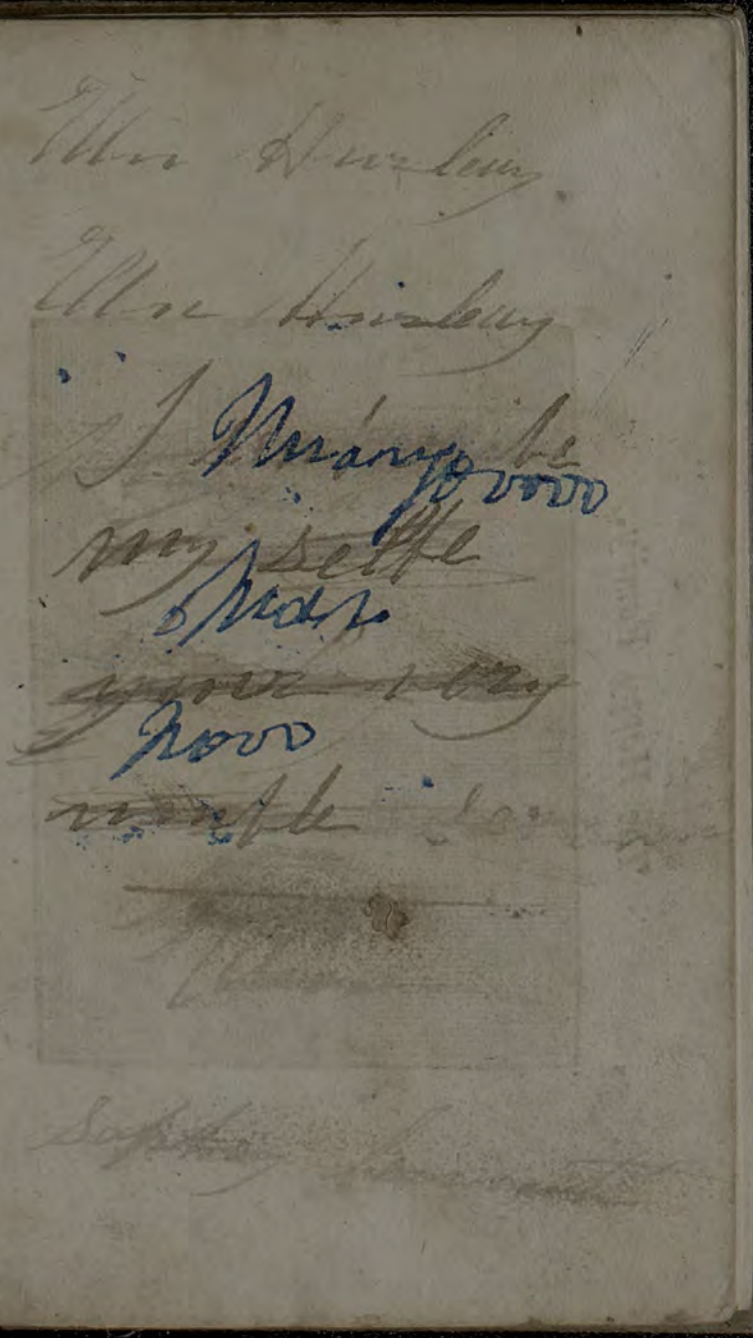

The Happy Family.

THE

HAPPY FAMILY:

OR,

Winter Evenings' Employment.

CONSISTING OF

READINGS AND CONVERSATIONS,

In Seven Parts.

By a Friend of Youth.

WITH CUTS BY BEWICK.

"O snatch your offspring from adding to the number of those objects "of supreme commiseration, who seek their happiness in doing nothing."
HANNAH MORE.

YORK:

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PREFACE.

TO repreſent TIME as valuable; STUDY amuſing and profitable; INTEGRITY indiſpenſable; VIRTUE amiable; and the paths of RELIGION, as the ways of pleaſantneſs; is the plan of this little work: and to draw the attention of young minds to theſe important views, is the motive for publiſhing it. Should the work prove ſucceſsful but in a ſingle inſtance, my labour will be rewarded.

I have enriched my little volume with paſſages from a number of admired authors; particularly from the late incomparable work of Hannah More*. In ſelecting from this author, I riſk being claſſed amongſt the "*beauty mongers*" of the day; as, indeed, it is ſcarcely poſſible to ſelect a line

*Strictures on the Modern Syſtem of Education, by Hannah More.

from that book, where the reader, if he has any diſcernment, will not diſcover a *beauty*. When I make extracts from this work, in order to illuſtrate my ſubject, particularly when that ſubject happens to be religious education, it is becauſe no other author ſupplies me with ſentiments, which I deem ſo well adapted to my purpoſe. And I ſhall fail exceedingly in my deſign if the reader does not find in theſe paſſages, ſome things that may lead him to examine the work from which they are ſelected. There he will find not only beauty and elegance—but treaſures of infinitely greater importance.

If I have borrowed a few tints from the moſt ſucceſsful Artiſts that have ever painted the advantages of early reflection, I truſt I ſhall be forgiven. I have done ſo in the hope that, by applying thoſe bright touches, which cannot fail to attract, the whole of my little compoſition may be recommended to the obſervation of thoſe, for whoſe amuſement and edification it was deſigned by

A Friend of Youth.

WINTER TALES, &c.

THE FIRST EVENING.

ELDEST BOY.

NOW, my young friends, we are met together for our amuſement, let us form ſome regular plan of proceeding. I am the oldeſt of the company, therefore I propoſe that we all ſit round this cheerful fire, and read ſome entertaining ſtories out of the little book which has juſt been preſented to us. This book, it appears, has been written by one who is a Friend of Youth: that being the caſe, we may expect to find ſomething in it to entertain us; and, perhaps, while it makes us merry, it may alſo make us wiſe; and, what is more, may tend to make us good; and that, I have heard my father ſay an hundred times, will certainly make us happy.

We are here preſented with a ſhort deſcription of that noble animal the Lion: but before I begin to read, in order to engage your attention, you ſhall ſee the beautiful picture which is here placed at the top; and as we perhaps may hear a great deal concerning this fierce looking animal, we ſhall, by viewing his portrait, the better underſtand what ſort of a creature he is.

THE LION.

This animal is produced in Africa; he reigns the ſole maſter of the deſerts his

rage is tremendous, his courage undaunted, and his roaring horrible. His mane is large and ſhaggy, and he is of a tawny colour; his ſtrength is great: and yet for all this ſtrength and fierceneſs, becoming once acquainted with man, and the power of his arms, he loſes his natural fortitude, and is terrified even at the ſound of the voice of his keeper. Such is the ſuperiority of reaſon over inſtinct—ſuch is the power which Providence hath given to man over the whole creation. However tame theſe creatures appear, we ought not to truſt their ſavage nature too far. I will tell you a little ſtory about one of theſe animals.

STORY OF A LION.

A Gentleman once kept in his chamber a Lion, which he ſuppoſed to be quite tame; and his ſervant, who uſed to feed and attend it, as is uſual, mixed blows with careſſes. This ill-judged aſſociation continued for ſome time. One morning, however, the gentleman was awakened by an unuſual noiſe in the room; and drawing his curtains, he perceived it to proceed from the Lion; which was growling over

the unhappy man, whom it had juſt killed, and had ſeparated his head from his body.

