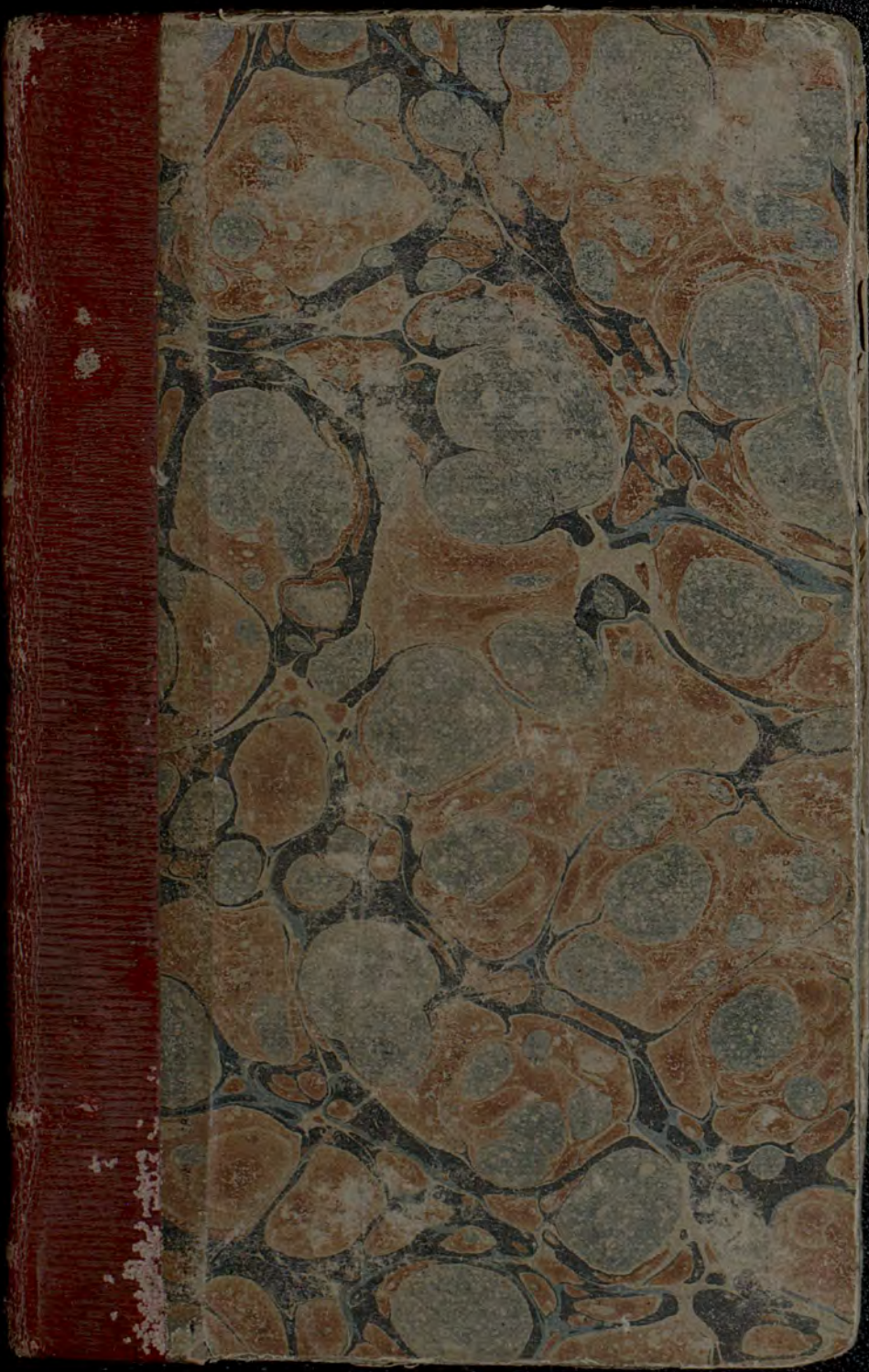

Louisa Dilworth

We are all inclined to make a birth-day present to our worthy Uncle.

FAMILY SUPPERS;

OR,

EVENING TALES

FOR

Young People;

IN WHICH INSTRUCTION IS BLENDED WITH AMUSEMENT.

TRANSLATED BY LADY MARY H*****,

FROM THE FRENCH OF

MADAME DELAFAYE,

Author of the "Six Tales of Youth," &c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

VOL. II.

FAMILY SUPPERS;

OR,

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT.

ELEVENTH SUPPER.

MADAME ARSENA, breathing the pure and salubrious air of the country, rapidly recovered. Every morning, Elizabeth carried her a cup of milk warm from the cow; and, when she arose, taking either the arm of her father or the Captain, she walked a short time before breakfast. This exercise was of so much benefit to her, that she soon gained sufficient strength to walk with the assistance only

of her daughter. One day, when they were together in the garden, Elizabeth was struck with the beauty of a foreign anemone, which Pamphilius had, with great care, reared in a pot.

"Dear mamma," said Elizabeth, "lend me your scissars, that I may cut off this flower to put in my hair."

"I shall not indulge you in this request," replied Madame Arsena; "this flower belongs to your uncle, who values it much. It is a gratification of which I would not, on any account, deprive him."

"My uncle is so old," said Elizabeth; "what pleasure can he take in a simple flower?"

"This agreeable present of Nature is capable of pleasing at every age," replied Madame Arsena.

Instead of yielding to these reasons,

Elizabeth began to supplicate her mother with so much importunity, that Madame Arsena quitted the garden, telling her that this flower was not her own, and that she was not able to dispose of it without the permission of the Captain. Elizabeth immediately ran to find Pamphilius, who was translating a story, and acquainted him with the great desire she had to gather the anemone.

"Gather it!" cried the Captain; "take care that you do not, my dear girl:—if you wish to look at it, I will consent to its being placed in the balcony of your bed-room; but, to cut it would be a crime. This plant flourishes here only with the greatest care; and there is no other way of preserving it for any length of time than by letting it remain in the earth on its stalk."

Elizabeth replied, crying, that he did not love her, since he could refuse her this flower, with which she so much desired to ornament her hair. The good Captain could not see her weep without being moved; he kissed her, and told her that he was willing to give her any thing else, and, taking her hand, led her into the garden.

"Look, my dear child," said he, pointing to the anemone; "see how charming this flower is: it has required upwards of six months' patient attention to make it blow;—would it not be a pity to cut it? Two hours after having gathered it, you would have nothing left but regret. Indeed, it is impossible to gratify you. If you must have flowers to dress yourself with, why not choose these queen-margarets, so varied in their colours?"

Pamphilius immediately gathered some of them, which he presented to Elizabeth, who, colouring with rage, threw them down disdainfully, and ran crying to her mother's chamber.

The Count found Pamphilius much hurt at the behaviour of Elizabeth.—"Surely, brother," said he, "she will prove a termagant of a wife; her mother was never so imperious. If you had seen with what ill-humour this little girl threw away the flowers which I had the kindness to offer her, you would be as angry as myself. Indeed, we are quite foolish with children, and they take advantage of our weakness."

The Captain was seriously irritated; and the Count, finding that Elizabeth merited a lecture, went into Madame Arsena's room, feigning not to observe Elizabeth, who continued crying in a

corner, and he sat down near his daughter. Madame Arsena was embroidering a purse of pink satin, which she intended as a present to Elizabeth, to recompense her for the care she had taken of her in her illness.

"My dear," said the Count, "this is a charming purse; is it not intended for me?"

"No, father; I am embroidering it for Elizabeth; but, as it pleases you, I will make you one exactly similar."

"This one will do for me very well," replied the Count, "and I shall take possession of it:—Elizabeth shall be served after me."

Elizabeth, alarmed, dried her eyes, and went up to her grandfather to defend her interests.

"Ah! are you here, my love," said the Count, embracing her; "are you

not willing to give up this purse to me? Your mother will embroider another for you when this is finished."

"You do not know, then, my good papa, that this sort of work is very tedious?" replied Elizabeth.

"A better reason," said the Count, "for my taking this one; for I do not love to wait."

"Nor do I," quickly retorted Elizabeth.

"It is, however, necessary that one of us should give way to the other," continued the Count, "and you certainly ought not to expect me to do so."

"When Louisa disputes any thing with me, they pretend that it is my duty to yield, as being older and more reasonable than she is."

"Very well; and does this wise law always regulate you?"

"I allow that I forget it sometimes; —but, when I am grown old, I assure you, I shall be no longer self-willed."

"You are wrong in thinking so;—when we do not correct our faults in our youth, they only become stronger with our years; and the self-willed child invariably becomes an aged tyrant. In short, were you in my place, how would you act?"

"I dare not tell you."

"Speak—I permit you openly to explain your thoughts."

"Well, in your place, then, I would not vex Elizabeth—I would wait for another purse."

"This is not putting yourself in my place, it is simply remaining in your own; for you certainly would not deprive yourself of any thing strongly desired, to give it to another."

"I assure you that I would, grandpapa."

"Notwithstanding this, your uncle has spoken to me of a certain anemone—"

"Ah! it is true that I had a great inclination to obtain it;—you see that I have not been gratified."

"All in good time: but in what manner have you given it up?—in a want of respect to your uncle, who sought to console you with so much kindness."

The Count then convinced her how very unjust it was to expect to be always accommodated at the expence of others; he also pointed out, with much force, all her odious conduct towards the Captain; and Elizabeth, affected even to tears, hastened to beg his forgiveness.

Peace being thus restored, the anemone remained upon its stalk, the purse did not change its mistress; and,

when the family arrived on the Thursday, all the house was in perfect harmony. Immediately after supper, the Count told the following story.

THE OLD CLOAK.

One winter's evening, the good peasant René was sitting in his chimney-corner, with his wife Barbara, recounting to her how Abraham sent the eldest of his servants into Mesopotamia, to seek a wife for his son Isaac, and how this servant, having prayed the Almighty to be favourable to him, met at the side of a well Rebecca, the daughter of Nacor, who was Abraham's brother; he related also that Rebecca, after quenching the thirst of the servant and his camels by drawing water for them in her pitcher, conducted them to her father's house, who gave her in marriage to Isaac.

Barbara listened to him with so much pleasure, that she did not perceive that the fire was nearly extinguished for want of fuel. René arose to put on a faggot, when he heard a loud knocking at the door; and, on opening it, instead of the person whom he expected to see, he found nothing but a large black parcel laying upon the threshold of the door. René called his wife, who brought a light; and they examined the packet, and found it contained a child about four years old, wrapped in an old cloak of blue cloth. The poor child was sleeping, but awoke on feeling the night air, which was very cold. The good couple hastened to carry it into their house. Barbara took it upon her lap, and the child cried, and called Christopher; she asked him, if Christopher was his father?

"No," replied the child, "my father is dead."

"And your mother?" said Barbara.

"I have not got one."

"Poor little dear," said René, much affected, "not to have either father or mother at your helpless age? But who then is this Christopher, whom you ask for, my child?"

"It is Christopher," replied the innocent creature, crying again.

Barbara wished to know its name; and the child answered, that they called him Joseph.

"Where were you yesterday, Joseph?"

"Upon Christopher's horse."

"And this morning?"

"Upon Christopher's horse."

"And where did you go to sleep?"

"In Christopher's cloak."

René then took the old cloak in which he had been wrapped, and asked him if he knew it?

"Yes, yes, it is Christopher's cloak;" and he cried still more.

This was nearly all the information they could obtain from the little orphan. René remarked a little cross of white cloth, sewed on one side of the cloak, and concluded that this was a mark put for the purpose of knowing him afterwards; the good peasant, therefore, carefully folded the old cloak, locked it up in a chest, and proposed to his wife that they should keep the child. "We have none," said he to her; "this will be a comfort to us in our old age." Barbara consented with all her heart.

From this moment they regarded little Joseph as their own son, and they loved him as much as if he had really been

so. René sent him to school, that he might learn to read and write, and, above all, reared him in the fear of God; he concealed nothing from him of the abandoned state in which they had found him, and excited him to bless Providence for having provided him a father and a mother in the place of those he had lost.

Joseph shewed much quickness in every thing they wished to teach him: he was active, vigilant, and full of gratitude towards his benefactors; but a secret vanity filled his heart. From the mysterious circumstance that obscured his origin, he imagined that he owed his birth to some great personage, and, giving himself up to this illusion, he was hurt at leading a life so little conformable to his supposed birth.

One day, as he was confiding to

Barbara the dreams of his vanity, the good woman began to smile. "My dear child," said she, "I think you amuse yourself with very idle fancies; for, if you had been born of rich parents, they would not have wrapped you in an old worn-out cloak; the little brown frock you were dressed in was in better condition, but far from being magnificent."

Joseph observed that it was possible some unfaithful servant had intentionally changed his clothes, as he had read in several histories; and he related to Barbara the romantic adventures of many young persons, who, after having been exposed as he had, found themselves to be the sons of princes, or at least of rich noblemen.

Barbara, who did not participate in these vague hopes, and cared little about

their reality, terminated the conversation by saying, "Whether you discover your family or not, or whether you were born rich or poor, what does it signify, Joseph?—are you not happy with us?"

Joseph affectionately embraced her, and went to dig a small plantation of vines, that René cultivated at some distance from his cottage.

The country where they inhabited was not far from the town of Saintes. A clergyman, who resided there, passed in his carriage near the place where Joseph was at work, and asked him the road to a country-house whither he was going. Joseph, in pointing it out, assured him that there was great danger of the carriage breaking down in the narrow rocky roads through which it must pass. The clergyman was old, and too infirm to walk without difficulty; and still less dared to mount

a horse: therefore, the situation in which he was placed much embarrassed him. Joseph, having entreated him to wait a moment, ran to a neighbouring house, and procured an ass: they placed upon it the carriage cushions, and the old man was conveyed comfortably to the place of his destination. The carriage returned to the nearest inn, and his valet remained near his person; while Joseph walked before the ass, to shew the way.

The orphan had a handsome face, natural wit, and much less vulgarity than is usually met with in country people. Urged by the vanity of his mind, and the good opinion he entertained of himself, he was constantly employed in polishing his manners and his language, and attentively observing those of persons of consequence, who lived during the summer in the neighbourhood. The

old priest took great pleasure in talking to Joseph; he interrogated him as to his family, but the boy declared his ignorance in this respect, at the same time giving him to understand his romantic pretensions.

The priest found in the confession of this hope a certain nobleness that struck him forcibly; he judged that a child of this temper was capable of great actions, as he only viewed the character of Joseph on its favourable side, and did not reflect that, though ambition sometimes enlarges the mind, it seldom fails of narrowing the heart.

On his return, the priest went to see René; he made himself acquainted with the circumstances relative to Joseph, and concluded by requesting that the child should visit him every Sunday at Saintes.

Joseph was punctual in his attendance; and Mr. Pascal (this was the priest's name), becoming more and more attached to him, wished at length to keep him altogether, in order to give him the advantage of a master. René and his wife loved Joseph too sincerely to oppose the good fortune that was now offered him; they took him themselves to Saintes, and, on their return, praised God for having taken under His protection a destitute orphan.

Joseph wept with regret on quitting the cottage of his benefactors; but the education it was wished to give him was too flattering to his self-love to allow his grief to be of long continuance. The ardour with which he applied himself to his studies, so completely gained the affection of Mr. Pascal, that he made him his heir.

During the first months of his residence at Saintes, Joseph went regularly every week to visit Barbara and René. By degrees, the studies to which he had devoted himself rendered his visits less frequent; and, in proportion as his prosperity increased, his gratitude towards them appeared to lose its warmth.

Mr. Pascal died, and Joseph inherited considerable wealth. Indifferent now as to his being the son of a prince, he concealed the obscurity of his origin with as much care as he had formerly endeavoured to discover it. He blushed at the obligation he owed René, and hastened to leave a place where he was so well known, and fixed his residence at Nantes. Joseph did not depart without taking leave of his first benefactors; he gave them the best reasons in his power for changing his place of

abode; and, seeing them deeply afflicted, he promised that he would write to them frequently.

Joseph quitted them with a heart overcharged with grief: he was by nature affectionate,—vanity only had rendered him ungrateful. Faithful to his promise, he wrote to René, and gave him his address, in order that he might write in his turn. This correspondence lasted more than a year; but insensibly it relaxed, and Joseph ceased to think of his foster-parents: Barbara, in consequence, fell ill of grief.

"Poor Joseph is sick!" cried she, weeping; "he is perhaps dead, or he would have written to us."

In despair at the misery of his wife, and full of anxiety himself, René determined on going to Nantes, that he might learn what had befallen Joseph. He

put on his best coat, his new gaiters made of fustian, and, covering himself with Joseph's old cloak, he, mounted upon a mule, departed for Nantes. René had never been further from home than Saintes,—two hundred miles was, therefore, a great journey for him; but he was unable to exist any longer without ascertaining the fate of Joseph.

After a fatiguing journey of eight days, he found himself in the beautiful streets of Nantes; but he was too much occupied in thinking of Joseph, to pay any attention to the numerous objects that presented themselves. He arrived at a handsome house, and asked for Mr. Rupert,—the name that Joseph had assumed. The porter desired him to walk into his lodge, and enquired what he wanted with his master?

"What do I want with him!" cried the good peasant; "I want to see him, to press him in my arms, and, in short, to take care of him; for I suppose he is very ill."

"Ill! not at all; he is in excellent health:—but you are mistaken; the person whom you are talking of embracing is a very rich man, courted by the first families in the town, and who rides about in his carriage every day."

"God be praised!" replied René, "he is well and happy! I will forgive him for having neglected us; youth demands indulgence.—You are surprised to hear me talk thus; but, when your master returns, notwithstanding my coarse coat and fustian gaiters, you will see with what joy he will throw his arms round my neck."

"You are perhaps his foster-father?" demanded the porter.

René was about to answer, when Joseph's carriage entered the court; it was filled with ladies and gentlemen whom he had brought to dine with him. René, with a palpitating heart, and his face bathed in tears, was only able to say, in a low voice, "Joseph! my dear Joseph!"

Mr. Rupert would not have perceived him, had not the porter presented him. Joseph grew pale on seeing the good old man advance to embrace him, and at first feigned not to recollect him. "O Heaven!" cried the old man, with surprise and grief, "can you have forgotten René?"

"Ah! is it you, good old man," replied Joseph, withdrawing; "by what

chance are you here?—and your old wife, is she pretty well?" At the same time, turning to his servants, he added, "Take care of this peasant; give him some refreshment immediately, in order that he may depart, for he dwells very far from hence."

After having said these words, he gave his hand to a young lady, and entered the house with her. René, with despair in his heart, uttered no complaints: he went into the stable, saddled his mule, and set off the same instant.

He had nearly reached the outskirts of the town, when he recollected that he had still on Joseph's cloak; at which he burst into tears. "Alas!" said he, "if the ungrateful man had seen this cloak, would he have been able to treat me with so much cruelty?"

