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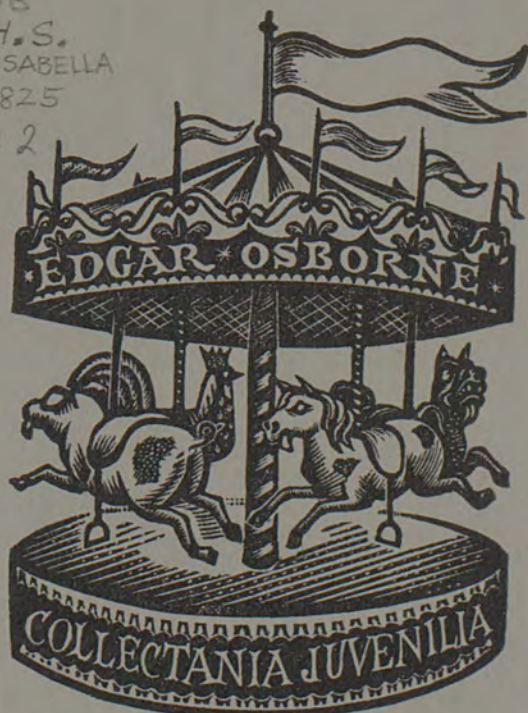
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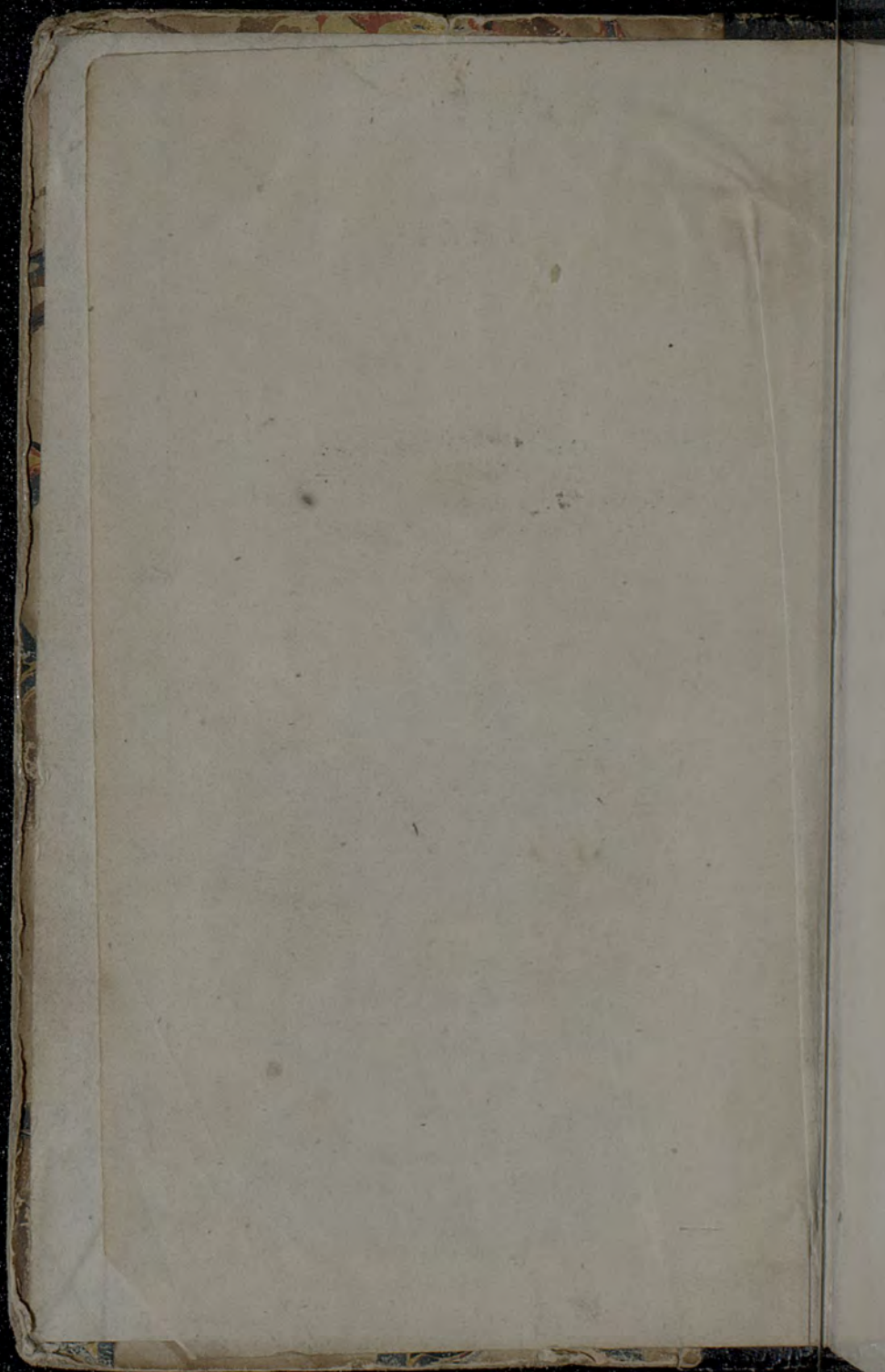


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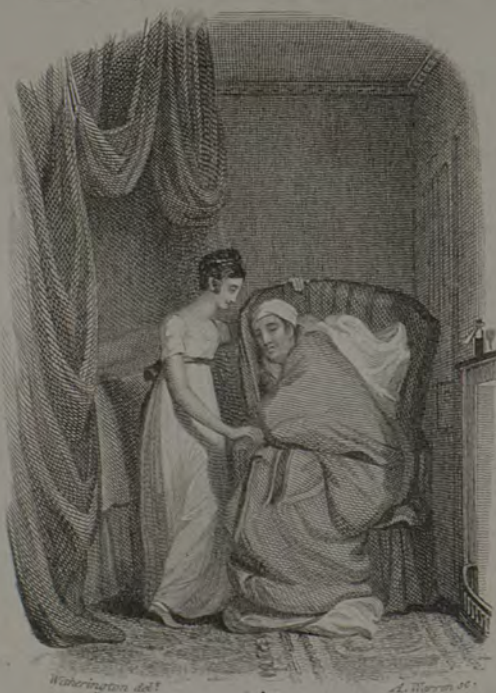
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or,
THE ORPHAN COUSIN.



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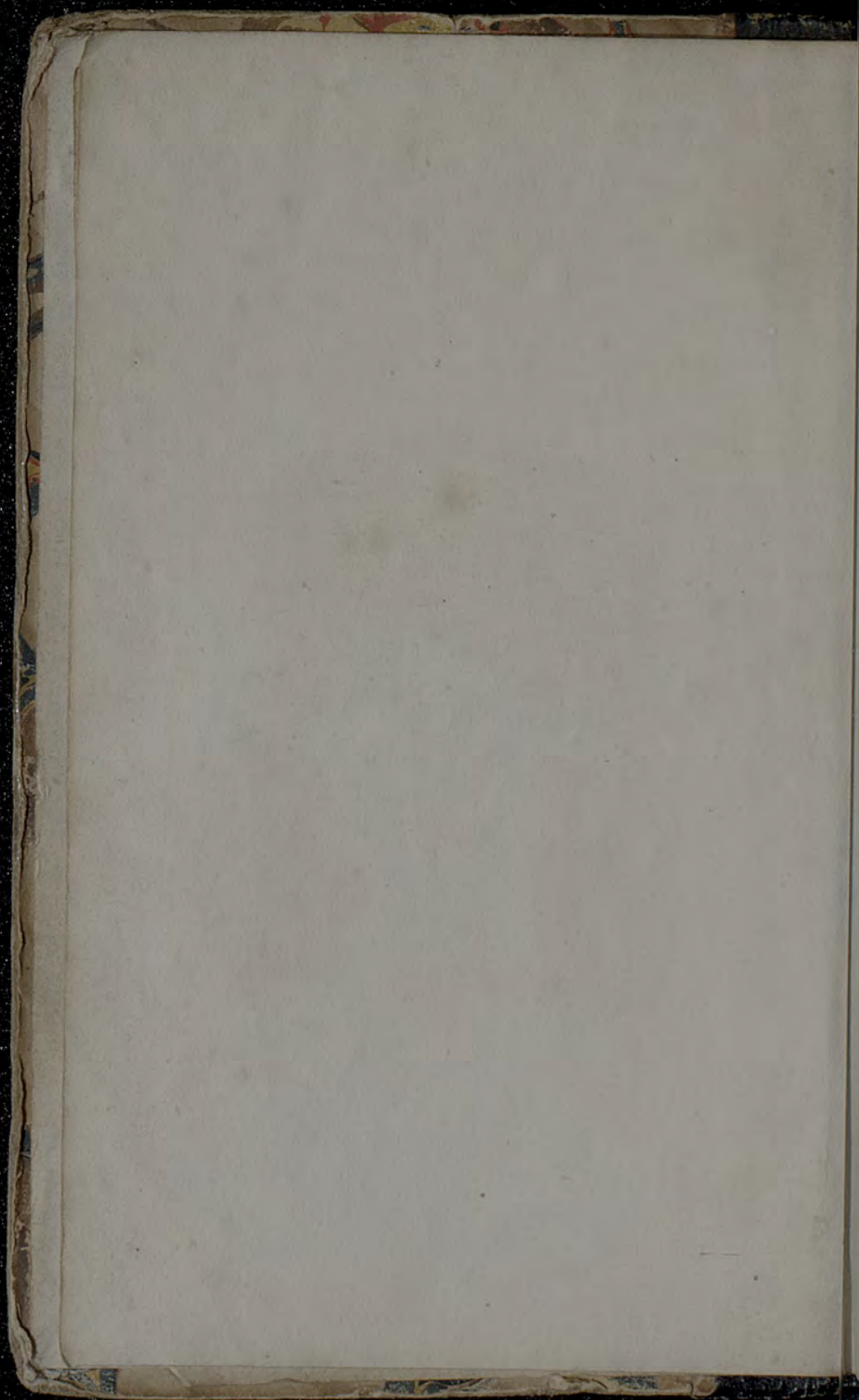
By his bed side saved a lovely interesting Girl.

Page 9.

LONDON.

Printed for E. Edwards, Newgate Street, and
A. F. Bluns, Cheap Street, Bath.

1825.



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BY

PRINTED

AND

ISABELLA;
OR,
THE ORPHAN COUSIN.

A MORAL STORY FOR YOUTH,

BY THE DAUGHTER OF A CLERGYMAN.

"And art thou then Acasto's dear remains?
She whom my restless gratitude has sought
So long in vain? Oh heavens! the very same;
The softened image of my noble friend,
Alive his every look, his every feature,
More elegantly touched.—"

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR E. EDWARDS, NEWGATE STREET;

AND A. E. BINNS, CHEAP STREET, BATH.

MDCCCXXV.

ISABELLA

OR

THE ORPHAN

A NOVEL

IN THREE VOLUMES

BATH :

PRINTED BY ANN E. BINNS, CHEAP STREET.

PREFACE.

IN presenting this little tale to the public, the young authoress feels herself obliged to state, that when she compiled the following pages, she had not the slightest idea, it would ever appear in print. It was written in the hours of convalescence from a tedious illness, to beguile some weary moments; and for the amusement of her young relatives. But she has at length, to gratify a too partial mother, summoned courage sufficient to throw herself upon the mercy of an indulgent public, and to submit to their inspection this first effort of her youthful pen; and should it afford pleasure to some few juvenile readers, she will not regret having thus indulged maternal vanity, in announcing herself, the authoress of “Isabella; or the Orphan Cousin.” H. S.

ISABELLA;

OR,

THE ORPHAN COUSIN.

CHAPTER I.

“MY dear mamma, when will papa, with our new cousin arrive?” exclaimed little Grace Claremont, as she eagerly ran to the window to watch for the arrival of her father with his young charge.

“Indeed, my love, I cannot say,” returned Mrs. Claremont, smiling at the eagerness of her little daughter; “But I rather think he will not reach home before night.”

“Have you ever seen our cousin, mamma? Is she pretty; and has she flaxen hair like mine? I mean like Julia Dalton’s;” eagerly

enquired Clara, a very pretty girl, with light hair, and blue eyes. "I should like very much to know if she is as handsome as papa describes her to be."

"I must take a little time before I can answer all your questions;" answered her mother, still smiling. "In the first place I have not yet seen your cousin; I do not know what colour her hair is, but I think it is not like yours, as her mother was an East Indian: but from your papa's account she must be very beautiful. But I think it is of very little importance whether she is pretty, or otherwise, provided she has a good disposition. Do you not agree with me, Eliza?"

"Certainly, mamma, but then one cannot but be anxious to know all about a person of whom one has heard so much," replied Clara, blushing a little.

"But, if I remember rightly," said Mrs. Claremont, "your papa dwelt most upon the many amiable traits he discovered in her disposition, while he remained with her father. Poor thing! though she doated upon her last remaining parent, yet she had fortitude sufficient to command her feelings when her

grief might have afflicted and disturbed him in his last illness."

"Poor cousin Isabella!" exclaimed Grace, her eyes filling with tears, at the thought of her cousin's severe loss. "I am sure I will love you dearly, and will let you nurse my great big doll, all day long; don't you think that will please her mamma?" she anxiously enquired of her mother, who smiling at the simplicity of her request, affectionately kissed, and told her, she did not doubt but that her cousin would be very grateful for her kindness.

"Pho! nonsense, Grace," said Cornish Claremont, a fine boy of ten years old, who was spinning a top in a corner of the room. "What do you think she is such a baby as you are, and will always be playing with dolls? Oh, depend upon it she will rather play at trap-ball; or at battledore and shuttlecock with me. Why you know she is just my age."

"There you are mistaken my dear boy," returned Mrs. Claremont; "she is just the age of your sister Clara, and from what I can understand is very accomplished; if you do not take care Clara, she will soon eclipse you, not

only in outward accomplishments, but in more solid knowledge."

"Is she indeed so very clever, mamma?" cried Clara; I was afraid, she would turn out to be a very ignorant, stupid thing; but now I shall be so happy; we can practice our music lessons together; and then I hope, mamma, you will not send me back to Mrs. Stuart's; and as my papa says my cousin is not to go to school, I do so wish you would keep me at home, because I shall have such a good companion in Isabella."

"You must wait, my dear, till your papa returns," replied Mrs. Claremont; "and then we will settle that point. But hark! is not that the carriage coming up the avenue?" she continued, as walking up to the window, she saw one driving up to the hall door.

The parlour door opened, but instead of their father, the children saw their aunt, Lady Mildew, whom Clara had never yet seen, and the others had not seen for two years. Their joy at seeing so much sooner than they had expected, an aunt whom they had so dearly loved, compensated in no slight degree for their momentary disappointment. But their

pleasure was damped when their aunt informed Mrs. Claremont, that she should not be able to stay but a few minutes, while the horses were changing, as she had above twenty miles to go that night; but promised that on her return in the course of a month, she would make a long stay at the Parsonage. She soon after took her leave, and stepping into the carriage, it drove off.

As the evening advanced, Mrs. Claremont began to be alarmed at the non-appearance of her husband. At ten o'clock, the children were sent to bed, as Mrs. Claremont considered it best for them not to be up when the little stranger arrived, as her husband had told her in his last letter, that she was very timid, and as Mrs. Claremont rightly deemed she might be alarmed at the sight of so many strangers.

About eleven o'clock, Mrs. Claremont heard the sound of carriage wheels; but before she could get to the door, it opened, and her husband entered, leading in a delicate looking girl, in deep mourning, whom he introduced to his wife, as his niece and third daughter; and who, he trusted would prove herself deserving of her affection. At these words, the

afflicted orphan threw herself into the arms of Mrs. Claremont, and wept bitterly for some minutes, till her aunt, taking her to a sofa, entreated her to rest herself, and then by gently reasoning with her, and gradually drawing her attention from the cause of her grief, had the satisfaction of seeing her dry her eyes, and attempt to eat a little sandwich, and drink a little wine and water, which she had prepared for her. By degrees her tears ceased to flow, but the melancholy glances which now and then stole from beneath her long dark silken lashes, as she raised her eyes timidly to the countenance of her aunt, as if to discover whether she should indeed find in her a second mother, so affected Mrs. Claremont, that it was with difficulty she could refrain from shedding tears, as she gazed upon the expressive countenance of the interesting orphan. Soon after seeing her look fatigued, Mrs. Claremont took her into a little room in which there were two beds, in one of which was Clara fast asleep; the other was reserved for Isabella. Having seen her charge comfortably in bed, she returned to her husband, and earnestly entreated him to relate every par-

ticular of his journey: but as his emotion often obliged him to stop, we think it best to give that, and several other circumstances that occurred previous to the beginning of this tale, in our own words.

Mr. Claremont, and his brother Cornish, twins, were the only children of a gentleman, who possessed an estate in Hampshire, but having had the misfortune, when very young, to lose their mother, and their father being a very extravagant man, at his death they came in for very little fortune. Alfred, the youngest, had been educated for the church, and was presented with a valuable living in Devonshire; and soon after married an amiable woman, who possessed every quality requisite to make such a man as Alfred happy, and who was become the father of four children. On the death of his father, Cornish the eldest, found himself heir only to an empty house, which he soon sold; and being as his father, very extravagant, he was obliged to leave the country, and sail for the East Indies. He had never once written to his brother, and had not been heard of for above twelve years, when one morning, as Mr. Claremont was sitting

down to breakfast, a letter was delivered him by his servant, who said it had been put into his hands by a man on horseback, at the same time desiring him to give it to his master. Mr. Claremont opened it, and read the following words :

Dover, May, —

My dear brother,

Am I remembered? or has the name of Cornish ceased to occupy a place in your heart? If indeed I am not forgotten, do not fail upon the receipt of this, to make all possible speed to Dover, where you will find a brother who has never ceased to remember with gratitude your past kindness; and who, had he followed your fraternal advice, would never have experienced the misery of finding himself almost a stranger in his native land; but bitter as this reflection is, I am yet more sorely afflicted; for I must very soon leave my beloved girl an orphan! Yes, my dear Alfred, I am fast hastening to that, "bourne, from whence no traveller returns."

It only remains for you to make the death-bed of a parent happy. Hasten then, while life yet remains, that I may once again fold to

my bosom the only friend I have on earth ; and bequeath to your care my dearest treasure. As you are yourself a parent, make allowance for the anxiety of one, and come to cheer the last moments of your dying brother,

CORNISH CLAREMONT.

Upon receiving this affecting summons, Mr. Claremont left Hawthorn Parsonage, and hastened to Dover, where he heard that his brother was in the greatest agitation lest he should not arrive before the awful moment.

Mr. Claremont was instantly shewn into the dying man's chamber, whom he found supported by pillows, sitting in an easy chair. By his bed-side stood a lovely interesting girl, apparently about the age of thirteen, and who by her affectionate attention to the invalid, seemed to anticipate his every wish. Upon his entering the room his brother attempted to rise ; but his feelings overcame him, and he sunk back exhausted. When he had recovered his composure, he took an opportunity to dismiss his daughter from the room. Hardly had she closed the door, when the sick man turned to Mr. Claremont, and hastily enquired if he

would quiet the anxious throbbings of his heart, by informing him if he was able and willing to undertake the guardianship of his darling girl. Mr. A. Claremont interrupted his brother by desiring him to calm his agitation, as nothing was more opposite to his nature than to refuse such a request from a brother he so dearly loved; and that it would be his greatest delight to discharge with scrupulous care the charge entrusted to him.

Mr. Claremont broke out into the most animated expressions of gratitude, for his brother's so readily, and kindly conforming to his request; and proceeded to inform him, that he had not left a single shilling for the maintenance and education of his daughter, as the only forty pounds he had brought over to England, had been expended during his long confinement. His brother then entreated him to relate all that had befallen him since his departure from England. Mr. Claremont stated that soon after his arrival in the East Indies, he had married a very amiable and lovely woman, but who unfortunately died after giving birth to two children, a boy and a girl; that several years after her death, he had been seduced into

a gambling-house, where in one night he had lost all his fortune; upon which he was reduced to beggary, and was obliged to sell every thing in order to procure a passage to England: that soon after they had sailed, he had been seized with a violent fever which had confined him to his bed for a month, and that on his recovery his little boy who was about eight years old had taken the measles, of which he died after a tedious illness. His constitution already weakened by sickness, added to the great fatigue and anxiety he had undergone in nursing his dear child, rendered him altogether unable to sustain this last blow; he was again thrown upon a bed of sickness, from which he was never expected to rise; but that after another long illness, he once more rose from his bed, but so reduced that he was scarcely able to stand. When they arrived in England, he found himself fast sinking to his grave; which determined him to enquire after his brother, whose address he had at last had the good fortune to discover, by means of the servant who now waited upon him in this hotel, having once lived with his brother. As Mr. Claremont ended, the physician was

announced, who desired his patient to be put to bed, and kept particularly quiet, as he appeared to have been very much agitated, which might have a very serious effect upon a frame so greatly debilitated as was Mr. Claremont's. Doctor Ormond then seated himself by the side of his patient, and began a cheerful conversation; in which he said he hoped to have the pleasure of seeing him at his house in London, as soon as he was able to be removed. The invalid shook his head, and with a mournful smile asked him if he had seen Isabella?

"Oh yes," answered the doctor, "I saw her at the door where she was standing, and it was from her I heard of the arrival of your brother; but now I hope you will not banish the poor girl from the room, but allow her to return and give you a glass of your medicine, as it is quite time for you to take another dose." So saying, he opened the door and Isabella came in, and going up to her father asked if he wanted any thing; and then proceeded with the greatest tenderness to smooth his pillows, and to give him his medicine.

Mr. Claremont could not refrain from gazing

with admiration upon the pale and interesting countenance, and sylph-like form of the little nurse, as she glided on tiptoe about the room, for fear of disturbing or startling the sick man. Soon after the doctor took his leave, but observing Mr. A. Claremont make a sign to him, he followed him into an adjoining room, when Mr. A. Claremont closing the door, earnestly begged him to make him acquainted with the real state of his brother's health. The doctor then in the gentlest manner, informed him that Mr. Claremont was certainly in a very alarming state, that he was afraid his constitution had suffered too much to afford him hopes of seeing him recover, but that with care he thought he might linger for some days ; he then took up his hat and saying he would see Mr. Claremont early the next morning, left the house.

It is impossible to describe Mr. A. Claremont's affliction at hearing this ; he had not seen his brother for a length of time, and was now only arrived in time to see him expire. He soon however conquered his emotion and returned to his brother, who had fallen into a deep sleep, and Isabella was sitting by his

bed-side. She made a sign to him not to disturb her father but Mr. Claremont soon awoke and asked for his brother, who immediately went up to his bed; and his brother, pointing to a small desk, told him that when he was no more he must open that, and there he would find directions where he was to be interred; he told him in that desk he would also find a miniature painting of his dear wife, and some jewels, though not of much value, yet as they had once belonged to her dear mother, he should wish Isabella to have; after talking some time Mr. A. Claremont called the nurse, and having affectionately embraced his brother and neice, retired to his room.

A week passed on in this manner, the invalid apparently growing weaker and weaker every day, and every hour disclosing to Mr. A. Claremont some amiable trait in his niece's disposition; when one evening, after her father had been earnestly attending to his daughter, who was reading aloud to him some portions of the bible, Isabella suddenly let the book fall from her hand, and "oh! my dear father!" issued with a shriek from her lips, as she ran for a little cold water, to sprinkle

on his face ; Mr. A. Claremont had just risen from his seat, and walked to the window, but hastily turning round at this exclamation of his niece, flew to his brother time enough to hear him faintly whisper, " my poor girl ! protect her heaven !" and to receive his last look, and catch his last sigh as he closed his eyes, to open them no more !

The shock was too much for the delicate frame of Isabella, who was already so weakened by the excessive fatigue she had undergone, that her health was materially injured, and she was confined to her bed in all the delirium of a high fever. Mr. Claremont not knowing how to act, instantly wrote to his wife, but unfortunately, the day before his letter reached her, his youngest daughter had been seized with a violent inflammation on her lungs, and was pronounced to be in so dangerous a state that Mrs. Claremont could not leave her. Mr. Claremont did not know who to employ to nurse his invalid niece ; but he applied to Doctor Ormond, who recommended Mrs. Barton, the same person who had nursed her father, and who was a very good, respectable woman.

After Mr. Claremont had attended the re-

mains of his brother to his last abode, and settled his affairs, he began to prepare for his return home with Isabella, whose fever had left her so weakened that her uncle was obliged to wait till she had acquired strength sufficient to enable her to bear the fatigue of so long a journey. Her spirits were still very weak, but Mr. Claremont entertained the hope that when she mixed with companions of her own age, they would regain their usual tone. He returned to Hawthorn Parsonage, and to his anxious family, after an absence of six weeks, in the manner already described.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY the next morning, Isabella was awoke by a great noise in the apartment, and on opening her eyes, found it proceeded from a little curly-headed boy, who was struggling violently with a little girl, who pulled him away from the bed upon which Isabella was lying, while he continued to cry out, "Grace, dear Grace, do let me, pray let me look at my cousin, indeed I will not wake her." As Isabella was trying to recollect where she was, Mrs. Claremont entered, and desiring Clara who followed, to take her brother and sister down stairs, proceeded kindly to enquire of her niece how she had rested during the night; and soothed with maternal expressions of affection, this young and mourning stranger. When Isabella entered the breakfast parlour, where the children were assembled around the table ready to begin their breakfast, all eyes were turned upon her; and as Mrs. Claremont

led her up to Clara her eldest daughter, in whom she said she hoped she would find a sister, Isabella's eyes filled with tears, which her aunt perceived, and in order to divert the children's attention, proceeded hastily to arrange the business of the breakfast-table.