This ſtory the younger part of my readers ſhould keep in mind; it may be the means of ſaving you a hand or an arm. You will perhaps frequently ſee thoſe fierce animals either at the Tower of London, or at Mr. Pidcock's, or carried about the country in iron cages: you will ſee their keepers play with them and careſs them; and becauſe you obſerve in the animal a ſullen compoſure, which you miſtake for gentleneſs, you may approach too near the grate, and attempt to touch them; but be aware of doing ſo; remember the Lion in the chamber; he may at that very time be watching an opportunity to ſeize you; and the loſs of an arm would be paying dearly indeed for your curioſity. Many accounts aſſure us that the anger of the Lion is noble, its courage magnanimous, and its temper ſuſceptible of grateful impreſſions. This may be; but we have ſeen how little theſe noble qualities are to be depended upon: and when there is no good to be done, or glory to be gained, it is certainly ſafe, prudent, and commendable to avoid

danger; and at all times proper to keep at a diſtance from bad company.

As the Lion is remarkable for his ſtrength and fierceneſs, ſo is the Mouſe for its weakneſs and timidity. But to ſhow you how the ſtrong and hardy may be ſometimes obliged to the weak and timid for their preſervation—and, indeed, how the high and mighty may occaſionally be dependent upon the meek and lowly; or the rich and proſperous ſaved by the charitable aſſiſtance of the humble and grateful; I will here inſert a little fable of—,

A LION CAUGHT IN A NET.

A little, timid Mouſe was amuſing itſelf by picking up a few grains of rice, which had eſcaped the hand of the gleaner, and were ſcattered on the ground; without obſerving a tremendous Lion who had ſought this ſhady place, and ſtretched himſelf out to repoſe. The little animal caught the Lion's attention. He gently laid his paw upon the mouſe; which, in an agony of fear, in the moſt pitiable language, implored his mercy, and begged him to ſpare the life of an object ſo incon-

ſiderable as he muſt appear in the eyes of his majeſty.—"Go," ſays the Lion, "I did not intend to hurt thee; but keep this leſſon in thy mind, when any one is helping himſelf to that which is the property of another, there may be an eye upon him that he ſuſpects not." The Lion releaſed his little priſoner, who went away rejoicing at the clemency ſhown him by his royal maſter.

It happened a little while after this, that the Lion, who was prowling amidſt ſome thickets in the dead of night, fell into a ſnare, a net of ſtrong cords, which had been ſpread for the purpoſe. Finding himſelf thus enſnared, and unable to extricate himſelf, he ſoon made the woods reſound with the moſt horrible roaring. It was in vain he ſtrove to untie the knots which held him: the more he applied his ſtrength, the more firmly they were bound together.

His cries at length reached the ear of his little friend the Mouſe, whom he had ſo lately ſet at liberty. The voice was well remembered by the little animal; and without ſtopping to conſider in what way

ſo inſignificant a creature as he could ſerve ſo great a perſonage, or what riſk he would run of meeting his deſtruction if he approached the Lion whilſt thus enraged, he ran with all his ſwiftneſs to the place; impelled by gratitude and a ſenſe of duty, he diſdained all fear. He ſoon ſaw in what condition the Lion was in.—"Deſpair not," ſays he; "ceaſe to ſhake the earth with this terrible roaring: be ſtill, and ſuffer me to apply the means that occur to me for your deliverance." He immediately fell to work, and ſoon, with his ſharp teeth, gnawed away the principal knots by which the Lion had been confined, ſo that he could eaſily ſhake off the net. "Now," ſays this little knight errant, "your majeſty will pleaſe to walk forth; and let this leſſon teach you, that a charitable action done in ſecret, ſeldom fails to be rewarded."

There is a pretty ſtory told of a Lion, which, if true, ſerves to ſhow that he in his turn, is capable of gratitude. It is as follows:

There was a traveller who loſt himſelf

in a foreſt: it was almoſt night; and having ſpied a cave, he went in to ſtay till the next day: but a moment afterwards, he ſaw a Lion coming towards the cave. The man was in a great fright, and thought that the Lion was going to devour him. The Lion walked on three feet, and held up the fourth; he came thus to the traveller, and ſhowed him his paw, in which there was a large thorn; the man took out the thorn, and having torn his pocket handkerchief, wrapped the Lion's paw in it. This animal, by way of thanking him, fawned upon him like a dog, did him no harm, and the next day the man went his way. Some years after, the man, for ſome crime he had committed, was condemned to be torn by wild beaſts. When he was in a place called the Arena, they let out againſt him a furious Lion, which at firſt run at him to devour him: but when he came near the man, he ſtopped to look at him; and knowing him to be the ſame who had taken the thorn out of his foot, he went up to him, moving his head and tail, to ſhow the pleaſure he had in ſeeing him again. The emperor was very much

ſurpriſed at this ſight; and, having ordered the man to be brought to him, he aſked him if he knew the Lion; the criminal gave him an account of the adventure, and the emperor pardoned him.

There is not a more pleaſing exerciſe of the mind than gratitude. It is accompanied with ſuch inward ſatisfaction, that the duty is ſufficiently rewarded by the performance. It is not like the practice of many other virtues, difficult and painful, but attended with ſo much pleaſure, that were there no poſitive command which enjoined it, nor any recompenſe laid up for it hereafter,—a generous mind would indulge in it for the natural gratification that accompanies it. If gratitude is due from man to man, how much more from man to his Maker? The Supreme Being does not only confer upon us thoſe bounties which proceed more immediately from his hand, but even thoſe benefits which are conveyed to us by others.—Every bleſſing we enjoy, by what means ſoever it may be derived, is the gift of Him

who is the great Author of Good and Father of Mercies.

ELDEST BOY.

The Evening is now pretty far advanced, and I think we cannot leave off at a better place. I muſt own the delight I feel in thoſe charming reflections; they will for ever be impreſſed on my mind, and I hope they will alſo be impreſſed upon your minds. We ſhould be ungrateful to the Author of this little book, which has already afforded us ſo much entertainment, if we did not make a proper application of thoſe virtuous ſentiments.—How indeed can we cloſe the evening better, than by expreſſing our thanks to the Father of all Mercies, through whoſe kind providence we have been rendered ſo happy this night, and from whom we have received ſo many, many bleſſings.

THE SECOND EVENING.

ELDEST BOY.

WELCOME, my little brothers, sisters, friends!—with pleasure I meet you again, to renew our Evening's Conversation, and proceed in our entertaining and instructive little book. Here it is—

"*Am I not a Friend and a Brother?*"

On opening the part which contains the second evening's reading, I observe

the picture of a Negro: poor fellow, he seems to be in great distress.—Hand him round before I begin to read concerning him.

ELIZA.—(6 YEARS OLD.)

O! what a disagreeable black looking creature! I never saw any thing so frightful; and all hung about with chains, I declare: I dare say he fancies himself my Lord Mayor, or some such fine man. I have no patience with such conceited things: and only see what faces he makes; most likely all this finery is very painful to him. It reminds me of our Margery, the cook, who was such a silly thing as to go the other day and have her ears bored; she came back making such faces as this. Mother told her that "pride was painful;" and I really think both Margery and this black man would look quite as well without having bits of brass wires hanging at their ears.

ELDEST BOY.