This reflection gave birth to another:

he dismounted at a public-house, purchased a little wooden box, and, enclosing the cloak in it, sent it to Joseph by the hands of a porter, waiting his return. René hoped that this eloquent messenger would change the heart of Joseph. The porter, however, returned without bringing one word of consolation: Joseph, engaged in pleasure, had received the box without deigning to open it, or without scarcely paying any attention from whom it was brought. René raised his eyes to heaven, and departed for his village with a heavy heart.

He was not able to conceal from Barbara the ingratitude of their adopted child. This tender-hearted woman again fell ill, and died fifteen days after her husband's return. René soon followed her; he expired, praying the Almighty to pardon Joseph.

Providence, however, was preparing to chastise the ungrateful orphan. A relation of Mr. Pascal arrived from a long voyage, and consulted several lawyers upon the legality of the will that the priest had made in favour of Joseph. Supported by their advice, he speedily attacked him by a law-suit, and, after a long procedure, it was declared illegal.

Joseph, stripped of his fortune, was abandoned by all his friends, as is generally the case. He had retired to a miserable garret, when one of his adversary's footmen, with an insolent air, brought a box, addressed to him, which they had found in a corner of his late residence. Joseph, when alone, opened the box, and, on seeing the old cloak, the remembrance of his ingratitude almost broke his heart: he felt that his misfortunes were merited, and, falling

on his knees, he supplicated the Almighty to accept his sincere repentance.

Joseph resolved to go and implore the mercy of his benefactors also, and to devote to their service the remainder of his days. Provided with a small sum of money which he still possessed, he went by the same road that René had travelled two years before. With what despair did he learn that death had rendered his fault irreparable! He wished to die upon the tomb of his benefactors; and, in fact, his griefs were very near bringing him to the grave. He was received into an hospital at Saintes; but, his youth prevailing over his disorder, he began to recover.

One day, as Joseph was benefitting by the warmth of the sun, in the court of the hospital, a man, who walked with two crutches, sat down by his side, and

asked him if the village of Islets was far from Saintes: (the name of that which René had inhabited.) Joseph sighed at the question, and replied, that it was about a day's journey.

"Do you belong to the village?" demanded the stranger.

"It is there that I will die," replied Joseph, melancholy.

"And I also.—I wish to go there," continued the stranger: "if you have no objection, we will set out together, as I do not remember the road."

A sigh accompanied these words. Joseph consented to accompany him as a guide; and, in a few days after, they departed. The orphan threw upon his shoulders the old cloak, folded up, the only inheritance he had received from his parents.

Arrived at the village, the stranger,

without naming whom he sought, went straight to the little house of René; but other peasants now inhabited it. He returned in a few minutes to seek Joseph, who was seated on the side of the church-yard, with his eyes fixed on the tomb of his benefactors: he was wrapped in his cloak, and shedding tears.

"Those whom I seek no longer exist," said the stranger, sorrowfully; "their death has left me in a miserable uncertainty.—But what do I see!—this mantle—this white cross—Alas! if you should be Joseph?"

"That is the name by which I have been called since my infancy," replied Joseph, with emotion:—"you have, without doubt, some knowledge of my fate—you know why I was exposed at the age of four years."

"Yes, I do know it!" answered the

Alas! should you prove to be Joseph.

stranger, in a suffocated voice, and covering his face with his hands.

"Tell me if I have still a father and a mother, to whom I may devote my miserable days?"

"You no longer have any;—you would not have been abandoned had either of them lived."

"Tell me, then, what is become of Christopher, whom I so much regretted, and whom I called upon in tears?"

"Ah! he neither merited your remembrance nor the tears you shed for him.—Joseph!—alas!—pardon me,—pardon the unfortunate Christopher!"

In saying these words, he threw himself upon Joseph's neck, and both wept, agitated by different sentiments.

"You demand pardon of me," cried Joseph, "of me, who am so culpable!

—Christopher, relate to me, I implore you, what you know of my infancy."

Christopher, a little recovered from his emotion, commenced the following recital:—

"I was a soldier in a regiment of cavalry: engaged very young in the service, I experienced every mark of friendship and protection from one of my comrades, who was married: he was called Urban. His wife died, and left him a son only two years old; it was you, my dear Joseph. Your father would never abandon you, but continued to keep you in the regiment, which was then in garrison. Eighteen months afterwards he also died, from the effects of a wound under which he had long suffered. Before he expired, he took you in his arms, and, looking at me sor-

rowfully, said, 'What will become of my poor Joseph, if you do not consent to protect him? You are yourself very young: but remember how I have loved you, and that, from our first acquaintance, I have considered you as my son.' I promised Urban to cherish and protect his son; and he died tranquilly and full of confidence. It was my intention to fulfil my promise, and for several months I remained faithful to it; but the love of pleasure soon rendered this duty irksome to me. I confided you to the care of the women of our regiment; but the money they required appeared to me a hardship, because I was obliged to endure many privations to enable me to afford it. The companions of my pleasures advised me to put you into an hospital; but I could not resolve on this step. One of them suggested the idea

of exposing you at the door of some good-hearted peasant, who might be without children. We had been at Saintes several days: I obtained leave of absence for thirty-six hours, and departed with you, for the purpose of passing through the neighbouring villages, and informing myself with caution of the character of the inhabitants. Every body spoke in praise of the good René: his circumstances were tolerably good, having sufficient to subsist on without the fear of want. It was to his charitable care that I determined to confide your infancy. I returned here at the commencement of night. I had put you to sleep in this same cloak, upon which I had sown a small white cross; I laid you down gently upon the threshold of the door, and, having knocked, concealed myself. I saw René take you in his

arms, and carry you into his house; and then I withdrew, praying to God, but with so much agitation that I did not know what I was saying. When I remounted my horse, I returned to this house, and examined it attentively. A dreadful weight oppressed me; I thought I saw Urban reproaching my infidelity. On arriving at Saintes, I found the regiment had departed, and hastened to rejoin it. We marched against Holland, which had become the theatre of war.—Since this fatal moment nothing has prospered with me. I was made a prisoner, and for eight years dragged on a miserable existence; at the end of which time an exchange recalled me to battle. I lost a leg, and the other was dreadfully wounded. Conducted from hospital to hospital, I at length returned to Saintes, where I again fell ill; and it was there

that it pleased Heaven I should meet with you.—Ah, Joseph! remorse has not spared me even to this hour; and, having found you unfortunate, I shall die without consolation."

"Alas!" replied Joseph, "were you a hundred times more culpable, I should have no right to reproach you with my misfortunes, as they are the consequence of my own misconduct."

Joseph then related, in his turn, all that had happened to him.

"It is very true, then," cried he, after having finished his narrative, "that Heaven punishes the ungrateful, and that they must not hope for repose!—Christopher, as we are both culpable, and both unfortunate, let us unite our misery and our repentance: you are old and infirm; I will labour to support our common existence."

Christopher, unable to reply, reclined in Joseph's arms, and he conveyed the invalid to the house of an opulent vine-cultivator, who gave them a small room to dwell in; and Joseph worked as a day-labourer. They were always poor and unhappy. Their only walk was to the church-yard; where, pointing to the tomb of his benefactors, Joseph, sighing, would exclaim, "poor dear departed souls, you both rest in peace, while we still groan upon the earth, regretting the past without being able to recall our ill-spent time!"

"Oh, papa! your story is very melancholy," said Victorine, drying her eyes.

"It appears to me," observed Henry, "that the story would have terminated more satisfactorily if Ren and Barbara

ad lived; then Joseph could have worked for them."

"Ingratitude is a vice whose melancholy consequences cannot always be repaired at will," replied the Count: "the opportunities of doing so are very rare; and it is this inability that renders repentance so bitter. The ungrateful cannot be punished with too much rigour."

TWELFTH SUPPER.

The following Thursday, when all the family were again united, the Count said to Henry, "I remember, my dear Henry, that you prefer true stories, and it is but just that you should be gratified in your turn." Henry kissed his grandfather's hand with gratitude, and gave all his attention to the following history of

JOHN DE MONTFORT AND OLIVER DE CLISSON.

Britanny was not always a French province: in the thirteenth century, it formed a sovereignty governed by dukes, who, notwithstanding they paid homage

to the kings of France, were sufficiently powerful to be feared by them.

John de Montfort reigned over this dukedom by the name of John the Fourth, surnamed the Conqueror; having twice conquered his territories. History represents him as a brave warrior and a profound politician, but of an imperious, cruel, and violent disposition. He had disputed his states with Charles de Blois; and it was not until after a long series of combats, of successes and reverses, that he found himself in peaceable possession of the duchy of Britanny.

Oliver de Clisson had at first supported the claims of John the Fourth, who was indebted to him for many his victories; but the haughty temper of the duke unintentionally wounded the pride of Oliver, whose independent mind,

supported by valour, could not bear the appearance of ingratitude, and some interested debates augmented their enmity, and rendered every attempt at reconciliation vain. Charles the Sixth, king of France, who had raised Clisson's father to the dignity of constable, concluded many treaties between them, which they invariably broke. A new incident raised the hatred of the duke to such a height, that it induced him to take a violent and criminal resolution, not only unworthy of a prince, but of every honourable man. This incident was, an alliance which Oliver proposed entering into with a descendant of Charles de Blois, by giving him his daughter in marriage: the duke conceived that, in forming this union, Oliver had no other object than that of reviving the pretensions of Charles's

family to the dukedom of Britanny; and he resolved to be revenged.

He assembled the states at Vannes, under pretence of discussing the interests of Britanny. Several noblemen attended, and amongst them were Oliver de Clisson, the Sieur de Laval, his brother-in-law, and the Lord de Beaumanoir, to whom he was much attached.

The duke, concealing the odious design which he meditated under the most friendly air, gave to all his nobles a gracious reception; and, after many entertainments and feasts, at which he was present, he invited some of them to inspect his Chateau de l'Hermine, which he was building at Vannes, and was then nearly finished. His open and candid manner banished suspicion from the minds of every one; and Oliver de Clisson, with the Sieur de Laval and

several others, accepted the invitation. The duke, accompanied by Oliver and Laval, walked from room to room, until they came to a large tower, which he begged Clisson to enter, and examine the fortifications, while he had some conversation with Laval. The constable leading the way, Oliver entered the tower; and, at the same instant, a troop of the duke's men rushed upon him, and, after disarming him, loaded him with chains;—one, with more humanity than the rest, took off his cloak, and covered him with it, for the purpose of shielding him from the cold.

The duke could not hear the door lock without starting and changing colour;—for the most powerful man is affected by crime. The Sieur Laval, perceiving this emotion, felt alarmed for his brother-in-law, and supplicated the

duke not to attempt any evil design against Oliver de Clisson. The duke ordered him to quit the castle, telling him he had determined in what manner he should act. Laval would not depart without his brother-in-law; but, not daring openly to resist the duke, he continued to conceal himself until he could become acquainted with the fate of Oliver.

Beaumanoir came in his turn to demand the constable; when the duke, irritated, and laying his hand upon his dagger, said, "Beaumanoir, do you wish to be in the same situation as your master?"

"My lord," replied Beaumanoir, "I hope that my master is well."

The duke repeated his question; and Beaumanoir, judging from his fury that Oliver was in danger, generously consented to share his fate: he was therefore

loaded with irons, and conducted to the tower where Oliver was confined, who found great consolation in the presence of this generous friend; he extended his hands towards him, and vowed never to forget his friendship, whatever might occur.

The duke, always governed by passion, sent for John Bazvalan, in whom he placed great confidence, and to whom he had given the charge of guarding the tower, and ordered him to put Oliver into a sack, and throw him into the sea in the middle of the night. Bazvalan shuddered on receiving this cruel mandate, and ventured to represent to the duke that this action would draw upon him the hatred of all his subjects, and that even himself, after having gratified his resentment would bitterly repent. The duke, deaf to these pru-

dent observations, declared that he should suffer death if he refused to execute his order relative to Clisson.

Bazvalan, overwhelmed with despair, retired; he sought the Sieur Laval, and informed him, with tears in his eyes, of the order he had just received. Laval flew to embrace the knees of the duke; supplicated him not to render himself culpable by an action so horrible; and offered his own property as a ransom for his brother-in-law. The duke replied, that Oliver had too highly offended him; that he still endeavoured, by his alliance with the family of Charles de Blois, to draw upon him new dangers; and that nothing short of his death could appease his resentment. Laval, therefore, was obliged to retire without being able to overcome the hatred of the duke.

Night now arrived; and John, left alone, gave himself up to melancholy reflections. The consequences of his vengeance presented themselves to his imagination, with their dangerous consequences. Would the king of France suffer him with impunity to put Oliver de Clisson to death?—and, in the event of Britanny being again attacked, could he find a nobleman like him who would interest himself in its defence?

The idea of the murder, and the perfidy of which he had been guilty, struck him with horror. The clock struck twelve; a cold perspiration covered the face of the duke: but, whether actuated by shame, or withheld by some remaining portion of anger, it is difficult to determine, he did not call any person to him, or retract his inhuman sentence.

As soon as day appeared, he sent for

Bazvalan. The duke, pale and agitated, waited for him to speak, without daring to interrogate him. Bazvalan silently observed him, seeking to divine the cause of the extraordinary state in which he saw him. At length, the duke asked if he had been obeyed?

"My lord would be——," replied Bazvalan.

"What!" cried the duke, in despair, "is Clisson dead? Wretch! ought you to have executed so promptly an order dictated by passion? Why did you not wait until reflection had calmed me? Go, far from my sight, that I may never see you any more."

Bazvalan withdrew; and the duke continued to indulge in the most acute sorrow, refusing all nourishment, and groaning incessantly. Bazvalan, informed of his situation, returned to the duke, and told him that, foreseeing his

repentance, he had suspended the execution of his orders.

The most perfect joy now succeeded the duke's despair; he threw himself upon Bazvalan's neck, and declared that he could not have done him a more eminent service. He then sent for the Sieur Laval, and agreed with him to treat for the ransom of Clisson; which was the general custom of that period.

Laval was conducted to Oliver's prison. This nobleman, in deep melancholy, expected nothing but death, and was dictating to Beaumanoir his last will, when the presence of his brother-in-law re-animated his hopes. He submitted to all that the duke demanded, to obtain his liberty; which he no sooner enjoyed, than he repaired to demand vengeance of the king of France.

The crime of the duke would not admit of the establishment of any solid reconciliation between them; so that they continued for a long time enemies to each other; and, notwithstanding many attempts to procure an accommodation, their dissentions filled Britanny with troubles. However, the Duke John, finding himself growing old, and the father of very young children, thought it adviseable, for the interest of his family, to make peace with Oliver de Clisson. He wrote to him, with his own hand, a letter full of candor and kindness, in which he requested a private interview. Clisson, surprised at this step, did not dare to confide in the duke's good faith, and demanded as hostage his own son. The duke felt this suspicion warranted by his previous conduct; and, far from being offended

at it, he sent him the young prince his son, then only six years old. Clisson, touched with this condescension, which proved the duke's sincerity, brought him back his son, and relied on his honour: they, therefore, became perfectly reconciled; and, what the mediation of princes had been unable to attain, mutual generosity procured.

"The duke, however, was not very generous in asking a ransom after behaving so ill," said Galaor.

"True," said Mr. Theodore; "he ought to have felt sufficiently repaid in escaping the remorse and misfortunes which he would have brought on himself, had it not been for the prudence of Bazvalan."

Louisa, who had not taken much interest in this historical sketch, got on

the Captain's knees, and asked him if he would shortly give them some story from his great book? Pamphilius promised her one for the following supper; which assurance gave great satisfaction to every one present.

THIRTEENTH SUPPER.

GALAOR had a lightness of character which prevented him from succeeding in any thing, although he undertook many. He, however, began to make some progress on the violin; but became tired of it, and begged his papa to let him have a drawing-master. Mr. Theodore was possessed of an independent fortune, but the education of his three children compelled him to be economical. He was very angry with Galaor, and reproved him for his fickleness.

"Are you not aware," said he, "that no science can be acquired without study, and that by perseverance all difficulties

may be surmounted. Your unsettled mind is very injurious to you, not only in preventing you from acquiring a knowledge of the amusing arts, but, I am afraid, in your more serious studies, which hereafter might be of great use to you. You have successively studied Latin, Greek, English, and German, without being proficient in any one of them; neither do you possess a thorough knowledge of your own language. Mathematics delighted you for nearly a month, but no longer: in fact, you know nothing; and you increase in years without acquiring proportionate wisdom. If this negligence continues, what will become of you? The ignorant are treated by the world with contempt, because mankind only respect those who are useful. It is time that you should decide upon some particular course of study: I cannot satisfy your numerous

whims without injury to your brothers, who have the same claims on my affection as yourself, and whose applications better repay my anxious care. Chuse, then, once for all; for, I assure you, it shall be the last time, and I allow you three days to reflect on it."

"It is not necessary, papa, to wait so long," said Galaor; "I assure you I have positively decided on learning drawing; and, since you have the goodness to give me my last choice—"

"No precipitation," said Mr. Theodore, interrupting him; "I will not receive your definitive resolution until the end of three days."

Galaor proceeded to his brother Henry, and informed him of his father's determination.

"What! are you going to lay aside the violin, on which you play so well?

I assure you, that you will very much regret it. Drawing is doubtless very pleasing, but requires infinite pains to succeed in it. Consider how Victorine labours every day, notwithstanding she has already made considerable progress in it. Having in some measure surmounted the difficulties of the violin you should now be more attached to it."

"No," replied Galaor, "I am tired of the violin."

The same day, Gustavus and Galaor visited Paul, whom they found receiving a lesson in astronomy. He had expressed so great a desire to go into the naval service, that his father judged it necessary to make him well acquainted with a science so useful to navigators. The master, animated at the sight of the visitors, and wishing to give them an idea of his talents, began to talk of the most

curious and wonderful things in astronomy. The young folks listened with attention to his description of the mountains of the Moon, which are easily discerned by means of a telescope, though to the eye they appear only as simple spots on her face; the clear and variable belts which surround a planet called Jupiter, and which the learned suppose to be very extensive seas; Saturn's-ring, a kind of large thin oval crown, which surrounds the planet without touching it, and of which the use cannot be discovered; and the explanation of the various revolutions of the earth and planets round the sun. All these things so much enchanted Galaor, that, in returning, his head ran on nothing but astronomy: drawing lost all its attractions, and Galaor told Henry that he should now make choice of astronomy, and

that he entertained no doubt of becoming a great astronomer.

The next day Madame Theodore, accompanied by her sons, went to a concert, to which she was invited. Gustavus, who only loved the sound of drums, was permitted to remain at home; Galaor and Henry went with their mother. In the course of the evening, a young man played a solo on the flute with so much superiority, that all the auditors applauded him with transport, and Galaor more than any other. He now became as desirous to play on the flute as he had been to learn astronomy, and consequently decided on asking for a music-master.

Just as he was going to seek his father for the purpose of declaring to him his last resolution, Henry took him aside, and begged him to reflect ma-

turely on what he was about to do ; he desired him to recollect that, in the short space of two days, he had successively chosen drawing, astronomy, and the flute. "Is it probable," added Henry, "that your taste will vary no more, and that you will definitively fix on the last thing that has charmed you? No, my brother, you must not thus flatter yourself. Scarcely will you have quitted the violin, than, disgusted with the difficulties of the flute, you will be anxious to resume the study of that instrument of which you have already some knowledge. Do a little violence to yourself, by resisting these desires ; and seriously apply to that particular study which will be most useful to you."