Each of the children tried to anticipate their cousin's wants; Cornish flew to fetch a chair; Clara put a roll into her plate; Grace brought a foot-stool, and told her to put her feet upon it, as it was a very soft one: little Alfred ran, and putting his arms round her neck told her not to cry, for she would find his mamma very kind; she never was angry, unless they had been very naughty indeed. After breakfast the children sat down to pursue their different studies; Cornish got his latin grammar, and sitting down in a corner of the room, proceeded to study his lesson with great diligence; Grace got her slate, and began to cypher; Clara taking up, "Berquin's *L'ami des Enfants*," read to her mother, while Isabella seated herself by the side of her aunt, and listened with great attention to what her cousin was reading. Mrs. Claremont pleased with her being so much interested, after Clara

had finished, asked Isabella if she should like to read a little. Isabella, looking timidly upon the ground, answered in a low voice, "indeed, I should like it very much; but I cannot read French so well as my cousin Clara."

"Well, but my love," answered Mrs. Claremont, as she kindly drew the timid girl towards her, and placed the book in her hands; "you can try, and if you don't read so well as Clara, I shall not be less pleased with your ready compliance with my wishes."

Isabella immediately began, and Mrs. Claremont was not a little surprised at the correctness of her pronunciation, and the fluency with which she translated it into English. After having read two or three pages, her aunt asked her if she knew any thing of music: to which Isabella answered, "that her dear mamma was passionately fond of that science, and had taken great delight in instructing her to play on the piano." She then left the room to fetch her music book.

"Mamma, do not you think Isabella very pretty?" exclaimed Cornish, running eagerly to his mother; "I think she is much more accomplished than Clara; don't you mamma?"

“ Oh, we do not want to hear your opinion Master Cornish,” cried Clara, while her face flushed with the pangs of mortified vanity ; “ we all know where you get all your vulgar ideas ; I think she is much too dark to be thought pretty,” she continued, as glancing her eyes towards a mirror in which she saw reflected her own fair face. “ Though to be sure she is much taller than I am ; but I suppose she is much older.”

“ Clara, Clara,” exclaimed her mother, in an angry tone, “ how often have I warned you not to give way to that fretful temper ; indeed, what was there in your brother’s remark to call forth such an angry reply. Your cousin if not surpassing you in personal attractions, possesses such qualities, as I am afraid I shall never have the happiness to see you display.— She is six months your junior, and yet appears to far outstrip you in knowledge ; your papa can give you a most beautiful description of her tenderness for her sick father ; the patience with which she bore all the fretfulness of disease ; her vigilant attention to his most trifling wish ; all these gave proofs of the excellence of her disposition. Make it your

study then, my dear Clara," she continued, as she folded the repentant girl to her bosom, "to imitate your amiable cousin, and never let the baneful passion of envy take possession of your breast, and obscure all your good qualities." Isabella then entered, and brought with her, her music and drawing books, which she laid upon her aunt's work-table. Clara directly left the room, to hide the traces of those tears, which a rebuke from her mother always caused to flow. Clara was a very affectionate girl, but Mrs. Claremont had been prevailed upon to allow her to live with an invalid sister, Miss Eliza Bell; and where she had been constantly told of her beauty, and extolled to the skies for her cleverness. This flattery, added to her never having been thwarted or contradicted in any of her whims, had nearly completed the spoiling of her disposition, when her aunt suddenly died and left her heiress to a large fortune. As soon as she arrived home (Mrs. Claremont, being then in a very bad state of health, and not able to attend to the education of her children), she was sent to a Mrs. Stuart, a very respectable lady, who undertook the

education of a few pupils only. Clara had been there one twelve-month, and had returned home for the midsummer vacation, when she was first introduced to her cousin; and the idea of being outshone in personal attractions, had made her give way to that peevish temper, which had caused Mrs. Claremont to reprove her so severely.

Cornish was three years younger than his sister; of an open, generous, and affectionate disposition, but very passionate; extremely volatile, and very prone to ridicule; this fault his mother did all in her power to correct: but often when she began to hope, she had entirely conquered that failing, would he begin to mimic some person, who appeared in a ludicrous light, either from some personal defect, or from some acquired habit. He in particular never spared Clara; it happened that two or three days after his sister's arrival from school, he accidentally entered the parlour, where she was practising how to make a graceful courtesy, before a mirror. This was never forgotten by Cornish; and Clara was often obliged to forbear making any retort to his railleries, for fear of provoking him to

disclose this silly, vain action. Grace was an amiable girl, possessing only one very serious fault, which was that she had no resolution to refrain from temptation. She would commit a fault merely from the want of fortitude to say, "no," to any of her young companions, when they would entice her to do something contrary to her mother's desire. She was about nine years old at the commencement of this story. Little Alfred only six years old, was yet too young to have any decided character.

After Isabella had remained in the breakfast-room for some time, and had been sitting quite silent, she suddenly turned to her aunt, and asked, if "she intended to send her to school."

"Should you like it, my love," replied Mrs. Claremont, "if you would rather go to school, I can certainly send you."

"Oh! no, no," cried Isabella, jumping up and throwing her arms round her aunt's neck; "I would much rather remain with you, only I was afraid you would think me troublesome and I should not like to be thought so by any body. My dearest mamma," she continued, as tears of affection trembled in her dark eyes,

always said "she hoped poor papa would never send me to school; for though she thought it quite right for boys to go, she did not approve of girls being sent from home."

"No, my dear, you shall not be sent away from me," exclaimed Mrs. Claremont, tenderly, as she kissed the tears from off the affectionate girl's cheek; "you shall stay at home and be a companion to Clara. But where is your sister Grace? we will go and pay a visit to Mrs. Dalton, and then we will call upon widow Adams and her daughter, who has been so ill."

"Mamma, Clara is coming directly," answered Grace, as she entered the parlour, from seeking her sister. "But pray wait, while I finish this sum;" and she began hastily to add up the figures on her slate.

"I cannot wait long for you, Grace," replied her mother. "But let me see what you are doing. Why my dear," she continued as she took the slate from her daughter, "you ought to have done this sum yesterday. Why did you not do it?"

Grace looked at Clara, but did not speak till Mrs. Claremont insisted upon knowing the

truth; then Grace deeply blushing, replied, that till late last night she had been "playing in the garden, and that Clara had repeatedly warned her not to allow the evening to pass over before she had finished her cyphering; but that seeing her brother working in his garden, she could not forbear joining him, and when she came in she had quite forgotten to do it."

"Well then," returned Mrs. Claremont, looking very severe, "as you have committed the fault, you must take the consequences that ensue. You certainly must not think of going with me; for it was only on condition of your being a very industrious little girl, that I promised to take you with me to call upon your young friend Julia Dalton, who will certainly be very much disappointed at not seeing you, as it is her birth-day; but it cannot now be helped."

"Indeed, mamma," cried Cornish in a beseeching tone; "Grace will not commit the same fault again. I am sure she will not," he continued in a vehement tone, as he saw his mother still look incredulous. "Will you Grace? Oh, do pray let her go; it will be

such a very great disappointment to poor Julia."

"Ah, Cornish, that is taking quite a different view of the subject," answered his mother, half smiling at his eagerness. Yet I have too good an opinion of her to think that for one moment she will regret the deprivation of any selfish gratification, when she learns that Grace will be benefitted by it.

So saying, Mrs. Claremont accompanied by Clara, Isabella, and Cornish, set out to pay their morning's visit, leaving poor Grace in tears at being obliged to remain at home.

When they arrived, they were shown into a parlour where Mrs. Dalton and her three daughters, Charlotte, Sophia, and Julia were sitting. After Mrs. Claremont had apologized to the latter for her youngest daughter's absence, the young ladies left the room with Clara, leaving Isabella with her aunt. Mrs. Claremont enquired of Mrs. Dalton if she could recommend a worthy young woman as a governess, as she intended removing Clara from school, and placing her with her sister and cousin, under the care of some amiable young person, who would conscientiously dis-

charge the confidence reposed in her. Mrs. Dalton said she did know a young lady who she did not doubt would have suited Mrs. Claremont, but that unfortunately she was engaged. After some further conversation, Mrs. Claremont took her leave; no sooner was she out of the house, than Cornish exclaimed, "Oh Clara, how can you like that Sophia Dalton. I never saw such a lump of affectation. Why she never answers a simple question properly, but she begins with 'I really cannot say, or if I am credibly informed, I think I may venture to assert.' Why cannot she speak like other girls? like Isabella for instance, I hate such would be women."

"That is all the fashion," answered Clara, coolly, "nobody speaks otherwise. It would be thought the height of vulgarity to speak in a plain hum-drum way. Sophia Dalton was reckoned the most fashionable girl in our school, so Mr. Fillagree our dancing master used to say. Now only mark the difference; Charlotte, who is one year older, and understands French and English grammar, and history, and plays much better than her sister, still is not thought so accomplished, or half so

much admired as Sophia, because she has not been to Mrs. Stuart's, and enjoyed the advantage of a fashionable education, and therefore does not carry the imposing air, and fashionable *je ne sais quois* about her, as her sister does."

"Ah! ah! that may be all very fine," replied Cornish, laughing heartily; "but for all your grand description of the girl of fashion, Charlotte is to my taste. Which do you prefer?" he asked of Isabella, who had not yet spoken: "Sophia with her graceful lounge, and fashionable stare; or, Charlotte, with her good humoured smile, and modest countenance."

"I have seen so little of either of the Miss Dalton's, that I can hardly judge of their dispositions from the short time I was in their company," answered Isabella mildly; "but from what little I saw of them, I think I should like Charlotte best. She bears with her sister's ill-humour so well, and makes such kind answers to her cross remarks, that she appears to be very amiable indeed, and I think I prefer her to her sister."

"There's a good girl," cried Cornish, "I knew you would say so; don't you think she

has described Charlotte well, mamma," he continued, turning to his mother. "And do you not agree with me in saying, that Sophia makes herself very ridiculous?"

"You are quite right in your opinion of Charlotte, but I think Cornish you are too hasty in judging of Sophia by her manners," returned Mrs. Claremont, "I believe she possesses many good qualities, which are entirely obscured by that odious failing affectation, which proceeds from too great a desire to please. To endeavour to give pleasure to our friends, is certainly an amiable motive for exerting ourselves; but when it degenerates into a thirst for admiration, it ceases to be a virtue, and renders the possessor of it contemptible in the eyes of every sensible person; which is the case with Sophia Dalton."

"But how can affectation be so great a fault, mamma, when you say it proceeds from too great a desire to please," asked Clara; "surely it would be very wrong in us not to make the most of the pains and expense our good parents have bestowed upon our education?"

"Certainly, Clara," answered her mother,

“it would be extremely wicked, and ungrateful in young people to throw away the advantages bestowed upon them, by their parents, through the blessing of an All-wise and All-merciful Providence. Education, ought not only to improve our manners and persons, but also to enlarge and enlighten our understandings. Dancing and music, are merely external accomplishments, they can neither render a girl amiable in her temper, or agreeable in her manners ; you see the truth of this in Sophia Dalton, who having been very early in life separated from her parents by her godmother, who was very fond of her namesake, was sent to a fashionable boarding-school in Bath, where it appears nothing was attended to but mere showy accomplishments, without any regard to the cultivation of the qualities of the mind. You see the effects of such neglect in the temper of Sophia, for as her sister is amiable and unaffected ; she is proud, ungovernable, and violent. I am sorry to say that affectation is among the least of her faults, for she behaves in a very undutiful and rebellious manner to her mother, who now reaps the sad fruits of her child having been separated from her, and

allowing her to live with a weak-minded and yielding relation, who never spared any expense to gratify her darling's wishes ; and being always in company with grown up people, who from interested motives, never failed to pour into the willing ear of the deluded girl, protestations, which she implicitly believed, and thought herself a superior creature, above the vulgar mortals who daily passed her god-mother's elegant mansion."

"All this I heard from Mrs. Dalton, who bitterly repents ever having parted from Sophia. At her mother's earnest desire, Mrs. Monson permitted her god-daughter, to pay her a visit, to see her sisters, whom she had not seen since she was six years old. She is now fourteen, but is forward enough in her manners, to pass for seventeen or eighteen." As Mrs. Claremont said these words, she reached home, where she found Grace, who had finished her sum, walking in the garden with her Papa.

Isabella continued to improve both in health and spirits, and it was with the sincerest pleasure Mr. and Mrs. Claremont saw the rosy tint of health once more visit the pale cheek of their orphan niece.

The kindness with which she was treated by all the family, (Clara excepted), tended in no slight degree to sooth the wounded feelings of the sorely bereaved girl. But Clara could not, with any degree of patience, see herself so entirely thrown into the shade, by one whom she considered so much inferior, both in personal attractions, and elegant accomplishments; and this feeling of mortified vanity often caused her to treat her amiable cousin in a manner, for which, had not her better feelings been obscured by envy, her really affectionate heart would have severely smote her. Isabella had a very keen sensibility, which made her alive to any kindness from others; no wonder then that she should become so fervently attached to her uncle and aunt; who being mild and indulgent to their own children, were particularly so to their niece, from the distressing circumstances under which she first became their charge.

Clara ranked next in her affection; she loved her as a sister; for it was only when in company with strangers, or when she feared Isabella's superior talents would be called forth, that Clara behaved otherwise than

affectionately amiable. We have before said that Clara possessed an affectionate heart, which, often hid by traits of an unpleasant kind, would occasionally appear, and show itself in numberless little actions; and if she ever gave way to her temper, which was very warm, she was sure to make up for it by ten-fold kindnesses.

Cornish was very fond of Isabella, who by her gentle and affectionate behaviour often stopped him in his sarcastic remarks upon the failings of his sister. Whenever by his giddy thoughtlessness he forgot his lesson, or neglected his other studies, Isabella was always ready to assist him; and if ever he incurred his mother's displeasure, Isabella was always near to plead in his favour, and seldom pleaded in vain. As Isabella's health returned, Mrs. Claremont began to think of procuring a respectable young woman, who might be capable of undertaking the education of her daughters and niece; and for that purpose wrote to Lady Mildew, to request her to inquire for such a young person, possessing the qualities requisite for so important a situation. She soon had the satisfaction of

receiving an answer from her sister, in which she stated having heard a very high character of a young lady, from a particular friend of her's, who had once occasion to have some intercourse with her; and had found her to be a very amiable, as well as a very clever lady. She had been early accustomed to teaching, her mother having had a numerous family; but not until after the death of her father, had she thought of seeking a situation as governess, in some respectable family. Her father, a clergyman, had very little fortune, and upon his death, his widow found herself with a young family almost destitute; which determined Miss Fitzhenry (the eldest of the family) to endeavour to gain her own subsistence, by exerting those talents, which nature, and the best of educations, had bestowed upon her. Lady Mildew concluded by observing, she thought her sister could not do better than engage her, as it was very unlikely she would ever again meet with so desirable a young person as Miss Fitzhenry appeared in every respect to be. Upon the receipt of this letter, Mrs. Claremont determined to accept Miss Fitzhenry, as an instruc-

tress to her children, and wrote to Lady Mildew to that effect; and earnestly entreated her to come, and pass a few weeks at Hawthorn Parsonage, agreeably to her promise; and to bring with her, her young friend, as she wished as soon as possible, her little girls to begin their studies: they had been so long neglected, she feared it would be long before they could apply sufficiently to retrieve the time they had lost. It was then settled that Lady Mildew should come the following week, accompanied by Miss Fitzhenry.

CHAPTER III.

CLARA and Isabella looked forward with great anxiety to the promised visit, though with different feelings.—Clara thought it would be a fine opportunity to show off her superior accomplishments before her titled aunt, and new governess; she was very certain, that her aunt, who mixed so much with the fashionable world, would infinitely prefer her brilliant and dazzling appearance and manners, to the less showy, but more interesting ones of her cousin; she felt not so sure of Isabella's not eclipsing her, were she called upon to exert her musical talents, or to produce her port-folio for her aunt's inspection; But she relied upon the great timidity of her character, which, she was sure, would prevent her from ever exhibiting her talents for admiration, she therefore rested tolerably quiet upon this head. But she was vexed indeed at not having any becoming dress to

exhibit herself in, as she was determined to appear most lovely, upon her first introduction to her new governess, which she could not do without a new frock ; and as her cousin had a pretty black silk one, she asked her mamma to allow her to have one like it, which Mrs. Claremont did. But then she must have a gold locket like Isabella's, but this her mother absolutely refused, saying, that she could not allow such a little girl as Clara to wear such an expensive ornament: but that she always liked to see her children dressed neat and plain ; and not by wearing jewels, which belong only to ladies, to try to appear what they really were not.

“ But mamma, you let my cousin wear one,” replied Clara, looking very disappointed ; “ and she is six months younger than I am.” “ Yes, my love,” answered Mrs. Claremont, “ I certainly do allow Isabella to wear her's, but then it was the last gift of her dying mother, who on her death-bed charged her always to wear that locket ; you surely would not wish me to be so cruel as to deny her the melancholy satisfaction of obeying the last request of a mother she so tenderly loved ?

But," she continued, turning to Clara, who was busily employed in threading a jet necklace; "Why will not this necklace do? I think it looks very pretty." "So it does mamma; but I heard you say to papa, the other evening, when he said, we ought to be dressed alike, you intended it, and as you were going to buy me a new pelisse, you should also purchase one for Bella; and yet will not allow me to have a locket like hers;" replied Clara, in a discontented tone, as a pang of jealousy shot across her bosom, as she thought her mother's objection merely arose from a wish of seeing her cousin look better than her.

"I would certainly purchase a similar one for you, Clara," said Mrs. Claremont, "but I think you are yet too young; and now that I have explained my motives for allowing your cousin to wear one, and also for my not according to your wishes, I hope you will remain contented till you get a little older. I shall be extremely displeased if you again require me to refuse you, as you know I always gratify your most trifling wish when it is in my power;" saying this, Mrs. Claremont left the room, leaving Clara little disposed to follow

her advice as to being contented with her plain black necklace. Isabella was not without her troubles : for having been brought up in solitude, and close retirement, the very idea of even seeing a stranger, was fraught with danger the most terrible to her imagination ; never having been at school, or under any other instructress than a beloved mother, she did not know what the term "governess," meant ; but Clara soon gave the knowledge she required, by describing to her one of the teacher's under whom she was placed. This description did not tend to relieve poor Isabella's fears ; as none of the children had ever been with their aunt for any length of time, she could form no decided idea of *her* character, but from what little she did hear, she gained courage sufficient to talk with some composure of the approaching visitors ; but as to her dress, or to the appearance she was to make on the day of her aunt's arrival, she had never once thought about. Her mind was so fully occupied with the dread of seeing her new governess, and the subsequent trials she would be obliged to endure, that all other ideas were for a while suspended ; and she

was constantly asking questions of Mrs. Claremont about the disposition, manners, and appearance of the expected arrivals. Notwithstanding her aunt's oft repeated assurance, that she had never seen Miss Fitzhenry, and that what she knew of that lady was only by report, poor Isabella was so bewildered with her own conjectures and fears that the next week would put an end to all the delightful hours she had spent at the Parsonage, that she continued to put question after question, and to receive the same answer. The children were much amused with their cousin's fears : but more particularly Cornish, who would describe Miss Fitzhenry as all that was horrible to his dismayed auditor, and then would reverse the picture when he found he had gone too far, and represent her as a fairy princess. As the day drew near for the arrival of the expected guests, her colour varied so often, that Mrs. Claremont alarmed for the health of the timid girl, which still continued delicate, prohibited any farther conversations on the subject : Cornish, whose love for Isabella made him alive to any danger that threatened his cousin, ceased to rally her about the

“new madam,” as he styled Miss Fitzhenry, and united his efforts with those of Clara, who really pitied her cousin, to allay the apprehensions of Isabella.

Before we introduce Lady Mildew to our readers, we think it necessary to give some account of her and Mrs. Claremont, previous to the beginning of this narrative; Grace, Eliza, and Clara Bell, were three sisters, but having unfortunately lost both their parents, they were consigned portionless to the care of their maternal grandmother Mrs. Monteagle, who, weak and indulgent, gratified every wish of her darling grand-children. Eliza, the second, was decidedly her favourite; and as she never married, but always remained with her aged relative, it is not surprising that affection should so far increase, as to induce her to leave her fortune wholly to Eliza. Grace at the age of eighteen, was a beautiful and accomplished woman, (for the education of her charges had been the first care of Mrs. Monteagle) but was possessed of no steady principal; was extremely gentle, but capable of receiving good impressions. Her younger sister Clara, was directly opposite to Grace;

It might well be said of her in the poet's words, "severe in youthful beauty, she was all majesty." Her mind was firm, and her heart capable of the strongest attachments. Eliza's character was of no particular cast, she was beautiful, but her beauty was of that insipid sort, that after the first impression, the beholder would wonder what was in that face to attract admiration, and would turn with delight to gaze upon the expression and soul-inspiring eye of the ardent Clara, or rest upon the mild blue eye of Grace. One summer, Mrs. Monteagle took the sisters to Bath, where by their singular loveliness they were called the "graces." There Grace first saw Mr. Claremont. Her interesting style of beauty soon captivated the heart of that gentleman, who accordingly applied to Mrs. Monteagle, and became the accepted lover of the charming Grace ; and after a lapse of six months became the happy bride of Mr. Claremont ; who soon found that although his young wife possessed all the milder virtues, she was deficient in the one thing needful, religion. She had always been at school, and had contracted a habit of thinking lightly on that subject ; a habit which is ever alarming.

Her husband, in the gentlest manner, pointed out the ill effects resulting from being remiss in public, as well as private worship; and these remonstrances had their full weight; for Mr. Claremont soon had the pleasure of seeing his beloved Grace exercise all the duties of a good christian. It was true that Mrs. Claremont attended public worship, and gave alms to the poor, but it was more from the goodness of her own heart, and the wish of pleasing her dear Alfred, than from any feeling of the gratitude she owed her Creator. Clara was soon after her sister's marriage addressed by a rich baronet, Sir Godfrey Mildew; and after a twelvemonth spent almost entirely in the society of her lover, under her grandmother's roof, consented to become his wife. Soon after the marriage ceremony, the happy pair set off for the continent, where they remained for some years, during which time Lady Mildew had become the mother of a fine boy. On their passage home, Sir Godfrey was attacked by a malignant fever, which carried him off in less than a fortnight, and thus left Clara a widow at the age of twenty-five; but she possessed a mind capable of bearing up under the seve-

rest trials, and as she pressed her darling boy to her bosom, blessed God for having spared her such a comfort. But this consolation was not granted her; hardly had she arrived in England, and seen the remains of her idolized husband conveyed to their last abode, ere her child was attacked by the measles; which soon proved fatal. This last blow required all the Christian's fortitude and submission to the will of God to support Lady Mildew under this second bereavement; but she bowed obedience to the will of "*Him* who giveth, and *Him* who taketh away," and soon was enabled to say, "*Thy* will be done." After the term of her widowhood was expired, she flew to Mrs. Claremont, (whom she had ever loved with all the fervour of an affectionately attached sister,) and whom she found the mother of three children. From her she learned of her grandmother's death, (for every communication between the sisters had been fruitless, as every letter had been lost,) and the settlement of the whole of her fortune upon Eliza, who had also extorted from her a promise, that she would give to her the little Clara to rear as her own. This was a severe disap-

pointment to Lady Mildew, who, although of too generous and noble a disposition to envy her sister the ample fortune left her by her grandmother, yet could not forbear feeling sorry at not having her little namesake, as she fully intended to have offered to educate and provide for her little niece, had Miss Bell not anticipated her in this her most favourite scheme. Little Grace was too young and too delicate for her mother to think of parting with her; but Mrs. Claremont earnestly begged her sister to come and reside with her. To this Lady Mildew would not consent, but returned to Ivy Cottage, (the seat her husband had purchased expressly for her ladyship, previous to his leaving England,) and contented herself with making frequent, but short visits to her sister.

After the death of Miss Bell, (who resided in Scotland, but with whom she had kept up a regular correspondence,) she determined to beg for Clara; but when she heard from Mrs. Claremont, of her having received an addition to her family by the death of her husband's brother, who had left an orphan girl totally unprovided for, she determined to pay a visit

to the Parsonage before she decided. Her heart pleaded strongly for the little orphan; but she knew that her sister had not left Clara very well provided for; yet she wished much to let her little orphan niece have an equal portion with her cousin. But she determined not to decide hastily, but to study their different characters, and to take her measures accordingly. We will now leave her for the present, to relate what occurred previous to her arrival at Hawthorn Parsonage.