What you say of Margery may be very proper; but what you say of the poor

black man ſerves to ſhow how very cautious we ſhould be in forming our judgment of perſons by their outward appearance, and of being too haſty to condemn. This is the portrait of a poor negro ſlave, who has been dragged from his country, his connexions, and his friends. Perhaps an affectionate huſband and a tender father, whoſe hapleſs family are bemoaning his lot in ſome remote corner of the world; or who may, by this time, be loaded with chains, and under the tyranny of ſome cruel taſk-maſter, obliged to lead a life of ſlavery like his, in order that ſuch as you may have ſugar to your tea, and your tarts made ſweet and palatable. Now there is little Harry, with his pink and white cheeks, and his ſparkling eyes, ſuppoſe ſome great rough looking man was to come and ſteal him away, and carry him into ſome diſtant country, and when he was able to work, load him with chains, as if he was a cart-horſe. Would it not have coſt you many a ſorrowful thought, many a deep ſigh, when you reflected that your brother was torn from you, and ſo cruelly treated? we will ſuppoſe him carried away into a far

distant clime, where some little girl may say, "O! what a disagreeable *red and white* looking creature!—how frightful!" —This poor black man is the work of the same Creator as you are. There is, to be sure, a very great difference in the colour of your skins; but as neither were of your own making, so neither of you have any business to be proud of the difference, nor to despise each other on account of it. He is a poor miserable creature, and deserves all our compassion; and so do all his wretched race.

EDWARD—(EIGHT YEARS OLD.)

You have said so much about this poor Negro, it makes me love him better than if he was white. I could look on his picture, and reflect on his forlorn condition, until I shed tears over it.

ELIZA.

I'm so sorry to think that I should be so naughty as to call him names, I could cry too. I wish I could take these ugly chains, and tear them link from link; and could raise him up from his knees, I would kiss

him, and tell him, that though I was so silly to call him names, *I did not mean to hurt him.* And when he saw my tears, I think he would believe me.

ELDEST BOY.

It was spoken like a young Christian; and with such energy, that I cannot doubt its sincerity. Perhaps if older Christians than we were to come to a resolution to break the fetters, to emancipate and kindly raise up these poor afflicted fellow-creatures, who are so sorely burthened, they would feel a more exquisite sensation than they had ever before experienced.

A traveller relates, that "in walking through a slave-yard, he saw a man about thirty-five years old, in irons; he was a a Mahometan, and could read and write Arabic. He was occasionally noisy; sometimes he would sing a melancholy song, then he would utter an earnest prayer, and then perhaps would observe a dead silence." [This, by the way, I take to be the very man whose picture is here exhibited.] "I asked the reason of this strange conduct, and learned that it was

in conſequence of his ſtrong feelings on his having been juſt put, for the firſt time, in irons. I believe he had begun to wear them only the day before. As we paſſed, he cried aloud to us, and endeavoured to hold up his irons to our view, which he ſtruck with his hand in a very expreſſive manner, the tear ſtarting in his eye. He ſeemed by his manner to be demanding the cauſe of his confinement.—How affecting!—for a man in the prime of life to be bound in irons, and perhaps doomed to endure all the hardſhips and cruelties, which it is well known are practiſed upon theſe poor men; and left to aſk, perhaps in vain, of the remorſeleſs maſter, "What is the cauſe of this?—What has been my crime? Wherein have I offended?"—I truſt there is not one of my young readers whoſe heart would not melt with compaſſion at the ſight of this poor innocent ſufferer, were they to ſee him, in a ſupplicating poſture, with tears in his eyes, calling out to them,

"*Am I not a Friend and a Brother?*"

What an appeal to the human heart!—Before I diſmiſs the ſubject, you ſhall have

a ſpecimen of the *tenderneſs* of thoſe men-dealers.

"The captain of an American ſlave-ſhip had loſt a very fine ſlave; he died *of the ſulks*, as he emphatically termed it. The following were his words, as near as the perſon who related the fact could remember—"The man (he ſaid) was a Mahometan, and uncommonly well made, and it appeared to me, that he had been ſome perſon of conſequence. When he firſt came on board, he was very much caſt down; but on finding that I allowed him to walk at large, he got a little more reconciled to the ſhip. When the number of my ſlaves grew to be ſuch that I could not let them have their liberty any longer, I put this man in irons like the reſt, and upon this his ſpirits ſunk down again to ſuch a degree, that he never recovered it. He complained of a *pain at his heart*, and would not eat. The uſual means were tried with him, but it ſeemed all in vain, for he continued to reject food altogether, except when I ſtood by him, and made him eat. I left no method untried with him; for I had ſet my heart on ſaving him. I am

perſuaded he would have brought me three hundred dollars in the Weſt Indies; but nothing would ſucceed. He ſaid from the firſt he was determined to die, and accordingly ſo he did, after lingering for the ſpace of nine days. I aſſure you, Gentlemen, I felt very ſorry on the occaſion, for I dare ſay I loſt three hundred dollars by his death; and, to ſuch a man as me, that is a very heavy loſs!"

This is the compaſſionate language of a ſlave-merchant. What muſt this poor African have endured? Surely this was dying of grief—torn from all that was dear to him in life—he would have ſtruggled with the miſerable reverſe of his fortune with heroic fortitude—but chains—to laden an afflicted creature like this with chains—NO!—he *could not* bear that!—HE DIED!!!

"Such, I exclaim, is the pitileſs part,
Some act by the delicate mind;
Regardleſs of wounding, or breaking a heart,
Already to ſorrow reſign'd."

He without whoſe permiſſion "not a ſparrow falls to the ground, and who feedeth the young ravens that call upon him,"

will not ſuffer the meaneſt work of his hands to be treated cruelly with impunity. I remember ſome moſt beautiful lines on this ſubject written by that excellent poet, Cowper. With his permiſſion, I will borrow a few of them for your gratification.

" Oh! moſt degrading of all ills that wait
On man, a mourner in his beſt eſtate!
All other ſorrows virtue may endure,
And find ſubmiſſion more than half a cure;
Grief is itſelf a med'cine, and beſtow'd
T'improve the fortitude that bears the load;
To teach the wand'rer, as his woes increaſe,
The path of Wiſdom, all whoſe paths are peace.
But Slav'ry! Virtue dreads it, as her grave,
Patience itſelf is meanneſs in the ſlave;
Or if the will and ſovereignty of God
Bid ſuffer it a while, and kiſs the rod,
Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
And ſnap the chain the moment when you may.
Oh! 'tis a godlike privilege to ſave,
And he who ſcorns it, is himſelf a ſlave.
* * * * * * * * * *
A Briton knows, or if he knows it not,
The ſcripture plac'd within his reach, he ought,
That ſouls have no diſcriminating hue,
Alike important in their Maker's view:
That none are free from blemiſh ſince the fall,
And Love Divine has paid one price for all.

The wretch that works, and weeps without relief,
Has one that notices his silent grief;
He from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
Ranks its abuse amongst the foulest deeds,
Considers *all* injustice with a frown,
But *marks* the man who treads his fellow down.
Remember, Heav'n has an avenging rod;
To smite the poor, is treason against God."

I believe the hour of rest draws nigh: we will therefore separate for the evening; bearing in our minds the sufferings which have been described, we shall not fail to commiserate the wretched, whilst we are rendered more truly sensible of the peculiar blessings bestowed upon us by the gracious hand of Providence.

THE THIRD EVENING.

ELDEST BOY.

OUR laſt evening's reading preſented us with a melancholy ſtory, and even excited our tears; I hope we may now find, by way of contraſt, ſomething pleaſant, to produce a ſmile, as the little elegant ſong ſays,

"The tear that is wip'd with a little addreſs,
"May be follow'd, perhaps, by a ſmile."

THE THIRD EVENING's READING.

INTEMPERANCE AND DISSIPATION.