Galaor felt the justice of these observations, though they were somewhat

at variance with his disposition; and he therefore resolved to follow them. Mr. Theodore praised the affability of Galaor; and the Count and Captain applauded his resolution.

When the dessert was removed, Pamphilius took from his pocket a little copy-book, in which he had written the following story.

HISTORY OF THE LITTLE CLOTILDA.

A peasant of Roussillon, named Olivia, had three daughters, the eldest of whom was not quite thirteen, and the youngest eight, years old. Onesimus, Monimia, and Clotilda, were their names: an accident had rendered the latter a cripple, and in consequence her mother was so unjust as to love her less than her other children.

Poor child! you mother is then very unjust.

Olivia frequently sent her to the fields to take care of a flock of geese, though she was younger and weaker than her sisters; a little coarse bread and a clove of garlic was her only food, whilst Onesima and Monimia were regaling themselves at home: in addition to this, Clotilda was obliged to spin a certain quantity of flax, which her mother always gave her before she went out.

Mild and timid, she endured all without complaint, and she anxiously endeavoured to fulfil the task imposed on her, in order to gain the affection of her mother.

One very cold day, her little benumbed fingers could not turn her spindle, and Clotilda began to cry: an old woman came up to her, and enquired the cause of her tears?

"Alas!" replied Clotilda, "I cannot spin, my fingers are so benumbed

by cold; and my mother, in consequence, will love me still less."

"Poor child!" said the good old woman; "your mother is then very unjust."

"She is not unjust," replied Clotilda; "for, if I displease her, it must be my fault."

The old woman, affected by this reply, embraced Clotilda, and, taking her distaff, began spining, and soon finished her day's work. Clotilda, grateful for this service, wished to divide her bread with the old woman; but the latter took from a little basket, which she carried on her arm, an excellent plum-cake, with which she regaled the little girl.

When the old woman was gone, Clotilda put her spindles in her apron, and returned with her geese to the house. Olivia, with an austere air, asked to see

her day's work: Clotilda opened her little apron; but scarcely had her mother cast her eyes upon it, than she exclaimed, "What do I see?—gold thread! What can this mean?"

Clotilda, much amazed, related what had happened, but without being able to comprehend how her flaxen thread had been converted into gold. Olivia, though ignorant of the cause, was very well satisfied with the change, and treated Clotilda a little better that evening; and the poor little girl was delighted with her mother's kindness.

The next day the old woman again sought Clotilda, who informed her of the strange metamorphosis of her spindles.

"My dear child," said the old woman, "Heaven always blesses children who are respectful towards their pa-

rents; and it has been pleased with the efforts you have made to gain the affection of your mother."

She again assisted Clotilda to spin her thread, and in the evening the spindles were in like manner covered with golden thread; a change which continued for several days. Olivia, overjoyed at what she considered as a source of riches, reproached herself for her aversion to Clotilda, and began to love her more than she had previously done the others. She now bought her some beautiful dresses, and gave her the best dishes. Clotilda felt much less affected by these presents than by her mother's affection; and her happiness would have been complete, but for the jealousy of her sisters, who could not see without dissatisfaction this great change.

Onesima one day said to her mother,

"I intreat you to give me some fine hemp, and send me to take care of the geese instead of Clotilda, in order that I may also bring you some golden thread."

Onesima in vain waited for the appearance of the old woman: she was obliged to do her work alone, and in the evening her spindles were covered only with hemp; in her anger, she threw them on the ground, and went to conceal herself.

Monimia said, she would take the coarse tow, the same as that of Clotilda; and, having loaded her distaff, went to the field in her turn, without being more fortunate than her sister.

Nothing could equal the vexation of these two young girls. Monimia, carrying her hatred to the greatest extreme, asked her sister if she had any objection

to their revenging themselves on Clotilda? Onesima replied, that, if they considered every thing, Clotilda really had not offended them; and that she had not been the cause of what had happened.

"How good you are to think thus!" cried Monimia: "can you believe the tales that this little girl relates? There is no doubt but some person gives her this golden thread, and she pretends not to know from whence it comes."

"But," replied Onesima, "Clotilda is so innocent!"

"So innocent!" said Monimia; "you are pleased to say so. With all her simplicity, however, she has succeeded in gaining our mother's affections; who scarcely looks at us now, and no longer buys us new dresses; and, I warrant you, that she will very shortly give her our's."

"Monimia, I have just conceived a project. Let us follow her to the field, and take her by surprise; we shall then know how she changes her tow into gold."

This expedient pleased Monimia. On the next day the two sisters escaped from the house, and placed themselves in ambush near the tree under which Clotilda was cheerfully spinning her tow. There were not more than two spindles remaining, when the old woman appeared; she embraced Clotilda, sat down by her side, and finished the rest of her spinning.

Clotilda having taken the road towards home, Monimia said to Onesima, "Let us seize her spindles: we will threaten to beat her if she does not keep the secret, and we will persuade our mother that we have done Clotilda's work."

Ill as this plot was contrived, Onesima willingly engaged in it; and they stopped their little sister. "You have torn from us our mother's love," said they, "by the assistance of your crafty old woman. You must now promise not to contradict us; for we will take your spindles, and make them pass for our work: if you tell, we will beat you."

"Why do you threaten me, my sisters?" replied Clotilda: "is it not sufficient, if this will please you, that I consent to it with all my heart?"

She then gave the spindles, which already had become gold, to her sister Onesima; and they all three went home to Olivia. Clotilda kept back a little; but Onesima, advancing with a triumphant air, said, "I hope, mother, you will not blame me for what I have done today;—the desire to please you induced

me to take Clotilda's place, and I also bring you spindles of golden thread."

On saying this, she opened her apron; but, unluckily, the spindles had again become covered with tow. Olivia gave her a box on the ear, and sent her to bed, crying. Clotilda, interrogated by her mother, was obliged to confess the truth, at the same time excusing her sisters in the best manner possible.

Onesima and Monimia, more irritated than ever, formed an unworthy project to rid themselves of Clotilda. The Sunday following, they walked on the sea-shore, where they found a small boat, fastened to a stake by a wicker-ring. The three sisters amused themselves by playing in the boat; till Onesima, seizing a moment when Clotilda was in it alone, suddenly took off the ring, while Monimia pushed the boat

with her foot. The current soon carried it from the shore; and the two sisters, little affected by the tears of Clotilda, cried, "Adieu, beautiful spinner; we wish you a good voyage;" and they ran away precipitately. However, they had not gone three hundred steps, before they shuddered at the action they had just committed. "Should our sister perish, we shall be the cause of it!" said they, weeping. They returned to the shore, and discerned afar off the little vessel, which from the distance appeared to be nearly swallowed up, though the sea was very calm. At this sight, their tears and cries redoubled, and they began to accuse each other with this shocking crime.

One of their neighbours found them in this miserable state: he thought that this accident had arisen from the natu-

ral imprudence of youth, and took the two sisters home to their mother, to whom he imparted his opinion; a mistake which Onesima and Monimia were careful not to contradict.

We have already seen how mercenary Olivia was. The loss of Clotilda occasioning also that of the golden thread, rendered the mother inconsolable, so that she died of grief in about a fortnight afterwards. One of her brothers became guardian to her two daughters, and treated them with a cruelty that often called to their recollection the loss of Clotilda.

"God punishes us for the evil that we have done," said Onesima: "we wished to better our condition, and have now more reason to complain than ever. Had it not been for your bad advice, this would not have happened."

"Your example was my ruin," replied Monimia, bitterly: "you are the oldest, and ought to have chided me when I was to blame?"

Thus they passed their days in continual reproaches, augmenting their woes instead of softening them. Let us, however, leave them to endure this just punishment of their barbarity, and return to Clotilda, whom they exposed in a little boat to the dangers of the sea.

After having wandered all night, the poor child, overcome by fear and shedding tears, devoutly recommended herself to the protection of Heaven, and fell asleep; in the morning she perceived a verdant island, at the side of which the boat stopped. Clotilda timidly landed; when a number of young girls, about her own age, with wreaths of flowers upon

their heads, and dressed in beautiful garments, came out of the groves, singing and dancing. One of them approaching, and tenderly embracing her, said, "We are very glad to see you, Clotilda; we have been expecting you for a long time."

Clotilda was much astonished at this address, but, not knowing how to reply, she remained silent. A young girl presented her with a wreath and a robe similar to their own, and several of them assisted her to dress; after which, the one who had spoken, taking her by the hand, led her into the interior of the island. A vast palace of white marble, of a circular form and surrounded by columns, appeared in the midst between the trees. All round the palace were orchards of the finest fruit-trees, so short, that the highest of them had not attained

three feet: peaches, prunes, pears, apples, oranges, and all kind of fruits, offered themselves to the infantile hands of the inhabitants of the island; several of whom were refreshing themselves by eating of them, and Clotilda, solicited by her companions, also partook of some, as she was much in want of nourishment; but, previously to gathering them, she enquired if any person would censure such a liberty? The young girls replied, that every thing in the island was intended for their use, and all who entered it had immediately the same privilege as themselves.

Clotilda, whose curiosity was raised, begged the little girl who accompanied her to favour her with an explanation; with which the latter, who was named Egerie, hastened to comply.

"You are in the Island of Happy

Children," said she to Clotilda: "it belongs to the fairy Sensible, whom we all consider as our mother, and who often lives here with us. This good fairy, in passing to and fro on the earth, has been affected by the fate of a number of unhappy children, whom she has met with,—some of them orphans, left to the care of mercenaries; others abandoned from their birth; and others unjustly hated, or victims to the misery of their families. The fairy, taking these unfortunate children under her protection, has with them peopled this peaceable island, in which reigns an eternal spring. She has assembled all those of our age who pleased her, requiring nothing of us but harmony and sincerity. In this happy place, we never know what trouble is; the instruction we receive pleases us; and, whilst

we are mild and complaisant to each other, there is nothing more required of us."

At this moment, the sound of various instruments were heard; and Egerie informed Clotilda that this music announced the hour of repast, and they entered the palace together.

In the middle of an immense rotunda, ornamented with draperies of roses, shaded with white, and edged with wreaths of various flowers, was a table of the same form as the room, and of a proportionate size, on which was laid a choice assemblage of flowers, fruits, vegetables, preserves, and sweets of all descriptions, at once charming to the eye and delicious to the palate. All the young girls embraced previously to their sitting down, and sung a hymn, in which they returned thanks to Heaven for their felicity, and

prayed for its protection to their sovereign; and, after the repast, this affecting ceremony was repeated.

Egerie, taking the arm of Clotilda, conducted her into the other rooms of the palace. Above the eating-room was another of the same size, appropriated to dancing, round which were statues of musicians, with various instruments;—these statues were animated at will, and the young girls could dance whenever they were inclined. Above this room were four others: the first contained all the instructive and diverting books for youth; in the second were a number of musical instruments, which played of themselves as soon as touched. The third room contained dolls, clothes with which to dress them, furniture for their use, and all the play-things agreeable to little girls; the fourth contained a

variety of sweetmeats,—such as dry and liquid preserves, fine sugar-plums, delicious tarts, and a thousand other things, equally palatable to children. Clotilda and Egerie made choice of a cup of crisp almonds, and rested for a short time in this delicious apartment; after which they went out upon a terrace that terminated the palace, and from whence they could view all the island, and the sea by which it was surrounded.

Clotilda remarked in the distance a small black spot: Egerie told her that it was an island similar to their own, in which the fairy had assembled young children of the other sex; but, directing her attention to their own residence, she pointed out to Clotilda the beauties of its situation. All the ground was covered with a fine herbage, which every where formed a carpet, so soft that there

was no possibility of any injury being incurred by a fall; the numerous springs by which it was watered were not more than one foot deep, and flowed upon a very fine gravel. In every corner of the thickets were swings; places in which to play at running at the ring, proportionable to the strength of the inhabitants of the island; and little chariots drawn by sheep, who would suffer the children to mount, and ride them in the same manner as horses. The birds made their nests upon the earth, or in the little orchard-trees, receiving with pleasure the caresses and attentions of these innocent girls, who never attempted to harm them.

When night arrived, and the eyes of these fortunate children became weary by fatigue, they retired into the middle of a very dark wood; and, at the same

moment, neat little beds, lined with moss, and suspended to the trees by wreaths of flowers, lowered of themselves to the earth: each girl having taken her accustomed place, the cradles gently rose, and a mild air, which spread itself over the wood, soon sent them to sleep, by softly rocking them in their airy couches.

Clotilda, delighted with all these things, wished for nothing now but to see the fairy Sensible, that she might thank her for the blessings she enjoyed.

"You know her," said Egerie; "she has often spoken to us of you."

Clotilda could not recollect having ever seen any being that resembled a fairy, according to the idea she had formed of them; and, as Egerie could not give her any further information, she was obliged to wait for the appear-

ance of the fairy herself to solve the mystery.

Clotilda had resided nearly a month in the island, when one morning an harmonious sound was heard; on which all the children, uttering expressions of joy, ran precipitately to the shore: it was to announce the arrival of the fairy Sensible. A small vessel, made of mother-of-pearl, with muslin sails embroidered with gold, approached the island, accompanied by the sound of enchanting music. An ivory bridge assisted the fairy in landing. She was young and beautiful; a sweet inviting smile played on her countenance; and her forehead was ornamented with a diadem of pearls. She soon found herself surrounded by her numerous family,—some kissing her silver robe, others seizing her hand, and all exhibit-

ing signs of the most perfect joy. They brought her a little car, of the form and colour of a rose-leaf; and, then fastening it to their girdles, they drew it gently towards the palace; whilst a crowd of others, who could not participate in this honour, were contented with gathering round the wheels.

When the first transports were a little subdued, and the fairy could make herself heard, she asked for the new-comer. Clotilda approached her with timidity, and tenderly embraced her knees: the fairy kissed her, and informed her that she was the old woman who had so frequently assisted her to spin. Clotilda had never dwelt long upon this idea, though it had recurred to her many times; so very different did this old woman appear to what she had conceived of a fairy. She again expressed her gra-

titude to the fairy Sensible, who informed her of the death of her mother, and the punishment her sisters were undergoing for the injuries they had done her.

This intelligence caused Clotilda much sorrow: she stole away from her joyful companions, and wept for the misfortunes of her family. The death of her mother was an irreparable loss; but she could not help indulging the hope that the fairy would ameliorate the melancholy condition of her sisters; and in a few days she ventured to express her wishes on this subject.

"My child," replied the fairy, "I cannot but applaud a desire so worthy of your good heart: however, I ought previously to inform you, that misfortune has not changed Onesima and Monimia —they are still envious and wicked. Sincere repentance is not in their souls;

and, as it is impossible for a vicious heart to taste happiness, what can be done for their benefit?—they would never cease complaining during their lives."

Clotilda retired, not daring to urge any more; but she could not persuade herself of these sorrowful truths, and gave herself up to grief. Sensible soon perceived that she fled from the amusements and pleasures of her companions, and, touched with compassion, she called Clotilda.

"You are unhappy, my child," said she, "and my words have failed of convincing you; but the motive that induces you to doubt is too laudable to offend me. Tell me what it is you wish: at the same time, remember that I cannot admit your sisters in my island, or consent to your dwelling with them."

"Alas!" answered Clotilda; "at least permit me to go and console them, and inform them that the evil they intended me is become a source of happiness; and give me a present for my uncle, to encourage him to treat them with more kindness."

The fairy acquiesced in all that she desired. Clotilda received from her hands a girdle, which would be sufficient to transport her wherever she wished, by fastening it round her body; and a purse made of the skin of a syren, full of gold, for their guardian.

"This purse," said the fairy, "will never be empty, employed in whatever manner, provided those to whom it may belong commit no injustice: in that case, nothing will be found within it, and it will not refill until after a prompt reparation. With this, your sisters will

have nothing more to fear from their guardian, who will find it too much his interest to behave with kindness to them, to neglect to do so."

Clotilda affectionately thanked the fairy. Delighted with having the power of changing the fate of her sisters, she put on the girdle, and soon arrived in Roussillon. After having secreted the girdle in her bosom, she advanced towards two poor young girls, ill dressed, whom she saw sitting in the corner of a wood; and discovered them to be Onesima and Monimia. They were disputing, as usual; and, when Clotilda threw her arms round their necks, her sisters could not believe it was her, on account of the richness of her dress.

"My dear girls," said Clotilda, "do not regret any longer on my account; I am become so happy, that I have lost

the right to reproach you: but, ever since I have been acquainted with your misfortunes, I have not been able to enjoy my felicity, and have hastened hither to console your sorrows."

Onesima and Monimia wept, and begged her pardon; and complained bitterly of the conduct of their guardian. Clotilda, after shewing great affliction for the death of her mother, related what had happened to her after their separation. Her sisters intreated that they might be taken to the Island of Happy Children, and appeared much mortified on learning that the fairy would not admit them.

Clotilda's return gave great pleasure to all the neighbourhood, who loved her on account of her amiable temper and the goodness of her heart. The guardian received with joy the present of the

purse, and conducted himself in such a manner that it was always full: he then began to dress his two nieces very neatly, and to manage their inheritance with the utmost probity. Onesima and Monimia soon felt the benefit of the change; but, instead of being grateful for it, they hated Clotilda, on account of the extraordinary happiness she enjoyed.

"It is from jealousy," said Monimia, "that she refuses to take us to the island, and wishes to persuade us that the fairy objects to it."

"I am of your opinion," replied Onesima; "we ought to get her girdle from her, and compel her to remain here in our place."

This project being adopted, they tied their sister to a tree, took the girdle from her; and then, each holding an

end, they immediately flew away, laughing at poor Clotilda.

"The fairy was right," said she, sighing, "and I ought to have believed her."

A peasant, who passed by, unbound her; and she returned to her uncle, who did not require the incitement of the purse to conduct himself well towards her, whose excellent disposition caused every body to love her. Her sisters were regretted by none; and the uncle thanked Heaven for having delivered him from such wicked creatures.

In the mean time, Clotilda, after having enjoyed the delights of the island, could not be happy any where; the recollection of the blessings she had lost haunted her without ceasing, and overwhelmed her with chagrin. One day, as she was wandering sorrowfully on the

sea-shore, she saw a swallow with something in its beak, which it dropped on the sand. Clotilda ran towards it, and found it to be her girdle. Delighted at recovering this treasure, she bound it round her, and was immediately carried away to the Island of Happy Children.

As soon as she had received the congratulations of her companions, she enquired what had become of her sisters. Egerie told her that the girdle had brought them to the shores of the Happy Island, but that they found there an invisible wall, which prevented them from entering it: they struggled for some time in vain to accomplish their purpose, and at length fell into the sea, where two enormous fishes, who were watching for them, instantly swallowed them up; the girdle was taken up by the swallow, who flew with it to Clotilda.

The good girl pitied her sisters, notwithstanding their wickedness; she then went to return thanks to the fairy Sensible, who caressed her with fondness. Her arrival was kept as a holiday by her companions, who proved their friendship by the excess of their joy.