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CHAPTER IV.

ON the evening previous to the day on which their Aunt was expected, as Isabella was employed in copying a drawing lent to her by Charlotte Dalton, Cornish ran hastily into the room, exclaiming, "come Bella, come directly, and see what I have got, it was promised me by that old woman we went with mamma to see, some time ago, but she never gave it to me till to-day. Now do come and see it, will you?"

"I will come the moment I have finished this;" answered his cousin, as she quietly put away her drawing materials, "you know I must not let this drawing get soiled, or Charlotte will not lend me another to copy."

"Very well Bella, if you wish it at all you must come now, and directly too," replied Cornish, in a firm tone, as he waited impatiently for Isabella.

“Clara, will you not come?” said Isabella, as she was leaving the room; “You had better come now with us, as Cornish says we must see it now or not at all.” “No, I thank you,” returned Clara, as she continued playing on the piano; “I must practise this air till I can play it perfectly; for as Sophia Dalton told me yesterday, it is so very fashionable, I should not wonder if my aunt was to ask me to play it; and only think what a vulgar little rustic she will think me, if I cannot play such a simple thing as this.”

“Oh, do not mind Clara,” cried Cornish, “leave her to practise her fashionable airs, that she may captivate her new governess’ heart, while we run and see my pretty little rabbit;” so saying, he dragged Isabella out of the room. Clara no sooner saw the coast clear, than she instantly ran to Isabella’s portfolio, opened it, and took out her cousin’s copy of Charlotte Dalton’s drawing, and placed her own in its stead; and then with a trembling hand and palpitating heart, placed Isabella’s among her own drawings. To account for the seeming dishonesty of this action, it is necessary to inform our readers

that two or three days previous to this incident, Clara accidentally overheard a conversation that passed between her papa and mamma; as she was passing through the school-room, which was adjoining the parlour, she heard Mr. Claremont remarking to his wife, "how beautifully their niece had drawn a group of children surrounding a blind fiddler, while some were dancing, and others listening attentively to what the poor man was saying;—but," he continued, "I am afraid she will lose it, or leave it about to get dirty before her aunt arrives, or that would win Lady Mildew's heart; she always patronises genius; particularly in the science of drawing. I am extremely anxious the dear girl should gain her affection, as I then think she will be provided for." This determined Clara to draw a similar one, but not possessing that talent in an equal degree to her cousin, she could not succeed; and the fear of Isabella's gaining the admiration of Lady Mildew, and thus throw herself in the back ground, overcame every other consideration, and tempted her to commit an action, which

at another time she would have shuddered at the bare idea of.

Isabella soon returned with Cornish and Grace, the latter crying out, "Oh Clara, who do you think we saw with widow Adams, who has brought Cornish his beautiful——"

"I am sure I cannot say, unless you mean her daughter, that disagreeable Mrs. Woods," answered Clara, trying to speak in as composed a tone as she could. "I do not know who else you could have seen with Widow Adams, for the other day when we called upon her, she said her son was gone to sea, and she did not expect to see him again for at least two months."

"Oh no, it was not her son," answered Grace, laughing, "can you not think of any body else? well then, I will tell you, it was nobody more or less than that little match girl, whom we met one day as we were going to Mrs. Dalton's, and who picked up your music-book, which you dropped as you were standing to look at that large and beautiful mirror that stood in a shop window; well, she has turned out to be Mrs. Wood's little Ann. Now do not you remember her saying

to you, as she gave you your music-book, "Miss, you should never stand to look in a glass in the street, for you are a very beautiful young lady, and that will make people ridicule you, and laugh at you as being very vain of your pretty person; you remember her now, don't you Clara," she continued, as she saw her sister's face and neck crimson with shame.

"Oh yes, I recollect that little dirty creature," replied Clara, colouring more and more with shame and anger; "how dare she to take upon herself to reprove me; if we had not been in the street, and so many people looking at us, I should have told her not to think of taking upon herself the task of reprimanding a young *lady*! Indeed! such insolence."

"Who is the unfortunate person who has been so unhappy as to fall under your displeasure, Clara?" asked Mr. Claremont; who had unperceived by Clara, entered the room time enough to hear the concluding part of her sentence. "Why it surely must be a very heinous offence to cause you to make use of such very strong language. I again ask, who

is the offender, and what is the offence? will you not tell me Clara? then I must appeal to your cousin. Do you not know who it is that Clara is so angry with, my dear?" he continued as he turned to Isabella; who seeing Clara ready to sink to the earth with confusion, did not know how to act; but summoning up her courage, she related all she heard from Grace of the little match girl, and of the circumstance that had first brought her into notice. Mr. Claremont heard all in silence, and after she had finished, he turned to his daughter, and in a serious tone pointed out to her the folly of being angry with a little girl for having warned her against the folly of vanity; but that she ought to be angry with herself for allowing a match girl, who had never experienced the advantages she had enjoyed, to be so much her superior in the qualities of the mind. Poor Clara burst into tears, as she earnestly begged her papa to forgive her; acknowledged her fault, and promised to try to correct herself. Isabella added her entreaties to those of Cornish; so that Mr. Claremont yielded to their solicitations, and affectionately kissing his daughter, asked

her to sing a favourite song. Clara drying her eyes, complied, and as nature had bestowed upon her a pretty voice, she did justice to the song her father had selected for her to exercise her vocal talents upon. When she had finished, Cornish exclaimed, "I declare, Clara, I never heard you sing so well, as you have just now done, nor ever saw you look better than you do to-night. Can you tell me the reason Papa?"

"Yes, I think I can;" replied Mr. Claremont, smiling at the abruptness of this remark. "It is because your sister has cast off the mask of affectation, and appears in her own natural character; nothing is so odious and deforming as affectation. No wonder, then, that you should think her now improved: after being so long a stranger to our own modest, and unaffected Clara, it is quite a pleasure to catch a slight glimpse of what was once so stationary." Clara looked down, not a little abashed at these words of her father; she felt the truth of what he said, but pride prevented her from acknowledging this; she therefore remained silent. Mr. Claremont observed his daughter's confusion, but thought

it better to take no notice, and therefore turned to Grace, who was standing by the window, and who now said, "Papa, have you seen Cornish's rabbit, which was given him by widow Adams? come here, and you can see it. Is he not a pretty fellow?"

"Yes, very. But who is that little girl standing by the garden gate?" asked her father, as he looked out of the window.

"That is little Ann," replied Cornish, "I think she is a very neat, modest looking little girl."

"Come, come," cried little Alfred, "come to tea; mamma is waiting with sister Clara, and cousin Bella, for you to come to tea in the drawing room." Mr. Claremont, with Cornish, and Grace, obeyed the summons. "Well Clara, have you accomplished the difficult task you set yourself to do to-day," asked her father.

"O yes, papa," Clara answered, "I finished it before tea, and have placed it in my portfolio."

"And have you finished yours, Isabella?" enquired her aunt. "I hope you have taken care of your friend Charlotte's drawing."

"I have put it away with my own copy in my port-folio, aunt," replied Isabella, as she crossed the room for the purpose of showing it to her aunt. Clara now wished herself far away; and made an internal vow that she would never place herself in so uncomfortable a situation again. Her embarrassed feelings were, however, quickly relieved, by hearing her mamma say to Isabella, that she did not wish to see her drawing then; and that she placed too great a dependence upon her niece's word, to think of wanting any proof of the truth of what she said. "Thank you, my dear aunt, for your good opinion of my veracity," replied Isabella, as her eyes glistened with delight, at her aunt's speech. "I have taken care of it, and it is not at all soiled; and I hope to be able to return it to Charlotte without its having sustained any injury whatever."

"Mamma," when will our aunt come?" exclaimed Grace, in a tone of impatience; "I hope she will come early in the morning; and not just as we are going to bed. It will be so very provoking to be obliged to leave her as soon as we are comfortably settled by her

side, and listening to what she says ; and in looking at Miss Fitzhenry." "I hope then, you will make yourself contented, when I tell you I expect your aunt to arrive before twelve o'clock," said her mother, "but as she travels in her own carriage, I should not be surprised, if we were to see her even sooner than the time she mentioned. However, I would advise you, (if you wish to see Lady Mildew when she first enters the house,) not to be playing in the garden, or learning a lesson you ought to have done to-day."

"I know all my lessons, mamma," answered Grace ; and cousin Bella has been so kind as to hear me repeat them ; and has heard me play my music lesson over ; and looked at my cyphering, so that I am certain of not being in punishment to-morrow.—Ask Isabella, mamma, if she does not think I know my lesson perfectly." "Yes aunt, Grace knows her lessons very well indeed, and has been a very good girl, and very patient. She has taken great pains both with her music and sums," replied Isabella, as she smiled kindly upon her little eager and impetuous pupil.

"You ought to be very grateful Grace, to your cousin," said Mrs. Claremont, "for undertaking so troublesome a task, as superintending your studies."

"Yes, I think you ought indeed, Grace," exclaimed Cornish who had been an attentive auditor of the foregoing conversation. "I only wish I had somebody, who would be always reminding me of my duty; then I should never get into such dreadful scrapes as I now do with papa. The best of it is, Isabella never thinks it a trouble; but does it with such good nature, and smiles so sweetly upon Grace when she is good, that it makes one really worship her."

"But then Bella likes it," said Clara, vexed at hearing her cousin praised so highly, particularly before her father, (who had, since the removal of the tea-equipage, taken a book, which he appeared to be intently perusing, but who, in reality was anxiously listening to this conversation,) and unconsciously taking the very method to excite his attention;—therefore there can be no such very great merit in her attending so readily to Grace's studies."

“ Yes, Clara, there is very great merit due to your cousin ; for she is not so nearly related to Grace as you are ;” answered Mr. Claremont in a mild voice ; and yet you see the pains, and the trouble, which she takes with her, and the kindness with which she bears all her childish faults ; while you, Clara, never once think of helping or assisting your sister, out of any difficulty she may fall into. I do not say that this proceeds from any want of affection on your part, but the truth is, you are always too much occupied with yourself to attend to the wants of others. And very often, (I am ashamed to say it,) when you are adorning your little person, Isabella is either hearing Grace practise her music lesson, or attending to her other studies.”

Isabella blushed deeply at hearing herself praised by one whose good opinion she was so anxious to obtain. Clara coloured, but it was with anger at her Father’s so warmly defending her cousin ; her envious feelings would have led her to expose herself to the anger of Mr. Claremont, had not her mother, seeing how ill able she was to command her

temper, at being so sharply reprimanded by her father, announced the time for the young folks to retire to bed. Mr. Claremont affectionately kissed Isabella, as she was leaving the room, and said, "good-night, my dear girl, and take with you my best thanks for your kind attention to my little heedless girl."

When they arrived in their apartment, Isabella noticed a cloud upon the fair brow of her cousin, but thinking it better not to take any notice of Clara's silence, continued quietly to undress; till at last, Clara, unable to bear the provoking expression of happiness so perceptible on Isabella's countenance, exclaimed, "I wonder Bella, what you give Cornish to sound your praise. I suppose," she continued, with a contemptuous toss of her little head, "you write his exercise for him, or hear his latin grammar, I should be ashamed of such meanness!"

"Oh, Clara, how can you talk so unkindly," cried Isabella, her eyes swimming in tears; "what have I done to deserve such unkind treatment from you? I am not conscious of having done any thing to deserve the accusation of meanness. As to what you say about

your brother, I do not understand what you mean. I never write his exercise, but I do certainly very often hear him repeat his latin lesson. You surely cannot be angry with me for doing that?"

"Oh no, certainly not," returned Clara, in a haughty tone, "you are at liberty to do what you please about hearing Cornish his lessons. But I always like to see people open, and not by bribery, prevail upon another person to publish every little kind action that he or she has done in their life-time."

"What do you mean, Clara," asked Isabella, in a firm tone of conscious innocence. "I never prevailed upon, or bribed your brother, to sound forth any of my actions. Who can have been so ill-natured as to represent actions, which I merely did out of kindness, in such a contemptible light? And how can you, my dear Clara," she continued, as this ebullition of wounded honour subsided, and her natural mildness returned, "how can you believe, even for a single moment, that your own Bella could act in so disgraceful a manner;" and as she concluded, Isabella no longer able to command her feelings, wept aloud. Upon

this, Clara flew to her cousin, and entreated her to forgive the fretfulness of temper, which she had given way to, and severely reproached herself, for treating so harshly, her really dear Isabella ; who soon dried her eyes, and the two cousins entirely reconciled, proceeded to undress. It was long before either of them could go to sleep. Clara was kept awake by thinking what her papa would say, if he knew how deceitfully she had acted towards his orphan niece ; and in making good resolutions for the future : she determined, the first opportunity that presented itself, to restore her cousin's drawing to its rightful place ; and she fell asleep reflecting upon the consolation she should derive from the inward consciousness of having acted right in making this reparation. Isabella's thoughts were fully occupied with the dread of the approaching visit ; and if she once reflected upon her cousin's strange behaviour, it was only with the firm conviction that somebody had poisoned the mind of Clara against her. Her thoughts then reverted to her dear parents ; and as she thought of the many happy, happy hours she had spent in their society, her tears

began to flow. But she did not long allow herself this indulgence, for quickly drying her eyes, this amiable girl severely blamed herself for yielding to unavailing grief, when she had every reason to be grateful to that *Great Being*, by whose divine aid, she had been placed under the care of such excellent relatives ; and then with a heart expanding with gratitude to that *All-wise God*, for every blessing she possessed, this young christian fell asleep.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. CLAREMONT had at that time in her service, a young woman, who had lived with her sister, Miss Bell ; and at her death, Clara persuaded her mamma to engage her as servant to the children, which Mrs. Claremont did, and found her to be a very respectable quiet young woman. But Fanny possessed faults, which she had art sufficient to hide from her mistress ; for she was ill-tempered, malicious, and cunning ; but these wore the mask of simplicity and good humour. When she lived with Miss Bell, she had frequent opportunities of seeing Clara, whom she never failed to flatter, for which she often received very handsome presents ; such as gowns, caps, &c. &c. ; and she made herself so useful and serviceable to Clara, that the latter fancied she never could part with her. But Fanny hated Isabella ; she feared her influence over the mind of Clara would entirely fail, should

once her real motive, self-interest, be discovered ; and she apprehended that Isabella's clearer judgment, and more penetrating eye, would soon discover that it was not entirely through affection that Fanny indulged and extolled her " dear Miss Clara." She did every thing in her power therefore, to lessen Isabella in her cousin's esteem ; and having one day overheard Cornish repeating his lesson to his cousin, she immediately went to Clara, and told her that Isabella only heard Cornish his lessons on his promising to take every occasion to praise her for her kindness to Grace, before his father, as she was particularly anxious to appear in an amiable light to Mr. Claremont. Poor Clara, easily deceived, was wrought upon by the apparent deceit of Isabella's conduct to such a degree, that she gave way to the natural warmth of her temper in bitterly reproaching her cousin, for what she termed the meanness of her conduct.

" Come, Miss Clara, it is time to get up " said Fanny, as she undrew the window curtains. " Your mamma has sent me to tell you to make haste and dress, for she intends break-

fasting very early this morning, as she expects your aunt and your new governess before dinner." Clara and Isabella instantly arose, and dressing themselves with great haste, were proceeding down stairs, when Fanny beckoned the former to return, which she did; then shutting the door, Fanny told her young mistress that if she wished to wear a locket like her cousin's, she could lend her one. Clara started at the thought of deceiving her mamma, knowing, as she did, what she had felt, only the last night for having once acted deceitfully; she however thanked Fanny, but firmly declined her offer; saying she could not be so wicked, as to wear a locket, when her mamma had so decidedly expressed her disapprobation of such a trinket being worn by so young a girl. "Certainly, Miss Clara," answered Fanny, not a little abashed; "I only thought that you would wish to be as well dressed as Miss Claremont, on your first introduction to your new Governess, who will think you very shabbily dressed when compared with your cousin. I am sure I do not wish you to deceive your mamma; but it is such a pity, to see your

pretty fair neck without any ornament, while your cousin's, not half so beautiful as yours, has a handsome gold locket; and I could not bear the thought of my darling Miss Clara, being looked down upon for the want of a little jewel, when it was in my power to help her to it."

"Thank you, Fanny," replied Clara, in an irresolute tone; "I would accept your offer, but I am afraid it would not be right to deceive my mamma; particularly as she is so very kind to me, and never refuses me any thing that is proper for me to have. No, no," she continued, in a firm tone, "I cannot listen any longer," so saying, Clara ran down stairs, leaving Fanny standing with the locket in her hand, and not a little enraged at being thus refused, as this artful wretch wanted to entice Clara to do something wrong, that might make the latter dependant upon her good nature not to tell Mrs. Claremont; and then she knew she could make Clara connive at her stealing several articles, which had not a little tempted her honesty.

Clara found only her mamma and her cousin at the breakfast table; her papa and brother

having walked out to try if they could see any thing of the travellers. Mrs. Claremont remarked Isabella's want of appetite, for she could scarcely eat a mouthful, so great was her apprehension of the approaching visit; but took no notice of it, except by being kinder than usual. After the breakfast things were removed, Mrs. Claremont took out her work, and soon entered into conversation with Clara; Isabella, meanwhile, remained perfectly silent, till Mrs. Claremont suddenly asked her if she had ever seen widow Adams. Upon Isabella answering in the affirmative, her aunt proceeded to say, that as soon as Miss Fitzhenry was a little settled in her new abode, she should, with that lady, and Lady Mildew, go to see the poor blind widow and her grand-daughter. But Clara interrupted her, by saying, she was sure Miss Fitzhenry would not allow them.

"Oh yes she will, Clara," answered her mother; "Miss Fitzhenry from what I hear is very good-natured, and very fond of children; therefore I am certain she will do every thing in her power to render you happy when you deserve to be so."

“ Ah, so they used to say that Miss Baly was very good tempered,” answered Clara ; “ although she used constantly to thwart us in every little thing we wished to do ; and then say, as an excuse for her crossness, ‘ that it was not proper for young ladies, to do so and so ; ’ now Bella, don’t you think that was very provoking ? ”

“ But perhaps, Clara,” answered Isabella, smiling ; “ what you think she did through crossness, she did from a sense of duty.”

“ Why Bella, what a little sermonising thing you are grown,” exclaimed Clara, laughing ; “ why don’t you give me a lecture of an hour’s length, upon the propriety or impropriety of my talking so disrespectfully of my governess ? ”

“ Isabella is quite right, Clara,” said Mrs. Claremont ; “ for very often, I dare say, you think me cross, when I will not allow you to do any thing that I know to be wrong ; or will not grant your request, when you ask me for any thing, which I know to be very improper for you to have.”

Clara coloured deeply as she recollected the conversation that had passed between her and her mother, about the locket ; but she had

the gratification of knowing that she had resisted the temptation to deceive her mamma, when, had she been so inclined, she could have done it with great security; for as she always wore a black ribbon, with a miniature picture of her aunt, round her neck, she could easily have substituted the locket in its place, without danger of detection. But she could not rest so satisfied upon the subject of the drawing; her heart still continued to smite her for the deceitful part she had acted, and she was in terror, lest some unforeseen accident should discover to Mrs. Claremont, the treachery of her daughter. This fear constantly haunted her imagination, and she entered the parlour with the determination of replacing the drawing in her cousin's portfolio, the first opportunity. But when she saw her mamma, and thought how humbled she herself should feel if Lady Mildew admired Isabella's drawing more than her's; her good resolutions fled, and she thought she was doing no harm to her cousin, as the latter could easily draw a similar one. The idea next occurred to her, of asking Isabella to give that one to her, that she might pass it

for her own, but this was rejected as too humiliating, and to which her proud spirit could not submit ; she could not confess her inability to draw, without allowing her cousin to see her inferiority. She therefore determined to abide the consequences ; and quieted her remaining scruples, by resolving, the first opportunity, to make ample amends to her cousin for her unkind behaviour.

Soon after, Mr. Claremont entered with Cornish, and told Mrs. Claremont he had caught a glimpse of a carriage, which by the appearance of the horses, seemed to have travelled a great way ; therefore he thought it very likely to be Lady Mildew, with her friend. Clara instantly ran to the window, from whence she saw her aunt's carriage coming up the avenue. Poor Isabella would willingly have made her escape by the door, but this was prevented by Mr. Claremont, who caught hold of her as she was leaving the room, and drawing her towards him, kindly endeavoured to impart some little courage to the timid girl. Cornish, seeing his cousin look so pale, affectionately ran up to Isabella, and seating himself by her side,

took one hand, while the other was held by Mr. Claremont: Lady Mildew then entered, followed by an interesting young woman. The meeting between the sisters was affectionate in the extreme. After she had recovered from her agitation, Lady Mildew introduced Miss Fitzhenry to her sister, as a young lady she highly esteemed; and then kindly kissing Clara, who had, upon her aunt's first entrance, ran to welcome her, she asked for her little stranger niece. Mr. Claremont led the trembling Isabella up to Lady Mildew, who had no sooner caught a view of the dark, expressive eyes, and raven tresses of her lovely niece, than she started in evident astonishment: and it was some seconds, ere she could so far shake off her incomprehensible emotion, as to fold affectionately, to her bosom, her lately found niece, Isabella; who soon ventured to look at the countenance of Lady Mildew; and the expression of her mild hazel eye, as she returned her smile, so far encouraged Isabella, that she lifted her eyes from the ground, to take a view of the person of the long-expected, long-dreaded, Miss Fitzhenry, whose countenance bespoke

the goodness of her heart ; and whose voice, as she answered some questions of Cornish's, (who had already won her good opinion,) sounded so unlike the shrill and squeaking one Clara had so often described to her, as belonging to a governess, that she imperceptibly drew near the chair of the speaker. Mrs. Claremont was not a little surprised at the visible emotion of her sister, and felt some curiosity to learn the cause. Upon hearing Isabella's voice for the first time, its sweet and silver tones, as they reached the ear of Lady Mildew, (who had continued to watch her, even when engaged in conversation with her sister ;) made her colour change so rapidly, that Mrs. Claremont, fearing she suffered from indisposition, begged her to retire with her into another room ; but to this Lady Mildew would not agree, declaring that she only felt a slight giddiness, which she now hoped would not return. As Lady Mildew said this, she made a sign to her sister to take no further notice whatever of her agitation. Mrs. Claremont, more and more surprised, desisted from making any further offer of leaving the room to her sister ;

and crossing it to where Miss Fitzhenry sat, was proceeding to introduce, severally, her little pupils to her notice, when that lady, smilingly told her that she had been for some time acquainted with her young friends; and "I trust, my dear madam," she continued; "I shall not be disappointed in the expectations I have already formed of the disposition of these young ladies, for I think I can see in their expressive countenances, traces of an amiable disposition."

"I have never had cause to doubt the goodness of their hearts," answered Mrs. Claremont; "but where is Grace?"

At this instant the door opened, and Grace entered, followed by little Alfred, who flew up to his mamma, and hiding his little face in her lap, said, "Where is my new aunt, mamma; and which is the governess?" Lady Mildew soon satisfied the little fellow, as to which was his aunt; and he now so far conquered his bashfulness, as to sit upon his aunt's knee, and to chatter and laugh with Miss Fitzhenry. Cornish had, the moment Grace entered the parlour, led her up to his Aunt, and Miss Fitzhenry, with whom the

other children had become quite familiar, and who now led her into the garden, there to shew her all their little treasures.

As soon as Lady Mildew was left alone with her sister, and her brother-in-law, she explained the cause of her alarming agitation, by telling them that the likeness Isabella bore to a very dear friend of hers, with whom she had become acquainted, two or three months after she reached the continent; and from whom she had never heard for above eight years; this resemblance had totally overcome her; she added, that the last time she heard of her was from a friend of her late husband's, and then she heard of her marriage; and from her unaccountable silence since, she had every reason to suppose she was dead. "But," she continued, "the striking likeness this lovely girl bears to my deplored Florella, made me almost fancy that I saw a child of hers, as I knew she married soon after we left Italy to go to France. But it cannot be, for your brother Cornish, you say, married an East Indian; therefore she cannot be the child of my Florella."

Mr. Claremont then related to Lady Mil-

dew the history of his brother's life, during his residence in India; and assured her that for what he knew, his brother might have married an Italian, as he never once mentioned from what country his wife came.

This account raised Lady Mildew's spirits, and she resolved to write to the friend above mentioned, to ascertain whom Florella had married. But if it proved that her niece was the daughter of her friend, that friend was now no more. Painful as was this idea, Lady Mildew was anxious to ascertain the truth of her suspicions; but as Mr. St. Clare (the friend) was then in India, it must be some time before she could receive an answer; it was therefore determined that nothing should transpire of their surmises, till this expected answer arrived.