The neareſt approach thou canſt make to happineſs on this ſide the grave, is to enjoy from heaven underſtanding and health. Theſe bleſſings if thou poſſeſſeſt, and wouldſt preſerve to old age, avoid the allurements of Voluptuouſneſs, and fly from her temptations.

When ſhe ſpreadeth her delicacies on the board, when the wine ſparkleth in the cup, when ſhe ſmileth upon thee, and perſuadeth thee to be joyful and happy; then is the hour of danger, then let Reaſon ſtand firmly on her guard; for if thou hearkeneſt unto the words of her adverſary, thou art deceived and betrayed.

The joy which ſhe promiſeth, changeth to madneſs, and her enjoyments lead on to diſeaſes and death.

I remember having met with a ſtory, which ſhows the force of theſe obſervations. I think it was called

THE TWO BEES.

On a fine morning in May, two bees set forward in queſt of honey; the one wiſe and temperate, the other careleſs and extravagant. They ſoon arrived at a garden enriched with aromatic herbs, the moſt fragrant flowers, and the moſt delicious fruits. They regaled themſelves for a time on the various dainties that were ſpread before them; the one loading his thighs at intervals with proviſions for the

hive againſt the diſtant winter, the other revelling in ſweets, without regarding any thing but preſent gratification. At length they found a wide-mouthed phial, that hung beneath the bough of a peach-tree, filled with honey ready tempered, and expoſed to their taſte in the moſt alluring manner. The thoughtleſs epicure, in ſpite of all his friend's remonſtrances, plunged headlong into the veſſel, reſolving to indulge himſelf in all the pleaſures of ſenſuality. The philoſopher, on the other hand, ſipped a little with caution; but being ſuſpicious of danger, flew off to fruits and flowers; where, by the moderation of his meals, he improved his reliſh for the true enjoyment of them. In the evening, however, he called upon his friend, to inquire whether he would return to the hive, but found him ſurfeited in ſweets, which he was as unable to leave, as to enjoy. Clogged in his wings, enfeebled in his feet, and his whole frame totally enervated; he was but juſt able to bid his friends adieu, and to lament, with his lateſt breath, that though a taſte of pleaſure might quicken the reliſh of life, an

unreſtrained indulgence is inevitable deſtruction.

You will find the moral of this little fable proved by daily experience, even amongſt yourſelves, my young friends; the exceſsive indulgence of your appetites in fruits or ſweets, or the too eager purſuit of play or pleaſure generally, if not always, ends in remorſe. The former producing loathing and ſickneſs, prevents your application to your ſtudies, and deprives you of the real enjoyments intended for you in the hours of recreation: the latter takes up too great a portion of your time, diſſipates the mind, and equally renders you unfit for application, whilſt you are ſuffering under the diſpleaſure of an offended tutor. Theſe are real evils to youth; but they are only the beginning of ſorrows; if not timely checked, they will grow up with you, increaſe in ſtrength, and the diſorder which at firſt was painful and inconvenient, will in the end prove deſtructive. It is ſurpriſing to behold what infinitely various paths mankind take

in purſuit of pleaſure, and yet how few appear really to obtain it; all are in full cry after this will-o'-the-wiſp—from the all-accompliſhed Ducheſs at a maſquerade, to the little flirting heroine of a "baby ball"——pell-mell they go!——

Who is ſhe that with graceful ſteps, and with a lively air, trips over-yonder plain?

The roſe bluſheth in her cheeks, the ſweetneſs of the morning breathes from her lips; joy, tempered with innocence and modeſty, ſparkleth in her eyes, and from the cheerfulneſs of her heart, ſhe ſingeth as ſhe walks!

Her name is HEALTH; ſhe is the daughter of Exerciſe and Temperance; their ſons inhabit the mountains of the northern regions.

They are brave, active, and lively, and partake of all the beauties of their ſiſter.

Vigour ſtringeth their nerves, ſtrength dwelleth in their bones, and labour is their delight all the day long.

To combat the paſſions is their delight; to conquer evil habits their glory.

Their pleaſures are moderate, and therefore they endure; their repoſe is ſhort, but ſound and undiſturbed——

Enter JONAS, *the Butler.*

Here is little Miſs Lætitia Airy, call'd upon you, ladies and gentlemen.

O, deſire her to walk in.

Enter Miſs LÆTITIA.

O la, I am ſo happy to ſee you, how comfortably you are all ſet round the fire; I declare it's quite charming. For my part, I am an abſolute ſlave; I have really no time for reading, or thinking, or walking, or ſitting ſtill, or any thing; I'm ſure I ſhall be glad when this ball is over; but my 'ma has ſet her heart upon my making a figure there, and ſo has papa; and it's one's duty, I ſuppoſe, to pleaſe papa and mama, when one can, without doing any thing *very* diſagreeable to one's ſelves, you know. I'm ſure I have been ſix hours with Monſieur Molini, the French dancing-maſter, this day; but he gives me great encouragement; he ſays there is not any one young lady he has the honour to teach

who can ſtand on one toe ſo gracefully, or for ſo long together.

LITTLE EDWARD.

Miſs Letty, I ſhould like to ſee you ſtand upon one foot, and repeat the ſecond commandment.

LÆTITIA.

Lo, you little conceited thing, I know nothing about commandments; 'Ma gives particular orders that I am not to be commanded by any body, nor contradicted neither; ſhe ſays papa has plenty of money for me, and I ſhall do juſt as I pleaſe, as long as I live.

EDWARD.

I don't believe ſhe can repeat it, if ſhe ſtands upon both feet.

ELDEST BOY, *(aſide to Edward.)*

That, brother Ned, is entirely *her misfortune*, though perhaps not entirely her fault, and it is not becoming in you to ſcoff at the misfortunes of any one.—I would

not have you be offended at what little Edward ſaid to you, Miſs Letty, he is but a child. And though I really do think it is a grievous thing for a young lady, nine years old, not to be acquainted with *all the ten commandmants*, yet there was ſomething very improper in his behaviour on the occaſion.

LÆTITIA.

Nobody dare behave ſo to me at home: but, however, I muſt be gone; I ſee by my watch it is near ſeven o'clock, and if I ſtay any longer, I ſhall have dinner waiting for me: and I muſt not ſit long over the wine either; for, do you know, I ſhall have an alteration to make in my dreſs for the evening; we are going to have a party, *èn famille*, and there are to be ſeveral of the officers of this new regiment, ſo we ſhall be as gay as poſſible.—Well adieu! *Bon jour*—I'm ſorry to leave you ſo ſoon; but, really, *time is precious*. [*Exit.*

ELDEST BOY.

Miſs Lætitia's fine ſpeech ended with *a truth* however; though, knowing the

value of this precious gift, time, ſhe is moſt exceedingly careleſs of it, I muſt confeſs. We have great reaſon to rejoice, who can reliſh "the ſimply joys and unbought delights" which ſurround us, without the exceſſive fatigue poor Lætitia is forced to endure in the attainment of her more faſhionable pleaſures. She is exactly one of thoſe Lilliputian coquettes mentioned in that excellent book we ſaw upon the table in father's library the other day. I could not reſiſt copying out two or three lines which ſtruck my fancy as I opened it. I hope both my father and Miſs Hannah More will forgive me if I have done wrong:

"The true pleaſures of childhood are cheap and natural; for every object teems with delight to eyes and hearts new to the enjoyment of life; nay, the hearts of healthy children abound with a general diſpoſition to mirth and joyfulneſs, even without a ſpecific object to excite it; like our firſt parent, in the world's firſt ſpring, when all was new, and freſh, and gay about him,

——————"They live and move,
And feel that they are happier than they know."