"Oh, my dear uncle," cried Louisa, "how I should like to be in that beautiful palace, where one would be surrounded by heaps of sweetmeats."

"And where instruction does not plague, but is said to be a pleasure; I suppose, because not forced on children," added Galaor: "My uncle will agree that study is one of the misfortunes of youth, and that we should be much happier if we were not obliged to it."

"Not so," said Pamphilius, "but, however, I will allow that it appears a hardship to be obliged to take so much pains to learn before we can appreciate the utility of it, which is the case at your age; and this is the reason that study, which may prove so advantageous to you in your maturer years, now causes your tears to flow so frequently. You have repeatedly been told, that there is a period when the memory becomes restive, and the mind, habituated to indolence, cannot answer the demands made upon it. If we do not usefully employ the early period of life, we ought not to calculate on the remainder. If children were convinced of these facts, they would cease to complain. Besides, the author of the tale I have just related speaks of very

young children, placed in an extraordinary situation; and a fairy-tale is to be listened to with caution, on account of the many fictions with which it is embellished."

FOURTEENTH SUPPER.

MADAME CAROLINE, with her husband and children, one morning made an excursion to the Bois de Boulogne, where they proposed to take a rural breakfast; and they regaled themselves, under the trees, with strawberries and cream. When the repast was over, Paul, followed by Louisa, ran about the wood; and they perceived, in the great alley leading to Neuilly, a young scholar, about fifteen years old, looking about as if he had lost something. Paul asked him, what he had lost; and the young man replied, "A week since, while playing with my comrades, I lost an ex-

cellent ball; and it is that which I am now seeking."

Paul very obligingly assisted him in his search, and little Louisa, in gathering daisies, found it. The scholar was very much pleased, and invited them to play with him.

"No," said Paul, "I am not acquainted with that game; neither have I any inclination for it: I prefer the battledore and shuttlecock."

"That is a very ancient game," said the scholar; "it was while playing at battledore and shuttlecock that Apollo killed Hyacinth; and the Greeks, in commemoration of that event, instituted feasts, in which that game was not forgotten; and I know Greek scholars who, at this day, play at it with great pleasure."

"Pray, have you been in Greece?" asked Paul, anxiously.

"Why do you ask?" replied the scholar.

"Because I should like you to tell me all about your travels."

"You are right in saying, my travels, for I have made several.—Have yours been agreeable?"

"Mine!" said Paul, with a downcast look; "I have never been beyond the environs of Paris; but, when I am older, I mean to embark."

"You will do well: it is a great pleasure to go from north to south, and from east to west, where one meets with a thousand curious things. Have you ever seen a volcano?"

"Oh, dear! no; where are they to be seen?"

"They are beautiful artificial fireworks," continued the scholar, pompously: "at first the earth trembles—then a noise is heard, like that of a thousand carts laden with bars of iron—in a moment light appears—bang—it is like a bomb; there are twenty or thirty of them all in a blaze at once; and the crater vomits forth forests, rivers, and mountains, in the midst of a continual fire: all is illuminated for sixty miles round, and the little birds sing, being deceived by the light, which they mistake for day."

"Your description is very droll," said Paul: "I have often read of them, but never met with any thing like that."

"Have you ever heard of the Hottentots of Africa?"

"Very little."

"You do not know, then, that they

have two faces,—one behind, and the other in front?"

"For what purpose?" asked Paul.

"I do not know; it is a singularity of nature, perhaps, that they may the better guard themselves against the ferocious animals by whom they are surrounded.—Are you acquainted with the difference of men's stature in various climates? In China, for example, they are as tall as those trees, and men of six feet pass for children."

"Ah! you are joking."

"Not at all:—on arriving at Pekin, I was very much surprised at the height of the doors; and, as I was about to ask the reason, up came the emperor's cavalry—(you have seen the elephants at the King's Menagerie?)—they were mounted on them, and their legs touched the ground."

The scholar would doubtless have told many other wonderful stories, if Mr. Severin had not called his son. Paul, whose eager curiosity admitted all without examination, left the scholar with regret. "Ah, papa," said he, running up to Mr. Severin, "I have been talking to a school-boy, who has travelled a great deal, though he is still young."

"That boy?"

"Yes, papa; he talked to me of Greece, of China, Africa, and—"

"He told you fibs: I know him; he has never been beyond the neighbourhood of Neuilly, where he is at school."

Paul then repeated to his father all the follies with which the waggish school-boy had filled his head. Mr. Severin could not avoid laughing. "Why, my dear, the boy was quizzing you; he took you for a fool. The love of the mar-

vellous must not render you so credulous: to adopt without hesitation the most absurd stories, is to make yourself ridiculous and contemptible. The more extraordinary things appear, the more cautious we ought to be in believing them. How, for instance, could you credit the account of the Hottentots with two faces?"

"But, papa, he gave me a reason,—that, being surrounded by dangerous animals,—"

"It is not enough to see them; their speed ought also to be increased, to enable them to fly from them. Instead of these deformities, which would be useless to man, Nature has given to the wild beasts of these countries a roar, which may be heard at a great distance; and by that means they are avoided."

Mr. Severin was proceeding to refute

the fable of the Chinese giants, when Paul, ashamed of his credulity, begged he would not take the trouble, because he himself felt the absurdity of it.

On returning from their walk they found Captain Pamphilius, who took them the same evening to sleep at the Count's. The next evening, after supper, the Count, having eaten a little fruit and drank a glass of wine, told the following story of

ANSELMO AND FLORENTIN.

At the conclusion of our last evening's entertainment, my dear children, I recollect that you had with your uncle a slight discussion upon study: he endeavoured to make you feel the utility of it; but I hope the story of Anselmo and Florentin will more effectually convince you than any thing we could say on the subject.

These boys were the sons of two brothers, each of whom pursued a very different system of education: both wished to promote the happiness of their children, but took an opposite road to arrive at the same end. The father of Anselmo taught his son as he had been instructed himself, and as boys generally are from their tenderest infancy: he accustomed him to cultivate his memory by reciting prayers, moral fables, and historical anecdotes. At the age of seven, he was sent to college, to commence his studies, which were finished at sixteen. On his return home, his father engaged private tutors, as well to instruct him in the elegant arts, as to complete his more serious studies.

The father of Florentin very much disapproved this system of education.—"All that you are doing, brother," said

he, "is of no use: Anselmo does not reason on what he learns; he does not know why he takes so much pains; and in vain you repeat to him that he is sowing to reap a future harvest: he cannot persuade himself that all this is necessary. An age will come when he may feel the necessity of instruction, and then he would make more progress in one month than he previously did in twelve: why not wait for that period?"

"Brother," replied the father of Anselmo, "I will answer you by an example. A man undertakes to travel into a country that he is unacquainted with; and, instead of prudently taking provisions with him, he says to himself, 'Why should I burthen myself with bread and meat?—I shall certainly find them on the road.' The traveller was deceived in his calculations; the country

was a barren desert, and he died of hunger. It is the same with us, brother: if we do not take provisions in setting out, there is little probability of being enabled to stock ourselves with them afterwards. I agree that most men conclude by duly appreciating the excellence of a good education; but that is not sufficient; for, if some succeed in repairing the time lost during infancy, the greater part fail in endeavouring to do so: and Heaven forbid that I should render my son so ill a service. I would rather see him in tears sometimes while a child, than hear him reproach me afterwards with his ignorance."

"What you say, brother, is very good; but yet I feel that I am right. Life is sown with so many troubles, that there is no necessity to augment them by unnecessary foresight. When my

Anselmo and Florentin.

son asks me for books, I will then begin to consider of his education; but, till then, he may go and come, and run and play about, as he thinks proper,—I shall not interfere with him. Is it not a pity to see a poor child poring over Homer and Virgil, which he feels no inclination to understand, and who would prefer a riddle to the finest odes of Pindar and Horace?"

While the brothers were thus engaged in conversation, Anselmo was composing an extremely difficult theme, and Florentin was playing with a peg-top precisely under the windows of the room in which his cousin was studying. The noise of the top, so harmonious to young ears, struck those of the poor student. He rose softly from time to time, and looked out of the window; but time pressed, and he was obliged to resume

his task, though not without sighing, and thinking how much happier his cousin was than himself. When the hour of recreation arrived, no one knew so well how to employ it as Anselmo: it was a precious time, of which he did not lose a moment. Florentin, on the contrary, played with coldness and indifference, because he did nothing else; he had no idea of that lively impetuous pleasure to which his cousin gave himself up: already satiated with all the amusements proposed to him, he was ever dull in the hours of play.

At fifteen, he began to blush at not being able to read, and begged his father to give him a book: the latter was transported with joy at this request, and fancied the moment was arrived when he would triumph over the arguments of his brother; but, at the first lesson,

Florentin was disgusted. He asked if he could not learn to read otherwise than by beginning with the letters?—his father told him that, words being only those very letters differently arranged and combined, it was necessary that he should first study them. Florentin experienced so much difficulty in retaining their names, and was so long in learning how to join them in syllables, that he attained the age of eighteen without being able to read tolerably, and never ventured to read in public. It was the same in respect to writing; for, though his hand was legible, the language was barbarous.

As soon as Florentin had acquired a knowledge of reading and writing, he would hear nothing more of study, and his extreme ignorance led him to seek society where he was not compelled to

blush for himself; occupation being necessary to man, if he cannot gain it honourably, he falls into criminal and vulgar pleasures. His father felt too late the imprudence of his conduct: he did not dare to reproach his son, lest he should accuse him in turn; and sorrow for having pursued so fatal a system, put an end to his life.

His brother sincerely lamented him. He now began to reap the fruits of the good education he had given to Anselmo, who, released from the little chagrins of infancy, finished by studying the law, and qualifying himself for the bar. His father, before finally closing his eyes, had the happiness of seeing him fill an honourable function, which he exercised in so worthy a manner as to gain the esteem of his fellow-citizens. Every one praised the extent of his

knowledge, his amiability, and the purity of his manners.

Anselmo, some time after his father's death, married a young lady, whose education had been as much attended to as his own, with all the modifications consequent on the difference of sexes. Nothing was wanting to his happiness, save the uncertainty he felt as to his cousin's fate, who, after having dissipated his inheritance, had left that part of the country.

A magistrate, the friend of Anselmo, who resided in a distant town, wrote to him, that there was in the prison at that place an unfortunate man, apprehended for a robbery, who anxiously wished to see him. Anselmo had no doubt that it was his cousin, and he, with a heart heavy with grief, went there immediately. The moment he arrived, he proceeded

to the prison, where he found Florentin. Anselmo, deeply affected with his wretchedness and shame, embraced him in tears.

"If you do not procure my release," said Florentin, much dejected, "I shall be sent to the galleys."

Anselmo shuddered at the idea, and begged his cousin to reveal the whole truth. Florentin, ignorant and ruined, had become valet to a rich man; but his habits of drunkenness caused the loss of his place; after which he connected himself with a gang of swindlers, whose depredations had at length made him fall into the hands of justice.

Anselmo made every effort to save his cousin, whose real name was kept a secret; and, after great trouble and expence, succeeded in compromising the affair, and took him home; where he

dressed him according to his rank, and treated him as his brother; but, however, the company received at his cousin's was too good and respectable to suit Florentin. He retired to a country-house of Anselmo's, where he was continually intoxicated: the most dissipated of the village were his only companions. Every day he served as a laughing-stock to the children, and an object of contempt to every worthy person. Anselmo remonstrated with him mildly on the subject.

"What would you have me do?" said Florentin: "I am sensible that intoxication is an odious vice; but I must do something, and I drink to dissipate care."

Such an irregular life could not last long. Florentin had not reached the age of forty, when he was found

dead in a ditch. Anselmo had him decently buried; and, once in every year, he led his children to the tomb, and related to them the history of this unfortunate man.

Florentin was more to be pitied than condemned, because his vices were the result of a bad education; but those who resist the wise efforts of their parents do not merit the same excuse, and the world will always consider them as an object of contempt.

"You were right in stating this to be a striking story, papa," said Galaor; "I assure you I shall not forget it as long as I live."

"At the beginning of it," said Paul, "I was much of the same opinion as Florentin's father; but now I perceive

that his brother was the wisest of the two."

"To run the risk of the galleys, and to die in a ditch!" cried Julia, "it is horrible!"

"I am very glad, my dear children," observed the Count, "to see you shudder at the recital of these melancholy adventures: they are not imaginary; I knew Anselmo in my youth, and from him I learned the story.

FIFTEENTH SUPPER.

The vacation had terminated their studies for a short time, and the Count's grand-children went to pass the holidays with him, where they enjoyed all the pleasures and amusements of the country. Sometimes they made excursions to view the various labours of the farmer at this season; and at other times they amused themselves with angling in the fish-pond, or in cultivating little flower-beds, on which their grandpapa had given them permission to exercise their talents.

Victorine and Julia had each of them

planted a Spanish jasmine in vases placed at the entrance of their respective flower-beds, which were adjoining each other: that of Victorine succeeded perfectly, while the other gradually withered. This circumstance arose from the difference in the attention bestowed on them: the first was regularly watered morning and evening; but that of Julia would be without water for several days. She neither took care to defend it from the piercing north-winds, nor the nipping frosts at night. No one stopped to notice her bed, which was as much neglected as the jasmine; while every praise was bestowed on that of Victorine, whose constant attention was much admired; and favourable conclusions for the future were drawn from it. The jasmine, in particular, became an object of general applause; it was regularly

visited by all the family, and the time of its flowering was impatiently expected.

Julia, humiliated at the silence observed towards her, gave way to the perfidious dictates of wounded pride: she secretly went into the garden one evening, and threw down the vase with the beautiful jasmine, by which several branches were broken. The consternation of Victorine the next morning may be easily conceived, on seeing her beloved plant overturned, broken, and a great number of the buds shaken off; she wept bitterly. Madame Caroline, having enquired the cause of her sorrow, was made acquainted with it.

"What, my dear! is it for the loss of a jasmine that you are so miserable?"

"Ah! mamma, it was so beautiful!

no later than yesterday evening my aunt Arsena was admiring it."

"Well, my love, it is a loss, no doubt; but there are many more important ones to be encountered in life, and it is, therefore, unwise to be so much affected at this. You can cultivate another jasmine, and you will take care another time to shelter it from the wind."

"It is not so much the jasmine that I regret," replied Victorine, "as the pleasure I promised myself from it: it was covered with buds, and I only waited till they flowered to offer one to my sister Julia, in the place of hers, which did not thrive."

Julia, who had concealed herself to hear what her sister would say on seeing her jasmine destroyed, was so much affected at this last expression of Vic-

torine, that she ran, threw herself round her neck, and burst into tears.

"Oh, my dear Victorine!" she cried, "your generosity makes me ashamed of my conduct: it was I who overturned the jasmine, being instigated by jealousy; but, I assure you, I now regret it more than you can do."

Victorine made no reply, but tenderly embraced her sister, and endeavoured to console her. Madame Caroline, taking each of them by the hand, praised Victorine for her amiable intentions, and chided Julia severely, telling her that jealousy always inspired criminal ideas, and that nothing was so mean and unjust as to envy others the reward of their labours; and that no one could give way to this shameful vice without incurring public disgrace. "The fact," she added, "will always be discovered,

notwithstanding the pains which may be taken to conceal it."

Julia confessed her fault, and gave proofs of a sincere repentance; and Madame Caroline promised not to expose her before the rest of the family. This scene consequently remained unknown, and Julia was not excluded from the supper; after which, the Count gave the following narrative.

VALENTINA; OR, THE POWER OF FILIAL PIETY.

Filial piety is so mild a virtue, that it seldom appears to merit our particular commendation. Truly virtuous actions are such as we perform by imposing some sacrifice on ourselves; but little effort is necessary to cherish, attend, and respect those who, after having bestowed

on us so many benefits, still love us with the utmost tenderness. Woe to the unnatural child to whom such gentle cares appear a painful duty! I hope, my dear children, that none of you will resemble him; but, placed in a similar situation as Valentina, you would imitate her example.

Valentina, at the age of fourteen, lived under the guardianship of an uncle: her father had so long paid the debt of Nature that Valentina scarcely recollected his caresses; and, as to her mother, she had never known her. Valentina generally resided at the city of Grenoble, but she sometimes passed a few months at an estate which she possessed on the mountain of Sape, at the village of Chartreuse, near the desert of St. Bruno. Her mind being naturally melancholy, she found this resi-

dence very agreeable, notwithstanding its extreme solitude, and the dullness of the neighbourhood.

A female, who had brought her up, and who loved her affectionately, always accompanied her. She was named Rose, and her parents were honest working people; the father of Valentina had stood god-father for her, and, having received a good education, she possessed many solid virtues.

Valentina regarded Rose as a friend, and loved her as a sister; she opened her heart to her with the greatest confidence, as she was almost the only person who interested her affections. The melancholy disposition of Valentina prevented her from forming any intimate connexion with the young ladies whom she met in society; and her guardian was always too cold and severe to excite

in her any other sentiment than that of respect. Valentina took great pleasure in walking, accompanied by Rose, on the road leading to the Grande Chartreuse, and sometimes even as far as the desert of that name. There, with her eyes fixed on that vast monastery, founded by a repentant sinner in the midst of mountains, torrents, and black forests of pines, she thought of God, eternity, peace, and virtue. On seeing a crowd of persons occupied,—some by sowing in an ungrateful soil, but always triumphing by perseverance; others tending numerous flocks; several by carding wool, or spinning hemp; and a great number forging iron;—in listening to the noise of all those machines erected upon the water, which, instead of uselessly flowing, lightened the labour of man:—on seeing these

things, I say, Valentina blessed these good people, who appeared to belong to the most useful class of society; and she felt a strong inclination to imitate their usefulness.

She was very fond of reposing in the grotto formerly inhabited by St. Bruno. Rose took her work, and Valentina, sometimes taking from her pocket a little volume of the Lives of the Saints, would read to her attendant that of St. Bruno.

One day, as they were sitting at the entrance of this grotto, from whence ran a murmuring brook, they observed a young woman, nearly of the age of Valentina, pass, supporting a female whose paleness announced that she was only just risen from a bed of sickness. Rose and Valentina admired the caution with which this young person chose the smoothest paths, and the solicitude with

which she asked her companion if she were not fatigued. They approached the grotto, and Valentina learned from their discourse that they were mother and daughter.

Arrived at the brook, they sought in vain a narrow place where it might be crossed without much effort. The brook was not deep, but wide, and the mother could not have stepped over without wetting her feet. The girl then took her in her arms, notwithstanding her resistance, and stepped over, but with great difficulty. A tender kiss from her mother was the reward, and she pursued her way, overjoyed at having been able to render this service.

"Oh!" said Valentina, pressing the hand of her attendant, "why have not I also a mother, upon whom to cherish and bestow a thousand cares?"

Rose was much affected, and her eyes filled with tears; instead of making any reply, she folded up her work, and invited her to return home.