To give the conversation a different turn, Mrs. Claremont inquired of her sister, if she found herself at all altered in the opinion she had formed of the character of Miss Fitzhenry? To this, Lady Mildew replied, that far from being changed in her high ideas of that Lady, she was really quite delighted that she had the good fortune to meet with a

young person, so exactly suited to the situation for which she was wanted. It was not long ere Mrs. Claremont found the truth of her sister's observation; for she daily experienced some good effect that Miss Fitzhenry's mild and gentle behaviour produced upon the children.

CHAPTER VI.

THE likeness Isabella bore to the dear friend of Lady Mildew, prepossessed that lady in her favour; and upon a further acquaintance with her amiable and interesting niece, her fondness increased; and though she constantly treated Clara with as great kindness, yet the latter could evidently perceive her aunt's partiality for her cousin. This mortified her extremely; but her rage knew no bounds, when on the evening following her aunt's arrival, after she had exerted herself to appear to the greatest advantage, and after having danced, as she thought, most gracefully, that she might surprise her aunt with the superiority of *her* dancing, she heard Lady Mildew say to Mrs. Claremont, "she thought her little namesake danced most beautifully; but that she infinitely preferred Isabella's style, as the most unaffected and elegant." This was more than Clara had for-

titude to bear. After all the pains she had taken to excite admiration, to be thus eclipsed by one whom she thought quite vulgar and unfashionable ; and to hear her aunt, who she knew mixed with the great and fashionable world, give such faint and qualifying praise to her dancing, which she had always been told, was most divine, was altogether insupportable ; and Clara left the room to pour her sorrows into the sympathizing bosom of the condoling Fanny, who never failed to add fuel to the flame, by representing Isabella's conduct in the most artful colours, and then lamenting her ever having lived to see the day when her dear Miss Clara should be thus neglected, for a little deceitful creature who only wanted to gain the affections of Lady Mildew, that she might have all the handsome presents which would otherwise have been given to Clara. By conversations like this, Clara was persuaded to think herself injured by Isabella, whom she almost ceased to think of in any other light than in that of an artful intruder. Fanny was not a little pleased with the success of her schemes, but there were moments when she had reason to fear that Clara's

affectionate heart would cause the latter to alter her opinion of her cousin, and thus destroy all her plans; to prevent this, she had recourse to another expedient, which she no sooner thought of than she put into execution. She knew that Clara was very anxious to be called Miss Claremont; and she also knew that Isabella had the best right to that title, being the daughter of the elder Mr. Claremont. Soon after Isabella's arrival at the Parsonage, Mr. Claremont had desired the domestics always to address his niece as Miss Claremont. Fanny took occasion, one day, to insinuate to Clara, that it was through Isabella's persuasions this was done. This was another severe mortification to poor Clara, who could not endure the idea (as she was older than her cousin,) of being called by any other title than Miss Claremont; and this had the effect Fanny desired, as Clara ceased now to speak or even to go near her cousin, if she could possibly avoid it. But she was obliged to disguise her feelings, when in company with her parents and her aunt, and only when unperceived by any body, did she dare give vent to her spleen.

Meanwhile, the innocent cause of all this anger was daily advancing in the good opinion of Miss Fitzhenry, who found her to be extremely docile in her conduct, and persevering in her studies. The mild answers she gave, when Clara, irritated by hearing her praised, would become fretful and petulant, served only to endear her the more to the whole of Mr. Claremont's family. The only fault her kind friends found difficult to conquer was her extreme love of ease; this failing would often lead her into trifling scrapes, but the contrition she always expressed when she had thus indulged in indolence was always sure to gain her pardon. But as she had (during the first five years of her life) been accustomed to all the luxuries of an eastern climate, it required a very firm, though gentle hand, to eradicate the seeds of indolence which had taken such deep root. Excepting this fault, Isabella was all Lady Mildew's heart could wish; for she had enjoyed the advantage of "those, which are the golden hours of childhood; those which are spent in the society of a good mother." Her heart was "open as day to melting charity." Mild and gentle in her temper, and feeling in her disposition;

and although the gratitude she felt she owed to Mr. and Mrs. Claremont, made her bear with all the taunts and bitterness with which Clara so often treated her, yet it could not prevent her affectionate heart from being hurt at the daily instances she witnessed of the envy and even scorn, with which she was regarded by this young spoiled girl, and it weighed upon her spirits, and made her, at times, very unhappy; and nearly metamorphosed the naturally gay and light-hearted Isabella, into a drooping, low-spirited girl.

Mrs. Claremont and her sister, with concern, observed this change in their niece; and determined upon change of air, if she did not speedily recover her wonted cheerfulness. Lady Mildew often, when alone with Isabella, earnestly begged to know if there was any thing uncomfortable, or that afflicted her in her present situation: she never received any other answer than that she was perfectly happy, until one day, after she had been particularly anxious to ascertain the cause of her niece's unhappiness, Isabella burst into tears, and entreated her dear aunt to ask no more questions, as she could not answer any; but that she was as happy as she could expect to

be. For Isabella could not bring herself to own to Lady Mildew, (whom she already loved with the ardent affection of a daughter,) that the source of her unhappiness originated in Clara's unkindness. With this unsatisfactory reply, her aunt was obliged to remain silent ; but she resolved to watch narrowly the conduct of her two nieces, as she strongly suspected all was not right in that quarter.

The mornings were, by the children, devoted to their studies, and Mrs. Claremont, with her sister, often joined Miss Fitzhenry in the school-room. One morning, about a fortnight after her arrival at Hawthorn Parsonage, Lady Mildew repaired there, for the purpose already mentioned, and seating herself by the side of Miss Fitzhenry, proceeded to enquire how her pupils advanced in the knowledge of history.

"Miss Clara improves rapidly," answered that lady ; "and I think by a little attention she will soon be equal to her cousin, who at present knows much more of history than Clara. I am obliged, sometimes, quite to find fault with Isabella, for she devotes too much of her time to that study, and thereby

takes from the time she ought to devote to her other studies."

"Well, I am glad to hear Isabella is fond of history, but I agree with you in saying she ought not to neglect her other studies for that," answered Lady Mildew; "but my dear Grace, what are you about?"

"I am trying to learn Cowper's lines on his mother's picture;" said Grace, as she walked up to her aunt with the book in her hand, "I do not know it yet, but Isabella does; she learnt it when she was a very little girl, her mamma taught her."

"Will you oblige me my love, by repeating those beautiful lines;" said her ladyship to Isabella, who was sitting in the window-seat, busily engaged in tracing the source of some river on a map. She instantly, in a low, but sweet voice complied. But as she came to these lines,

I heard the bell tolled on thy funeral day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;

her voice faltered, and her dark eyes filled with tears, as the recollection of her own feelings on a similar event crossed her mind;

and rendered her unable to proceed. Lady Mildew tenderly kissed her niece as she sat down, and requested Clara to repeat Gray's "Bard," which she did in a very animated and expressive style ; but she entirely spoiled her otherwise good delivery by the many affected attitudes into which she threw herself. When she had finished, her aunt thanked her for her prompt compliance with her wishes, but at the same time gently hinted, how much better she should have liked it, had she attended more to the subject, and less to the manner of delivering it. As Lady Mildew ended, Mr. and Mrs. Claremont entered ; and after some conversation with Miss Fitzhenry, they requested Isabella to shew her aunt the drawing they had so much admired. Isabella went to her portfolio, and brought forth the drawing, which she gave to Mrs. Claremont ; but how great was her surprise at hearing her uncle exclaim, "Why Bella, my love, how very carelessly you have finished it. I am afraid your old enemy has assailed you here," he continued ; as he pointed to a figure very slovenly done. Isabella, who, on hearing these words had looked

at the figure now said, "I am sure my dear uncle, I took particular pains to do this figure well. I think this cannot be mine; I put it away myself, so there can be no mistake; but perhaps Clara, you—" but here she stopped; for as she looked towards her cousin, whose complexion varied from red to white, and from white to red, her confusion struck her forcibly; and fancying, she knew not what, she remained silent. Mr. Claremont then asked Clara for her copy, which she, with a trembling hand and downcast eye, gave to her aunt, who instantly broke forth into the warmest expressions of admiration, at the masterly style in which it was done; and at the same time turned to Isabella, and pointed out where her copy was inferior to her cousin's. Poor Isabella made no answer, but the expression of her mild reproving eye, as she stole a glance at Clara, seemed to say, "how could you act so unkindly." Clara's eyes, as they met those of her cousin's, sunk upon the ground, and her confusion momentarily increased. Lady Mildew, who thought it proceeded from modesty, took no notice of her niece's blushing cheek; but could not forbear

feeling disappointed at her favourite Isabella not having yet conquered her indolence ; and at the same time felt for her, at being thus publicly mortified ; she therefore turned from her, and continued to examine the drawing which her brother-in-law had then in his hand. The latter suddenly exclaimed, "How is this ? Why here is Isabella Claremont, written upon the back !" and he shewed it to Lady Mildew, and turned round to Isabella, who had (overcome with the idea of being lowered in the esteem of her best friends, for having apparently so totally given way to idleness,) sunk, senseless, on the floor. Mr. Claremont, taking his fainting niece in his arms, carried her to an open window. Lady Mildew and her sister busied themselves in trying to recover the still insensible girl ; while Clara exclaimed, as her alarm for her cousin overcame every other feeling ; "O my dear papa, I am afraid I have killed my poor cousin Bella ! you will never forgive me when you know how wicked I have been ; and how shamefully I have returned all my cousin's kindness." Lady Mildew desired her not to agitate Isabella, who was slowly

recovering, and who, upon hearing Clara make this half-confession, threw herself upon her neck, and gave way to a violent flood of tears. Clara mingled her tears with those of her cousin, as she (in the most penitent manner) confessed how she had been led by envy, and the fear of not appearing equal to her cousin in talents, to commit so degrading an action, finished by begging the forgiveness of Isabella, her papa and mamma. Her cousin affectionately embraced her, and with great sweetness pleaded her cause. Mr. Claremont then tenderly kissed his niece, as he forgave his daughter, and said he hoped this day's mortification would serve as a lesson to Clara, never to allow her better qualities to be hid or tarnished by that detestable vice,—envy. Her aunt and mother then kissed Clara, and the latter, as she embraced her daughter, breathed over her a mother's anxious prayer, and dismissed her with Isabella. As soon as they had left the apartment, Mrs. Claremont earnestly desired her sister's advice, how to guide her dear, but faulty child. Lady Mildew answered, that she had no doubt but that if properly and judiciously managed,

Clara might become a very amiable girl. It was no great wonder, that after having been so indulged and caressed by a doating aunt, she should not be so perfect in her character as was her cousin. Mr. Claremont expressed his pleasure at having his daughter under the care of Miss Fitzhenry, as he was certain, if it were possible to reform Clara, that lady would do it. This scene entirely unfolded to Lady Mildew the secret cause of Isabella's uneasiness ; but she trusted the forgiving disposition the latter had shewn towards her cousin, would make a deep and lasting impression upon the heart of Clara. This would certainly have been the case, had it not been for the pernicious effects Fanny's counsels had upon the mind of her young lady ; for fearing the effects of Isabella's generous conduct upon the really kind heart of Clara, she did all in her power to make the latter believe that her cousin's fainting was merely a counterfeit, to impose on the credulity of her uncle and aunt, that she might appear in an amiable and injured light to Lady Clara. All this was readily received by Clara, who eagerly swallowed the poison ad-

ministered by the artful Fanny, who with pleasure observed its effects upon the mind of her young mistress.

CHAPTER VII.

LADY Mildew had, soon after her arrival at her brother-in-law's, written to Mr. St. Clare; but as it must be, at least, a month or six weeks before she received an answer, she was obliged to wait, though not without some impatience, for the arrival of the expected intelligence. The next morning Lady Mildew went to the school room, and after sitting some time listening to Grace, who was eagerly telling her of her friend, Julia Dalton's dancing at a ball, that was given by a lady in the neighbourhood; she was leaving the room when Miss Fitzhenry mentioned her intention of taking the children with her to pay a visit to widow Adams. Her ladyship then said she would prepare to accompany them; and soon joining them, began their walk, accompanied by Grace and Cornish. On their arrival at the cottage, the door was opened by a neat little girl, who at the sight of so

many strangers, ran back, crying out, "Mother, mother, will you come here; here are so many ladies: do come, for I think they want to speak to you."

A respectable, decent looking woman soon appeared, and courtesying respectfully to Miss Fitzhenry, threw open the door of a clean little room, and asked her to walk in. The party entered, and addressing Mrs. Wood, Miss Fitzhenry told her that she had brought Lady Mildew to see her mother, and also to witness the improvement that little Ann had made in her reading.

"My mother is only in the meadow, ma'am," answered Mrs. Woods; "Betsy, my dear, go to your grandmother, and lead her in, and tell your sister to come in too."

"How does your mother contrive to amuse herself?" asked Lady Mildew, as the little girl disappeared.

"She plaits straw, my lady," replied Mrs. Woods; "which we send to the nearest market to sell, but we don't get much for it. We are in great distress now, for my landlord has just been in and told me that if I do not pay the remainder of the last year's rent by

next week, he will put an execution into the house. I am sure I do not know what will become of us, for I shall never be able to get up the money by the time, and my poor mother will be turned out of doors. I do not care about myself, but the thought of seeing her, blind and helpless as she is, without a roof to cover her head, quite kills me." Upon saying these words, the poor woman burst into tears. The children could not speak for emotion ; and turned to the window to hide their grief. Lady Mildew began to offer some consolation, by saying, that she thought, if she spoke to Mr. Williams (the land'lord) she could prevail upon him to wait till her husband returned from sea. But this, Mrs. Wood said, would be of no avail ; as he declared he could wait no longer, for he had given her the longest time he could, and that if she did not pay him, he would turn her and her family out of the house, and sell every thing she had. As she finished speaking, widow Adams came in, led by Ann, who, the moment she saw Clara, blushed, courtseyed, and said to Miss Fitzhenry, she hoped that young lady, (pointing to Clara,) had forgiven

her for taking the liberty of reproving her so rudely. "What do you mean, Ann," asked that lady in astonishment; "I hope you have not behaved in an unbecoming manner to Miss Claremont."

"I certainly did so ma'am, some time ago," answered the little girl, with a down-cast look; "but I hope Miss has forgiven me."

"It is very extraordinary, that I knew nothing of this before," said Miss Fitzhenry; "when did it happen Clara, my love?"

Clara coloured, and looked at Lady Mildew, (who had been talking to the poor blind widow, but who, on hearing these words, had walked towards the children,) and then at Grace, as if to implore the latter to be silent. Miss Fitzhenry still continued to wait, expecting an answer, while Lady Mildew looked from one to the other, as if to demand the cause of this strange silence, when all at once the door opened, and a servant came running, quite out of breath, into the room, and begged Lady Mildew to hasten home, as his master had been thrown from his horse, and brought into the house quite insensible; and that his mistress had desired him to fetch her sister, with Miss Fitzhenry and the children.

Words cannot paint the dismay of Lady Mildew on hearing this news. She instantly left the cottage, and hastened to Hawthorn Parsonage, where she found Dr. Ormond already arrived; and who declared it impossible for Mr. Claremont to survive the night. The children were overwhelmed with sorrow; but none felt the blow more acutely than poor Isabella. Her deceased father had early accustomed her to think and speak of her uncle as a second father; and the tender treatment she received from him, made her regard him as such. She went into the school room, where, in company with Clara and Grace, she was found by Miss Fitzhenry, weeping bitterly. She came to tell them that if they could command their feelings sufficiently, not to agitate the dying man, they would be admitted to his chamber. They eagerly promised to control their emotion; and were accordingly admitted into their father's room. But Clara, who had never practised self-control, burst into tears as the altered countenance of her parent met her view; and throwing herself upon the side of the bed, vehemently exclaimed, she would die with him. Poor Mr. Claremont lifted up his

dim eyes, as he saw approaching those objects of his tenderest love; objects which drew from his Creator the few moments allotted him on earth: but his hopes rested on the mercy, as well as justice of his God, through the merits of his Redeemer; and he fondly and inwardly breathed a blessing on the heads of his tender wife and beloved children, as in this world he beheld them for the last time.

“Restrain and control this burst of grief, my dearest Clara,” he exclaimed, “nought can save your parent now; therefore to His will, to whose Divine protection I commend ye all,—” he paused, and then resumed;

“Clara, give your fond and dying father one promise; and as you expect one day to realize the christian’s hope, and meet him again in that Heaven we all aspire to, and to which I hope soon to be admitted, keep it firmly; and the happiness it will produce will be your sweetest reward. Promise me to watch with vigilance, and curb with severity, every, even the smallest taint of that vile affectation, so prevalent, dear Clara, in all your words and actions; and which you acquired under the roof of your late aunt; promise me to make

my dear Isabella your standard of merit. Copy her, and your affectation will then cease ; and my Clara will yet prove the solace and delight of her dear bereaved mother. Will not you soothe your father, my child, with this promise ?”

Subdued to infantile softness by this affecting appeal from her father ; that father, so fondly, so dearly loved, so venerated ; the poor girl sunk on her knees, and tenderly seized and pressed to her lips, the cold, damp hand of her father ; and amidst sobs that convulsed her young frame, gave the promise required, and remained passive with her parent’s hand still clasped in her own.

Mr. Claremont again exerted himself, and called upon Cornish to approach, and take a fond father’s last blessing. “ Summon your fortitude, my dear manly boy, and whilst you deplore my loss, be resigned to the will of Him who gave, and Him who taketh away ; and next to Heaven, devote your every thought and energy to support the sinking spirits, and drooping form of your dear loved mother. God bless you, my son ; be dutiful to her, and kind to your brother and sisters, and He

will bless you." Beside his weeping sister, dropped the sobbing boy.

"Come near, Isabella, dear orphan of my much loved brother, listen to your dying uncle. Much have I seen and admired of your strength of intellect and firmness of mind, surpassing far your tender years. I have been, to the best of my ability, a tender parent to you since you were bereaved of your own dear one: listen then, dear girl, and rally your fortitude to hear my wishes, that you may obey them. Look at that dear one, and remember that to your dutiful and tender care, jointly with those of her dear children, I bequeath her sorrows. Console and support her, dear Isabella, in your own sweet comforting style, and you will gradually restore her spirits to thankfulness to Heaven, that has not wholly bereaved her, when *you*, and these, her darlings, are yet around her. And now Isabella, dear girl, remember it is my request, the request of a dying father, that you no longer secrete yourself alone in your chamber, to pay your devotions, and worship Him who reigns above; but that henceforth you openly read the Church

Prayers, as appointed in our beautiful Liturgy, night and morning, to all the dear party now assembled. By this, and a regular attendance upon Divine worship, the indifference, to say the least of it, which has been but too manifest in the family, will vanish ; and a beautiful, pious, and well-regulated religious system be established.—

“ Pardon me, my dearest wife, for this arrangement ; I love and revere you, but you know well, how often and deeply I have lamented the faulty and inefficient mode of worship in which you were reared, and you have seen and lamented it yourself. Blessed be Heaven ! you know that this is a highly gifted creature, with a mind long trained to every pious thought and every good action, by the sainted one, now no more, her late mother. Do you not all promise me to do as your mother and I wish ? Will you not walk in her ways, and worship with humility and truth, her God and your God ; the God before whose awful throne your now speaking father must shortly appear ? ”

Here Mr. Claremont dropped back on his pillow, and became faint with exhaustion.

His family were again convulsed with grief. Isabella and Lady Mildew only had power to administer cordials, which once more revived the poor sufferer.

"Dearest wife," said he, and he whispered a few words faintly. Mrs. Claremont agitated almost to a degree of insensibility, roused herself and put a book close to his hand. He beckoned Isabella, and requested her to read the prayers for the sick, as arranged in Dr. Paley's admirable work; and then demanded that all the household should be summoned. This he said he particularly wished, as there was no clergyman for miles round the village. A beautiful scene of resigned grief and patient suffering then ensued. Poor Isabella read, in a clear but agitated voice, the appointed prayers and litany for the sick. Meekly and thankfully, he audibly gave the response, "I am thankful!" Once more he fondly blessed his dear wife, and the children of his love; took a tender leave of the grief-struck Lady Mildew, and fervently prayed that she would console and support her poor sister. Gave to Miss Fitzhenry, (who had entered by his desire, with the little Alfred,) a short

but earnest entreaty for the care of the dear children ; and with one faint and dying glance on all around, sunk into the arms of Mrs. Claremont and her sister ; heaved one deep long drawn sigh, and the scene was for ever closed in this world, on the tender husband, fond father, ever kind friend, and good christian.

Mrs. Claremont, who was then in a very bad state of health, was unable to support this severe trial. She fell into long and deep swoons, and only recovered from one fit to fall into another. Dr. Ormond was alarmed for the life of his patient, and left not her couch for some days. This, added to the last awful event, made a deep impression upon the children. Clara, whose passions were always violent, and in the extreme, could find no comfort, and gave herself up to uncontrollable grief. But Isabella, whose mind had been tutored, and accustomed to scenes of distress and suffering ; and whose mother had always implanted in her heart where to find “ grace to help in time of need,” experienced consolation from the “ source that never fails.”

Lady Clara attended her sister with the most unremitting care, and only left her couch to carry hope to the terrified children, who had flown (upon first hearing their papa was no more, and that their remaining parent was in danger of being snatched from them,) to the door that opened into a dressing room, adjoining the chamber in which Mrs. Claremont lay, and clamorously demanded admittance. It was with great difficulty their aunt could persuade them to go and sit quietly with Miss Fitzhenry in the school room, promising to come down stairs as often as she could leave the invalid. All then quietly acquiesced, except Clara, who declared she would not be prevented from seeing her dear mamma. But Isabella added her entreaties to those of her aunt and Miss Fitzhenry, who represented the ill effects any agitation might have upon Mrs. Claremont; and at length so far conquered the stubborn girl, that she promised to remain with her cousin on condition that Lady Mildew would send frequent messages how her mamma was. It was in this time of severe trial, that Lady Mildew was confirmed how much Isabella evinced her superiority

over the violent and ungovernable Clara. The unwearied perseverance with which she endeavoured to comfort and console her cousin, and her mild forbearance, when Clara would tell her "that it could not be expected that they should bear such heavy misfortunes, with the fortitude she did. It was not *her* mamma who was ill, but only her aunt ;" and all this, though her heart was almost breaking with the idea of being bereaved of a second mother, she bore with uncomplaining silence. The control she had over her feelings, and the total absence of every selfish gratification, to enable her to help to amuse, and divert her cousin's grief, was most astonishing in a girl of her age ; and filled the heart of her aunt with love and admiration of such extraordinary strength of mind. At the end of two or three days, Lady Mildew had the pleasure of hearing from Dr. Ormond that her sister was out of danger, but that it would require great care to prevent a relapse.

It is impossible to describe the delight this intelligence gave to the poor children ; Clara threw herself upon her aunt's neck, and wept for joy ; Cornish rose up and ran, and threw

his arms round Isabella's neck, and kissed her so roughly, that she was obliged to beg for mercy. Lady Mildew then commended Isabella for her kind and gentle behaviour; which, she said, had tended in no slight degree, to keep the house quiet. Upon hearing this, the children ran to their cousin, and thanked her for her consideration, and severely blamed themselves for giving way to their own grief, instead of trying to do every thing in their power to second her efforts. But Clara could not bear to hear Isabella praised for what she called her apathetic behaviour, and therefore remained silent. Lady Mildew remarked the jealousy that caused this cold silence, but thought it better to take no notice of it; but it vexed her ladyship, as it clearly evinced how little Clara had profited by the mortifying scene that had passed but a short time ago. Isabella seized an opportunity to retire to her chamber, where she humbly and gratefully poured forth her thanks to that beneficent Being who had so mercifully preserved her dear aunt to her prayers, and the prayers of her young and innocent children. She was engaged in this

pious service when she heard a gentle tap at the door, and Cornish entered ; but was retiring when his cousin begged him to come back, and join her in praise and thanksgiving for the restoration of his dear mother from the brink of the grave. Claspings their hands together, the youthful cousins fell upon their knees, and for a season every other feeling was absorbed in that of gratitude for having one parent spared, when they had so recently been deprived of the other.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER the last sad duties had been paid to the remains of Mr. Claremont, and his disconsolate widow declared convalescent ; Lady Mildew offered her sister the use of her own elegant mansion, where she could remain till she could meet with a cottage suited to her taste. This offer was thankfully received by poor Mrs. Claremont, who was eager to quit a place rendered painful by the distressing scenes which had there passed. It was then settled, that in the beginning of next month, the family should remove to Ivy Cottage, (her ladyship's seat).