This is a deſcription of our little happy ſociety. How thankful ſhould we be for this peculiar happineſs, that God hath placed us under the care of parents who ſee and provide for us the things belonging to our peace; and yet ſtrew in our ways ſo many innocent gratifications.

Miſs Lætitia is gone to dinner. It is ſo long ſince *we* have dined, that I ſuſpect it is almoſt bed-time for moſt of you, and time to retire for all. We cloſed the book with ſome very excellent ſentences, let us bear them in our minds.

"Our pleaſures are moderate, therefore they may endure; our repoſe is ſhort but ſound, and undiſturbed."

THE FOURTH EVENING.

THE FOURTH EVENING's READING.

" OH Winter! ruler of th' inverted year,
Thy ſcatter'd hair with ſleet like aſhes fill'd,
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fring'd with a beard made white with other ſnows
Than thoſe of age; thy forehead wrapt in clouds,
A leafleſs branch thy ſceptre, and thy throne
A ſliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urg'd by ſtorms along its ſlipp'ry way,

I love thee, all unlovely as thou ſeem'ſt,
And dreaded as thou art.
* * * * * * * * * * * * *
I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fireſide enjoyments, home-born happineſs,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undiſturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.
* * * * * * * * * * * * * *
Come, Evening, once again, ſeaſon of peace,
Return, ſweet Evening, and continue long!"

ELDEST BOY.

Come, we open the evening's amuſement with a moſt beautiful deſcription of fire-ſide enjoyments; let us avail ourſelves of thoſe which now preſent themſelves. We ſeem to be much more happily ſituated than the poor old man in the picture above; I wiſh he was amongſt us, he ſeems half periſhed in the ſtorm.

I am to inform you, that the ſubjects intended for the preſent evening, are,

SINCERITY AND TRUTH,
With their Oppoſites.

"Sincerity and Truth form the baſis of every virtue. That darkneſs of charac-

ter, where we can ſee no heart; thoſe foldings of art, through which no native affection is allowed to penetrate, preſent an object, unamiable in every ſeaſon of life, but particularly odious in youth. If, at an age when the heart is warm, when the emotions are ſtrong, and when nature is expected to ſhow herſelf free and open, you can already ſmile and deceive, what are we to look for when you ſhall be longer hackneyed in the ways of men. Diſſimulation in youth is the fore-runner of perfidy in old age. Its firſt appearance is the fatal omen of growing depravity and future ſhame. It degrades parts and learning, obſcures the luſtre of every accompliſhment, and ſinks you into contempt with God and man. As you value, therefore, the approbation of Heaven, or the eſteem of the world, cultivate the love of truth. In all your proceedings be direct and conſiſtent. Ingenuity and candour poſſeſs the moſt powerful charm; they beſpeak univerſal favour, and carry an apology for almoſt every failing. The path of truth is a plain and ſafe path; that of falſehood is a perplexing maze. After the firſt de-

parture from ſincerity, it is not in your power to ſtop. One artifice unavoidably leads on to another, till, as the intricacy of the labyrinth increaſes, you are left entangled in your own ſnare. Deceit diſcovers a little mind, which ſtops at temporary expedients, without riſing to comprehenſive views of conduct. It is the reſource of one who wants courage to avow his deſigns, or to reſt upon himſelf, whereas openneſs of character diſplays that generous boldneſs which ought to diſtinguiſh youth.

"To ſet out in the world with no other principle than a crafty attention to intereſt, betokens one who is deſtined for creeping through the inferior walks of life; but to give an early preference to honour above gain, when they ſtand in competition; to deſpiſe every advantage which cannot be attained without diſhoneſt arts; to brook no meanneſs, and to ſtoop to no diſſimulation, are the indications of a *great mind*, the preſages of future eminence, and diſtinction in life. At the ſame time, this virtuous ſincerity is perfectly conſiſtent with the moſt prudent vigilance and cau-

tion. It is oppoſed to cunning, not to true wiſdom. It is not the ſimplicity of a weak and improvident, but the candour of an enlarged and noble mind; of one who ſcorns deceit, becauſe he accounts it both baſe and unprofitable, and who ſeeks no diſguiſe, becauſe he needs none to hide him."

So preaches the admirable Blair; and I pray, my young friends, that you may bring thoſe valuable precepts into practice.

I ſhall endeavour to amuſe you by a ſtory, the ſubject of a little drama, in the works of M. Berquin; with an intent to ſhow that thoſe who are walking in the paths of error and deceit are ſure, ſooner or later, to be caught in their own ſnare.

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.

The Counteſs of D. had invited Harry and Eliza, a nobleman's younger ſon, and his daughter, to paſs the day at her houſe with her own children, Auguſtus and Julia, together with Gabriel, Lucian, and Flora, three friends who lived in the neighbourhood.

In the abſence of the Counteſs, this young party had got poſſeſſion of ſeveral dozens of ſilver counters, which were highly valued by the Counteſs, and her orders had been peremptorily given, that her children ſhould not have them to play with. Maſter Harry, however, got hold of them; and, in ſpite of all that Julia could ſay, who offered at the ſame time her own ivory ones, he would have them out to play with, telling her they always had as good, or better at home. He took them himſelf out of the drawer; and having thrown them about the room, and behaved in a very rude, unbecoming manner for ſome time, he propoſed going to play in the garden.

Rachel, one of the ſervants, paſſing through the room where they had been playing, was aſtoniſhed to ſee her lady's valued counters thrown about. She gathered them up; and, in order to prevent all miſtakes, counted them over and over again, but could only make fifty-four—there ought, ſhe knew, to be five dozen—ſix were wanting. Rachel was greatly concerned at this accident, and expected

to be blamed by her lady, at leaſt as being acceſſary in giving them out. The Counteſs enters, aſks the cauſe of her uneaſineſs, and is told of the loſs of the ſix counters. At this time Julia enters the room: the Counteſs is angry with her for taking out the counters; when, with a compoſure and artleſs ſimplicity which proved her own innocence, ſhe related the facts which have been ſtated concerning them. The maid ſuſpected ſome of the young viſitors, and recommended that Maſter's pockets ſhould be examined. The Counteſs reproved her for the thought of offering ſuch an affront to their parents as that would be, and Julia endeavoured to exculpate the whole party. The ſtricteſt ſearch was made, but none of the ſix counters could be found. Adam, a faithful old ſervant, is called into court; but he can give no account of them; he has not ſeen them. After ſome deliberation, however, Adam undertakes to find the thief: provided he might have leave to put his own plan in execution, he had no doubt of producing the counters. The Counteſs, knowing his prudence, at length

conſented to this; and Adam went to get his conjuring ſticks and other matters ready.

The young family were all aſſembled together, when Adam's experiment was to be made. It may not be amiſs to give the ſhort ſcene of the drama which precedes the examination.

SCENE III.

THE QUARREL!

The Counteſs. Well, how fares it with you all, my little friends? I am glad to ſee you here.

Harry. Miſs Julia has juſt now informed us you have loſt ſix counters of the number we unluckily were playing with. I'm ſorry for it; but could never thing your Ladyſhip would have ſuſpected that one of us had taken them. At leaſt I can aſſure you for my ſiſter and myſelf, that we know nothing of them.

The Counteſs. I could not poſſibly ſuſpect ſuch well-bred children. Sure Julia did not ſay I ſuſpected you.

Eliza. No, my Lady, all ſhe ſaid was to inquire if we had brought them out through inattention.