Some young ladies, with their mothers, arrived to pay their respects to Valentina; who were received by her with every mark of politeness. The young ladies wished to see the desert of St. Bruno. Valentina took them there the next day; but, instead of the calm promenade to which she was accustomed, she was obliged to endure the bursts of laughter and immoderate joy of her companions, who disturbed by their noisy pleasures the solitary echoes of these places. One of them, more imprudent than the rest, amused herself with skipping from rock to rock, notwithstanding the advice of Valentina and Rose; and, at a moment when it

was least expected, her foot slipped: she gave a shriek, and rolled to the brink of an abyss, where happily some briars catching hold of her clothes, saved her. Every one shuddered at the danger; but Valentina was so terrified, that she had a violent nervous attack, from which she was recovering, when she heard these words:—"Poor little dear, so much sensibility at so tender an age creates a fear that she will one day be in the state of her unfortunate mother."

These expressions caused an agitation in the breast of Valentina, for which she could not at that moment account. She was very uneasy the whole day, and was anxious to be alone with Rose; but her young friends and their mothers, perceiving from her countenance that

she still suffered, resolved to see her put to bed.

Rose, after having taken care of the visitors, retired to her own room, which was next to that of Valentina. She was in the act of praying, when, to her great surprise, Valentina, half undressed, entered her room, advanced towards her, and, without allowing her to finish her prayers, made her sit down beside her, and said, "O, my dear Rose, I thought you had some friendship for me, but now I begin to think otherwise, since to this moment you have so cruelly deceived me. My mother is not dead, as you would have me believe; she is alive—she is unfortunate—and I know her not."

Rose, greatly troubled, asked her why she talked in that way, when Valentina repeated what she had heard; the at-

tendant endeavoured to persuade her that she had been deceived, from the weak state in which she then was, in consequence of her fainting.

"No!" cried Valentina, shedding a torrent of tears, "no, I am not mistaken: my mother exists, and you have the cruelty to keep me in ignorance of her fate. I now recall to mind a thousand circumstances which convince me that it is no secret to you. Lead me to my mother's arms: if she is poor, I will partake her poverty; if she is unhappy, I will console her; if she suffers, I will consecrate all my cares to her."

Rose wept, cast her eyes to the ground, and made no reply; when Valentina, falling on her knees, implored her with such ardour and tenderness, that the good attendant told her, in a voice interrupted by sobs and sighs,

"You shall know all! you shall know all!"

After a few moments, in which their tears did not cease to flow, Rose resumed as follows:—

"Yes, Valentina, your mother does exist; and, if I have hitherto concealed it, it was in obedience to the positive commands of your guardian. Before I explain to you the reasons of this injunction, I shall relate the history of your unfortunate parents. Your mother, named Eleonora, was an orphan without fortune; Mr. Valentine, your father, saw her, conceived an affection for her, which was returned, and ardently desired her for his wife. Mr. Valentine, though destined to inherit immense riches, was dependant on a father extremely ambitious and violent: this old man despised the virtues of

Eleonora, and only marked her indigence. He forbad his son to think of the marriage, but it was too late: Mr. Valentine was already secretly united to your mother. When the old man discovered the mystery of their union, he furiously rushed into the dwelling of the happy couple, and, insensible to their sighs, vowed to dissolve their marriage! Valentine, in his presence, listening only to the voice of honour and affection, declared his determination of being always faithful to the wife of his choice. The father, now more irritated than ever, and yielding to the frenzy of the moment, drew his sword, and plunged it into the bosom of his own son."

Valentina gave a shriek of horror, and covered her face with her hands.

"The sad witness of this cruel event,"

continued Rose, "the unfortunate Eleonora, only recovered from her swoon to fall into a state of mental derangement, from which she has not yet recovered. Her husband did not die of his wound; and at the time of his greatest danger he obtained from his father, whose anger had changed into profound sorrow, the confirmation of their marriage; he, however, remained ignorant of the state of his dear Eleonora. He could scarcely walk, from the effects of his wound; but, when informed of the truth, he resolved to be carried to her, that he might judge of her situation. So far from recollecting him, she mistook him for an assassin, and fell into a frenzy, dangerous to herself and those who approached her. The presence of every person threw her into this dreadful state; and, therefore, for her own re-

pose, and the security of her friends, it was deemed necessary to place her in solitary confinement. The period of her accouchement was viewed with alarm; but it was hoped that it might, perhaps, favour the restoration of her reason. You came into the world without receiving the caresses of a mother: she seemed even to grow worse, and every hope of joy was torn from the bosom of her husband: he wept four years over your infancy, and then died, after having confided his wife and daughter to his brother's care."

"Alas! then I was born in misfortune," cried Valentina; "and it was Providence itself which disposed my mind to melancholy, in order that I might not be an object of scandal to those who were acquainted with the fate of my parents. Oh, my dear mother!

how much I already love you, without having seen you! Oh, should Heaven have reserved for me the task of alleviating your misery! It is not possible that a mother can be insensible to the caresses of her own daughter.—Rose, my dear Rose, finish your narrative, and inform me what place contains my unhappy mother."

"Your father would never suffer her to be removed from the house, and, whilst he lived, she dwelt under the same roof with yourself. At his death, your guardian had her removed to a convent on the banks of the Isere, where he pays a liberal sum, that she may have every comfort her unhappy state will admit of. It is a long time since I have seen her, but I know the nuns who received her merit the confidence reposed in them. As her cure was hopeless, he wished to

conceal, as long as possible, from you the existence of a mother who is in one sense dead; he wished to spare your sensibility so cruel a piece of information.—These, my dear Valentina, are the motives which have hitherto induced me to conceal from you the mystery; with which you reproach me as a crime, though it is rather a proof of my love than of indifference."

Valentina threw herself into the arms of Rose, and, after a few minutes' conversation, returned to bed.

However sad the information was which she had received, she felt happy in still having a mother. Her heart indulged a secret hope of seeing her one day restored to reason.

Valentina rose the next day less melancholy than usual. She breakfasted with her company, who afterwards re-

turned to Grenoble; and, she was no sooner at liberty, than, addressing Rose, she said, "My dear Rose, as I have a mother, you must lead me to her."

"What do I hear!" interrupted Rose: "have I not told you that society increases her disorder, and that it is dangerous to disturb her solitude?"

"No!" replied Valentina, with much firmness; "there are no dangers that shall shake my resolution. I will see my mother, and witness with my own eyes whether she receives all the attention and care which she may require: nay, were I assured that she would deprive me of the life I received from her, I would still resolve to visit her."

Rose, being unable to conquer her resolution, begged her at least to inform her guardian. Valentina wrote to him immediately: her letter, blotted with

tears, contained so affecting a prayer, that he replied by giving her power to act in this respect as she thought proper. Scarcely had this answer arrived, when Valentina and Rose set out for the village, where a carriage was in readiness for them.

Valentina was extremely affected at the idea of seeing her mother in a state so deserving of pity, and she was at once agitated by joy and sorrow. In a few hours, Rose pointed out, in the distance, the steeple of the monastery which contained Eleonora. Valentina burst into tears at the sight, which did not cease to flow during the remainder of the journey. When about to step out of the carriage, she rushed into the arms of Rose. and exclaimed, in deep affliction, "I shall soon see her!"

Rose was obliged to assist her in get-

ting out, and supported her into the parlour. The superior of the convent, being apprised of the visit, could not behold without interest the extreme agitation of Valentina.

"Tranquillize yourself, young lady," said she; "your mother is as well as her state will admit of. Her fits of frenzy have become less frequent and violent, and I hope that you may see her without danger."

A nun, who regularly attended on Eleonora, was charged with the task of conducting the daughter to her mother. Valentina, leaning on Rose's arm, with her face pale and limbs trembling, followed the nun through the windings of an immense building. A small place, separated from the other parts of the convent, and situated at the extremity of the garden, was the dwelling of

Eleonora and other similar unfortunate beings. Each had their separate apartment, consisting of a chamber and anti-chamber. The nun first entered into that of Eleonora, and soon returned as gently as possible; she had found her lying on a sofa, and asleep. Valentina, approaching silently, kneeled beside her; she wished to pray, but her voice was suffocated with tears. The countenance of Eleonora, composed of the most beautiful features, bore the marks of long suffering; and her tall figure was still graceful. Rose, wishing to divert Valentina's attention from the too lively impressions to which she gave way, took her by the hand, and pointed out the cleanliness of the apartment.

Two grated windows lighted a room, the furniture of which was not inelegant, and consisted of a little altar, a

bed, a chest of drawers, some chairs, and a table. In the corners of the room were vases filled with flowers; a few pious books were placed on a shelf; and above the altar was a large ivory crucifix.

The Imitation of Jesus Christ, by Thomas-a-Kempis, remained open on the altar; and the nun informed Valentina that Eleonora, notwithstanding her derangement, shewed great piety; but that the shattered state of her reason prevented her from deriving much benefit from it.

Valentina, leaving Rose and the nun conversing together, resumed her place near her mother; she leaned over her, and kissed her forehead gently, that she might not awake her. Oh, how delicious was this kiss, the first given to a mother! Emboldened by degrees, she

ventured also to kiss her pale cheeks; when suddenly Eleonora rose, and cast a look of alarm on Valentina, Rose, and the nun; her eyes fired, her cheeks coloured, and she threw herself on the ground. The nun called to Valentina to withdraw immediately; but, at the moment, Eleonora rushed with fury on the tenderest of daughters, who, seizing her hands, covered them with kisses and tears, and cried, in accents of tenderness and sweetness, "My mother! my dear mother!"

Whether it was the voice of Nature which penetrated the heart of Eleonora, or the effect of surprise, she instantly became calm, and, seating herself on the sofa, with her eyes fixed on Valentina, she exclaimed, "Who are you?"

"I am the daughter of Eleonora," timidly replied Valentina.

"I am Eleonora."

"Then I am your daughter—will you not be my mother?"

Valentina now approached, and tenderly caressed her; but Eleonora, without returning her embrace, smiled and wept, and bade her go away.

"You do not love me then?" resumed Valentina.

Eleonora looked at her in silence; and, on Valentina repeating the question, she replied, casting her eyes on the ground with an air of humility, "I am foolish, and perhaps may harm you; —go away." Then, walking hastily about the room, she threatened the assassins by whom she fancied herself surrounded, and complained of not being left alone for a moment. The nun made a sign to Valentina not to prolong her visit, and she retired with regret.

Eleonora followed her with her eyes in so mild a manner, that the nun congratulated Valentina on it. Never had she spoken so much in a connected manner, and the way in which her fury abated was altogether new; but, on the other hand, no one had ever testified so much affection for her: since the death of her husband, strangers alone had surrounded her.

"You will see," said Valentina, on receiving the congratulations of the nun, "that I shall succeed in curing my unfortunate mother: my prayers and my love are the only remedies I shall employ; and I should die with grief if I had not this hope."

She resolved not to quit the convent, and her guardian gave her and Rose permission to remain. Valentina did not long delay the second visit to her

mother; it was even thought that Eleonora recollected, and wished to see her. She gave a smile of satisfaction on seeing her enter. Valentina kneeled by her, and ventured to press her in her arms. Eleonora, with her eyes bathed in tears and a smile on her lips, passed her hand over the features of Valentina, and seemed to take a pleasure in viewing a face which so perfectly resembled that of her husband. Presently she enquired her name; and Valentina, not daring to pronounce a name capable of awaking a fatal recollection, replied, "I am called Eleonora, the same as my mother."

"I am Eleonora; and, if you are my daughter, quit me no more."

"No, never!" cried Valentina, in transport, her head resting on her mo-

ther's bosom, and shedding a torrent of tears.

Eleonora was much affected; "Oh, my God! my God!" she muttered in a low broken voice, "is this the end of my unhappy days!"

These two visits improved her considerably. Valentina wished to sleep in her mother's room, but it was objected, lest some new attack of frenzy might seize her; but she made up for this privation by devoting the whole day to her. Eleonora, on opening her eyes, saw her daughter smiling on her, and often fell asleep while pressing her hand. These sweet emotions of nature,—this affection, of which she saw herself the object,—insensibly dissipated the sombre images which clouded her brain: she mended daily, and at length, through

My name like my mother's is Eleanora.

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the attentions of her daughter, recovered her reason. Valentina consecrated to her the remainder of her days, seeking no higher gratification than the love and tender caresses of an adored mother.

All the family were so affected with this story that no one offered to praise it; they all wept, and Captain Pamphilius with the rest.

SIXTEENTH SUPPER.

The Count's grand-children assembled one day to deliberate on a present proper to offer to their grand-father on his birth-day.

"My friends," said Henry, "we are all disposed to celebrate, in a suitable manner, the birth-day of our good grand-papa, by making a subscription to present him with something worthy his acceptance; but the difficulty is to choose what would please him, the price of which may not be above our slender means. Let us, therefore, see how much money we have got: in the first

place, there is two guineas for my share."

"I should have had almost as much," said Gustavus, "but for the folly of purchasing an old sword of a pedlar, which he sold me at a very dear rate, so that every body laughs at me: however, there is sixteen shillings at the bottom of my purse."

Julia put twenty-five shillings to the stock; and Victorine, rather confused, added to it twelve shillings.

"What!" said Julia, "have you no more? How does this happen,—you have not bought any thing lately?"

"True," replied Victorine; "but I have so often relieved beggars in the streets, that, without perceiving it, I have thus nearly emptied my purse. I should on the present occasion be sorry

for it, were I not afraid of offending God by regretting the alms which I have given in His name."

"Beware of doing that, cousin," said Henry: "our grand-papa is too charitable himself not to approve of your praise-worthy imitation; and I have no doubt that the knowledge of such good actions will give him more pleasure than the finest presents in the world.—Well, what have you got, Louisa?"

"Me!" replied Louisa, "I should be richer if I had not also given a great deal of money to the woman who sells gingerbread at the corner of the Luxembourg."

Her sisters and cousins, laughing heartily, congratulated her on such generosity.

"There is no occasion to laugh so much," replied Louisa, with a serious

air; "you think it is from *friandise** alone that I have spent my money; but it was not:—I was so much affected to see her little children almost naked, when it was very cold, that I sent every day to buy cakes of her, and I have only five shillings remaining."

Elizabeth, who was the richest, put in two guineas and a half. Paul gave a guinea, being all he had left after buying the necessary materials for the construction of a little ship. Galaor kept behind the others, said nothing, and held in his hand an empty purse, on which he tied knots with an air of confusion.

* It is absolutely necessary to Anglicise this word, as we have none that corresponds with it. It is not gluttony, as it is often rendered, but a fondness for delicacies, or what we call in children, having a *sweet tooth*."

"Well," said Henry; "you Galaor, are not richer this year than the last, and you will be again the only one who does not contribute to the fund."

"You have two guineas," replied Galaor; "lend me one of them, and I will repay you whenever we receive our pocket-money."

"That will not augment the sum," observed Henry, "because I intend to give them both myself: besides, you never know how to return what you borrow, as your whims must be gratified before you pay your debts; and you have already owed me two pounds ten shillings for several years. With respect to me, it is a matter of no consequence; but, if you act thus towards a stranger, such conduct will do you no honour.—What becomes of your money?"

"I cannot account very well what I

do with it: as long as I have any, I buy every thing that pleases my fancy, and, though none of them are expensive, I at length find myself without a half-penny."

"You ought to be more prudent and reckon a little better," continued Henry; "this misconduct may some day be fatal to you. However, let us add up the different sums."

"I have a pencil and tablets," said Victorine; "tell me the sums, cousin."

She added them up, and found they amounted to five pounds. It then remained to be decided what the present should consist of.

"I think," said Gustavus, "it would be best to buy papa a fine charger."

"Are you mad," cried Paul; "a charger!—is grand-papa of an age to return to the wars? and do you think

that such a horse could be purchased for five pounds? My opinion is, that we should offer him a compass."

"Why, you are no wiser than Gustavus," said Julia; "does he require a compass to find his way about the mansion, and does he not know always that Paris lies to the north?"

"Let us buy him," said Victorine, "a fine picture by Raphael."

"We could not get one for five pounds," replied Julia; "we had much better make him a present of a marble frieze, on which we will get his arms sculptured, and place it over the front door of the mansion."

"Grand-papa cares very little for these kinds of representations," said Henry; "he is of opinion that a man of worth has no need of vain ensignia to make himself respected, and

that the virtues of the master alone commands the veneration of his neighbours much more than all the ensigns of heraldry with which he might embellish his house."

"Henry is right," exclaimed Louisa; "I am sure grand-papa would prefer a large box of oranges to all the fine marbles in the world."

"Oranges! O fie!" said Galaor.

"Well," said Henry, "let us give him a telescope and quadrant, to measure the distances of the stars."

"Another extravagance!" replied Elizabeth: "do you think grand-papa will hazard taking cold in measuring the stars, instead of telling us stories, and sitting at his ease in his arm-chair?—Take my advice, and buy him the beautiful child in wax which is in the saloon of Curtius."

"That would divert him much, indeed," said Galaor, laughing, and interrupting her; "rather let us buy him a barrel-organ, on which he may amuse himself all day, without studying music."

"I begin to perceive," observed Henry, "that each of us thinks of self rather than grand-papa: but it is his taste, and not our own, that we ought to consult. He is old, and we are young; he is wise, and we are children. Although he appeared very well satisfied with the Homer that we presented him last year, no one has thought of presenting him any books: let us give him a beautiful edition of the Bible; I am sure that will please him better than any thing we have spoken of."

Henry's project was adopted, and he was commissioned to execute it; and the

youthful committee separated without suspecting that the Count himself had overheard them from the next room: he took care to keep them in ignorance of it, but he had been so struck with the want of economy in Galaor, that, after supper, he selected the following story, in order to give him a lesson of which he stood so much in need.

THE SCHOOL FOR PRODIGALS.

Mr. Armand, after having, by commerce, acquired a comfortable fortune, which enabled him to pass his old age in peace, retired with his wife and daughter into the country, a few leagues from Limoges. His son Philip lived in that town, and conducted a porcelain manufactory, of which his father had made him proprietor.

One day, when Mr. Armand had

invited a few friends to dinner, a letter was brought to him from his son, which made so great an impression upon him, that he immediately ordered a horse to be saddled. Mrs. Armand appeared greatly alarmed.

"It is nothing of consequence," said he, endeavouring to smile; "Philip is very well; but he stands in need of my advice in an important affair."

Having said these words, he begged the company to excuse him, and left the drawing-room, followed by his daughter Sophia.

"Oh, papa," cried she, with emotion, "I fear some misfortune has happened to my brother."

"My dear child," replied Mr. Armand, "it is true that I feel some uneasiness; but I hope the evil will be less than I imagine. As to Philip, he is in

good health; therefore, comfort your mother during my absence."

Sophia, though still more alarmed, yet endeavoured to compose her countenance, that no one might perceive her inquietude. When alone with her mother, she employed every possible means to calm her agitation; and her affectionate consolations began to penetrate the maternal heart of Mrs. Armand, when her husband returned, and, from his being low-spirited and very sad, there was no doubt that he brought dreadful tidings.

"Alas! my son is dead!" cried the anxious mother.