One morning, after the children had been to visit their mamma, who was allowed to leave her chamber, and had for the first time since her illness, descended into the parlour ; Cornish and Grace, with little Alfred, ran into the garden ; Clara seated herself at her lesson by the side of Miss Fitzhenry ; while

Isabella placed herself on the window-seat, and busily continued her drawing. Miss Fitzhenry was soon after summoned by Lady Mildew, who wished to speak to her, and left the room ; when Isabella, looking out of the window, saw little Ann, who on seeing herself observed, made a sign that she had something particular to say. Isabella ran down stairs, where she met the little girl in the hall. No sooner did Ann see Isabella, than she ran up to her, and eagerly demanded if she could see Miss Fitzhenry ? Isabella answered, that if she would follow her up stairs, she thought she might be able to see that lady ; so saying, she ran quickly up, followed by the little girl. Upon the landing they were met by Clara, who after staring at Ann, turned to Isabella, and asked her what she meant by bringing that girl up stairs ? To this, her cousin good-humouredly replied, that the little girl wanted to see Miss Fitzhenry ; as she finished speaking, they arrived at the school room door, which Isabella opened ; but not finding her governess there, she was returning, when Fanny, who was arranging the chairs, begged her not to leave that child

there, as she had no doubt, but that she would steal something. Isabella turned an indignant glance upon Fanny, as she told Ann she had better come again. But the poor girl burst into tears, as she earnestly prayed Isabella to allow her to remain in the kitchen till she could see Miss Fitzhenry, as she had something very particular to ask her. Isabella then enquired if she could be of any service; to which Ann replied that her poor mother was in great distress, as she could raise no money, and that the next day was the time appointed for Mr. Williams to receive his rent. Isabella then asked, what was the sum required; and on being told that it was two pounds, but that Mrs. Wood had contrived to sell almost every thing, except two beds, by which means she had got one pound; she ran to a little box that stood on the window-seat, and took from a pocket-book a pound note, the savings of her pocket money, which she had hoarded up for the express purpose of making Clara a present on her birth-day; for although she had no fortune, Mrs. Claremont had always made it a rule to make these two girls equal in their allowance. This

little sum Isabella now gave Ann, and desired her to make the best of her way home ; and further, to tell her mother not to say how she came by it : she would not allow the poor girl to express her gratitude, but hurried her down stairs, and after seeing her out of the house, returned to the school room with a heart contented with itself, and with all the world.

But far different were the feelings of poor Clara. She was tormented with the idea of not being able to excite the wonder and admiration of Lady Mildew by the display of her numerous and fashionable accomplishments. The late melancholy event and the subsequent alarming illness of her mother, had rendered it impossible for her to shine in her darling sphere of fashionable affectation. It was not in the hour of distress, or in the duties of a sick chamber, indeed, that Clara tried to excel ; but in the drawing room, before a large company of ladies, who had daily visited her aunt ; and who, to ingratiate themselves with their hostess, never failed to take notice of the “little enchanting fairy,” as they called Clara. Her mind had been

so engaged the last week with the most poignant grief for the loss of a revered father, and with the danger of a mother she dearly loved, that self was for a time entirely forgotten. But now, that Mrs. Claremont was declared convalescent, her thoughts returned to their original channel. The mortification she had endured before her aunt was not forgotten; and now the fancied indignity she had suffered, returned with double force to her imagination. She had been brooding over this when she met Isabella, followed by the little girl, who she thought was going to inform Miss Fitzhenry, how they had first become acquainted. This idea rendered her outrageous, and she determined to seek Fanny, that she might hit upon some expedient to prevent the expected disclosure. She met Fanny coming from the school room, to whom she hastily communicated her suspicions; and concluded by wishing she knew what Ann had to say so very particular to Miss Fitzhenry. This she determined to find out, and for that purpose, stationed herself by the door, and stooped to the mean act of listening; but she could only hear her cousin tell

the little girl to say to Mrs. Woods that she wished her to say nothing about it to any one ; and then was obliged to fly for fear of detection, as the door opened and Isabella came out, followed by Ann. Fanny then beckoned Clara into the school room, and told her that she had some beautiful lace, just like what Miss Dalton had on her frock the night of the ball that was given by Mrs. Dalton ; and that if she liked, she might have it for half the price ; for as she (Fanny) had paid twelve shillings a yard at the shop, she would let her dear young lady have it for six shillings a yard. Clara looked at the lace, hesitated, but the wish of being equal in dress, to so fashionable a girl as Sophia Dalton, had nearly conquered her prudence, and she was just in the act of taking the lace, and had the money ready in her hand to pay Fanny, when she was startled by Isabella, (who had entered a few minutes before, unnoticed by Clara and Fanny,) who earnestly exclaimed, “ my dear Clara, do not buy that lace ; pray do not disobey my aunt, who you know, does not like to see us wear such expensive trimmings.”

“But your aunt, Miss Claremont,” replied Fanny, her features distorted with passion at the idea of losing so good a bargain, and with the fear of not being able to get rid of the lace, which she had good reason to wish out of her hands; “will never be the wiser; unless indeed you turn tell-tale, and get my dear Miss Clara punished.”

“Do not deceive your dear mamma,” said Isabella, without deigning to notice this impertinent insinuation, to Clara, who all this time had stood with the lace in her hand, and looked undecided what to do; “only consider my dear cousin, that she is now only recovering from a dreadful illness, and should she have a relapse, and be snatched from us, only think what would be your feelings at the recollection of having so deceived her!”

“Thank you, my dear Bella,” exclaimed Clara, as she embraced her cousin; “If you had not so opportunely come to my relief, I should have been in danger, not only of deceiving my dear mamma, but of breaking my promise to my poor dear papa;” and she burst into tears, as she threw the lace to Fanny; who, muttering vengeance upon the

meddling minx, as she called Isabella, left the room. As soon as she was gone, Clara broke out into the most violent self-reproaches, for having once listened to such an unprincipled girl as Fanny ; and determined to go and ask her mamma to discharge her directly. But Isabella gently detained her, as she was leaving the room, and told her she had better not agitate Mrs. Claremont now, but wait till she was recovered, before she attempted to open her mamma's eyes to the perfidy of Fanny. She then begged her cousin not to allow Fanny to hold any more conversations with her, as she was certain, from what she had observed of her conduct, that she was a very ill disposed, wicked person. Clara readily promised not to speak, and went so far as to say, that she would not even look at her. Soon after, Lady Mildew joining them, they entered into conversation, and for a time, quite forgot Fanny and all her concerns. But Fanny did not forget them ; for when she went out of the room, it was to go no further than the door, where she heard all that passed between the cousins. Rage, and a spirit of revenge seized her, as she listened to Isa-

bella's free description of her character, and she determined to be revenged some day; the time, she trusted, was not far distant, when she could materially injure her, and with certainty. But to do this with security, she must lull Clara's suspicions; and for this purpose she behaved so becomingly, that Clara, (whose good resolutions were easily put to flight,) was soon persuaded to think no more of the lace; and Fanny was speedily put into the possession of all her little jealousies and misfortunes. Miss Fitzhenry, Fanny really hated. Before her arrival, when Mrs. Claremont was unable to attend to the children, and her domestic concerns, (for Mr. Claremont was a man devoted to literary avocations, and attended little to the superintendence of his house,) Mrs. Fanny was mistress, and made it a very profitable employment. She had an unbounded influence over the household; no wonder then, that she should dislike such a person in the situation of governess, as Miss Fitzhenry, who feelingly experienced the truth of these lines:

“Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot.”

The children were very much attached to her, particularly Isabella. She possessed great influence over Cornish; and if ever Grace was tempted to do any thing that she knew her governess disliked, a look from that lady was sufficient to induce her to resist the temptation. As Mrs. Claremont was now able to bear the fatigue of travelling, every thing was arranged for their departure; when on Monday, (the day before that settled for their leaving Hawthorn Parsonage,) as the children were with their mamma, in the parlour, Mrs. Dalton was announced, and that lady entered the room, followed by her three daughters. Mrs. Dalton proceeded to the sofa, on which Mrs. Claremont was reclining; while the young ladies formed themselves into different and distinct groups. Sophia went to Clara, with whom she began a whispering conversation; but the affected tones in which she spoke, convinced Lady Mildew, who was a silent observer of all that passed, that it was a conversation only to excite admiration. Charlotte, who had upon entering, affectionately embraced Isabella, now asked when she intended to leave Hawthorn Parsonage.

"To-morrow morning," answered her friend, "so I am afraid I shall not see you again for a long, long time."

"Do not say so, my love," said Lady Mildew, who now came towards them; "I hope, with Mrs. Dalton's permission, to have the pleasure of my young friend's company at Ivy Cottage, as soon as the summer sets in." At this, Isabella's expressive eyes darted forth a ray of joy, while with her whole features radiant with delight, she gratefully thanked her aunt, and bounding across the room to where Mrs. Dalton was sitting, eagerly demanded permission for Charlotte to visit Ivy Cottage. "Certainly, my dear, and with great pleasure," answered that lady as she looked towards the smiling and happy countenance of her daughter. Clara's fair face clouded, as she heard this invitation. She was vexed at her so cordially inviting Charlotte, without Sophia; and she felt half inclined to ask her mamma to give a similar one to the latter; but the recollection that Ivy Cottage belonged, not to Mrs. Claremont, but to her aunt, checked her haughty spirit, and she was obliged to submit; but for the

remainder of their visit, she could not recover her temper, and soon took occasion to lead Sophia into the garden, where they joined Cornish, Grace, and Julia. The former, who was no friend to affectation, could therefore be no friend for Sophia; he soon left them, and returned to the parlour, where he asked Charlotte to come and see his rabbit, which she did, accompanied by Isabella. As they were admiring the beauty of his favourite, Clara and Sophia came up; but the latter pulled her away, exclaiming, "Oh! a rabbit! I never can bear to look at them, they are such ugly pets! Now if you had a parrot, or a lap-dog, you would be quite in the fashion: but to have a rabbit! It is so vulgar!" So saying, the fashionable lady walked away, leaving Cornish quite indignant at her rudeness. "Well," he exclaimed, after the first ebullitions of anger had subsided; "I am sure she possesses an excellent taste, to prefer a nasty, gaudy, squalling parrot, and a little pug-faced lap-dog, to this beautiful creature! I could say a great deal more, but you are her sister, and moreover a very sensible girl; so I shall be silent."

"Thank you Cornish, for your kind forbearance;" answered Charlotte, laughing; "but I am afraid if I had not praised your favourite, I should have been condemned as a girl of no taste too."

"Oh no, no," said Cornish, as he gallantly handed her over a stile; "it is not only in this instance your sister makes herself ridiculous; it is in every thing. And I am sorry to say, Clara is very much like her."

"Oh, pray Cornish, spare Clara," cried Isabella; "and do not be so severe upon the failings of others. Remember, we have all our faults; therefore we should be merciful to those of Clara and Sophia."

"You are very right, Bella," answered Cornish, in a serious tone. "I only wish I could always think, and act as you do." As he said these words, they opened the parlour door. Soon after, Lady Mildew requested Mrs. Dalton to allow her three daughters to pay her a visit by the middle of summer. Mrs. Dalton readily complied; and soon after rose and took her leave.

In making this arrangement, it must not be supposed that Lady Mildew had conceived

any partiality for Sophia Dalton. It was only to eradicate, if possible, Clara's jealousy of her cousin ; as her ladyship had remarked the frown on her niece's brow ; and but too well knew, that Isabella would be made to feel the effects of Clara's envy, were she not to pay the same attention to Clara's friend, as she had already done to Isabella's. By inviting Julia also, Lady Mildew meant to shew, that it was merely from courtesy that they were included in the invitation ; and to convey also to Sophia, how lightly she was esteemed by her ladyship. She also hoped that when the time arrived for the Miss Dalton's promised visit, Sophia would have returned to her godmother ; and that thus she would be spared the pain of seeing Clara so steadily adhere to her friend's example. Indeed, she had little doubt, that were she separated from Sophia, Isabella's gentle and amiable manners, and the admiration with which all beheld her, would evince to her cousin the folly of affectation, as a means of attraction ; and that in time, she should see her become the counterpart of her superior minded and highly gifted Isabella.

In the evening, Miss Fitzhenry proposed to her ladyship that they should raise a subscription among the young people, to buy an easy chair for widow Adams, whose daughter had been obliged to sell every thing, except the beds, and among other things, her mother's chair. The children instantly pulled out their purses, and each brought their mite. Clara produced twelve shillings, Cornish eight shillings, and Grace brought up four shillings; and upon her mamma's enquiring why she had so small a sum, she held down her head, and at last confessed that she had spent four shillings in little sixpenny books, which she had lost as soon as she had read them. Isabella, who had been standing at the back of Lady Mildew's chair, now brought up six shillings. Miss Fitzhenry then asked her if that was all; Isabella blushed, as she answered in the affirmative. "Why that is impossible, Bella," said Clara; "for it is not more than a month ago, that we both counted over our money. You had then one pound; these six shillings you only received two or three days ago; you have not been out since to buy any thing. What have you done with

all your money." Isabella gave no answer, but continued to colour. Cornish, pitying his cousin's confusion, determined to turn the attention to another subject. For this purpose, he turned quickly round to his sister, and asked her what she had done with the remainder of her money? It was now Clara's turn to blush; she replied, that she had spent it upon a pair of black silk stockings, which Sophia Dalton told her nobody could do without. Mrs. Claremont gently reproved her for spending so much money, upon a pair of stockings. "And I suppose, Isabella, you have done the same foolish action," she continued, as she turned to her niece, who had not yet spoken; "but why not own it at first. By remaining silent, you lead us to suppose that you love your money too well to part with it." All eyes were again turned upon Isabella; who instantly regained her courage, and determined not to allow her aunt to remain under a mistake so degrading; and denied having any more money than what she had given into her aunt's hands. "But my dear, where is your money," asked Clara; "cannot you say what you have done

with it." At this instant, a noise was heard in the hall; presently the door opened, and Ann ran in, but quickly retired, exclaiming, "Mother, mother, here is the good young lady; here, in this room." As she finished speaking, widow Adams entered, led in by her grand daughter, followed by Mrs. Wood and her other children. She immediately made up to Isabella, and began to express her grateful thanks for her great goodness in relieving her distress. Mrs. Claremont looked with astonishment, as the little Ann, together with the other children, fell upon their knees to Isabella, while the blind widow felt about, and then laying her hand upon her head, prayed for blessings upon the head of her youthful benefactress; to which the children uttered an emphatic amen. This scene passed so rapidly, that before either of the ladies could recover from their surprise, the children had again risen, and gone behind their mother. Mrs. Claremont demanded an explanation, and Mrs. Wood related every thing that had passed. Poor Isabella, all this time, had never raised her eyes from the ground; and her confusion momentarily increased. As

Mrs. Wood finished speaking, Lady Mildew called Isabella, and unable to speak, folded her, in silence, to her bosom. The children all crowded round ; and even Clara, her better feelings for an instant conquering the envy which her cousin's praise always excited, came forward and joined the circle of applause. After a silence of some minutes, Mrs. Claremont affectionately kissed the blushing cheek of her niece, as she commended the goodness of her heart. Lady Mildew, in animated terms, expressed her pleasure at finding her so deserving of the high opinion she had already formed of her disposition. The widow and her daughter, soon after, took a respectful leave of their young benefactress, who promised (if ever she passed through that village,) to call, and see her poor old friend ; and then, loaded with the contents of the subscription bag, they left the room. After some further conversation, in which Mrs. Claremont and Miss Fitzhenry did not fail to point out to the children, the good resulting from a charitable action, they retired to bed : but not till Isabella had poured out her heart in gratitude to the bountiful Bestower

of all good, for affording her the means of following the dictates of her heart, did "tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," visit her eye-lids.

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY the next morning, Mrs. Claremont and Lady Mildew, accompanied by Grace and little Alfred, in her ladyship's carriage; Miss Fitzhenry, and the remainder of the children, with Fanny, in a post-chaise, left Hawthorn Parsonage, attended by an old footman, belonging to Mrs. Claremont, and Newton, Lady Mildew's own maid. It was not without a feeling of the deepest regret, that the children and their mother left their hitherto peaceful and calm abode; and from a turn of the road, caught a farewell view of their beloved Parsonage. All indeed, but Clara, experienced a piercing sorrow at leaving a spot, in which they had spent so many happy days. But Clara's every thought

was engrossed by the idea of novelty—she thought that by moving to her aunt's, she should mix more with the world; and by that means obtain what was dearer to her, than any other earthly gratification,—admiration. Mrs. Claremont's emotion at quitting a spot where she had enjoyed all the happiness that the affection of a tender husband could bestow, was for some time uncontrollable. Lady Mildew, who thought it best to allow her sister to indulge her grief, for some time unrestrained, at length gradually opened to the view of the nearly heart-broken widow, the many blessings a good and bountiful Providence had spared her, in her young and lovely family; and pointed out the good effects that might result to Clara, from her having under her care so amiable a girl as Isabella. It was from such soothing discourse as this, that Mrs. Claremont began, for the first time in her life, to consider religion in a serious point of view. Hitherto she had attended divine service, said her prayers, and given alms to the poor, merely to please a revered husband, and because other people did the same. But the scene she had witnessed in the chamber

of her dying husband, had made a deep and lasting impression upon her mind; and the accounts she had received of the resigned and christian-like fortitude of Isabella, confirmed, what before she only began to think, that in religion, comfort and consolation could be found for the severest of our earthly trials. Lady Mildew seeing her sister regain some composure, sunk back in her seat, and fell into a deep reverie; from which she was roused by the numerous questions of Grace, who was constantly inquiring of her aunt, how far they were from Ivy Cottage? What sort of a house it was? Whether it had as pretty a garden as there was at the Parsonage? Lady Mildew could only beg her niece to wait a little time, and she would soon be able to judge for herself. About seven o'clock in the evening, our party entered the village of N—. As soon as the peasantry understood which carriage held Lady Mildew, they surrounded the door, and welcomed her home with rapturous acclamations. Mrs. Claremont had here an opportunity of witnessing the affection, with which her sister was regarded by the poor of the village, and its neighbour-

hood. All the houses were deserted ; and the young and aged, the infirm and strong, all attended their lady to Ivy Cottage, which was a little way out of the village. As she alighted from the carriage, she was entirely surrounded. Each pressed forward to express their delight at again seeing their beloved benefactress, and to tell her something that had occurred during her absence. Lady Mildew stopped, and condescendingly shook hands with some, spoke encouragingly to others, condoled with those who had suffered while she was away, and to each had something to say. At length she escaped into the house, followed by a " God bless our dear and noble lady," from all the throng ; who then moved quietly off to their respective homes. It is impossible to express the delight of the children at the appearance of Ivy Cottage, so different to the Parsonage they had been accustomed to. Cornish declared he could not sleep till he had explored every nook and corner of the little paradise, as he called it. Therefore, accompanied by his sisters and Isabella, he instantly set forth. He went first all over the elegant and simple

rooms of the house ; then he traversed the beautiful gardens, park, &c. &c. ; with these he declared himself highly delighted. But what most pleased his cousin, was a beautiful little temple, in the gothic style, at the end of a very extended walk, shaded by large trees. " Yes, that is very pretty, certainly," replied Clara, who had been examining some part of the furniture : " but it is nothing like the elegant temple my aunt Bella had fitted up in the middle of a large shrubbery. It was built in such a splendid style, that at a distance, you would suppose it to be some fairy palace. And the hangings, the settees, ottomans, &c., were all covered with the most superb crimson satin, with green leaves ; which Mr. Damask, the upholsterer, told my aunt, were all the fashion. Now these curtains, &c. &c., are all blue satin, with white flowers, which are extremely vulgar ; and this is what Sophia Dalton says, who is thought to be an excellent judge in such matters. She was telling me, only a short time ago, that she went to a lady's ball, where the ball-room was entirely furnished with this same pattern ; and every person was criticising, and laughing at the vulgarity of the whole appearance."

“Oh well, I do not care what your friend Sophia Dalton says,” said Cornish, who had waited impatiently for the conclusion of his sister’s long speech. “I only wish Clara, you would think for yourself, and not always be guided by that girl; for I am sure you can think and act much better than she does. Therefore why should you always quote her sayings, just as if she were an oracle? For my part, I like this colour much better than crimson.”

“I wish Cornish, you would not take upon yourself to correct one,” exclaimed Clara, as her beautiful face and neck coloured with passion; “I shall always adopt Sophia’s opinions if I like, for I am very certain she is more capable of judging of rich things than you are.”

“Well dear Clara, don’t be angry,” said Cornish; “I only wanted you not to copy that girl in all her ridiculous notions of fashion. Bella, which do you like,” he continued, turning to his cousin; “this colour, or crimson?”

“I like this best certainly,” answered Isabella; “I think crimson must be very hand-

some, but blue is the most simple. I do not know any thing about its being fashionable ; but I only say which colour I prefer."

"You are quite right in saying you know nothing of fashion," retorted Clara, with a scornful toss of her head ; "for how should you know any thing about such matters, when you have never visited any where since your arrival in England ; and your mother did not mix with any very high or fashionable company when in India ; for I heard my poor papa say that she was not descended from a very noble house."

"If my dear mamma was not descended from a high family," answered Isabella ; her usually mild eye flashing fire at hearing her beloved mother thus slightly spoken of ; "she derived her origin from good and worthy parents ; and she taught me to make it the rule of my conduct, never to insult the fallen and depressed." As Isabella finished speaking, the fire of her eye was extinguished, and she burst into tears. Grace ran to her cousin and begged her not to cry, for she was sure Clara did not mean to vex her, and would be sorry for having caused her a mo-

ment's unhappiness. But Cornish, colouring indignantly, at hearing his sister thus give way to passion, poured forth a torrent of reproaches, declaring he would not see his dear Bella so used, for only giving her opinion. "Pray Clara, how would you like to be treated in such a way, for only differing in opinion? I am sure she does not deserve such language from you; for she is always ready to help, or do any thing in her power to oblige you; and is this the way you shew your gratitude? I am quite ashamed of you!"

"I do not know what you mean by gratitude, Cornish," answered Clara, her better feelings prompting her to acknowledge her fault; but pride struggling against such a measure. "I am under no particular obligations to Miss Claremont. I said no harm about her mamma, so she need not be so highly offended."

"Oh Clara," exclaimed Grace, as she eagerly took her sister's hand. "I am very certain, you know that you have spoken unkindly to Bella. Pray shake hands, and do not allow her to think you meant what you said."

“Never mind, dear Grace,” said Isabella, drying her eyes; “I do not wish Clara to own herself in the wrong, because I know I have also behaved wrong, to take up the subject so warmly; but my love for my beloved mamma made me forget myself, and also my poor uncle’s wish, that we should love one another. Dear Clara, will you forgive me?” As she said this, the generous girl advanced to Clara, who unable to withstand this affecting appeal, threw her arms round her cousin’s neck, and begged her forgiveness for the petulance with which she had treated her. “That is just like my own dear Clara,” exclaimed the affectionate Cornish, as he delightedly kissed her cheek; “I knew you did not mean what you said. Oh how I wish you would have nothing more to do with Sophia Dalton, but imitate our dear Bella, who is every thing that is good!” This was an unfortunate remark of poor Cornish, who little imagined the mischief he was doing: for had he not mentioned her imitating Isabella, and thereby intimating her own inferiority, Clara would have really felt sorry, for having wounded the feelings of her cousin;

but now her envious feelings returned, and she thought herself the injured party, in having a cousin who so completely threw her into the shade. The reconciled party now returned to the house, at the door of which they were met by Fanny, who had been sent by their aunt, to desire them to come in, as she feared Isabella's health would be injured by the lateness of the hour. Upon their entering the parlour, they found only Lady Mildew, who told them that their mamma was so very much fatigued by her journey, that she had retired to bed. The children, after being affectionately kissed by their aunt, immediately retired. Isabella and Clara slept in one room, as they had done when at the Parsonage, and after having addressed themselves to their Heavenly Father, soon sunk into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER the settlement of the late Mr. Claremont's affairs, Mrs. Claremont found her finances so reduced, that she deemed it quite impossible for her to retain Miss Fitzhenry; and therefore resolved to consult her sister, upon the plan it was desirable that she should adopt for the education of her children. For this purpose, about a week after her arrival at Ivy Cottage, she stated all her circumstances to Lady Mildew. After listening to her sister's description of the difficult situation in which she was placed; her ladyship begged her to sit down and attend to the plan she had to propose to her. Mrs. Claremont obeyed; and Lady Mildew, after entreating her to weigh the subject maturely before she pronounced a negative, proceeded to tell her that as Sir Godfrey Mildew had left her an ample fortune, she did not know better how to employ the overplus that

would remain to her of her ample income, after satisfying her own moderate wants, than by educating her nephews and nieces. She therefore begged Mrs. Claremont's consent to her own wish, that one house might contain them all ; and she would then immediately write to Dr. G—, the master of Harrow school, to enquire if he had a vacancy ; as she thought it best to send Cornish at once to a public school. And added, that if her sister had no objection, she would herself undertake to engage Miss Fitzhenry to remain with her at Ivy Cottage, as long as it might be deemed necessary ; as she was certain her nieces' education could not be in better hands than it was at present. Words are inadequate to express the warm gratitude of Mrs. Claremont, for this truly sisterly and affectionate proposal. She could only take Lady Mildew's hand and bathe it with tears, as she endeavoured, though vainly, to express her thanks. Lady Mildew hastily interrupted her sister, by entreating her to write to Dr. G—, while she went and apprised Miss Fitzhenry of her determination to detain her at Ivy Cottage. The children were delighted at the idea of

living with their aunt, whose kind and affectionate manners had quite won their little hearts. Isabella was fondly attached to Lady Mildew, on account of a similarity of manners between her and her dear mother. Her aunt was no less fond of her, although she did all in her power to disguise this but too self-evident partiality; as she plainly perceived that any open proof of particular fondness, would only draw on the head of her young favourite, fresh instances of the envy with which she was regarded by Clara. Her ladyship had observed, with secret sorrow, the disdain shewed by Clara, whenever Miss Fitzhenry happened to praise Isabella for any exertion she had made to obtain her approbation. At the same time, she could not but be pleased with the contrary effect, that a similar praise bestowed upon any effort of Clara's, would produce upon the countenance and behaviour of her cousin, whose eyes would sparkle with delight at hearing her commended; and she was always eager to bring forth any thing that Clara had accomplished, even though it eclipsed, and threw for a time into the shade, her own more splen-

did talents. Often would Mrs. Claremont look at the beautiful, but haughty countenance of Clara ; and watch the opening perfections of her person, her eyes would fill with tears, and she would silently offer up a prayer to Heaven, for wisdom to guide her darling but dangerous child. She would then turn with pleasure to gaze upon the no less beautiful, but timid and retiring graces of Isabella, who “thoughtless of beauty, was beauty’s self ;” and whose cheerful and modest behaviour never failed to awaken in her aunt’s heart, an anxious wish that she might one day see her own Clara resemble her.