The Counteſs. Which you might very innocently have done.

Lucian. I would never dare to ſhow my face again, if I had taken even a pin.

Flora (emptying her pockets.) See, my Lady, I have nothing.

The Counteſs. My dear children, I have already told you I am far from thinking any of you have them, when you ſay you have not. They are certainly of no great value; yet I cannot but confeſs their loſs affects me.

Harry. Were they only worth a ſtraw, they were your Ladyſhip's, and ſhould not now be miſſing. But you know there are ſuch things as ſervants, and they are not always honeſt. 'Tis not the firſt time we have ſuſpected them at home.

Julia. But 'tis the firſt time any thing of the kind has happened in our houſe, I aſſure you, Maſter Harry.

Auguſtus. I would anſwer for our ſervants, men and women.

The Counteſs. I have truſted them this

long time; but if you, Sir, *(to Harry)* have made any obſervations, I requeſt you'd let me know them.

Harry. Oh, no, no! But when we went into the garden, did not what's her name, the houſe-maid, enter?

The Counteſs. Rachel! oh, I don't fear her. Theſe ſix years paſt that I have I had her, ſhe might eaſily have made away with things of value, had ſhe been diſhoneſt.

Harry. Did not your old footman come in likewiſe? I don't like his looks.

The Counteſs. Fie, Sir! What makes you thus ſuſpect the honeſt Adam? He was my father-in-law's confidential ſervant, and has been much longer in the family than I myſelf.

Harry. 'Tis not unlikely, then, that ſome one may have got into the room when we were gone.

The Counteſs. That's not at all unlikely; and I am going to inquire. Amuſe yourſelves till I come back.

Harry. No, Madam, after what has paſſed, I cannot ſtay any longer here. Auguſtus, can you tell me where they have put my hat?

The Countess. I can't let you possibly go home on foot. You wou'd have upwards of three miles to walk. Stay here till I return; I wont detain you long. You know your papa means to come and fetch you in the carriage. *(Exit.*

Harry. I'm very much astonished your mamma should have such thoughts of us! We steal her counters!

Julia. Neither has she such a thought. She might have fancied we had put them, without thought, into our pockets. But, as you say, *steal*, she did not think of such a word, or any like it.

Harry. Had there been none here but tradesmen's children, she might well have entertained suspicions; but should make some difference now.

Gabriel. You speak of us, Sir, I can see. Your looks inform me so; but let me tell you, in my turn, that 'tis one's way of living, and not birth, one should be proud of, if they are proud at all.

Harry. How these tradesmen talk about their way of living. You are very happy there are so few children hereabout, and that Augustus and myself are forced to

make you our companions, or have no diverſion. Did you live in London, you would not have ſuch an honour, notwithſtanding your fine way of living.

Auguſtus. Speak, Sir, for yourſelf alone: for juſt as here, in London too, I ſhould be proud to entertain my little friends.

Julia. Yes, certainly, they give us, to the full, as good examples as ſuch whipper-ſnapper noblemen as you.

Eliza. This, brother, you have deſerved. Why firſt attack them?

Harry. And you, too, upon me? You think certainly as I do, though you wont confeſs you do. Have you forgot mamma's inſtruction on the ſubject of familiarity with thoſe beneath us? "Never mix with tradeſmen's children; in the lower ranks of life you'll always have low thoughts."

Auguſtus. And can you poſſibly ſuſpect *my friends* of being *thieves?*

Gabriel. Did we approach the table?

Flora. No; whereas we ſaw you take the counters, and look at them half a dozen times. *(Harry aims to ſtrike her.)*

Auguſtus. Softly! you'll have me to deal with elſe.

Gabriel. No, no, my friend, I thank you, but I can take care of my ſiſter.

Harry. O 'tis far beneath me to diſpute with traders.

Julia. Very well; I hope then it is beneath you likewiſe to attack a little girl.

Harry. I ſha'nt permit her to inſult me.

Eliza. She certainly would have done much better, had ſhe held her tongue.

Julia. But being ſuch a child, ſhe might be pardoned; and particularly when ſhe ſpoke the truth.

Harry. The truth?

Gabriel. Yes, if you underſtood that word. She ſaid you took the counters and looked at them, and this certainly was true.

Harry. I ſha'nt even condeſcend to anſwer you.

Gabriel. You can't take a better reſolution, when you have nothing but ſuch anſwers for us.

By this time the Counteſs returns, and invites them into an adjoining room, where Adam is prepared for his experiment. Adam introduces a cock, which, he tells them is a conjurer. He ſets down the

baſket on the table, and lifts up a napkin which was covered over it, ſo that Flora and the reſt diſcerned the creature's neck and creſt, informing them, that if a ſingle ſtraw is miſſing, he need only conſult this bird, and he will be ſure to know who ſtole it. Adam now cloſes in all the windows—all is darkneſs. He now addreſſes them as follows: If any one is guilty of ſtealing the counters, let him go out—What, all remain! Come, then, Gentlemen and Ladies, and let every one of you in turn, lift up the napkin here, and with his right hand, d'ye ſee, ſtroke Chanticlear upon his back, you will hear his muſic the moment the thief lays his hand upon him; but don't lift the cloth too high; juſt ſo as to let your hand paſs under it.

They all ſeverally comply with the command, each exclaiming, "It is not I; the cock don't ſpeak"—Harry declaring he had ſtroked him more than the reſt, and he did not even ſpeak for him. Adam places the company in a row, with their right hands behind them, as each paſſes the table. The whole company now having paſſed the trial, a general laugh, in which the

Counteſs joins, is directed againſt poor Adam and the conjurer.——I muſt acknowledge this confounds me, ſays Adam. However, have patience for a little while don't ſtir; be ſure to ſtand ſtill. There muſt be ſomething wrong, I'll go fetch a candle.—Harry knew what all this ſtupid nonſenſe would come to. Flora ſuſpected the cock was no wiſer than his maſter. Adam, returning with the light, goes up to Flora: "Come, Miſs, let me ſee your right hand" She holds out her right hand. All are greatly ſurpriſed to find it as black as a coal. "Don't be frightened, little Miſs, I'll ſoon make it white again." The children have no patience, but look all together at their hands, and inſtantly cry out, "How black are my fingers too!" After much ſurpriſe, and many remarks having been made on this phænomenon, Harry lifts up his hand in triumph, exclaiming, "But ſee mine! there's none but I have got a hand that's fit to look at." "Very likely!" ſays Adam, taking hold of Harry by the collar, "'tis then *you* have ſtole the counters! Give them up, young gentleman, this inſtant, or I'll ſearch your pockets, and then black you all over."

Harry (turning pale and trembling.) Is it poſſible I ſhould have put them in my pocket, and not thought of what I was about? I recollect, indeed, I had them in my hand. Dear me! they're here indeed, in a corner of my pocket! Who would have thought it?"—He begins to invent excuſes—it was done without conſideration—he is charged with not having touched the cock—he declares he *did* ſtroke it.

Counteſs. "You *did*; is that then your aſſertion? Don't you ſee, that if you had, you would have blacked your hands, as all the others, Adam having ſmeared him over with a certain compoſition. Your companions were not the leaſt afraid to ſtroke him, as their conſcience did not any way reproach them for the theft; but as for you, the apprehenſion you were under, that the ſervant's artifice might really be conjuration, awed you; and the means you pitched on to avoid detection have betrayed you. You thought yourſelf very *politic*, no doubt, in *pretending* only, as you did, to ſtroke the cock—but HONESTY you would have found much better POLICY!"