"No," replied Mr. Armand, pressing her hand tenderly, "you have not to mourn his death; therefore, chear up your spirits, my dear,—also you, Sophia,

dry your tears,—and both of you give me your attention."

He then conducted them into his cabinet, where, being seated, he related all that had occurred.

"My imprudence," said he, "has thrown us into the greatest misfortunes. I thought, in confiding to Philip an important manufactory, to inspire him with a taste for industry and economy, and that he would be ambitious to shew that he merited so great a proof of my confidence: but I am deceived. Instead of attending to his establishment, and carefully superintending it, Philip has abandoned himself to a culpable prodigality, and left the charge of his concerns to unfaithful clerks. To cover this disgrace, he has had recourse to a still more dangerous remedy,—he has borrowed at high interest: in fact, he is

ruined. Not only has he lost his establishment, but enormous debts remain to be satisfied. And now I ask you what is to be done under such distressing circumstances?—Shall I deny my son's debts? Shall I abandon him to the shame and sorrow that overwhelms him? —What we have left belongs to Sophia; and I cannot conceal from you that all would be swallowed up in this gulf, if we should endeavour to supply it: not only must we sell this estate on which we live, but we must again turn our hands to labour, as if we were only in the beginning of our career. Our situation is dreadful, I do not seek to diminish its horrors; and I am ready to subscribe to whatever you may decide upon."

"Oh, Heavens!" cried the unfortunate wife, sobbing bitterly, "was ever

the heart of a mother more cruelly tortured! It is not my own fate that afflicts me, for the few years that I have to live I should not fear to suffer; but I weep for our unfortunate daughter, and I dare not condemn her to such a long indigence."

"Dear mother," replied Sophia, "and you, my worthy father, "were you to deprive yourselves at this moment of your property in my favour, you would see me without hesitation sacrifice it to my brother's wants. As it is in your power, fear not to follow your generous intentions. Preserve Philip's honour, and do not deem me unworthy of sharing your misfortunes."

Mr. and Mrs. Armand embraced this generous girl, and they departed in a few days afterwards for Limoges, where they hired three small rooms on the

second floor. Philip was so overwhelmed with the weight of his faults, and so distracted at the sacrifices he had imposed on his parents, although he was not yet aware of its full extent, that he remained two months shut up in his room. Mr. Armand would not console him; he considered his sorrow just, and his shame merited: but Mrs. Armand and Sophia, more indulgent and tender-hearted, secretly endeavoured to soothe the wounded feelings of this imprudent young man; but their prayers to induce him to leave his solitude were unavailing.

At the end of two months, he thought that this langour and idleness but ill repaired his past errors, and that he might perhaps procure some employment, by which means he might be enabled to restore to his sister a part of her property.

Full of this hope, he went down one morning from his little room, which was above that of his parents, with the intention of informing his father of his resolution. He entered, and found his mother and sister occupied in painting porcelain cups, and many others were lying near them. At this unexpected sight, Philip, who was ignorant that they were reduced to this extremity, threw himself into a chair, and wept bitterly. Madame Armand and her daughter hastened to console him; they endeavoured to make him believe that their work afforded them amusement, and tried to persuade him that it was less a task than a pleasure.

Some one having knocked at the door, Philip retired into another room: it was a porter, who brought back a breakfast-service, because the painting did not please the master of the manufactory;

and this low-bred man addressed the most vulgar reproaches to the two ladies, who endeavoured to excuse themselves with gentleness. He had scarcely left the room, when Philip threw himself at the feet of his mother.

"Ah! is it possible," cried he, "that you can still love me, after all the evils that I have brought upon you? Death would be a thousand times preferable to the torments I now endure, but I must, and will, save you from these cruel insults, or perish in the attempt.—I do not see my father; cannot I speak to him?"

"He is gone out," replied Sophia, quickly, "and will not return before the hour of dinner."

At this hour he arrived; and, on leaving the table, Philip wished to converse with him on his project.

"I have not leisure to listen to it," answered Mr. Armand, without noticing the signs of his wife and daughter: "it is two o'clock, and I must return to the counting-house of the merchant to whom I am clerk. To-morrow will be Sunday; you will then have plenty of time to explain your intentions to me."

This grey-headed old man was obliged, at his advanced age, to become a hired servant, after having himself been a rich merchant. Struck with stupor, the guilty Philip, during the day, did nothing but groan, and night came without bringing him any repose. When his father arose, Philip was for some moments immoveable on observing his pale cheeks covered with tears. The old man, touched with his situation, held out his hand to him affectionately, which

Philip seizing, he covered it with kisses and tears.

"Oh, my father!" cried he, "it is necessary that I should leave you. You have friends at Paris; deign to recommend me to them, and rely on my repentance for the regularity of my future conduct. You will easily comprehend why I wish to withdraw from a town which has witnessed my excesses, and where, in another respect, I should vainly hope to inspire confidence."

"It is very true," replied Mr. Armand, "that the public do not readily give up bad impressions, when once received. For my own part, I should regard you unworthy to live, if so terrible a lesson had not entirely reformed you."

Madame Armand was overwhelmed with grief at the idea of her son setting

out for so long a journey on foot, and almost without money; she pressed him to her heart, and wept bitterly.

"My dear," said Mr. Armand to her, "do not deter Philip from the good design that he has conceived, nor discourage him by your tears. Would you wish that he should make us the victims of his imprudence, without effort on his own part to retrieve his and our misfortunes?"

Madame Armand, having nothing to reply to these just observations, endeavoured to conceal her distress, and Sophia did all she could to imitate her.

Philip tore himself from the arms of his affectionate parents, who pardoned and blessed him. His slender parcel was committed to the care of the *diligence;* and he commenced his journey, with a staff in his hand, before any shop was opened in Limoges.

His father wrote by him to an old correspondent at Paris, who received him with kindness, and exerted himself to serve him so successfully, that in a few days he procured him a situation, as clerk, in a commercial house of respectability. Philip had but fifty pounds per annum as salary, and during two years that he occupied this situation he did not fail to share it with his family.

Philip often experienced strong temptations in such a gay city as Paris. The theatres, above all, singularly attracted his curiosity; but the recollection of the melancholy fate to which he had reduced his family entirely conquered his natural propensity, and he avoided, as a crime, the most innocent amusements. His prudence, his correctness, and his information, so strongly acquired him the esteem of his employer, that, at

the end of two years, he wished to give him a considerable employment.

This merchant had married an American lady, who possessed considerable property in the island of Martinique. The person who had acted as agent for them during twenty years having entirely lost his sight, the merchant proposed to Philip to succeed him, and offered him a salary of three hundred guineas per annum. Philip accepted this advantageous offer with gratitude, as it would in a few years enable him to return his sister and parents the price of the sacrifice they had so generously made for him:—however, he feared he would ill repay the confidence of the merchant, by undertaking an employment of which he was ignorant, and he frankly owned his scruples. His patron thought this delicate confession very honourable, and endeavoured to give Philip confidence,

by remarking that, though the old manager was blind, he could assist him with his advice, and that, with his experience, he would soon know how to conduct it by himself.

Every thing being decided, Philip wrote immediately to his father, announcing this happy intelligence, and blessing God for having at length given him an opportunity of repairing his faults. Mr. Armand gave him the assistance of his counsel, as much with respect to the conduct that he ought to observe towards his patron, as that which he should adopt towards those who would be dependent on him. He recommended to him that probity, which, not content with doing no harm, regards as a real injury every species of negligence committed against the interests of those who intrust us with their property.

"Every morning forget," observed the good father, "that you are only manager, and use the same vigilance as if you were protecting your own property. Be mild and humane towards the slaves, just and severe towards the guilty, and active to recompence the industrious. Let the purchasers of the articles never be deceived, that they may always buy with confidence."

Philip was to depart in two days for Havre de Grace, from whence he was to embark, when the merchant informed him, with a cold and serious air, that his plans were changed, and that he had made other engagements. Philip, in despair, asked the cause of this extraordinary change?

"I am not so rash," replied the merchant, "as to put my affairs into the hands of a man who did not know how

to govern his own, and who could not borrow a crown-piece in his own country."

Philip looked down, and suppressed the feelings of his heart at the affront he had received. The merchant, continuing his discourse, informed him that a resident of Limoges had done him the service of unfolding it in time; and he reproached Philip for not having been the first to confess his faults.

"I thought, sir," replied Philip, "that the errors which I had endeavoured to repair during two years would have inspired a little indulgence, and that I should have been spared the pain of blushing for them again. Yes, I have been extravagant, wild, and foolish; but, since I have had the honour of living with you, have these faults been apparent? Can you think that

I do not possess sufficient firmness to merit your confidence? Do we not every day see a man of honour gaining over himself the most powerful victories; and what inducement can be greater than that of a dear and respectable family?"

Here Philip, perceiving that the merchant appeared to listen attentively, explained to him with warmth the generous conduct of his father and Sophia, and the fortitude with which this young girl and her mother sustained their reverse of fortune; he forcibly painted his sincere repentance, and the hope that he cherished of returning to his family the benefits he had received; and concluded with shewing the letter that he had just received from his father.

The merchant, much affected, could no longer doubt Philip's sincerity. "I

Alas! One cannot be happy and at the same time culpable.

restore you all my confidence," said he, embracing him; "you are too sensible of your misconduct ever to repeat it. —However, does not the prospect of a long separation from your family distress you?"

This question greatly afflicted Philip. "Alas!" cried he, with bitterness, "one cannot be happy, and at the same time culpable!"

"This reflection is just and religious," replied the merchant; "yet two years of repentance ought to have some compensation; and I have conceived the means of rendering your duty less severe. If your family would consent to follow you to Martinique, I would endeavour to make their residence agreeable to them."

Philip, received this proposal with joy

and gratitude, and hastened to impart it to his father; but, while waiting for his answer, he trembled lest he should not be able to prevail on him to make so great a sacrifice. The length of the voyage, joined to the certainty of quitting his country for ever, were circumstances likely to affect persons of the age of Mr. and Mrs. Armand strongly. He was indulging in these melancholy reflections, when the merchant sent to request his attendance in his study. Philip found his father there himself, and they rushed into each other's arms without being able to speak. The merchant was deeply affected at beholding this scene between a repentant son and his venerable parent, whose cheeks were bathed with tears.

In a few minutes the merchant said to Philip, "Permit me, my young

friend, to present your travelling companion to you."

"What! my father! are you generous enough to go with me? Ah, how your unbounded kindness covers me with confusion!—But where is my affectionate mother and Sophia?"

"They are at Paris," replied Mr. Armand. "Never did they receive more agreeable tidings: where we shall be together, we cannot fail of being happy."

Philip, rejoicing in the completion of his wishes, went immediately with Mr. Armand to embrace his mother and his sister. They had been together about an hour, when the merchant and his lady came to beg this estimable family would remain at their house until the moment of their departure. Neither the one nor the other could part without regret;

and the merchant made them presents of great value, with so much friendship and delicacy that it was impossible to wound the feelings of those who received them.

Martinique, one of the islands of the Antilles, is situated in North America. Sophia, though she had said nothing on the subject, had conceived a horror of this residence; but was very agreeably surprised, on disembarking at Fort St. Pierre, to see a neat little town, partly built along the sea-shore, and partly upon a hill, with a brook running through it. Advancing further into the island, she perceived mountains covered with fine forests, fertile vales watered by rivers, and landscapes extremely varied, and animated by a numerous population.

Philip found the old manager seated under a cotton-tree at the entrance of

the house, and near him an old woman, who was his sister: she read to the old man the merchant's letter, of which Philip was the bearer, and he cordially welcomed his young successor. The house being large and convenient, they agreed to live together. Mrs. Armand formed an intimacy with the sister of Mr. Bernard, (that was the old man's name,) and learnt from her how to superintend the household affairs, reserving to herself the care of instructing Sophia. Philip and his father were, on their part, receiving directions from Mr. Bernard; for, notwithstanding Mr. Armand had no situation in the house, he was too deeply penetrated with the kindness of the benevolent merchant not to seek, by every means in his power, to serve him.

The old man, notwithstanding his

blindness, made them acquainted with the island. "You see that high mountain," said he; "there are found in it the marks of an ancient volcano, and it is from its bosom that these innumerable streams flow, which render the valleys so fertile. You will be surprised at the strength of vegetation, and will admire the fields of sugar-cane, the plantations of tobacco, of roucou, and of cocoa-trees. Much of this peculiarity is, however, only the effect of atmospheric disasters: the hurricanes till our land; that is to say, they redouble its fertility after having made it their prey. These hurricanes are horrible; they sometimes destroy to the amount of twenty years' labour. In these moments all the elements appear combined against man: the trees and the earth are all robbed of their verdure; these streams,

which you now see running so peaceably, and forming by their windings silvery drawings upon a smiling country, —these same brooks, transformed into devastating torrents, sweep along with them every thing they encounter in their progress: swelled with the ruins of our plantations, they furiously discharge themselves into a sea still more irritated; buildings are overthrown, and cultivated fields destroyed; and man, flying far from his tottering habitation, awaits, trembling with fear, expecting to see the end of nature itself. When all is calm, he sorrowfully turns his eyes upon the surrounding country; and no longer sees the house that he had inhabited, nor the tree that had lent him its shade, nor the crops that formed his hopes,—the land is become an unknown desert: but if, instead of losing his courage, he boldly recommences

a troublesome cultivation, the surprising fertility of the soil amply repays his labour and his care.

One day, when Sophia was admiring the coffee-tree, which grew abundantly in their plantations and in every other part of the island, Mr. Bernard acquainted her that this tree, originally from Africa and Arabia, was naturalised at Martinique, after a tempest which had destroyed all the cocoa-trees. An officer, named Desclieux, was charged with carrying two slips from those that had been reared in the royal gardens of France, and which had been themselves a present from Holland. During their voyage, the vessel failed of a sufficiency of water, and Desclieux shared his slender allowance with the two young plants that afterwards enriched this island. The manner in which they have

prospered has amply recompensed the paternal care he had taken of them.

The family of Mr. Armand had been one year settled at Martinique, living with Mr. Bernard and his sister as if they had been part of the same family, when the old agent declared his intention of returning to France. This determination surprised and affected Mr. Armand. "What!" said he to Mr. Bernard, "at your age, and with your infirmities, can you think of exposing yourself to so long a voyage? Is it possible that any of us can have displeased you?"

"No, my dear friends," replied Mr. Bernard; "I feel that I shall not leave you without regret; but now, as Philip is able to dispense with my advice, I will go and end my days in my own country. I am old and blind; but I

cannot resist the desire I have to breathe again the air of France, my native land, —to find myself once more in the village where I was born. I will cause them to lead me under the old yew-tree in the church-yard, which shades the grave of my parents; and I feel that I shall there experience a delightful sensation, the simple idea of which, even at this moment, excites my tears."

Nothing could alter Mr. Bernard's resolution: he departed with his sister, deeply regretting his friends, and leaving them a pleasing recollection of his residence amongst them. He arrived safe in France, where, after having received the most affectionate marks of veneration from the good merchant, he retired to his native village, and was in a short time laid by the side of his forefathers.

Philip merited more and more the

confidence of his benefactor; who, instead of the three hundred guineas he had promised, gave four hundred, a liberality which did not prevent his still being the richest planter in Martinique. His kindness attached to him a family, who lived only to serve him: instead of one manager he had four, who were all united by one and the same will, using in every department the most scrupulous vigilance. Happiness and tranquillity soon reigned in the bosom of this respectable family: Philip enjoyed it in common with the rest; but he never forgot the period when his father was obliged to be a clerk, and his mother and sister painted porcelaine cups.

"Father," said Mr. Theodore, "your story is very interesting; but we must

agree that it is very rare a spendthrift has the opportunity or the will thus to expiate his errors: for, where one corrects himself, we see a thousand who, after having dishonoured their families, miserably perish."

The Count looked at Galaor, and perceived that he blushed excessively, and did not dare to lift up his eyes. The grandfather, satisfied that his lesson was not lost, concluded the evening without adding any reflections to those of Mr. Theodore.

SEVENTEENTH SUPPER.

On the evening of the Count's birth-day, immediately after supper, the report of some fire-works was heard, which were exploded in the court. At this signal all the family left the table; and our young folks began to cry, "Long live our good grand-papa!" and each one presented him with a nosegay, which they had concealed under their napkins. The Count saw himself in an instant covered with flowers. Julia, Elizabeth, and Victorine, sang together a trio, the music of which was composed by Victorine, and the words by Henry. Louisa, in her turn, repeated, as well

as she could, a little song, innocent as herself, set to the air, "By the Light of the Moon," and the only one that she knew. Madame Arsena, who was the author of it, had positively forbidden her name being mentioned; but, when the Count, who was much delighted with it, interrogated Louisa, she cried, "It was not my aunt Arsena!" This ingenious reply betrayed the modesty of the author, who could not possibly be angry at it.

Henry and Gustavus presented the Count, in the name of all his grandchildren, with a superb Bible, richly bound, and embellished with elegant engravings. This present was joyfully accepted by the venerable grandfather, who tenderly pressed the children in his paternal arms, and raised a look full of satisfaction and gratitude towards hea-

ven. The poor Captain stood behind the others, and was much affected at this scene: he recollected the fête they had given on his arrival; but he no longer said to himself, as at that time, "What a fool I have been to remain a bachelor!"—his brother's family had become so dear to him, and he was so tenderly beloved by them in return, that he had ceased to consider it a misfortune to be without children. He wished to contribute to the amusements of the evening, and announced that he had a tale in his pocket; on which every one ran to their seats, and, silence being established, he commenced as follows:—

RHALEF;

OR, THE ENCHANTED FOUNTAIN.

A Syrian prince, named Rhalef, was returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca,

accompanied by a numerous suite. They had traversed for two days the deserts of Arabia, where a loose sand, and the constant heat of the sun, caused both the men and animals to languish; and the prince, laying in his palanquin, the thick curtains of which were no longer a sufficient shelter from the heat of the day, also partook of this depression. One of his officers asked permission to rest under a grove of trees, which they perceived at some distance; to which Rhalef joyfully consented.

His attendants, exhausted with fatigue, threw themselves under the shade of the first trees they met with; but the prince, descending from his palanquin, strolled alone among these shady places, attracted by the charming freshness they breathed, and by the warbling of a thousand birds which inhabited this so-

litude. A pathway, bordered with flowers, and spread over with a tufted foliage, which formed a close and delightful shade, conducted the prince to a fountain, the discovery of which gave him great pleasure. He advanced to the side of this fountain, which was formed of marble, and had already touched its pure and transparent water with his lips, when he perceived at the bottom an old man, seated upon the back of a crocodile. The prince, alarmed, would fain have retreated, but was prevented by a silver wall, which arose and surrounded him.

The old man then addressed these words to him:—"It is in vain that you seek to escape me; you shall pay with your life the imprudence of which you have been guilty, in attempting to drink at this fountain, which belongs to me;

you shall serve as food for my croco-dile."

The prince, seized with horror, supplicated the enchanter to revoke this barbarous decree. "If I had any intention to offend you," said he, "you might have reason to inflict on me this dreadful punishment; but I was ignorant that this water belonged to you. If the few drops I have taken of it can be repaid by gold, the king my brother, who is seated upon the throne of Damascus, will not refuse his treasures to purchase my life."