One morning, as Newton, whom Lady Mildew kept as maid to her sister and herself, was helping her own lady to dress, she happened to look out of the window, where she saw all the children playing in the garden, but Isabella, who was engaged with hearing Grace her morning’s lesson. “I declare, my lady,” exclaimed Newton, as she watched the patience with which Isabella corrected her little volatile pupil, who every now and then turned and laughed at Cornish, as he stood making faces at her ; “I never

saw such an angel of a young lady as Miss Claremont is ; only see how she smiles, and shakes her pretty black locks at Miss Grace ! She is quite a picture of patience !”

“ Yes she is indeed, Newton,” answered her lady, as she watched the children ; “ Grace is very heedless, but I trust with the united efforts of her mamma and Miss Fitzhenry, she will in time become as steady as Isabella and Clara are.”

“ Oh yes, my lady,” replied Newton, as she unfolded her ladyship’s dress ; “ I am sure she will, if Mrs. Fanny does not get along ’side of her, and fill her little head with naughty thoughts of her governess. She has already quite spoilt Miss Clara, or I am certain she would have benefitted by Miss Fitzhenry’s advice, and Miss Claremont’s example by this time, if it had not been for that deceitful woman, who flatters her before her face, but directly her back is turned, laughs at and ridicules the vanity, which she in a great measure nourishes.”

“ What makes you so very harsh, in your judgment of Fanny ?” asked Lady Mildew, with apparent unconcern, but real anxiety ;

“What has she done to excite your anger? Surely you have not quarrelled! I shall be extremely displeased if I find that to be the case; as Mrs. Claremont is in too delicate a state to be thrown into an agitation by any petty dissensions amongst our servants.”

“Oh no, my lady, I have not had any words. I should scorn to quarrel with such a creature;” answered the indignant waiting-woman. “I never speak to her if I can help it; not I indeed. I cannot abide such deceit. It was only the other day, that after coaxing Miss Clara till she had got a beautiful new pink silk handkerchief, never a bit the worse for wear, that she came into the servants’ hall, and before all the servants, related an anecdote of Miss Clara, which shewed that she had no feeling, or else she would have held her tongue; knowing, as she did, how it would vex her good mistress, if she knew it. I hate such hypocrisy!”

“Cannot you repeat what she told you, Newton,” asked her ladyship.

“Certainly, my lady,” answered Newton; and she then related an account of the accident that first introduced little Ann Wood to

her young lady's notice. Lady Mildew listened with great interest to the recital, and when it was ended, she dismissed Newton, desiring her to keep peace with Fanny; as she did not wish the house to be thrown into confusion, by any disagreements in the kitchen. Her Ladyship then reflected on what had passed; and she had no doubt, but that what she had heard, was the circumstance that had caused Clara such embarrassment the day she was at the widow's cottage, when the heart-rending news of Mr. Claremont's fatal accident; and the melancholy scenes she had witnessed since, had entirely driven it all from her memory; but when she heard Mrs. Newton's story, the mystery was explained, and she was convinced that must be the tale alluded to by the little Ann.

Lady Mildew then hastened down stairs, where she found Mrs. Claremont, looking very pale, and agitated. Her ladyship kindly enquired into the cause; and was told, that soon after she had seen him, Cornish was attempting to leap a ditch, when his foot slipped, and he fell in. Happily, Isabella and Clara were with him; but the latter was

so terrified that she could do nothing but scream; while Isabella flew into the house, and soon returned with assistance. Poor Cornish was soon pulled out, but he was so completely wet through, that Mrs. Claremont, fearful of his taking cold, had him put into a warm bed, and that he had fallen into a sound sleep. Her ladyship was glad to hear he had been so happily extricated from his unpleasant situation; and after breakfast, in company with her sister, repaired to the chamber of the heedless boy. They found him so ill, and in such a high fever, that they judged it proper to send for medical assistance. Accordingly a man was dispatched for the nearest doctor. But Lady Mildew stopped him as he was mounting his horse, and directed him to Dr. Lawton's. This gentleman shortly arrived, and declared it to be absolutely necessary to open a vein. After performing this operation, the doctor informed the anxious mother that there was no danger in her son's symptoms; and at the same time earnestly recommended her to keep herself quiet. "For," said he, with a smile, "there will be more danger to yourself, from agita-

tion, than to that little urchin ;" pointing to the bed on which Cornish lay. Lady Mildew had known Dr. Lawton for many years ; she knew him to be a sensible, charitable, kind-hearted man. He had a wife equal to himself in goodness, and four daughters, who were at present on a visit to a distant relation, in Scotland.

Mrs. Claremont's melancholy situation had hitherto prevented Lady Mildew from having any intercourse with the family, since her return to Ivy Cottage. But now, as some months had elapsed since she became a widow, her ladyship thought it advisable to open her doors to a few friends, that they might help her to enliven her sister's retirement. This wish she imparted to Mrs. Claremont ; who gently, but firmly, begged to mourn unmolested a little longer, the loss of a being whom she could never forget. Her sister was obliged to desist ; and the worthy doctor took his leave, without having extorted from either of the ladies, a promise to ride over to Elm Hall. The severe illness of Cornish, who was confined to his bed for some days, obliged his mother to delay his de-

parture for Harrow, till his health was perfectly re-established. Meanwhile, Mrs. Claremont saw, with delight, the improvement her daughters and Isabella made, under the care of Miss Fitzhenry. She frequently spent the forenoon in the school-room, where she had an opportunity of witnessing the contrast between the cousins. On the morning after Doctor Lawton had first given his permission for Cornish to go to the school-room, the doctor asked Mrs. Claremont to allow him to take Clara and Isabella, a pleasant ride in his little poney gig. Mrs. Claremont consented, on condition that the little girls should practise their music, and finish all their studies by twelve o'clock, the time appointed for the doctor's ride. They instantly applied, with great diligence, in order to accomplish the lessons set them by Miss Fitzhenry. Eleven o'clock came; Clara had done every thing, except drawing and practising. She went to the piano, and began. Isabella had finished her drawing, just as Miss Fitzhenry arose, and calling Grace, told her she might run in the garden; at the same time reminded Isabella that there wanted only half an hour of the

time allotted to school business; and left the room to assist the still weak Cornish into the garden, to breathe a little fresh air. Isabella asked Clara if she had finished practising; adding, "you know, Clara, you have not quite completed your sketch; you had better now let me practise, while you finish your drawing."

Clara, who had been mortified by Miss Fitzhenry's praising Isabella, for the manner in which her exercise was done; while she had rebuked Clara, for the carelessness so evident in hers; pettishly answered, "I shall practise this till I know it perfectly, for I do not intend Miss Fitzhenry to be always frowning on me, while you cunningly endeavour to excel me in every thing, that my aunt may think you a prodigy."

"Well, but dear Clara, you will be too late, as well as myself," said Isabella, without taking any notice of her ill-natured remark; "you had better let me practise now, as you have already been half an hour at the piano; or shall I go on with your drawing till you are ready?" Clara gave an ungracious assent to this kind proposal. Isabella finished her

cousin's allotted task, and then Clara rose, and she sat down to the piano. But hardly had she played her lesson over once, when Grace came to tell them that the doctor was waiting in the parlour. Clara instantly ran off, but Isabella continued to practise, for she knew she could not go, as she could not play her lesson well.

"Clara, where is your cousin?" asked Lady Mildew: as she entered the parlour equipped for her ride.

"She has not practised yet, aunt" answered Clara, as a conscious blush crimsoned her cheek, when she remembered that it was to her own unkind conduct the delay must be imputed.

"I am extremely sorry to hear that," said Miss Fitzhenry; "I was in hopes Isabella had conquered her indolent habits. She must have been very idle, or she might have finished all she had to do, at the same time that you have. I will however go, and enquire into the reason."

At this instant, Isabella entered, and trembling as if she had been really guilty of indolence, walked up to her aunt.

"How happens it, my love," enquired Lady Mildew; "that you are not ready? You have had the same time to finish your studies in, as your cousin. I hope you have not trifled away your time."

"Oh no, my dear aunt," exclaimed Isabella, tears trembling in her eyes; "I have not been idle, indeed I have not. Ask Clara if I have." This she said with the hope that Clara would try to exculpate her from such a charge; but in this she was disappointed; for Clara cast down her eyes and remained silent.

"Well, but what have you been doing?" asked Mrs. Claremont, earnestly regarding her; "you need not be afraid to speak the truth." Isabella was silent, but her varying colour convinced Lady Mildew that something was wrong. She therefore turned to Clara, and asked if she could say what her cousin was doing, during the time herself had been at her studies? Clara did not answer; and her silence led her ladyship and sister to fear that Isabella had told a falsehood, and that Clara would not accuse her cousin. They therefore praised the latter for her industry,

and told her not to keep the doctor waiting. Isabella raised her eyes, as her cousin was leaving the room, and the expression they conveyed, so shocked Clara, that she was upon the point of owning herself to blame, when the doctor hurried her into the chaise, and she forgot, for a time, poor Isabella and her own ungenerous conduct. Lady Mildew felt extremely hurt at this instance of the duplicity of her Isabella. She had hoped to find her innocent of the faults ascribed to her, but this had not been the case; and after severely reprimanding her, she was dismissed to her chamber, there to remain the rest of the day.

Poor Isabella, who to the last, had entertained the hope that Clara would not leave her, without justifying her conduct in the eyes of her aunts, severely felt this punishment. But more deeply did she grieve at being under Lady Mildew's displeasure. Sorry as she was, to be obliged to submit to the degrading suspicion of having deviated from the path of truth, she determined upon not exposing Clara to the anger of Mrs. Claremont and her aunt; but could not help think-

ing how much more enviable was her own case, though debarred of her ride, than that of Clara, with so heavy a conscience. She therefore, in silent composure, ascended to her chamber. But though, when before her aunts, she had commanded her feelings, now when alone, did she give way to all the bitterness of grief. "Cruel, unkind Clara!" she mentally exclaimed; "to leave me thus, and under such disgrace! But unhappy as I am, I would not for worlds exchange situations with you!" She was interrupted by the entrance of Grace, who said, that her mamma allowed her to come, and stay with the disconsolate prisoner. The day passed heavily with Isabella, although the affectionate Grace did all in her power to console her. At night, when Isabella was in bed, her pillow was wet with the tears of injured innocence. But her feelings were enviable indeed, when compared to those of her cousin. She had scarcely seated herself in the chaise, when the thought came across her, that perhaps Isabella might, to clear herself in the eyes of her aunts, disclose the unkind part she had acted; but she remembered that her cousin's

disposition was such, that sooner than lower her in the opinion of Lady Mildew, she would endure the greatest trials. Although this fear was allayed, yet her conscience severely smote her for the deceitful part she had acted towards her noble and generous cousin; and every word of praise that was bestowed upon her industry, spoke daggers to her heart. When she arrived home, and found that Isabella was confined to her room through her unkindness, she felt it impossible any longer to allow her to remain in such a situation; and resolved to go to her aunt, and confess all. But the next moment she thought, of what use would it now be to her cousin, as the day was nearly spent, and her punishment would shortly be ended. "And," she continued, "she is such a favourite with my aunt, that she will be soon forgiven, and then all will go well. Now if I was to own how much to blame I have been, I should only get myself into disgrace without doing much good to her. I can easily make amends to her for what she has suffered to-day; and she is such a kind-hearted girl, that she will think no more of it." It was with such reasoning as

this, that Clara endeavoured to stifle the reproaches of her conscience. When she retired to bed, she kissed the cheek of her injured and sleeping cousin; and it was with a feeling of remorse that she noticed the tears which still bedewed her face. She closed her eyes with thinking how she could recompence her cousin for what she had suffered, and in making good resolutions for the future.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME little time after this incident, Lady Mildew proposed to her sister to take Isabella and Clara to view a pretty spot in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Claremont gave her consent, and her ladyship repaired to her niece's apartment. As she entered, she heard a little bustle, and a door shut behind some one, who seemed anxious to escape notice. But she only found Fanny searching in a chest of drawers; who, on seeing Lady Mildew shut the drawer with great precipitation. Her

ladyship enquired for the young ladies ; and Fanny told her that Miss Claremont was in the room appropriated to Miss Fitzhenry, and that she did not know where Miss Clara was. Thither Lady Mildew repaired, and told Isabella her project ; adding, that she trusted she had acquitted herself, that morning, to the satisfaction of Miss Fitzhenry. “ But,” she continued, after hearing that lady’s good account of her niece’s conduct ; “ where is Clara ? I have not seen her since breakfast. Where can she have hid herself all this time ? ” To this, Miss Fitzhenry replied, that Clara had been with her till about half an hour ago ; when she had left her for the purpose of asking her mamma’s permission to write to her friend Sophia Dalton. As she finished speaking, Clara entered. Her aunt enquired where she had been. Clara coloured deeply, as with great confusion, and down-cast eyes, she said she had been writing to Sophia Dalton. Her ladyship was surprised at her confusion ; but taking no notice of it, told her to prepare for a walk, and then left the room. Lady Mildew had, for some time past, observed many faults in

Fanny which had alarmed her ; but as she had no ocular demonstration to justify her suspicions, she deemed it best to remain silent. But this did not prevent her from strictly observing her conduct. The bustle she had heard on entering her niece's apartment, and the confusion of Fanny, had roused her suspicions that something was going on wrong. The absence of Clara, on her entering the school-room, and her subsequent embarrassment, had led her ladyship to think that the person who had escaped by the opposite door, was no other than her little niece. Perhaps she was writing ; but why should she be so anxious to avoid notice, when she had obtained her mamma's sanction ? This question she could not answer to her satisfaction ; but determined to watch narrowly the behaviour of Clara. During the walk, Isabella chatted and talked with all the vivacity and innocence so natural to her. Cornish, restored to all his strength and liveliness, raced before, like a wild colt. But Clara appeared quite a different being ; instead of the gay and rattling girl she generally appeared, she scarcely answered a

question that was proposed to her ; and when she did, it was in as concise a manner as possible. And if by accident she raised her eyes to the countenance of her aunt, the expression she there saw, was sure to make them drop ; and in painful embarrassment she would again sink into silence.

All at once, Cornish, who had stopped considerably behind them, ran up to Clara and challenged her to run a race with him. " I am sure I can do no such thing ;" was her reply, as she walked silently by the side of Lady Mildew.

" Oh very well, Miss Clara," returned Cornish, in an angry tone ; " I know very well the reason of your refusal, it is because you think it is vulgar ; but you never thought so till your *friend*," laying a particular emphasis upon this word ; " Sophia Dalton told you, that no young ladies ever ran, for fear of making their faces red and blowzy. However, I shall not ask you again." So saying, he challenged Isabella, who cheerfully complied. A gate, which was at the furthest end of the field, was to be the goal ; and a beautiful rose-bud, that Lady Mildew held in her

hand, was to be the reward of the fleetest runner. The competitors then started. Cornish, who was stoutly made, and promised to be a large man, soon out-stripped his fair antagonist, and arrived within a few yards of the goal, when Isabella, who though tall, had a form delicate even to fragility, and whose strength had been apparently declining, now sprang lightly forward and reached the goal, for some seconds before Cornish, who had thought her far behind, could recover from his surprize. Laughing heartily at his awkwardness and vanity, in supposing he could out-run such a little nimble sylph, as he called Isabella, gallantly led her to receive the promised prize. They then turned homewards, where, when arrived, they found Mrs. Claremont eagerly awaiting them at the gate. She had received a letter by that day's post, from Dr. G—, the master of Harrow school, to say that he should be happy to receive her son as soon as possible, as the quarter had already commenced. Poor Cornish looked down at this intelligence; but upon his mamma's enquiring if she should write an answer in the negative, the noble boy raised

his head, and brushing away the unbidden tear, manfully exclaimed: "Oh no, my dear mamma, do not say so; I wish so much to go to school, and be as clever as my papa was; only I was not prepared for so soon leaving you and my dear aunt," continued the affectionate boy, as his mother tenderly kissed him.

"Well, but Cornish, we shall soon meet, I trust," said Lady Mildew encouragingly; "and then think what pleasure it will give us all, to hear that you have been a good and attentive boy."

It was then settled that Cornish should leave home on the following Monday. The anticipation of this parting, cast a gloom upon the spirits of the whole family. All the servants, with whom he was an universal favourite, vented their sorrows in tears and lamentations. Old Robert, who had lived with the late Mr. Claremont since he was an infant, bewailed his hard fate, in being obliged to part with one of his darlings. All were grieved but Fanny, who had reasons of her own for wishing such a warm advocate of Isabella to be away; she, indeed, had great

difficulty in concealing the joy this news gave her. His sisters and Isabella were busily engaged in repairing his wardrobe, and his mother and aunt were so much employed in arranging every thing for his departure, that the latter had no time to dwell upon the circumstance that had caused her so much uneasiness respecting Clara, till the morning before the one appointed for Cornish's journey, as she was passing her niece's room, the door of which was open, she saw Fanny, whose back was towards the door, take something out of her pocket, wrap it up in a piece of paper, put it into a handkerchief, and then place it in Isabella's drawer; at the same time muttering to herself, "Now I think this cannot fail. She will not then be thought so much better than other people." As she said this, she went out at the opposite door that led into the school room. As soon as Lady Mildew saw her depart, she entered the apartment, and opening Isabella's drawer, found wrapped up in a handkerchief, the little parcel. She opened it, and saw a one pound note. How this had come into her possession, her ladyship could not con-

ceive ; but she determined upon re-placing it, and to await patiently the developement of such an extraordinary occurrence. As she folded up the paper in which she found the note, her eye caught the name of Isabella, and reading on, she found it to be a french translation, which she very well remembered her Isabella's shewing to Miss Fitzhenry, and that lady's praising its accuracy. This circumstance, trivial as it appeared, convinced Lady Mildew that it was a premeditated plan to lessen and degrade Isabella in the opinion of the whole family. But she could not imagine how she came by this translation. She closed the drawer, resolved upon trying every means to discover from whence she had taken the note, for that she had stolen it, she had no doubt ; and was equally certain that Fanny wished to cast the odium of such a disgraceful action upon Isabella. But this, thank Heaven, Lady Mildew could now prevent : but she determined to allow the treacherous Fanny to imagine her plans successful, and thus to throw her off her guard, and then to overwhelm her with the knowledge of her iniquitous conduct. But what had caused her

to concert such a malicious and wicked scheme, she could not think ; or what could make her shew such an inveterate hatred against the innocent and unsuspecting orphan. She was at a loss to devise the means by which she might come at the whole truth. Lady Mildew then crossed the room, and opened a door which led into a little closet, into which she had heard some person retire, the day she had caught Fanny in such confusion ; she entered, and was looking about to see if she could discover any thing that might tend to unravel the mystery ; when she heard Clara's voice, speaking to some one, as she entered the room from the stairs. Lady Mildew softly shut the closet door and locked it ; when she remained perfectly quiet, and overheard the following conversation between Fanny and her niece. " Well Miss Clara, you may do as you please about buying the locket," said Fanny, in an insolent tone ; " but I can only say I shall not return the half of the money. No no, a bargain is a bargain all the world over ; if you do not like the locket, you need not buy it, for I can sell it for double the sum to Miss Sophia Dalton,

who will be very glad of it. For her mamma's [woman told me once, that her young mistress had desired her to settle with me for it, and she would pay me four guineas for it; and I let you have it for only two."

"But my dear Fanny," said Clara, in a beseeching tone, by which Lady Mildew perceived that she was very much distressed; "poor mamma would almost break her heart if she were to know that I thought for a moment of acting so deceitfully; therefore I cannot and will not do it. And if you do not give me my money back again, I do not know what I shall do, if mamma ask me what I have done with it."

"Why you may say the same then, as you told me you would when you wanted the locket," answered the wicked wretch; "I will not let you have the money back again; but I shall write to Maxwell, Mrs. Dalton's woman, and send the locket for her young lady."

A silence ensued for some minutes, and then Lady Mildew heard Fanny assail Clara in her weakest point, by representing to her what a triumph it would be to Miss Sophia

Dalton to have an ornament so much superior to any that she had ever had. "And," continued the artful creature, "there is Miss Claremont has such an elegant one; but then it is not so beautiful as the one you can have if you please."

"But," answered Clara, "I can never wear it, and of what use will it be to me if I can never exhibit it?"

These objections were soon over-ruled by Fanny, and Clara took the locket; but told Fanny that she must wait till her next quarterly allowance was due, before she could be paid. "Very well Miss Clara," answered Fanny; "I can wait as long as you please; but we had better not stand talking any longer, or we shall be overheard, and that lynx-eyed Lady Mildew will discover all, and then I shall be discharged for my good nature to you."

"Oh no Fanny, my aunt will never turn you away," replied Clara; "but I am afraid she saw me the other day as I ran into the closet, after giving you the guinea as half the price of the locket; but where is the paper in which the guinea was wrapped up? In my

hurry I quite forgot to take it, and it is a translation belonging to Isabella, which she only lent me, and I must return it."

Fanny declared she had lost it; and after promising her to look for it, Clara went into the school-room. The deceitful Fanny, the moment she heard the door close after her, said to herself, "well now I can do as I like with young Miss, she is completely in my toils. She shall not have the paper till I have done with it." So saying, she went down stairs, leaving the astonished Lady Mildew exasperated at the villainy of this artful creature. She had no doubt, but that she had wrapped the note in the paper belonging to Isabella, that she might the more easily confirm her guilt. The way in which the translation came into her possession was now clear to Lady Mildew; and she hastened down stairs, but she could hardly bear the sight of the arch hypocrite, who was so successfully using her arts to injure the morals of one niece, and to blast the innocent happiness of the other. The day passed slowly with the inhabitants of Ivy Cottage; each looked forward to the approaching separation

with sorrow. Mrs. Claremont's widowed heart felt deeply the idea of parting from her eldest son; but the duty she felt she owed to her departed husband, to bring her son up in the path he had chosen as the most desirable, helped to support her sinking spirits. Poor Isabella, who daily experienced some unkindness from Clara, and who was now acquainted from what source this treatment arose, thought bitterly of the hour of parting. Cornish was always ready to defend her from the peevish attacks of Clara, and she therefore felt as if she should then lose her warmest friend.

CHAPTER XII.

THE sun shone brightly through the windows of the room in which Cornish slept; when he was awakened by a tapping at his door; and a soft voice, which he knew to be Isabella's, telling him that it was six o'clock, and that his mamma was afraid he would be too late for the stage which passed through

the village. He jumped out of bed and hastily dressing himself, ran down stairs, where he found all assembled to bid him farewell. After he had taken a cup of tea, the coach wheels were heard. Cornish flew to embrace his mother and aunt, gave a hearty kiss to his weeping sisters and brother, told Isabella to write often, and to take care of his rabbit, took a respectful leave of Miss Fitzhenry, and receiving the basket well stored with biscuits and fruit, which Mrs. Claremont had provided him, he ran out of the hall, followed by the faithful Robert, who would insist on seeing his young master safely mounted on the roof of the coach. The children returned to the breakfast parlour, and from the windows saw Cornish spring upon the coach, and soon conveyed from their view. The remainder of the day passed heavily with the inhabitants of Ivy Cottage ; for they had lost one who had never failed to make the hours fly, by the liveliness of his conversation, and the acuteness and pertinacity of his remarks. About a month after the departure of Cornish, Lady Mildew received the long-expected letter from Mr. St. Clare, informing her that he

was already arrived in London, but that a severe illness prevented him from paying a visit to Ivy Cottage; and begging her to make all possible speed to London, as he had something of importance to communicate, but he could not trust it to the post. As he had been an old and intimate friend of her beloved and lamented husband, she could not hesitate, and accordingly set off the following morning, to the deep regret of Isabella, who had lately perceived that Miss Fitzhenry's manner to her was much changed. Instead of the kind and gentle treatment she had hitherto experienced from her, she now only returned cold and short answers to any questions that she put to her. "Dear Isabella," was now changed for a formal "Miss Claremont." Her looks were freezingly polite. A slight touch of the fingers, on taking leave for the night, was given, instead of the tender kiss. All these circumstances conspired to render Isabella very uncomfortable; she could not remember any offence she had committed, that could have wrought such a change. She watched the countenances of both her aunts, to try if she could discover a

similar coldness. Nothing there appeared to cause her any uneasiness. They were, on the contrary, kinder than ever; and on the morning of Lady Mildew's departure, she received from that lady several warm and kind admonitions to persevere in the path she had already trodden.