Being thus pinned down by the evidence againſt him, he confeſſes the crime.

ELDEST BOY.

What a pretty figure the little nobleman makes in this hiſtory! Let us charitably hope there are not *many* children educated in this crooked way. What a depraved mind is here deſcribed! What pride! What meanneſs!—Surely it would be more deſirable to be brought up in the pooreſt cottage, and afterwards to work hard at ſome low trade, and earn one's bread by their daily labour, rather than be a ſpoil'd child in high life, and afterwards a little nobleman turned looſe into ſociety to ſow the ſeeds of diſcord.

We have ſeen the vice of inſincerity painted in ſuch odious colours, that if our hearts had not been already ſet againſt it, the picture alone would have been enough to have fixed in us an hatred of the original.

I believe we muſt cloſe the buſineſs of the evening; for to-morrow we have a long, and ſeemingly, intereſting portion; let us meet early.

THE FIFTH EVENING.

ELDEST BOY.

THE ſubject for the preſent evening is a ſerious one, and well deſerves our earneſt conſideration. It opens I perceive, in the manner of a ſermon, I muſt therefore requeſt that ſilence may be preſerved; and, that ſuch of you as are old enough to underſtand, will liſten, with the ſtricteſt attention, to a ſhort diſcourſe

ON THE CHOICE OF COMPANIONS.

THE FIFTH EVENING's READING.

"*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*"

Doubtleſs all people ſuffer from ſuch communication; but, above all, the minds of youth ſuffer, which are yet unformed,

unprincipled, unfurniſhed, and ready to receive any impreſſion.

Before we conſider the danger of bad company, let us ſee the meaning of the phraſe.

In the language of the world, *good company* means *faſhionable people*; their ſtations in life, not their morals, are conſidered. I ſhould wiſh you to fix another meaning to the expreſſion, to conſider all company in which vice is found, be their ſtation what it will, as bad company.

The three following claſſes will perhaps include the greateſt part of thoſe who deſerve the appellation.

Firſt, thoſe who endeavour to deſtroy the principles of Chriſtianity; who jeſt upon ſcripture, talk blaſphemy, and treat revelation with contempt.

A ſecond claſs, thoſe who have a tendency to deſtroy in us the principles of common honeſty and integrity. Under this head we may rank gameſters of every denomination, and the infamous characters of every profeſſion.

A third claſs, and ſuch as are commonly moſt dangerous to youth, includes the

long catalogue of men of pleaſure. In whatever way they follow the call of appetite, they have equally a tendency to corrupt the purity of the mind. Beſides theſe three claſſes, whom we may call *bad* company, there are others who come under the denomination of *ill-choſen* company; trifling, inſipid characters of every kind, who follow no buſineſs, are led by no ideas of improvement, but ſpend their time in diſſipation and folly; whoſe higheſt praiſe it is, that they are not vicious. With none of theſe a ſerious youth would wiſh to aſſociate.

The danger of keeping bad company, ariſes, principally, from our aptneſs to imitate and catch the manners and ſentiments of others; from the power of cuſtom; and from our own bad inclinations.

In our earlieſt youth, the contagion of manners is obſervable. In a child we eaſily diſcover, from his firſt actions, and rude attempts at language, the kind of perſons to whoſe care he has been committed; we ſee the early ſpring of a civiliſed education, or the firſt wild ſhoots of ruſticity. In childhood and youth, we

naturally adopt the ſentiments of thoſe about us.

Habit, which is intended for our good, may, like other kind appointments of nature, be converted into a miſchief. The well-diſpoſed youth, entering firſt into bad company, is ſhocked at what he hears and what he ſees. The good principles he has imbibed, ring in his ears an alarming leſſon againſt the wickedneſs of his companions. But, alas! this ſenſibility is but of ſhort continuance. The horrid picture is now more eaſily endured.

"Vice is a creature of ſo horrid mien,
As to be hated, needs but to be ſeen;
Yet ſeen too oft, familiar to her face,
We firſt endure—then pity—then embrace."

Virtue is ſoon thought a ſevere rule; the goſpel an inconvenient reſtraint; a few pangs of conſcience now and then interrupt his pleaſures, and whiſper to him that he once had better thoughts: but even theſe die away; and he who at firſt was ſhocked even at the appearance of vice, is formed by cuſtom into a profligatd leader of vicious pleaſures.

Our bad inclinations form another argument againſt bad company. We have ſo many bad propenſities of different kinds to watch, that, amidſt ſuch a variety of enemies within, we ought at leaſt to be on our guard againſt thoſe without. It is therefore the part of inexperienced youth, ſurely, to keep out of the way of temptation, and to give bad inclinations as little room as poſſible to acquire ſtrength.

It is very true, and a lamentable fact; in the hiſtory of human nature, that bad men take more pains to corrupt their own ſpecies, than virtuous men do to reform them.

I ſhall now proceed to a ſhort ſtory, which applies to our ſubject, and is adapted to the underſtandings of the younger part of my readers.

This ſtory has never before appeared in print; it is well worth your attention, and I hope you will none of you loſe a word of it.

STORY OF MASTER TRUEMAN.

Master Trueman was the ſon of a reſpectable tradeſman, who lived at a ſmall diſtance from the metropolis. He

was an only child; and his parents, who were very conſcientious people, and poſſeſſed conſiderable property, were, as it may be ſuppoſed, extremely anxious for the welfare of this boy. He went to a ſchool in the neighbourhood, the maſter of which was an elderly clergyman, a very pious man, and in all reſpects, an exemplary character. This boy, whom we ſhall now diſtinguiſh by the name of Edmund, poſſeſſed a good natural underſtanding, was a dutiful and affectionate child; and by his general good conduct, had rendered himſelf the delight of his parents' hearts.

During the ſchool hours he was always attentive to his buſineſs, and ſeldom returned home without ſome peculiar marks of approbation, having been beſtowed on him by his maſter.

His evenings uſed to be ſpent in preparing his talk for the morning, in reading ſome uſeful and amuſing book, in drawing, or ſome other rational employment, during the Winter. And in the Summer he would walk in the fields with his father and mother, and ſometimes

perhaps a neighbour; and though only ten years of age, he would ſpeak of the beauties of nature, and attempt to trace the finger of God in all that preſented itſelf to his view, with ſo much good ſenſe, that he at once delighted and aſtoniſhed thoſe who heard him.

There happened to be in this ſchool (which conſiſted of only twelve boys,) two or three youths, who did not exactly walk in Edmund's ſteps; but then they were adepts at every ſport and paſtime which came in with the different ſeaſons.—Though they were perpetually turned back at their leſſons, and could not be taught to join two letters decently together with their pen, yet none were more expert in flying a kite, playing at ſhoe and ball, ſkipping through the rope, and ſo forth, in the ſummer; or at ſkating, ſliding, throwing ſnow-balls, and ſuch ſort of ſports, in the winter. Theſe were very *alluring* qualifications, and they were in themſelves harmleſs; but unhappily here they ſerved to cover a very bad diſpoſition. Thoſe boys were conſtantly playing the truant, robbing gardens, and one of them,

Richard Humphreys, in particular, had been detected more than once in ſuch acts as ſtealing the boys' knives and books, and ſelling them, but this was not generally known in the ſchool. In ſhort, ſome of them were continually under puniſhment for one crime or other; but then, when ſchool was over, they had ſo many ſeducing ways, and could make themſelves ſo very agreeable, that it was ſcarcely poſſible for any one to avoid their ſociety, and from joining in thoſe ſports wherein they ſo greatly excelled, particularly one whoſe heart was good, who meant only to partake of ſuch ſports as were innocent, and even thoſe only at proper times.