Rhalef added to these words reasons and prayers so affecting, that the enchanter granted him his life conditionally.

"He who is able to change these grains of sand into gold," replied he to the prince, "does not covet the riches

of a kingdom: I will have something more precious for your ransom. If you can find me a woman who never admired herself in a glass, and a man who never wished for any thing, I will suffer you to live in peace. I will give you a year to seek for them. In twelve months from this day, I will expect you at the side of this fountain. Remember that you can never withdraw from my power, in whatever place you may fly."

The prince, who was young and inexperienced, did not consider these conditions difficult to fulfil; but observed to the old man, that he could not read the heart, and that he risked being deceived if he must depend upon the good faith of man. The enchanter, having made him throw out some essence of roses, which he carried about him in a small bottle, desired him to fill it with

the water of the fountain. "When you wish to know the truth," added he, "you must consult this bottle: if the water is agitated, they deceive you; if it is calm, they speak sincerely."

After the enchanter of the fountain had thus spoken, he left the prince, who, no longer impeded by the silver wall, rejoined his suite, much occupied with his adventure. He could not confide it to any person before his arrival at Damascus; but, on his return to his palace, he assembled some courtiers, who were much devoted to him, and demanded their advice. The old men, at this discovery, could not avoid shedding tears, for they considered Rhalef as a lost man: they told him that, if he was not assisted by some favourable genius, he would never be able to perform what was demanded of him. The young

men, on the contrary, laughed heartily at the ridiculous ransom imposed by the enchanter, and protested that he did not require a year to accomplish it in. Rhalef, being young himself, thought as they did, and turned his back upon the old men, who quitted him sorrowfully. One party of the prince's courtiers undertook to procure him a woman who had never admired herself, and the others promised to discover a man who had never wished for any thing; and Rhalef, without making any observation, began to seek also.

"Where shall I find a woman so indifferent to her face as never to have thought about it?" said the prince to himself; "it is not in the great world, where the desire to please is inspired so early in life. I will seek her, then, in places most remote from the court, and

amongst women who live in retirement. On the other hand, I can never meet with a man, such as the enchanter desires, but in the highest ranks of society; for it is more natural that a miserable being should form wishes, than those whose lives are crowned with honours and riches."

After these reflections, the prince informed himself of such women as passed their lives in solitude, and was told of a considerable number; some having a great reputation for piety, others who had suffered heavy misfortunes: but, however indifferent they appeared, when it was necessary to come to the proof, the bottle of water never accorded with their conversation. The prince then addressed himself to the most ill-favoured; but all had looked at themselves from curiosity, and continued to do so

in the hope of discovering some improvement in their features. In the country, where luxury had not introduced the looking-glass, the vanity of the shepherdesses had consulted the fountains.

Rhalef, discouraged by so many unsuccessful attempts, and hoping that his favourites would be more fortunate than himself, turned his attention to the men. He first addressed himself to the king his brother, who reigned over a fertile and agreeable country, and was beloved by his subjects, respected by his neighbours, surrounded by a numerous family, and by virtues worthy the admiration of all good men: he told Rhalef that, in the midst of his glory and happiness, he had often wished for a repose which the cares of his kingdom prevented him enjoying, and that he had

esteemed the lowest of his subjects much more happy than himself.

Rhalef, much surprised at this declaration, next interrogated rich men without employment, and whose liberty was not in any way interrupted: they complained bitterly to the prince of not having places, saying that they preferred honour to idleness. Men in favour wished for the rank which was superior to their own. Thus, from the simplest officer in the palace even to the prime-minister, not one of them appeared contented with his fate; and, if the minister did not dare to confess that he wished for the crown, he could not conceal from the prince that he was far from being so happy as people supposed him to be.

Rhalef, without being discouraged, went from cottage to cottage:—their

thoughts were less proud, but wishes were always in their train. Here, a poor labourer was tempted to wish for the possession of a neighbouring field; there, they only longed for a fine cow. There was not one without desires, even to the little child, who wished for the apples or pears from his neighbour's tree.

The prince, disconcerted, assembled his council, who were not more fortunate than himself. They decided that it was necessary to seek for these two wonders amongst savage nations, where mirrors were unknown, and where Nature, having freely distributed her favours, rendered all covetousness unnecessary.—Rhalef approved this idea, and resolved to travel himself, in order to proceed with more attention in an affair in which he was so deeply interested. He went

to Suez with all his train; and, having embarked upon the Red Sea, he proceeded to the deserts of Arabia, to seek a woman without vanity, and a man without ambition.

The most savage people, almost approaching to a state of nature, could not afford him these two treasures: he found that they formed wishes everywhere, and that coquetry had invented a thousand means of being able to judge of the way to please.

Ten months had already been vainly spent; and Rhalef, without hope, no longer thought of any thing but returning to his country, and bidding a last adieu to his family. A dreadful melancholy reigned in his heart and upon his countenance, and his attendants, not daring to interrupt his profound meditations, accompanied him in silence.

Rhalef relieving the Magician.

When they arrived at a small village, they found a miserable being, tied to a stake, awaiting a dreadful death: the savages who surrounded him were dancing, and preparing to roast him, for the purpose of devouring him. Rhalef said to himself, "Before I die, let me do a service to this man, in delivering him from the peril in which he is."

Putting himself at the head of his men, he dispersed the savages, and took away with him their unfortunate victim. The stranger, after having thanked his preserver, informed him that he was an Egyptian, and that, having felt a great desire to travel for instruction, he had passed over great part of Africa. Sufficiently skilled in magic to avoid any danger, he would not have fallen into the power of these savages, had they not surprised him while he was asleep. The

Egyptian concluded by entreating the prince to permit him to become one of his attendants.

"Alas!" replied Rhalef, "this permission will not serve you long: in two months I shall cease to live."

The Egyptian, whose name was Sabed, asked an explanation of these words, and, when informed of the melancholy situation of the prince, he cried, "How happy I am in being able to acquit myself of the debt of gratitude I owe my benefactor! Generous prince, you have saved my life; I hope also to preserve your's, if you will deign to place sufficient confidence in me to follow me alone."

Rhalef did not hesitate to trust himself to the faith of the stranger, who, before he set out, provided himself with two long thick veils, and a small quantity of

very soft cotton. They proceeded for a long time amongst woods and rocks, until they perceived two enormous columns of smoke, at some distance from each other.

"Do you see those two columns?" said Sabed to Rhalef: each of them encloses an ivory tower, and in them are the two wonders which you would seek in vain through all the earth. The beautiful Fleur-de-Printemps is a captive in the nearest tower, and her brother, Bouton-de-Myrthe, in the other. They are both children of the enchanter of the fountain. A fairy, more powerful than himself, jealous of the confidence that a Persian king placed in him, carried away his son and daughter, who were then in their cradles, and condemned him to live in the cavity of a fountain. The unfortunate enchanter

has no other resource to extricate himself from thence, and recover his children, than that of imposing upon those whom chance conducts to the side of his fountain the condition that he has exacted of you, knowing well that there were none in the world, but Fleur-de-Printemps and Bouton-de-Myrthe, who are capable of fulfilling them; but the fairy does not permit him to say more. Now it is necessary that you attempt alone to penetrate into these towers; I will wait here for you. Here is a purse, containing grains of glass of three different colours: the red possess the property of putting those who swallow them to sleep; the yellow metamorphoses them into the form which is most useful for them to assume, and the white will restore them to their natural figure. This purse constantly attaches itself to

its possessor, whatever change he may undergo, and is always at hand as soon as wanted. In this instance, your sword would not be able to serve you; it requires prodigies to combat prodigies."

The prince, having listened attentively to this discourse, embraced the Egyptian, and rushed into the column of smoke. Instead of the ivory tower that he expected to find, he saw another column of fire, so bright and strong that it was impossible to attempt passing through it without perishing. As Sabed had not informed him of this obstacle, he did not know how to act. After having reflected for an instant, he swallowed a grain of yellow glass, and immediately became a salamander; and, under this form, passed the fire without sustaining any injury. He then found himself at the foot of the tower, which was guarded

by four monstrous dragons; who cast around them such menacing and ferocious looks, that the prince hesitated to resume his own form: however, taking advantage of a moment when they could not perceive him, he hastily swallowed a white grain. Scarcely had he quitted the shape of the salamander, than all the dragons uttered together the most horrible cries, enough to put an army to flight. The prince, notwithstanding his distress, threw them some grains of red glass; but he could not put more than three of them to sleep: the fourth pursued him so rapidly, that the prince, not having time to throw the grain he intended for him, found himself obliged to fly from the terrible animal. Unfortunately his foot slipped, and the dragon had already began to swallow it very greedily, when the prince, who had still

his hands and arms at liberty, took one of the yellow grains as promptly as he could: this precaution saved his life; he became a worm, so small that he was enabled to pass easily through the body of the dragon. Rhalef, having taken time to recover his original form, threw the dragon a red grain, which made him sleep as soundly as the others.

He then sought to penetrate into the tower, which presented on every side a plain surface of white ivory, without any sort of opening. While he walked round this singular edifice, he heard a murmuring in the air, and perceived, at the top of the tower, a swarm of bees, who flew about as if they were near a hive. Rhalef saw that it was necessary for him to have wings to reach Fleur-de-Printemps, and he swallowed a yellow grain, which changed him into a bee.

He instantly flew to the top of the tower, into which he entered by little holes that served as passages to the insects whose form he had borrowed. The prince was at first dazzled by the brilliancy which the diamonds, that were incrusted in the marble, threw around him, and which only gave light to the place. Fleur-de-Printemps was laying upon a silk bed, between four pillars, each terminated with a large diamond, which served for a lamp. A crowd of bees flew to and from the lips of the young captive, whom they nourished with the moisture from flowers. Rhalef, after having admired so wonderful a spectacle, meditated whether he should appear to the princess, or put her to sleep. The latter seemed the most prudent: he then flew, the same as the other bees, upon the lips of

Fleur-du-Printemps, and made her swallow a grain of glass. She was hardly asleep, when, under the form of an elephant, he laboured to enlarge the holes through which the bees passed, and, afterwards taking that of a great eagle, he carried away the princess, whom he put into the hands of the Egyptian.

Sabed, delighted to see him, hastened to put some cotton into the princess's ears, that no noise might awake her, and then covered her with one of the veils with which he was provided.

"You must not be astonished at so many precautions," said he to Rhalef: "if Fleur-du-Printemps sees or hears, she will become the same as other women, and might in an instant make you lose all the fruits of your labour. Now hasten to render yourself master of her

brother; for I fear that we are not yet at the end of our difficulties."

Rhalef immediately set out again to deliver Bouton-de-Myrthe. This adventure, entirely the same as the other, was terminated in much less time. Bouton-de-Myrthe was wrapped in a veil, in the same manner as his sister; and the prince and the Egyptian, having placed them both upon their shoulders, departed immediately with their precious burthen.

The Egyptian, suddenly turning his head, exclaimed, they were all lost!—"You see," said he to the prince, "that black point which comes from the east? It is the fairy Tourbillon: she is going to visit her towers, and the loss of her two prisoners will not fail to induce her to pursue us. Do not let the distance at which she now appears to be

deceive you; she advances with the rapidity of the winds, and, at the moment I am now speaking to you, she has already passed the two towers. Quickly give me a grain of glass, and take one of them yourself."

Sabed and Rhalef instantly became two thorny bushes, under which they concealed their booty. The fairy Tourbillon passed without discovering them. They perceived with sorrow, through the clouds of sand, hail, and rain, which her breath made fly around her, a terrific woman, whose eyes darted flames: she rode upon a car, which a thousand wheels, ornamented with feathers, drew with inconceivable swiftness; she overthrew, with her feet, all the buildings she found on her road, and scattered with her hands fragments of rocks and trees. The bushes fortunately escaped

being torn, and they tremblingly listened to the horrible hissing that she uttered in her fury.

As soon as the prince and the Egyptian had lost sight of her, they resumed their own form, and continued their journey, remarking with fear all the ravages that had been committed by the fairy Tourbillon. They had not proceeded a mile, when the black spot appeared again in the east: it was the fairy again, who, having finished the tour of the world from east to west, recommenced it a second time. The prince and the Egyptian had only time to change themselves into tombs, in which they enclosed the children of the enchanter. The fairy, in passing, cast upon the prince a portion of a rock, which had nearly crushed him in its fall: he escaped, however, with a slight bruise, which did

not prevent him taking Bourton-de-Myrthe upon his shoulders. At length, the black point appeared for the third time: her course was so rapid that Rhalef had not sufficient time to swallow a grain of glass, and he tremblingly threw himself, with his burthen, under the heap of straw into which the Egyptian had just changed himself.

Unfortunately he did it with so much precipitation, that the end of his feet were perceived by the fairy, whose breath scattered the little straw that covered him. She hooked them to the end of her wand in passing, and immediately ascended into the air with the poor Rhalef, and, thus suspended by the feet, she let him fall upon a mass of pointed rocks; which would have been fatal to him, if he had not had presence of mind to swallow the yellow grain that he

still held between his fingers: he became a little bird, whose lightness saved his life.

Sabed, who was in despair at his dangerous situation, thought he should have died with joy and surprise on seeing him arrive safely. The fairy appeared no more: she had taken a direction from north to south; and the two travellers happily arrived at the place where the prince had left his suite. The persons who composed it almost blamed the imprudence of Rhalef, in trusting himself with a stranger; and they had formed an opinion that, so far from having retarded his death, he had anticipated it, when he appeared laden with Bouton-de-Myrthe, and followed by the Egyptian carrying Fleur-de-Printemps.

The joy of his favourites was great, not only to see him return, but to learn

that he had at length met with the two wonders which were to preserve his life. Rhalef shut up the brother and sister in his palanquin, and Sabed put another grain of glass in their mouths to prolong their sleep. They embarked at a port in Abyssinia, and descended on the coast of Arabia Petræ, the sea being unfavourable; and the journey that they were obliged to make by land occupied so much time, that the prince was not able to arrive at the fountain before the end of the year.

He ordered the palanquin to advance, and told the enchanter, that, according to his promise, he had brought him a woman who had never viewed herself in a mirror, and a man who had never wished for any thing.

"What do I hear?" cried the enchanter: "you bring me then my dear

children; for they only, from the singularity of their education, are able to fulfil the conditions I had required of you."

Fleur-de-Printemps and Bouton-de-Myrthe, who had slept until then, awoke. No sooner were they out of the palanquin than they approached the fountain: Fleur-de-Printemps, by chance leaning over the water, was, for the first time, amused by looking at herself in it; and Bouton-de-Myrthe, perceiving the crocodile at the bottom, eagerly wished for it. Rhalef thought himself lost, on seeing them immediately fall into the follies of other people; but the enchanter, too happy at recovering his children, quitted the hollow of the fountain, and affectionately thanked Rhalef, whom he loaded with many magnificent presents. The prince generously

gave them to the Egyptian, who became from that moment his counsellor and friend.

He returned to Damascus, where his unhoped-for arrival was celebrated by brilliant fêtes. From this time he no longer believed it possible to find disinterested men; and, when he heard of the wisdom and prudence of a woman, he related, laughing, his adventure at the enchanted fountain.

"That is a very severe writer," said Julia, after the history was finished, "to consider it wrong to look at oneself in a glass. For what other purpose were they made?"

"It is not precisely the action that he intends to blame," replied Pamphilius, smiling, "but the vanity which inspires it. This lesson is addressed to

those persons who attach so much importance to their faces, that they think they have no better occupation than that of dressing themselves.

Victorine was going to reply, when the Count, finding the night already much advanced, arose, and gave the signal for retiring. They thanked Pamphilius for his kindness, and every one went to bed very well satisfied.

EIGHTEENTH SUPPER.

THE Count's grand-children were assembled in an arbour, eating a dish of strawberries and cream, which served them as a refreshing collation, whilst they conversed about the stories they had heard. Galaor highly praised that of Rhalef.

"To speak candidly," said Gustavus, "I begin to find these fairy-tales much less entertaining than the others. They always contain metamorphoses, extravagant adventures, dragons, and sorcerers! All this sometimes surprises, but never affects."

"How can we be affected by a story we cannot believe?" replied Henry:

it is possible that our grand-papa's recitals are not more true, but the incidents of which they are composed do exist. Might we not find in the world many young people who, like Philip, have great faults to correct; and are not our parents equally tender as Mr. and Mrs. Armand?"

"I do not know whether that is the reason," answered Victorine; "but, though I very much like the fairy-tales, they never draw from me one tear; while my grand-papa's stories cause me to shed them abundantly."

"What!" cried Louisa, "were you not affected at the fate of little Clotilda, whose wicked sisters exposed her in a boat?"

"I was sure," continued Victorine, "that the vessel would conduct her to a good port."

"We have too much sense now," replied Elizabeth, "to be diverted with fairy-tales; but they are very well for Louisa."

"Indeed, my dear cousin," answered Galaor, "older persons than ourselves are not ashamed of being pleased with them; and I see that our parents listen to them without being tired."

"It is because the least important of these tales always presents some good lesson to recollect," replied Henry: "for example, in the History of Rhalef, I remarked, in the first place, the presumption that the want of experience gives young people, and the contempt they have for opinions which does not accord with their own, as on the occasion of those whom the prince consulted upon his adventure: you must remember that the old men thought it impossible to fulfil

the conditions; and that the young men, on the contrary, declared it was not necessary to take a year to find them. This was the reason that Rhalef would no longer listen to the old men."

"I did not recollect this circumstance," replied Elizabeth.

"Besides, I found in this story," continued Henry, "that we are often amply recompensed for the good we do to others: had it not been for the service that Rhalef rendered to the Egyptian, he would not have known of the ivory towers, and of those who were enclosed in them."

"It is very true," answered Victorine, "these are excellent lessons."

"For my part," said Paul, "I found the fairy Tourbillon uncommonly pleasing; and her manner of travelling from

one end of the world to the other would suit me exactly."

"You would not travel at that rate to make observations," replied Gustavus, laughing.

They were thus conversing, when some young Parisians, their school-fellows, made them a visit. They received them with pleasure, and their play became more animated. These young folks passed part of the week at the chateau, and did not return until the Thursday morning. As this was the day of the supper, they consoled themselves a little for the loss of their companions, which had thrown a langour over their amusements; but they got over the day as well as they could, which the Count terminated by the following story.

THE TWO SLAVES.

The Spartans and the Messinians, animated by hatred and vengeance, made a long and terrible war against each other. The Messinians, defeated everywhere without being subjugated, shut themselves up on Mount Ithome, and sustained during ten years the attack of their enemies, to whom treason at last delivered them. Part of the unfortunate vanquished were slaughtered or given up to slavery; a great number sought afar-off another country; and some old men hid themselves in caverns and secret places.