Fanny, now Lady Mildew was absent, resolved to put her plans into execution. She had, some time previous to her ladyship's departure, instilled into the mind of Miss Fitzhenry, ideas injurious to the innocence of Isabella; and among other things, artfully insinuated that she had heard her say, that she only tried to gain Lady Mildew's good opinion, that she might in time persuade her to believe that Miss Fitzhenry was an ignorant, artful, and presuming woman; and thus get her dismissed. Hitherto, Miss Fitzhenry had not listened without any degree of belief, to what Fanny said; but this last vile fabrication had the desired effect, and Miss Fitzhenry was astonished and exasperated at the seeming duplicity of her favourite. This opinion it was, that naturally caused a revulsion of feeling and manners that had so much affected

Isabella. Lady Mildew had left Newton at Ivy Cottage, as she was persuaded Fanny would do all in her power to render Isabella uncomfortable; and she thought by leaving Newton she had secured Isabella a sincere friend, who would at least endeavour to counteract the bad effects of Fanny's ill-humour and malice. Mrs. Newton was a very respectable woman, but was left a widow when very young, and had lived with Lady Mildew ever since her ladyship's marriage. She was extremely attached to her lady, and had shared in all her afflictions. Newton had taken a fancy to Isabella at first sight; and the angelic sweetness with which she bore all the taunts of Clara, had endeared her to the good woman's heart; and she determined that no efforts of hers should be wanting to fulfil her mistress's directions, which were, to keep a strict watch upon all the actions of Fanny, and if any thing occurred, that was likely to injure her Isabella, she was to write to her immediately. This Lady Mildew arranged, as she judged it right to make her appearance, if her niece's character should be in any peril. But she did not disclose her

suspicious to Newton, only charging her to comfort Isabella under any little mortification she might suffer through the machinations of Fanny. Her ladyship did not wish to harass her sister by informing her of the wretch she was harbouring, till concealment was no longer desirable.

About a week after Lady Mildew had left Ivy Cottage, as the children were sitting with their mamma in the school room, Miss Fitzhenry, who had left the room for a few minutes, hastily entered, and with a face of some alarm, informed Mrs. Claremont of her having lost a pound note. The children stared in astonishment, but Mrs. Claremont said she thought it very likely she might have overlooked it. All now declared they had never seen it, but arose and helped to search. Clara and Isabella looked in every nook and corner of the apartment, but to no purpose. At length Mrs. Claremont said she thought Miss Fitzhenry might have put it away with some papers she had been sorting but a few days ago. Miss Fitzhenry searched among her papers, but it was useless; and they were obliged to return to the school-room, without

having found the last note ; but Miss Fitzhenry said she had the number. In the evening she proposed a walk in the garden ; the children flew to Mrs. Claremont, and begged her to let them take tea in the temple ; to which she gave a willing assent, and the tea-things were accordingly carried to the temple. The delighted children followed, and all were happy and cheerful, though Mrs. Claremont was not easy concerning the loss of the pound note. But she resolved upon waiting the return of Lady Mildew, before she examined the domestics, as she rightly conceived it more proper for the mistress of the mansion to enter into such an investigation, than herself, who was merely an inmate, and consequently could have no ostensible right to such a proceeding. The evening was spent in great festivity by the young people, and at a late hour they retired to bed, after Isabella had, according to her dear uncle's dying request, read the evening prayers. Her spirits were very much depressed by the more than usual irritability of Clara, who had frequently during the evening, upbraided her for wishing to insinuate herself into the good graces

of her aunt ; for the private conference Lady Mildew had with her niece, had not escaped the observation of the quick-sighted Clara ; who thought that by thus tormenting her cousin, she should be able to learn upon what subject her aunt had conversed. Gladly did the poor tortured Isabella welcome the time for retiring ; and laying her head on her pillow, forgot her sorrows in a temporary oblivion.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next morning at breakfast, Mrs. Claremont rang the bell, and desired Fanny again to look every where in the school-room, as it was not unlikely for it to have flown from the table, when the window was open. Fanny answered that she would look certainly, but she was sure she should not find it there. " I think it is not at all improbable that you may find it in some corner of the floor," rejoined Mrs. Claremont, surprised at her words, but

more at the significant look she cast upon Isabella, whom however it did not seem visibly to affect. "Oh I am sure it must be in the school-room," exclaimed Isabella; "for it was there I saw Miss Fitzhenry open her pocket-book."

"Begging your pardon, Miss Claremont," replied Fanny, in a tone of affected humility; "I do not think it will be found in the school-room; however I can look;" so saying, she left the room, but soon returned without the unfortunate note. The search was again given over, and Isabella and Clara sat down to their studies; but the former was sent out of the room by her aunt, to fetch a book which she remembered leaving in the parlour. During her short absence, Fanny entered, and with a face of horror and consternation, beckoned her mistress out of the room. Mrs. Claremont, astonished and alarmed at the mysterious tone in which Fanny made this request, told her to say what she wished, as she was sure she could have nothing to communicate, that she might not speak openly; but still Fanny persisted in her wish of having a private conference with her mis-

tress. Mrs. Claremont then left the room. Fanny followed her into another, and shutting the door began a studied speech about the concern she was under, at being obliged to lower Miss Claremont in the esteem of her mistress; but she hoped that she would excuse what she was going to say, as her own reputation, and that of her fellow servants was at stake, and required her solemnly to lay aside every other consideration, that the disgraceful odium under which all the servants suffered might be removed. Mrs. Claremont here interrupted her by exclaiming, "What do you mean Fanny? For heaven's sake torment me no more, but tell me at once what you mean by thus bringing Isabella's name as connected with the clearing of your character. You surely do not mean to insinuate that my niece has had any thing to do with the lost note?"

"Indeed madam," answered Fanny, in a tone of affected commiseration; "I should be sorry to lessen Miss Claremont in your opinion, but I must speak the truth, that—that—that—"

"Speak out Fanny instantly, and relieve

this dreadful suspense;" ejaculated Mrs. Claremont, in a voice scarcely audible from emotion.

"Why madam," answered Fanny; "as I was looking over the school-room, about a quarter of an hour ago, I all at once recollected having seen Miss Fitzhenry open her pocket book in the young ladies' chamber; and I instantly determined to look there. When I entered, the first thing I saw was Miss Claremont's black silk frock. I opened her drawer, and was taking out of it a handkerchief in which I could wrap it up, when a little paper parcel dropped out, and fell upon the floor. I picked it up with the intention of re-placing it, when as I was twisting one of the ends of the paper which had opened, I saw a bank note! I opened it, and it is the same number mentioned by Miss Fitzhenry."

"It is impossible!" exclaimed Mrs. Claremont; "it is quite impossible, that my dear, charitable, upright, and generous Isabella, could be capable of such a wicked and treacherous act!"

"Madam, I would not tell a falsehood,"

said Fanny, in an humble tone ; “ and as you will not believe my assertion, that I have seen the note in Miss Claremont’s drawer, if you will take the trouble to walk into the young ladies’ room, and send for Miss Fitzhenry and the young ladies, you will shortly be convinced of the truth of what I say.”

Mrs. Claremont followed the designing Fanny into the room ; but what was her astonishment and horror, at perceiving the identical note Miss Fitzhenry had lost, in her niece’s drawer ; and wrapped up in a translation which she had well remembered seeing her write ? She directly sent for Miss Fitzhenry, who pronounced it to be her lost note ; and although she appeared shocked, owned that she was not *much* surprised ; as a girl that could allow herself to talk dishonestly would not be long before she acted so. Mrs. Claremont dismissed Fanny, and entreated an explanation of her words. Miss Fitzhenry then related what she had heard of the way in which Isabella spoke of her to Lady Mildew. Mrs. Claremont, more and more hurt at the want of principle discovered by her niece, now offered to repair to the school-

room; but they determined first to let the note remain in the drawer, until they had heard what Isabella had to say. They then entered the school-room, where they found Clara and Isabella, who upon seeing her aunt, ran up to her with the book; adding to Miss Fitzhenry, as she gave the book into Mrs. Claremont's hands; "I have been looking again for your lost note, my dear madam, but I have not been able to find it."

"I am not at all surprised at that, Miss Claremont," replied that lady, coldly and stiffly; "as I have certain knowledge that it is not in this room." Tears came into Isabella's eyes at the formality and unkindness of this speech; but conquering her emotion, eagerly enquired if she had found it? The perfectly unembarrassed tone in which this question was asked, hurt Mrs. Claremont, as she wholly attributed it to the hardness of guilt; and shocked at so young a person being such an adept in the art of deceit, she replied, as she turned a firm and scrutinizing glance upon the innocent Isabella; "We have found it; but in such a place, and under such circumstances, that I had much rather it had

remained unfound." Contrary to the expectations of her aunt and Miss Fitzhenry, Isabella, instead of appearing the guilty being they supposed her to be, exclaimed, "Oh how glad I am, you have found it,—are you not, dear Clara," she continued as she turned to her cousin; who now enquired where it had been found?

"That question you must ask your cousin, Clara," answered her mother, in a tone of displeasure; "she only with propriety can answer; and at the same time, I wish her to inform me how it came into her possession."

"In my possession! dear aunt, did you say?" cried Isabella, in a tone of astonishment; "who can have uttered such a falsehood!"

"I only judge from facts, Miss Claremont," coolly returned her aunt, as she witnessed with horror, the seeming duplicity of her niece; "I should not speak so positively, without having had ocular demonstration of the truth of what I now assert; that the lost bank note, belonging to this injured lady," pointing to Miss Fitzhenry, "is now in your drawer!" It is impossible to describe the

feelings of poor Isabella, on hearing these words. Surprise, doubt, and consternation, by turns occupied her mind; and she sat some moments without power to articulate a single syllable. The paleness which overspread her countenance alarmed her aunt, and she with a feeling approaching her usual kindness, drew near to Isabella, to whom she offered a smelling bottle. But on seeing her recover, she resumed the stately and unkind manner that had so affected Isabella; who now, on recovering from the slight faintness which had overcome her on first hearing her accusation from the lips of one whom she so tenderly loved, exclaimed, "You cannot, you will not believe your Isabella would act so treacherously! You cannot think her so totally lost to every feeling of justice, of rectitude, and of gratitude, as to imagine that I would so repay you for all your kindness to me? Oh no, no, I am sure you do not."

Mrs. Claremont deeply affected with this artless address, and willing to believe that some mistake had happened, then said, that she had better look in her drawer, for it was there she had found it. "In my drawer!

Oh it is impossible !" vehemently exclaimed Isabella. " Oh Clara, only bear witness to your cousin's innocence. Did you ever know me to be guilty of theft ?" Clara, who had witnessed this extraordinary scene with great surprise, and keenly feeling for the distress of Isabella, now eagerly cried, " Oh it cannot be true that my dear Bella could ever commit such an action ; but let us look in the drawer." The two girls ran to the room, leaving Mrs. Claremont and Miss Fitzhenry in the school-room. No sooner did Isabella see the note really lying in her drawer, and folded up in one of her own translations, than she uttered a scream of agony, and leaned against the drawers for support. Clara, struck dumb with surprise, remained unable to move, while the note lay on the floor, where Isabella had dropped it. Mrs. Claremont and Miss Fitzhenry, alarmed at the sound that had reached their ears, now entered the room ; and upon seeing Isabella pale, and almost lifeless, Mrs. Claremont confessed to Miss Fitzhenry, that now indeed she was convinced of the guilt of her niece. Isabella upon hearing these words, roused herself,

and again vehemently and solemnly protested her innocence ; and called fervently upon God not to forsake her ; but as he knew her innocent, to save her by his power, from the consequences of such a cruel charge. She then declared she had never before seen the note, and demanded who was the person who had first told her aunt the note was in her drawer. Mrs. Claremont said it was Fanny, who had first discovered the lost note, and had flown to give her the shocking intelligence, where she had seen it. Isabella then asked permission to have Fanny summoned, and to hear her account. Fanny was accordingly sent for, and in the presence of Isabella told the same tale already known to Mrs. Claremont. Isabella burst into tears, as she threw herself upon her knees before her aunt, and protested her innocence. But Mrs. Claremont coldly desired her to rise ; and to kneel for forgiveness to Him, whom she had so deeply offended, by transgressing one of His commandments.

Isabella now almost frantic with despair, exclaimed, " Oh my dear sainted parents, look down upon your injured child ! Would

you have believed your Isabella to have been so culpable? Oh no, no, you knew too well how deeply you had ever impressed upon my mind the value of truth, for me ever to deviate from the path pointed out by your wise and indulgent hand. Oh look down and bless your child, and teach her to bear with fortitude this very, very severe trial." As she said this, tears rushed into her eyes, and unable any longer to combat with her feelings, she sobbed convulsively. Her aunt and Miss Fitzhenry, deeply affected, could not speak, while Clara, every other feeling absorbed in sorrow for her cousin's distress, wept aloud. Fanny suffered considerably from the fear of detection, but durst not attempt to leave the room, as Mrs. Claremont had desired her to stop. Isabella again dried her eyes, and sought to discover, in those of all around her, commiseration for her situation; but only in Clara's could she read any sympathetic sign, as those of her aunt and Miss Fitzhenry were averted, as their momentary emotion passed, and their former convictions of her duplicity returned. Clasp ing her hands in agony, Isabella frantically exclaimed, "Oh! is there no

one who will come forward and attest my innocence? Then indeed, I shall never be able to convince my beloved friends of my being guiltless of the crime laid to my charge! What will now become of the miserable Isabella? Will no kind friend relieve my distress?"

"I will," answered Lady Mildew, as she appeared to the astonishment of all. Fanny turned pale on the entrance of her ladyship; while Isabella throwing herself into the arms of her aunt, wept unrestrainedly. Mrs. Claremont expressed her surprise at seeing her sister so much sooner than she expected. Lady Mildew gently said, she would presently relate every particular of her journey, but that she must first see justice done to her injured niece, and confound the conspirator against the poor young creature's happiness and character. At these words Isabella felt herself pressed warmly to the bosom of her dear aunt; while Clara, anxious to hear her cousin's innocence proved, drew near, and took one of her hands; and Mrs. Claremont and Miss Fitzhenry, astonished at the calmness of Lady Mildew's manner and words,

prepared, with great anxiety to listen to the following conversation.

CHAPTER XIV.

LADY MILDEW then turned to Fanny, and in a stern voice desired to know from what motive she had so wickedly endeavoured to traduce the character of Miss Claremont? Fanny endeavoured to answer in a tone of unconcern; protesting that she had found the note in Miss Claremont's drawer. "But," she continued, "if your ladyship will not take my word, I can produce a witness to prove the truth of my assertion."

"Who is that witness?" asked Lady Mildew.

"Mary the housemaid, my lady, who was sweeping the room, when I found the note in Miss Claremont's drawer." Mrs. Claremont now rang the bell, and ordered Mary to appear. After a few minutes, she entered. Lady Mildew noticed the look of encourage-

ment Fanny gave her, as she advanced to the middle of the room. Isabella, trembling violently, remained close to her aunt; while Mrs. Claremont wondered how this extraordinary scene would end; and she earnestly prayed that something might occur to clear her niece from the odium of such an action. Nor was Miss Fitzhenry less anxious for the fame of her beloved pupil; for although her affections were estranged by vile insinuations, yet she could not shake off the partiality she really felt for Isabella. Lady Mildew then began her examination. "Were you in the room when Fanny found this note?"

"No—Yes, my lady, I was," answered Mary, in a tremulous voice.

"You must be correct and exact in your answers; above all, you must tell no falsehoods. For remember who you are accusing; and if I find that you have not spoken the truth, be assured your punishment shall be severe." As Lady Mildew said this, her eyes glanced, alternately, from Fanny to Mary. The former she observed, looked pale and agitated; while the latter absolutely sunk into a chair, unable to support herself. Lady

Mildew perceived from these symptoms of guilt, that Mary had not seen Fanny take the note out of the drawer, but that she was induced, by some secret motive, to bear witness against the innocent Isabella. Lady Mildew then asked what she was doing in the room at the time Fanny went to the drawer?

"I was passing the room door, my lady, with a basket of linen in my hand," said Mary, as she looked towards Fanny.

"O no, no, Mary, you were sweeping the room," eagerly interrupted Fanny, as she looked angrily at Mary.

"How am I to come at the truth," said Lady Mildew, if you Fanny say one thing, and your partner in iniquity another. It is evident to me Mary, that you did not see Fanny take this money out of Miss Claremont's drawer. How dare you then, thus assert such a falsehood."

Mary fell on her knees, as she owned she was not in the room when Fanny found the note; but that Fanny had promised her some money if she would come forward as a witness to the truth of what she said. Lady Mildew desired her to rise and leave the room. She

then turned to Fanny, and said; "How can you suppose that after this proof of the wickedness of your heart, I shall believe you any more. I do not mean to say the note was not in the drawer; but how came it there? You are the person to answer that question." All eyes were now turned in astonishment upon Fanny; while Isabella, motionless with anxiety, scarcely dared to breathe, for fear of losing a syllable. Fanny boldly denied having any knowledge of how the note came into the drawer; and then began a specious description of her sorrow, at being the person to come forward, and accuse her ladyship's niece; but that she could call her——. She was here stopped by an exclamation of horror from Lady Mildew, not to commit such a deadly sin, and add one more to the already long and dreadful catalogue of her crimes. "Will you deny having placed this note, with your own hands, in this paper, in the drawer of this injured and innocent orphan. Speak not," she continued, as Fanny attempted, though faintly, to deny the charge. "I saw you myself put this paper, folded as it now is, into a handkerchief, and lay it in my niece's

drawer? Did I not hear you say, you hoped this would not fail; and that the amiable object of your hatred, would then be thought no better than other people?" Fanny turned pale at these words; as she knew it would be useless any longer to deny the charge. And fearing that Lady Mildew would proceed to some steps to punish her perfidy, she determined to throw herself upon her mercy, and by this means she hoped to avert the threatened danger. Throwing herself at her ladyship's feet in an humble tone, she confessed what she had done. It is impossible to describe the feelings of poor Isabella, as she was alternately pressed to the bosoms of her aunts. Miss Fitzhenry tenderly caressed her, as she now perceived the veil that had been placed before her eyes, to the injury of her interesting pupil's character. Clara also, was not slow in congratulating her cousin. But she was deeply agitated by the fear that Fanny would disclose the affair of the locket; and then she knew how degraded she would be in the eyes of all her friends. The transaction of this morning convinced her of the truth of what Isabella had so often told her, that

Fanny was devoid of all principle. But she still clung to the hope that Fanny had too much affection for her to implicate her in the confession. How fervently she wished she had never been led by vanity, to have any thing to do with her ; and that she was as innocent, and free from blame, as her cousin. Fanny finished her confession, and Isabella was enjoying the satisfaction of having had her innocence established, when a letter was brought to Mrs. Claremont, which she read, and without commenting upon its contents, gave it to her sister. It was from Mrs. Dalton ; and was as follows :

“ Dear Madam,

“ Need I say how happy I am to hear your health is so much improved ? I trust you will continue to derive benefit from the air of —.

“ The occasion of my troubling you so soon after my last letter, is a very unpleasant occurrence which has taken place in my family. My woman, I have been obliged to part with, for dishonesty. I missed a great many very valuable trinkets ; and among other things,

a gold locket and some lace. Most of the articles missing were found in Maxwell's possession ; but the locket and lace could not be found. She has, at length, acknowledged having parted with them to a young woman in your service, Fanny Parkson ; who paid her a few shillings for the same. If the young woman is now with you, you will greatly oblige me, my dear madam, by desiring her to deliver them into your possession, that they may be sent to Beechwood Hall. I am extremely sorry to trouble you, but the locket is of infinite value, as it belonged to my lamented mother. I hope you will excuse me for adding, that I have heard from the dishonest Maxwell, many circumstances, that induce me to warn you of allowing Fanny to remain any longer in your service, as she is capable of corrupting the morals of young people ; a vice, I consider, the most culpable. I trust Miss Claremont is recovered from the delicate state in which she was in, when she left the Parsonage. Sophia has returned to her god-mother, with whom she is going to take a trip to the Continent. Charlotte and Julia beg to be affectionately remembered to

their friends. With kind regards to your sister, I remain, dear madam,

Your sincerely attached,

CHARLOTTE SOPHIA DALTON."

Lady Mildew was quite confounded with this account of the dishonesty of Fanny; and felt assured that the locket parted with, to Clara, was the same alluded to in this letter. She read the letter aloud. Fanny's terror was apparent to all, as her ladyship proceeded; while Clara was not less agitated, so great was her dread of a disclosure of how deeply she was concerned in the locket: gladly would she have given the locket and money to Fanny to have escaped such an exposure. But it was impossible; and as Isabella gave her a look of delight, and whispered how glad she was her dear Clara had nothing to do with the lace; her heart smote her, and instead of answering the affectionate pressure of her cousin's hand, she looked down, pale and trembling. Mrs. Claremont remarked her daughter's emotion, but thought it proceeded from sorrow at discovering how undeserving her favourite had proved; she

therefore beckoned her to her chair; and then kindly endeavoured to console and comfort her. All this only added to the distress of poor Clara; as she thought how deceitfully she had acted towards that kind mother, who was now so tenderly caressing her. She burst into tears, and throwing herself upon her bosom, remained sobbing violently. Mrs. Claremont was quite alarmed at her agitation; but Lady Mildew who had just ended the letter, knew but too well the cause of this sorrow; and trusting this day's mortification would have a salutary effect upon the mind of her niece, took no notice; but turned to Fanny and enquired what answer she was to send Mrs. Dalton. Fanny terrified almost out of her senses, fell upon her knees, and confessed having bought the lace and locket. Her ladyship then asked for them. Fanny, wicked at heart, and resolved to be revenged upon her mistress for the disgrace she had suffered, said that Miss Clara best knew where the locket was; and left the room for the lace. Mrs. Claremont, in astonishment, asked her daughter the meaning of Fanny's insinuation. Clara, amidst

sobs that convulsed her frame, owned how she had been persuaded, by Fanny, to purchase the locket. She stated that she had withstood the first temptation of the locket; and that Isabella had rescued her by her timely interference, from buying the lace; and finally concluded by throwing herself upon her knees, and praying forgiveness with tears and sobs. Isabella unable to see her dear Clara in such disgrace, without participating in her grief, wept with her; and though shocked at the part she had acted, she fell by her side, and joined in beseeching her dear aunts to forgive her cousin. Mrs. Claremont, alarmed and grieved at this instance of her daughter's so lamentably yielding to vanity, looked coldly and estranged upon Clara; as she, in a voice very different from her usual gentle and kind one, desired her to rise. But when she beheld Isabella, whom she had a short time back, thought guilty of such a degrading crime as stealing, now innocent, and kneeling, pleading in her cousin's behalf, so affected her, that she lifted them from the ground, and kissing her daughter's cheek, bade her imitate her amiable cousin. Clara,

struck to the heart, with remorse and sorrow, for having once endeavoured to lessen Isabella in her aunt's esteem, related to her kind friends how shamefully she had allowed herself for a short time to enjoy such a pleasant ride, while her cousin was deprived, through her means, of accompanying her. And Isabella frequently interrupted her, as she declared she herself, was wholly to blame, in not having been more industrious. Mrs. Claremont shed tears of joy, as she now for the first time entertained the fond hope of seeing her Clara, one day, equal to her cousin in virtue. Lady Mildew viewed with delight, the first dawn of reformation ; and she inwardly breathed an earnest prayer, that with the help of Him, who ordereth all things, her niece might become an ornament to society, and a comfort to her widowed mother. Miss Fitzhenry expressed her delight, at having the affair so satisfactorily explained ; and declared, as she tenderly kissed the glowing cheek of the now happy Isabella, never again to believe any thing naughty, that was said against her. She then told Lady Mildew, all that Fanny had implanted in her mind, of the deceit of Isa-

bella. Her ladyship disclaimed all knowledge of such language, having ever been held to her by her niece. Miss Fitzhenry replied, that now she did not for a moment think of it; but that when stated to her, (as she knew nothing of the bad principles of Fanny,) she had given implicit credit to the artful wretch, for she had considered her a faithful and attached servant. This fully accounted to Isabella, for the strange alteration in her kind friend's manner; and she shed tears, as she thought how wicked she must have appeared in the eyes of that lady. Miss Fitzhenry soon comforted the amiable girl; and solemnly promised never to listen to any thing that was injurious to her favourite; as she was sure from what she had heard that morning, that her Isabella never could act so treacherously. Mrs. Claremont and Lady Mildew did not fail to commend Isabella, for her kind consideration in not defending herself from the charge of indolence, by accusing Clara of (the least that could be said of it) deceit. Isabella, seeing this subject distressed her cousin, playfully denied any praise. And as she was again pressed to the heart of her aunt, she thought

she would not care to suffer the same again, could she be certain of being so rewarded.

