in anxiety for her own preservation. The long-concealed moisture, that would have preserved her root, preyed upon her heart, and wasted her leaves. The fine warm rain had no power to invigorate her enfeebled frame; her fibres, shrunk and withered, had not strength to draw any moisture from the ground; and, with vain regret, she discovered, when too late, the fatal consequence of her selfish avarice. The following morning decided the fate of the wretched plant; for, as George Smith was looking over his plants, and admiring their generally healthy appearance, approaching the spot where the shrunken vegetable grew, or rather stood, he observed, with some surprise, the withered state of the

cabbage, which he had often regarded as one of the finest in his grounds.

The good man had, however, no time to wonder or investigate the cause, but immediately pulled up the worthless plant, the root of which had not any power to cling to its parent earth. As he drew it up, the insidious weed shared the destruction to which it had contributed. The wretched vegetable was thrown on a dunghill hard by, and its destiny now was to assist in manuring the ground for the following season.

THE END.

C. SMITH,
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