Cleonis, from his earliest infancy, had fallen into the hands of an inhabitant of the town of Amiclea, who had brought him up as a slave. This Lacedemonian had a country-house upon the shores of

the Pamisos: Cleonis, now sixteen years old, inhabited it with another slave of the town of Megara, named Egosthenes. He was a cruel vicious man, in the prime of life, and worthy the baseness of his situation. The master preserved, as very precious, a pot filled with honey from Mount Hymettus, with which he intended to regale himself and his friends. Egosthenes, excited by a shameful gluttony, eat the honey, in spite of the remonstrances of Cleonis. The young Messenian said to himself, "Our master is on the road home to entertain his friends: if he does not find his honey, he will accuse us both, and, perhaps, on account of my youth, will believe me only guilty. Let me be first, I will go and justify myself without waiting his arrival."

Cleonis instantly departed; he found

his master in the country-town of Laphitheum, and, having thrown himself at his feet, declared what the other slave had done. The Lacedemonian desired him to be tranquil on his own account, and always to watch over his interests. Arrived at his country-house, he ordered the guilty Egosthenes to be lashed with a whip, as a punishment for his dishonesty. Cleonis, after this, was fearful to approach the Megarian; but he, far from shewing any resentment, confessed that he merited the chastisement he had received. After passing some days at his country-house, the master returned to Amiclea.

Egosthenes, although he shewed nothing of his intention, only waited for an opportunity to be revenged on Cleonis. He dissimulated his hatred, the better to serve his purpose, and asked the

young Messenian to accompany him to the foot of Mount Taygetes to gather simples for the cure of a disorder that he pretended to have. Cleonis, for some time past, deceived by the gentleness of his words, had ceased to fear him, and followed without any suspicion.

After having wandered in vain a great part of the day between the rocks and caverns, they arrived at the side of a dry well, covered over with two pieces of stone. Egosthenes, having looked through the space that was left between them, perceived along the wall of this well the plants and herbs he wanted. They drew the stones further apart, and Egosthenes affirmed that he saw some at the bottom, but could not reach them without descending into the well. Cleonis regretted their not being provided

with a cord, by means of which he might have performed this service; and Egosthenes observed, that their sashes would be sufficient. Cleonis, having fastened himself to one end, began to slide with difficulty between the two stones into the well, and was still six feet from the bottom when Egosthenes suddenly let go the sash, and Cleonis was precipitated upon a soft marshy soil, which prevented him from being bruised by the fall. His first opinion was that the sash had accidentally escaped from the slave's hand, and was about to assure him of his safety, when the Megarian cried out, in a malignant voice:—Here you receive the punishment of your perfidy towards me, you Messinian traitor; you will no more scourge me with a whip, and a lingering death will avenge me!"

At these terrible words, Cleonis raised towards him his suppliant hands, and the tears flowing abundantly from his eyes. "In the name of the gods," said he to Egosthenes, "do not abandon me in this terrible place. I should not have descended, had it not been in the hope of prolonging your life: would you punish me for my humanity? If I have in any other respect offended you, I sincerely intreat you to pardon me. Be not then without pity, and measure more justly the punishment to the offence."

"No, no, you shall perish," replied the wicked slave.

"Alas!" continued the unfortunate Messinian, "you will no sooner have satisfied your vengeance than my sorrowful shade will pursue you everywhere. You will then come to seek my

miserable remains, at least to give them burial; but neither the tomb which you may raise for me, nor the sacrifices that you may make to the infernal gods, will restore peace to your soul. O Egosthenes, whilst it is yet in your power, save yourself from this crime, and return me to the light of day."

"You had no pity for me," replied Egosthenes, "when you denounced me to our master. I still bear upon my body the marks of the blows I received, for which you shall die in this abyss."

"Well, I will confess my fault," replied Cleonis, "and allow that I shewed but little forbearance towards you: the fear of being punished myself induced me to deliver you up to the vengeance of my master. But does this action merit death, and such a death as you have prepared for me? Do you not

know how to pardon? Alas! are you certain of never wanting pity from others?"

Thus complained the unfortunate Cleonis. Egosthenes, without replying, placed the two stones close together, and returned to his master's house, to whom he affirmed by oath that Cleonis was drowned in attempting to swim across the Pamisos. The Lacedemonian much regretted this young man, whom he had reared, and whose gentleness and activity had given him already great hopes.

In the mean time, Cleonis, not hearing any more at the entrance of the well, and judging from the darkness that the stones had been reclosed, lost all hope of exciting compassion in the unfeeling heart of the Megarian. He tried to re-ascend the walls, but the form of the

well, which resembled a funnel reversed, rendered his efforts useless. Another reflection again stopped him; this was his inability to raise the stones that covered the entrance. Nevertheless, as the hope of preservation never abandons a man, whatever may be the horrors of his situation, Cleonis began to search for some subterranean passage in the cavern. The recollection of a warrior of his nation, who, in a situation somewhat similar, was saved by the assistance of a fox, animated him in his search. By dint of groping about, he at length felt a current of air on one side of the well, and discovered an opening, but so small that he found it necessary to enlarge it with his hands; and in this he succeeded, on account of the great humidity of the earth.

Cleonis, without giving himself time

to make it conveniently large, made his way as well as he could through the aperture: at first he crawled for some time upon his hands and knees, until he came to where the vault, becoming a little higher, permitted him to walk as well as it is possible to do in the dark. From the freshness of the air that he felt around him, and the drops of water he heard fall from all parts, Cleonis found that he was by the side of a subterranean lake. He wished to sound its depth, and judged it impossible to cross it by any other means than swimming. There was, however, a very great danger in thus exposing himself in water that he could not see. Cleonis picked up some stones, and threw them with force into the lake; they slid upon the water to such a considerable distance that the unfortunate Messinian felt al-

most discouraged. However, as death menaced him equally, whether he tried to cross the lake or remained upon its shore, he preferred to meet it rather than to await it miserably.

Cleonis stripped off his tunic, and plunged into the dark waves, invoking the god of the Ocean. In a few minutes he found a boat, into which he entered, being extremely surprised to find in this place an object made by the hands of man: he was beginning to persuade himself that this vessel belonged to the old pilot of the infernal regions, when he felt nets fastened to its sides. What fisherman could have been sufficiently bold to levy contributions on the waters of this lake, enclosed in the bowels of the earth?

Cleonis, occupied with these thoughts, remained motionless, not knowing whe-

ther to fear men or divinities; but, encouraged by the calm which surrounded him, he seized the oars, and proceeded upon the lake until he reached the opposite shore. There he left the boat, and continued his way through extensive caverns, whose sharp stones lacerated his feet. A distant gleam of light suddenly struck his view, and the young Messinian, animated by a just hope, hastened towards it; and arrived in a cavern, where a woman and an old man were sleeping, wrapped in their clothes. Some household utensils, rude furniture, a chafing-dish containing fire, and a silver lamp, appeared to constitute all their riches. Cleonis, covering himself with an old mantle which he found upon a stool, and sitting down near the chafing dish, was unable to comprehend

who these people were, or foresee what reception he should meet with.

The old man soon awoke, and addressed these words to Cleonis: "It is vain that you persist in remaining in this frightful residence: nothing can vanquish the resolution I have taken of dying here, and Lasthenia has made a vow to Diana never to quit me."

The woman, awaking at those words pronounced by the old man, approached him with fear, crying, "My father, we are betrayed—this is not Celenus."

Cleonis then spoke. "Console yourselves," said he; "so far from causing any alarm, I should only inspire you with compassion. Exposed to a cruel death, it is through a thousand dangers that I have been able to reach you. In the name of Castor and Pollux, so revered—"

And I also am a Musselman.

"I am not deceived," cried the old man, "it is a Spartan who is before my eyes!—I recognise thee by thy accent, by thy head-dress, and by thy invocation! Ah! why is my arm so weak?—gods! inspire it with sufficient vigour to pierce the bosom of my enemy!"

On saying these words, the old man seized his javelin; but his daughter restrained him, and, embracing his knees, said, "Oh, you who have always been so generous, stain not your latter days by the death of this unfortunate young man. Alas! so early in life, he cannot have contributed to the ruin of the Messinians."

"And I also am a Messinian," cried Cleonis: "this language, and this habit, which have deceived you, are only proofs of my servitude. Victim of the miseries of war, I was torn from the

arms of my parents, and became a slave in my childhood."

Lasthenia and the old man then approached him: his youth and his tears easily persuaded them of the sincerity of his declaration. They wished to know how he had penetrated into this place; and his narrative augmented the interest they felt for him.

Lasthenia looked at him, and wept. "Alas!" said she, "my son would have been of this age. I lost him at the taking of Messina, where he fell into the hands of the conquerors. Oh, should this be my son!"

"Ah!" replied Cleonis, "endeavour to believe it: how sweet it will be to regard you as my mother!"

An affectionate intimacy was soon established between these three unfortunate beings. Cleonis became their

adopted son, and he loved them as much as if they had been the authors of his being. The old man afterwards related to him, that Celenus, for whom his weak sight had at first mistaken him, was one of a small troop of Messinians, who had taken refuge with them in this cavern, which they had inhabited for a long time, never quitting it but at night, for the purpose of hunting in the mountains. It was them who had constructed the boat which Cleonis had met with on the lake, whose subterranean waters were often filled with fish after a storm. One of their countrymen who had gone into exile, came and told them that they had found an asylum at Naupacte, a town which the Athenians had generously ceded to them, and that they were going to fight their common enemy, who threatened Athens. At this information,

the Messinians were impatient to signalise themselves against a nation whom they held in abhorrence, and wished to take with them the old man and Lasthenia. Celenus, who was their relation, pressed them strongly; but the old man, too weak to fight, dreaded falling into the hands of the Spartans, and resolved to finish his days in this subterranean place. Lasthenia, widow of an illustrious warrior, and deprived of her son, had consecrated her days to her father: she was skilful in the chace and in fishing, in which she had employed herself since their misfortunes, and was thereby enabled to provide for the old man's support until the return of Celenus, who had promised to come back again very speedily.

Cleonis accompanied the Messinian woman in her nocturnal excursions: he

made himself acquainted with the windings of these vast caverns, whose entrance was at the foot of Mount Taygetes, on the side opposite to Messina. A sweet illusion, growing stronger every day in the hearts of the old man and his daughter, persuaded them that Cleonis was her son. It pleased them to give him the same name, and often, in looking at his face, they fancied they could retrace in his features those of Lasthenia's husband.

In the mean time, the old Messinian, overwhelmed with the weight of years, and with the still heavier burden of misfortune, felt his last hour approaching. Very far from regretting life, he rejoiced in the idea of quitting the gloomy place he had so long inhabited, and longed to descend to those fields of repose where the souls of the faithful wander amidst

an eternal verdure. Before closing his eyes for ever, he blessed his children, and commanded them to go into Sicily.

"I have this night seen, in a dream," said he, "the chaste Diana: she was leaning upon a hind with horns of brass, and a luminous crescent crowned her immortal brow. She took me by the hand, and conducted me through the air to smiling Sicily, where I perceived the Messinians occupied in building a town, which they called Messina. I beheld you both there: you were advancing sorrowfully, bearing an urn inclosing my ashes. The goddess gave me a branch of laurel, which I placed in the earth, and it immediately took root; at this signal you placed my urn in that place, and marked the limits of your voyage. This dream is an order from the gods;—when I shall be no more,

hasten to consume my body, and carry with you my ashes."

The old man expired in a few hours after having thus spoken; and Cleonis and Lasthenia, weeping, performed the funeral honours. They were still engaged in this melancholy task, when Celenus arrived in the cavern: the appearance of Cleonis at first excited his surprise and anger, but, when satisfied by Lasthenia, he felt almost as much interest as herself for their young countryman. After kissing the icy face of the old man for the last time, he assisted in the religious duties which his daughter rendered him. His ashes were gathered, and deposited in an urn, when Celenus invited Lasthenia to retire to Naupacte; but she, faithful to the commands of her father, declared that she would go to Sicily.

Celenus secretly prepared all that was necessary for their departure. They embarked at Phenæ, in a Phenician vessel, carrying, with much difficulty, the urn that contained the ashes of the old man, and several pieces of gold, the remains of their former riches, which they had prudently kept concealed in the cavern.

Celenus accompanied Lasthenia and her adopted son on their voyage to Sicily; but the gods did not permit him to land: attacked, on board the vessel, by a mortal disorder, he perished, notwithstanding the tender cares of his friends; and his body was buried in the island of Zacintha, where the ship had stopped.

The exiles at length arrived in Sicily, with two slaves, whom Lasthenia had purchased at Tarentum. They wandered

about, as the old man had seen in his dream, carrying with them the funeral-urn, when Cleonis perceived a laurel. He cut a branch of it, and, invoking the sister of Apollo, planted it at a short distance from the new city which his countrymen were building, as the old man had announced to them. The Messinians received Lasthenia and her son with kindness, and pressed them to live amongst them; but Cleonis, having visited his laurel-branch, found it growing, and cried, "Oh, my mother! it is here where the ashes of your father are to repose;—we will go no further."

Lasthenia, full of confidence in the words of her father, ordered a hind to be brought, which Cleonis sacrificed in honour of Diana. They also raised, in the same place, a tomb, which the branches of the laurel-tree soon covered

with their shade, and where libations were annually offered during three days. The house of Lasthenia was built near her father's tomb; and her vicinity to this sacred spot drew upon her the protection of the gods; their flocks multiplied, and their fields yielded abundant crops.

Cleonis, in about ten years, married a young lady of New Messina, who, besides her beauty and virtues, brought him a considerable fortune in lands and flocks. Lasthenia, wishing to honour the young bride, desired Cleonis to purchase four young slaves to wait upon her. Obedient to the request of his mother, he proceeded in his car to the port of Syracuse, where a vessel laden with slaves had just arrived.

Cleonis, after having chosen the four females whom he destined to serve his

wife, and placed them under the care of his domestics, was conversing with some Thessalians who were descending from the vessel, when he recognised, amongst the slaves for sale, Egosthenes : at this sight his heart beat violently, his countenance changed colour, and he rudely quitted the Thessalians to approach the slave, in order to assure himself that it was him. Egosthenes looked at him without recognising him ; the many changes that had operated upon the person of Cleonis since the age of fifteen, and the persuasion that Egosthenes had of his death, rendered the recollection of him entirely impossible. The Messinian experienced a sensation so painful at the aspect of this barbarous man, and his ideas became so confused, that he could not account for the violent desire he felt

to possess him for his slave: however, he offered a price, and bought him.

On the return of Cleonis, Lasthenia had not much difficulty in perceiving that something violently agitated him; and she hastened to interrogate him.

"My mother," said he, "I have often related to you with what perfidy the Megarian Egosthenes made me descend into the well, and left me there to perish. The just gods, after having preserved my life, have at length delivered into my power this merciless slave. What ought I to do? What punishment can I inflict upon the most wicked of men?"

"You should pardon him, my son," replied Lasthenia. "What other vengeance should be permitted to the heart of man, so weak, so little master of his actions, that perhaps he may fall to-

morrow into the very crime he has chastised to-day? The gods will bless generous souls, and it is for them that they reserve their bounty."

"Oh, my mother," answered Cleonis, "it is wisdom herself who speaks by thy mouth! But shall I not at least make myself known to Egosthenes, and compel him to blush for the crime that he has comitted?"

"Humiliating a guilty being is not to pardon him," continued Lasthenia:—"do you know whether he has not, by tears and sacrifices, appeased the just anger of the gods? Perhaps they have already given peace to his soul; and will you, more implacable than they, awake terror in it again? If you make yourself known to him, let it be by your mildness and kindness. Let us, above all, wait until the resentment you still

feel is changed into a wise moderation."

Thus spoke this virtuous woman; and Cleonis thanked the gods for having given him such a guide, and endeavoured to calm his agitation.

Egosthenes had not grown better; he had only answered the voice of remorse which pursued him by plunging deeper into every vice. The Lacedemonian, despairing of correcting them, sold him to Phrygian merchants. He passed successively under the laws of different masters, who, always discontented, suspected him from the moment they knew him. It was thus that he arrived in Sicily. He soon stole from the wife of Cleonis a valuable necklace which had been given her by Lasthenia: detected in this robbery, and brought to the feet of his master, he supplicated him with

tears to take pity on his age. He cited the example of the gods, and mingled in his prayers the most revered names. Cleonis listened with a gravity under which he concealed the emotion of his soul; and, after preserving a profound silence, during which he was considering how to act, said to Egosthenes, "Slave, at this moment of thy misery, recall to thy recollection the most serious actions of thy life, and tell me if thou hast always been thyself sensible to pity?—hast thou never repulsed the prayer of a being weaker than thyself?"

Egosthenes grew pale at these words; but, persuaded that no person could be acquainted with his crime, he replied, "Oh, my master! what answer can you expect from a miserable slave? Is it for creatures in my unfortunate situation to exercise mercy?—dependant upon

the will of others, how should I be able to grant or refuse it?"

"Wicked slave," continued Cleonis, "since thou refusest to confess thy crime, know at least thy accuser."

He took from a little box the slave's sash, by the assistance of which he had descended into the well.

Egosthenes, shuddering with terror at this sight, fixed his eyes upon Cleonis for a moment, and exclaimed, "Just gods!—can it be possible?—Cleonis!"

"Yes, I am Cleonis," replied the Messinian, rising from his seat, "contrary to thy expectation, I still exist. Thou seest in me thy victim, thy master, and thy judge! Now I leave it to thy own conscience, thou who for a slight offence intended my death, what mercy canst thou hope from me."

"Alas!" said the trembling Egos-

thenes, "I expect only from Cleonis, now become my judge, the most horrid punishments; and I already imagine I see death surrounding me on all sides."

"Be comforted," interrupted Cleonis, "I pardon thee!"

"The excess of surprise and joy made the Megarian faint: he only recovered to detest himself; the more kindness Cleonis shewed him, the more insupportable was the weight of his remorse. He survived this event but a very short time: his last sigh implored the forgiveness of the gods, and his last words blessed him who so well imitated their clemency.

Cleonis, in enjoying the delight that generosity gives to the heart of man, said to Lasthenia, "Oh, my mother! be for ever blessed, for having turned me from a cowardly vengeance; for I

feel that nothing can equal the happiness of having pardoned."

"My dear father," cried Henry, "I consider this the most charming story you have told us. How I admire this picture of ancient morals!"

"It appears to me," said Gustavus, "that it is carrying generosity to an extreme to pardon those who would have killed us."

"We, however, see many examples of it on record," replied Mr. Theodore: "Joseph not only pardoned his brothers, but loaded them with benefits; and David respected the life of Saul, who eagerly sought his ruin. Religion and morality equally enjoin us to forgive."

"I wish I knew who the warrior was, the recollection of whom supported Cleonis in the well," said Victorine.

"It was Aristomenes, a Messenian general," answered the Count: "he was a long time the support of his country and the terror of the Spartans. The latter, having taken him prisoner, threw him into a deep cavern. Having descended alive into this abyss, where death appeared inevitable, he heard a fox, which he seized, and, holding it fast, was dragged out of the cavern, through several gloomy passages: he thus escaped the destruction that menaced him, and returned to defend his country.

CONCLUSION.

This was the last evening they passed at the chateau. The vacation having expired, the Count followed his children to Paris, where the cares which he now