The party were so occupied with their own feelings, that it was not until Grace ran in, exclaiming, " my dear mamma, Fanny is gone, and nobody knows where !" that Lady Mildew recollected having sent Fanny for the lace. She then in company with her sister, went in search of the run-away. Grace enquired the cause of her sister's and cousin's red eyes; Isabella wishing to spare Clara's feelings, remained silent. But Clara generously declared she would relate all herself to the deeply affected Grace; and in this relation, she never spared her own character; and concluded by exclaiming, " O my dear Bella, what would I give to be like you ! O teach me to be amiable and good like yourself, that I may share with you and dear Grace the affections and esteem of my dearest mother and aunt." Isabella affectionately kissed her cousin, as, blushing, she offered her assistance to the open, but faulty Clara: but on condition, that she would in return correct all she saw amiss in her; while Grace, with her eyes filled with tears, declared she was the

happiest girl in the world; and flew to tell her mamma of the agreement between the cousins. The house and grounds were searched for Fanny but it was useless. She had decamped, leaving the lace on the table in her room. Mrs. Claremont was not sorry to be thus saved the trouble of discharging her; and the silly, weak Mary was sent to a neighbouring town, where she soon got a place. Mrs. Claremont, after writing to Mrs. Dalton, and sending the locket and lace, repaired to Lady Mildew's dressing room, and requested her sister to relate the cause of her sudden appearance at Ivy Cottage. "I must then go back to the time I left you;" answered her ladyship; "and as Isabella is the person principally concerned in my narrative, I think it right for her to be present." Isabella was accordingly summoned, and Lady Mildew began; but what she related was interesting enough to deserve another chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

QUIETLY seated next her aunts, the young Isabella composed herself to the most rigid attention, whilst Lady Mildew thus commenced the detail of her surprising and eventful journey. “When I arrived in London, I immediately drove to Portland Place; and then to a splendid mansion; and after waiting in a grand drawing room, I was shewn into a room, where I could with difficulty recognise, in the pale, emaciated figure, seated on a sofa before me, the once handsome and interesting St. Clare. I was so affected with the alteration, so conspicuously visible in his appearance, that I remained standing motionless at the door; till at length roused by his feebly attempting to rise, I advanced towards him with extended hands. The meeting was affecting in the extreme. I had not seen him since the severe loss I had sustained in the death of my beloved Godfrey; and the sight of him recalled the most distressing scenes to my imagination.

When he had in some little degree recovered his composure, and my own was gradually returning, he inquired after my family in the tenderest manner: informed me he had travelled long in search of me: and that he had at length and most reluctantly, totally given up the pursuit as fruitless, when my letter most fortunately reached him. The intelligence it conveyed determined him to embark instantly for England; and that when he arrived, he was thrown upon a bed of sickness, which prevented him from coming here. All this, however, he said was not the important subject he had to communicate. In broken and faltering sentences he then stated, that when he left Sir Godfrey and myself on the Continent, he went to the East Indies; there bereaved of all his loved friends, he took up with a set of gamblers, with whom he spent all his leisure hours; and that on one unfortunate evening, he got so intoxicated, that he was upon the point of staking what would entirely have ruined him, when a gentleman rushed towards him, and without speaking a word, dragged him out of the house, with efforts as strong as they were effective. Mr.

St. Clare entirely roused by this seeming outrage, from the inebriated state he had been in, felt not a little indignant at being thus roughly handled. But the gentleman apologized for his apparent rudeness, in so gentlemanly and delicate a manner, saying, that he had been himself reduced almost to a state of beggary by gambling ; and that seeing another on the same brink of destruction, he could not forbear snatching him even thus rudely from the misery of finding himself and children destitute. The wildness of his looks, as he concluded this apology in a deep and hollow voice, so affected Mr. St. Clare, that he grasped the stranger's hand, and, in warm terms, expressed his grateful thanks. He then requested to know to whom he was so greatly indebted ; and was informed that his name was Claremont ; and that he had lost his wife, who had left behind two motherless babes ; he then disappeared ; and although Mr. St. Clare had done all in his power to discover him, that he might relieve his distress, he could never hear any thing more of him till the moment of reading my letter, in which I begged him to tell me if he knew who my dear friend Florella Spi-

netto had married ; and if he had ever heard of a Mr. Claremont. This and other circumstances detailed in my enquiry, convinced him that his preserver, and the Mr. Claremont I had mentioned, would prove to be one and the same person. And that he was still eagerly investigating who Mr. Claremont was ; and begged me to inform him, if I had heard, and could tell him any thing of Mr. Claremont. Surprised and much agitated, I then related all I knew of your husband's brother ; and of your having under your own care the orphan child he had left wholly destitute, to his brother's and your protection. Again he informed me that my beloved friend had become the wife of Mr. Claremont, about a twelve-month after I last saw her." Here tears choked the utterance of Lady Mildew, and she was obliged to pause. Isabella deeply affected, wept aloud at hearing this account of her beloved parents.

Her ladyship resumed, " He bitterly lamented the death of Mr. Claremont, whom he styled his deliverer and preserver from ignominy and ruin ; but declared himself rejoiced at having it in his power to repay in some measure, the vast debt of gratitude he owed him,

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by leaving his immense property wholly to his orphan; as he had no relations. I then asked him about the family of your beloved mother, dear girl; but he said, she never had any relation since she was an infant, than an aged grandmother, who had brought her up, and educated her, but that she alas had paid the debt of nature a short time after her grand child's marriage. He was, he said, delighted and grateful to God, that he could now be able to arrange his affairs, and settle his fortune upon his preserver's child, before he quitted this world. I ventured to suggest a hope that he would be able to see Isabella; but to this he mournfully replied, 'Do not my dear Lady Mildew flatter yourself, that I can survive more than a day or two. My sand has nearly run out. In a very, very short time I shall be numbered with the dead.' This affected me exceedingly, and I offered to sit up with him during the night; but this he would not allow, as he had a doctor, and nurse to whom he was accustomed, a good, kind creature, would remain with him the whole of the night. I then retired, hoping that his mournful sentiments proceeded from weakness; and

that he would live many days, if not weeks. But this hope proved delusive, for I was summoned in the dead of the night, to receive the last sigh of my poor friend."

Lady Mildew, her sister, and Isabella, here wept; and it was some time ere her ladyship could proceed, to inform her attentive and affected auditors, that, after she had taken leave of him for the night, he had sent for his solicitor again; and that after the funeral the will was opened, and read. A considerable legacy was left to herself, as well as Mrs. Claremont. These, besides a few others to old and attached domestics, with a hundred pounds, as a gratuity to the nurse, were the only items of the will; except that the remainder of his ample property was bequeathed to Isabella. "Doctor Lawton" she continued, "at my request, is nominated joint guardian with myself, to our niece. My sudden, and unexpected arrival here, was caused by a letter I received from Newton yesterday, informing me of poor Isabella's distress. As every thing had been made safe and sure for our dear girl now an heiress, I made my arrangements, and instantly set off for Ivy Cottage;

and as you know arrived in time to clear her spotless character; and as it turned out, to reward her integrity."

As her ladyship ended, she tenderly kissed the weeping girl, and bid her hasten to her cousin, and tell her all. Lady Mildew then told Mrs. Claremont, that, as the house in Portland Place, and also a splendid seat, Clare Abbey, was left to Isabella, she thought it advisable, that they should remove thither as soon as possible, that her nieces might enjoy the advantages of the best and most approved masters. As the fortune Isabella would receive entitled her to a superior education. She then embraced this opportunity of putting her sister into full possession of her future pecuniary disposal of her fortune. She said she should divide her own large income into distinct parts and allotting one to her sister, and reserving a part only for herself: while the remainder should be equally divided between her nephews and nieces. Of course Isabella would not be included in this arrangement; as although her ladyship's fortune was handsome, yet, when it came to be divided among so many, the separate portions

would not be equal to Isabella's. She then continued, if Mrs. Claremont had no objection, she should send Cornish, as soon as he was old enough, to one of the Universities; there to be prepared for the Church. Mrs. Claremont, astonished, and deeply penetrated at the affection and generosity of this offer, remained for some moments motionless with gratitude; at length, falling upon her sister's bosom; she poured forth her heart-felt acknowledgements in broken and inarticulate sentences. When she had in some degree subdued her agitation, the sisters descended to the school room, where they found the three girls and Miss Fitzhenry. Lady Mildew then made known her intention of leaving Ivy Cottage for Portland Place, as soon as possible. Isabella far from feeling elevated by her sudden and unexpected fortune, felt grieved at her dear Clara's not sharing it with her; but she made a vow, that as soon as she was of age, her cousin's should have an ample part of it. Her thoughts were next occupied by Mr. St. Clare, who had munificently provided for her; and by that means, would enable her to gratify her darling wish. She heaved a

sigh at the remembrance of the essential service her dear father had rendered him; and it fully accounted to her the reason why he had so often, and in her hearing, condemned the vice of gambling.

Clara's feelings now were very different to what they would have been a very short time back, had she then known of her cousin's superior fortune. Let not my young readers imagine, that in the short space of a few hours, she could so far have conquered a failing, the seeds of which had so early been sown. O no; Clara had sometimes, even during the evening of this eventful day, felt symptoms of her old malady. But the ensuing moment, she repelled it with firmness; and, in order to crush it effectually, remembered how bitterly she had repented of that unkindness of her's to Isabella; which had been caused by envy, united to vanity. This reflection was seen to guard her from admitting into her breast again, such a baneful guest.

On retiring for the night, as Lady Mildew kissed her youthful namesake, she smiled and said, "I think my dear Clara, your friend Sophia Dalton, will not be much improved by

the anticipated trip to France. Indeed I do sincerely pity her mother, for having such a daughter; for I am sadly afraid, that, through her affectation, she will become a pest to society; and a mother's heart, (however bad that child may be) will severely feel such a blow."

"O my dear aunt," exclaimed Grace, "I am so glad Sophia is going to leave England for a short time; and then she will not come with Charlotte and Julia. I do not like her for more reasons than one," and she looked archly at Clara.

"What are your reasons my love!" asked Miss Fitzhenry, quite unconscious of Clara's embarrassment.

"O I do not wish to mention them now," cried the affectionate Grace, fearful of giving pain to her sister, "I will tell you another time ma'am."

"No, no, Grace, I well know what you mean now," returned Miss Fitzhenry, as she playfully held her prisoner. "Come, I am sure, there is nobody here, that you need be afraid of telling me your weighty and important reasons for disliking Miss Sophia Dalton."

Grace looked at Clara, who deeply blushing, stood pretending to admire a beautiful plant, which was on a table by the window. Grace was obliged to speak, and said, "Why one is, that she always tries to make our dear Clara as ridiculous as herself; Cornish noticed this, as well as I did, how much more amiable she looked, when that Sophia Dalton was away. O I could almost say I hate her!"

"O hush, hush, dear Grace," exclaimed Isabella, as she placed her hand before her cousin's mouth; while Clara, though in great confusion, kissed her sister, and thanked her for the candour with which she had spoken.

They then retired to rest, with happy and contented hearts.

CHAPTER XVI.

The next morning, as they were sitting down to breakfast, Mrs. Claremont received the following letter from Cornish:

Harrow,——

Dear mother,

I write this to let you know, that you may expect to see me home in the course of next week, as our holidays commence at the end of that time. I hope to find all my dear friends well; and little Alfred grown quite a man. Dr. —— praises me so much and so often, that it makes me quite blush, something like what Bella used to do. Pray do not imagine this proceeds from vanity, for I can assure you it is all true. I trust your own health, my dear mamma is improved. With dutiful love to my dear aunt, and Miss Fitzhenry; and kind regards to my sisters, cousin (who by the bye, I trust has cast off the vulgar habit of blushing), and Alfred,

I remain, ever,

Your very affectionate, and, I hope,

Dutiful Son,

CORNISH CLAREMONT.

His mother, in her reply, apprised him of the strange event that had occurred; only drawing a veil over that part connected with Clara, as she too well knew the propensity he

had to satire ; and thought it better to keep him in ignorance of the way in which his sister had treated her cousin. She desired him to proceed to Portland Place, instead of seeking her at Ivy Cottage, where he had left her, as it was there he would meet his family. Lady Mildew soon took a ride over to Elm Hall, where she was received with great delight by the worthy doctor and his wife. She then informed Dr. Lawton of the important charge that had been bequeathed to his guardianship. He expressed himself greatly pleased with having so amiable a young lady under his care, and earnestly requested her ladyship's permission for his young ward to visit him. But Lady Mildew begged to be excused parting with her niece just yet ; and promised that ere long Isabella should visit her worthy guardian. She then took her leave, requesting the doctor to make a call at Portland Place on his return from Scotland ; whither he was going to bring back his daughters.

As soon as every thing was arranged for their removal, Lady Mildew, with her sister and family, set off for London ; where they

arrived the second day after their departure from Ivy Cottage.

Lady Mildew noticed with delight, the modest and humble deportment of Isabella on entering her own splendid mansion. Not a word or a look, did she allow to escape her, that might be construed into pride; or intimate to her cousin how much her superior she had become in worldly riches.

Nor was the aunt and mother less pleased with the behaviour of Clara; who neither evinced envy or jealousy at her cousin's good fortune; but, on the contrary, was among the first to congratulate Isabella upon her entering (for the first time) her own elegant mansion. At the end of the week, after their arrival in Portland Place, Cornish was pressed to the bosom of his widowed mother. And as she viewed his noble countenance, so like her departed Alfred, glowing with health and happiness, she mentally breathed a prayer, that he might indeed one day prove himself worthy of being the son of such a good and excellent father.

Cornish was no less struck with the improvement that had taken place in the persons of

Clara and Isabella, than they were with the alteration, a few weeks had made in his appearance. As he kissed the cheek of the latter he laughingly congratulated her upon being so suddenly provided with such an excellent house and gardens ; and protested that she must have a temple erected like her aunt's, and that she must allow him to choose the colour of the drapery. This allusion to the dispute between himself and Clara, brought the colour into the cheeks of his sister, as she recollected how pettishly she had then treated her cousin. Isabella perceiving that this topic was embarrassing to Clara, now offered to adjourn to the drawing room, where they found Dr. Lawton, his lady and four daughters : who were introduced to the cousins by the names of Caroline, Flora, Laura and Emily. The two eldest were twins, and about the age of Isabella and Clara, with whom they shortly became very good friends. The doctor had come as he said to extort a promise from Lady Mildew and her sister, to pay him a visit. This, he said, he had a right to urge, and with a good chance of success, as that young lady, and he pointed to Isabella, had

become his ward. A promise was readily given by Lady Mildew, and the doctor and his family soon after took their leave.

“O what nice girls, Emily and Laura, are,” exclaimed Grace, as soon as they were gone. “How pleased Julia will be to know them; they are so very good-tempered.”

“How can you know that, Grace?” asked Cornish. “Why you have been in their company only half an hour; how can you judge of their tempers, in such a short space of time?”

“O I can easily perceive that they are not ill-tempered however,” returned Grace. “Did not you see how sweetly Laura smiled, when you laughed at her bonnet, because you said it was like an old woman’s? I am sure, if she had been ill-tempered, she would either have cried, or been very angry with you, and have scolded you.”

“Yes, you are quite right, dear Grace,” replied Cornish, laughing at the warmth she displayed, in defending her new favourites.

“I am very certain Sophia Dalton would not have behaved so well. I wonder what will become of her. I never could bear that girl, with ideas of vulgarity and fashion, and all

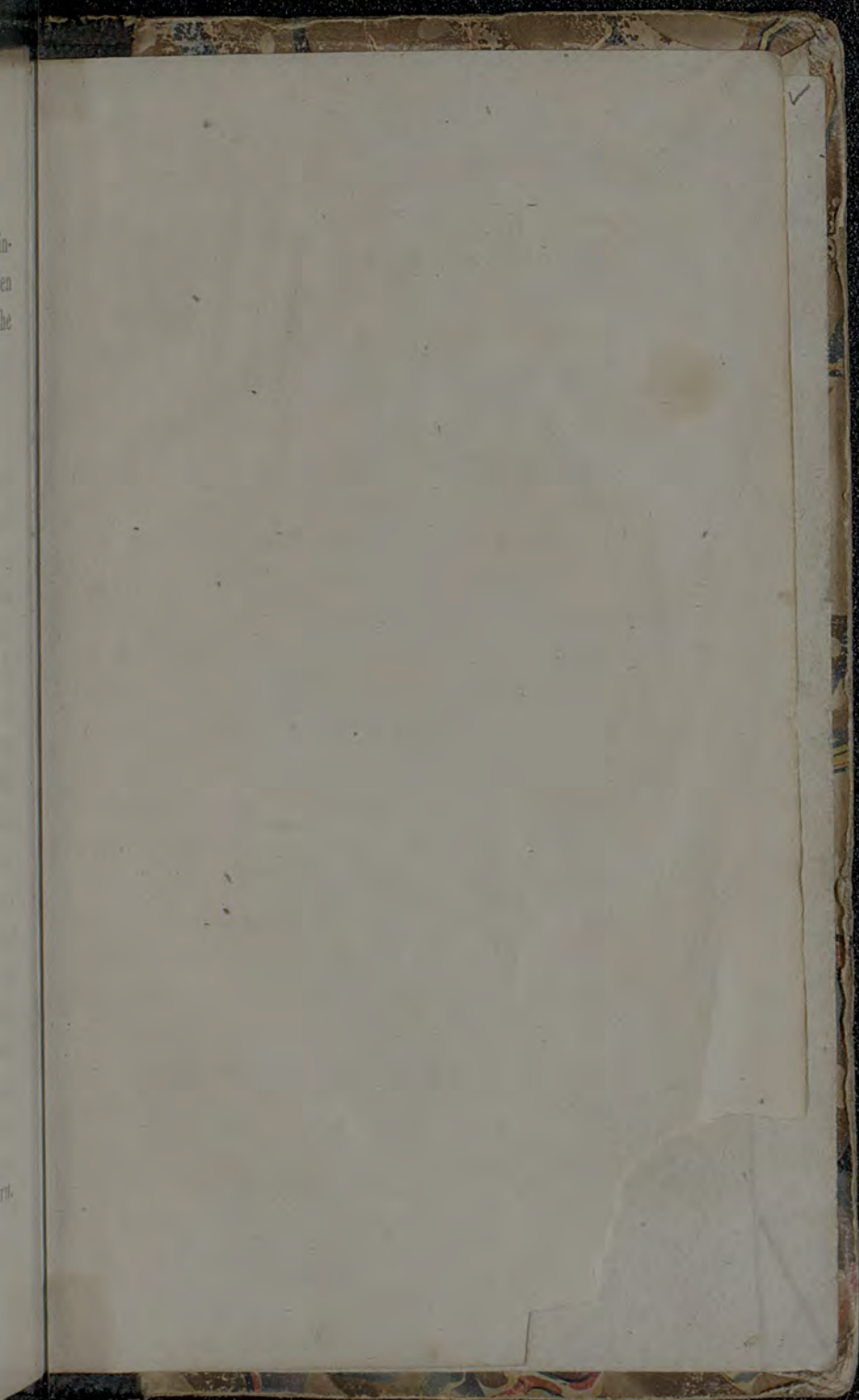
such nonsense. I hope dear Clara, you are not so fond of her now?" "O no, not now, Cornish," answered Clara, but still I do not think her quite so bad as you do; although she is certainly very different to our dear Bella, who is every thing that is natural and unaffected. I have but lately discovered my error in that respect; and I hope poor Sophia will be convinced, before it is too late, of the folly of affectation." Cornish jumped and threw his arms round her neck, as she exclaimed, "How happy I am, to hear you talk so; O how pleased our dear papa would have been, to have heard his Clara speak so sensibly." Tears, unbidden, came into his eyes as he said this, and there was a pause for some minutes. At length Lady Mildew impressively said, "my dear boy, if in those realms of bliss, where your good father now is, enjoying eternal happiness his spirit be permitted to witness this blessed reformation, we may hope, that he views with extacy, this change in his beloved daughter, and pours his blessing upon her!"

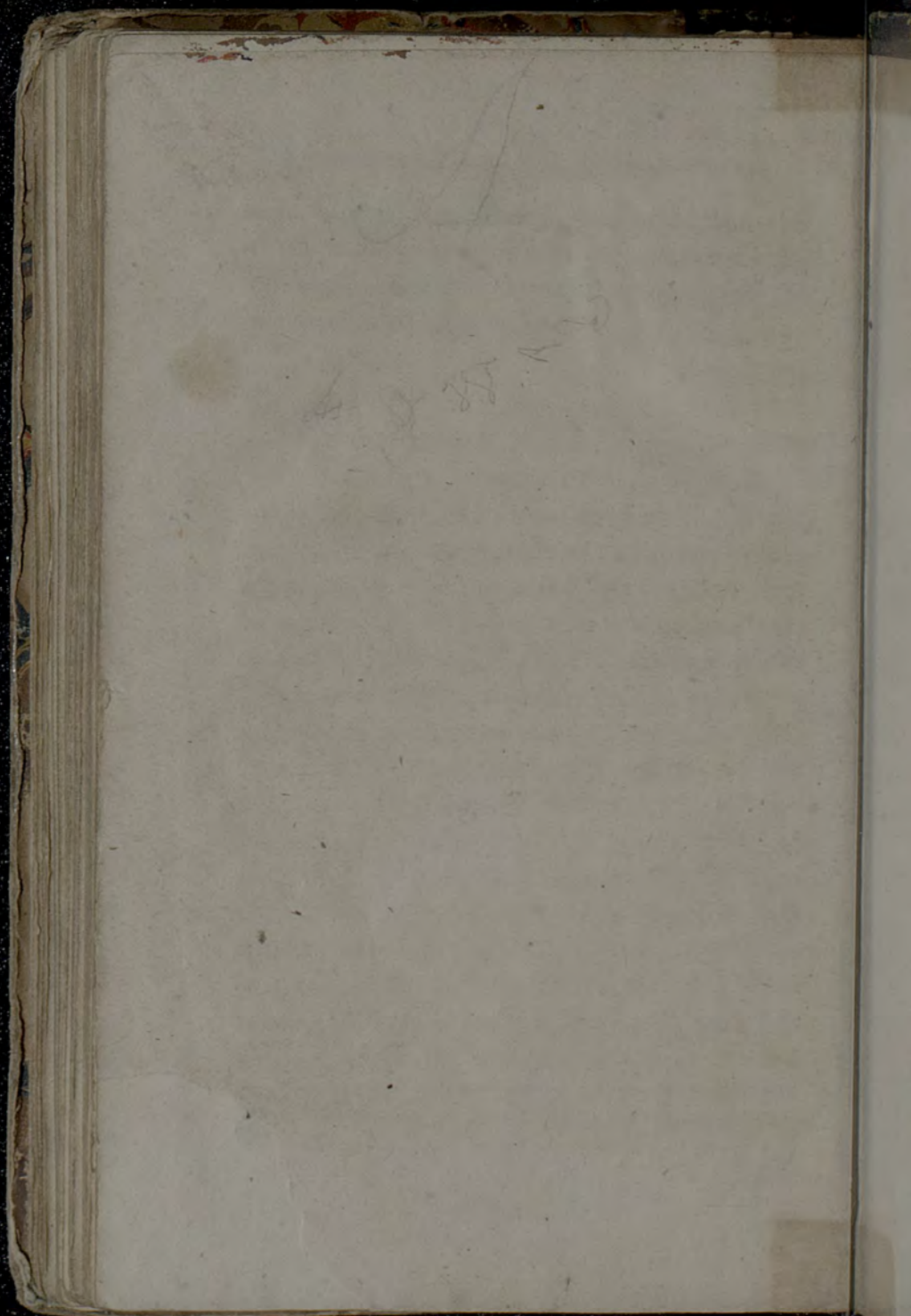
CONCLUSION.

HAVING traced Isabella through the principal events of her life, I must now my dear readers finish my tale, with assuring you, that these young people continue to delight their tender mother, and anxious aunt, with the rectitude of their conduct and behaviour. Nor has Clara ever again given way to her besetting sins of vanity and affectation; while Sophia Dalton continues to draw upon herself the scorn of all good people, by the outrageous affectation and vanity of her deportment, her young mind under the dominion of these errors, is running wholly to ruin. The Claremont's each and all, are growing up ornaments to the station in which they are placed; and I have only to request the attention of my young friends to the truth, as exemplified in this domestic sketch, that providence seldom fails even now, to detect and punish vice, and hold her up to the detestation and contempt of the good and worthy part of the world. And it is

equally true, that virtue, unaffected and sincere, scarcely ever fails to be rewarded even on earth, and her beauty exhibited to the admiration of all mankind.

THE END.





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