One morning as Edmund was trudging to ſchool in the uſual way, he was met by Richard Humphreys, who joined him, and turned back part of the way with him. "A fine morning, Maſter Edmund," ſays Dick; "you are going to ſchool, I perceive." Edmund anſwered in the affirmative. "For my part, I am going to a village hard by; there is a mountebank to exhibit, and they ſpeak very highly of the merry Andrew, who, they ſay, is the moſt

witty fellow, and has the clevereſt tricks of any one that ever appeared upon a ſtage."

"I ſhould like very well to ſee him," ſays Edmund; "if it had happened to have been a holiday, I would have aſked my father's permiſſion to go and ſee him." "Beſides," adds Richard, "I have got a ſhilling in my pocket, and I know of a boy who won a ſilver watch the other day by putting a ſhilling into the mountebank's lottery, where they ſay there are not any blanks. I intend to try my luck to-day." "I ſhould like to go" ſays Edmund, "but it would be a ſin and a ſhame to neglect ſchool; beſides I ſhould be too late, was I to go back to aſk leave." "Why, truly," replies Richard, "it would be a ſhameful thing indeed to miſs ſchool *often* in this way, but a *time by chance*—it is only two hours—I think there can be no very great harm in doing this *for once* in one's life. We can ſoon make up, by a little extraordinary application, for the loſs of two hours, and we ſhall be back by the dinner-hour, ſo that no one need know any thing of the matter; one may eaſily

invent ſome excuſe to the maſter, and then all is over."

At this time who ſhould come up but Tom Laurence and Billy Bentill, two intimate friends of Richard's, (for this, you muſt know, was a concerted plan)—theſe boys had long been diſguſted by the attention of the maſter to Edmund, and his ill treatment, as they termed it, of them; they were determined to bring matters a little on a level, not by mending their own ways, and copying Edmund's conduct, which in their hearts they could not help approving, but by endeavouring to pervert his ſteps, and, by entangling him in their baſeneſs, bring him, by degrees, to be as infamous as themſelves. This is very common with bad children; as it is much eaſier for an artful lad to make a well-diſpoſed boy as bad as himſelf, provided he aſſociates much with them, than it is for him to wean himſelf from all his vicious habits, and, by conſtant imitation, bring himſelf to be as good as he found his companion; this is often attended with a great deal of trouble, and requires much perſeverance. But to go on with the ſtory. Tom and

Billy coming up, one of them, addreſſing Dick Humphreys, aſked what he was about loitering there; every body was gone! they ſhould be too late if they did not run: for their parts, they would not be too late for all the world. "Come, Edmund," ſays Richard, "'tis but for once, let us take a run with them; you would never forgive yourſelf, if you were to miſs the ſight, and this is the laſt time of performing." Here was not one moment left for reflection—now or never.—Edward's heart throbbed with the deſire of ſeeing this ſcene of mirth and jollity; away they run together, nor do they relax their pace until they reach the village. This was an unlucky meeting, indeed, to poor Edmund. As they ſtood laughing at the Merry Andrew and his jokes, Richard pretended to be greatly concerned all of a ſudden. At length he exclaims, "Alas! alas! I have loſt my ſhilling; I put it into my waiſtcoat pocket to be ready, and, in the violence of running, it has flown out. [*The truth is, he had no ſhilling to loſe.*] If you, maſter Edmund, would be ſo kind as lend me one, I will promiſe you part of what I ſhall gain

by it." "Aye," fay the other lads, "and if you will lend each of us one, we will do the ſame." "I have only two ſhillings in my pocket," ſays Edmund, "which I was taking to ſchool for my contribution towards coals for our fire. [*Here a ſad thought glanced acroſs his mind.*] I will venture to lend you one of them, Richard, and the other to your friends; but the only condition I make is, that you will pay the money again, that it may be appropriated to the purpoſe for which I received it." Theſe terms were readily acceded to, and the tickets were purchaſed. Now, big with expectation and hope, the three adventurers loſt all reliſh for the jokes of the fool; anxiety for the fate of their tickets took entire poſſeſſion of them. Edmund continued to be amuſed for a little time, when the tickets were both declared to be *blanks*; the Merry Andrew at the ſame time aſſuring them, that the two packets were worth their weight in gold; theſe, however, they ſoon found were of no more value than a ſmall quantity of brick-duſt. The money was gone! the time was gone! and never was more ſolemnity ſeen than

in a ſad proceſſion of the four ſorrowful lads, from the ſcene of mirth, to the place of retribution.

In order to ſcreen the proceedings of the morning, it now became neceſſary, as they thought, to invent as many lies and falſe excuſes as might be deemed expedient to effect that purpoſe. This, in their walk home, they contrived by the aſſiſtance of Richard, who was an adept in this ſort of buſineſs, the affair was ſo artfully managed, that no part of the tranſaction was brought to light.

When the evening came, Edmund was obſerved not to be ſo cheerful as uſual; his parents were uneaſy, and thought he could not poſſibly be well, as he had always been the life of their little ſociety, till the hour of his retiring. He complained of a ſlight head-ach, though, if he had given his diſorder the right name, he would have called it the *heart*-ache; for truly he ſuffered much remorſe. He went ſoon to bed, but not to ſleep; his heart ſmote him for his paſt miſconduct; he felt himſelf debaſed; and could not find a place where his head would reſt eaſy, all the night.

He aroſe early next day; the morning was clear and fine; the air was freſh and bracing; his ſpirits revived; he went to ſchool; all paſſed ſmoothly on, and he began to think more lightly of the excurſion to the neighbouring village. The fact is, he had been tempted to ſet his foot over the boundary line of diſcretion; the act had paſſed off unnoticed, and it is ten to one, but on the next temptation, the other foot will follow. It was not long, indeed, before this happened. There came a very hard froſt, and the river, which they frequently touched upon in their road to ſchool was frozen over, ſo that people might, with diſcretion, walk over it with a tolerable degree of ſafety. As Edmund ſet off to ſchool one morning, Mr. Trueman ſaid to him, "My dear Edmund, you will oblige me, by not going upon the ice in your way to ſchool; ſo many accidents happen from boys venturing without a guide, that I ſhall really be quite unhappy until I have your promiſe, that you will avoid it. To-morrow, you know, is a holiday, and you ſhall go and walk there with me; if the froſt continue, as it is

likely to do, we may then more ſafely venture. Edmund promiſed he would not come near the ice; and with this reſolution he ſet off to ſchool. There was a ſudden bend in the river, which brought it ſo near the foot path acroſs the lawn, that it gave you a full view of it to a great extent.

It was a fine winter's morning: the ſun ſhone on the ice, and exhibited a number of people who were ſkating upon the river, in a part where the water was known to be ſhallow. Here bonfires were made on the ice, hot ale and cakes were ſeen in various ſituations; ſome perſons were ſliding, others engaged in various ſports; all ſeemed gay, all were delighted. At this unlucky moment, with a fine ſweep of their ſkates, up came Richard Humphreys and his two companions. Edmund had never had a pair of ſkates on; it was beautiful to ſee people ſkate, they did it with ſo much eaſe, and ſome ſo gracefully. "Try mine on," ſays Humphreys; "you are very welcome; I'm ſure you'll ſoon learn." "I ſhould not be able to ſtand up in them, I fear; beſides, I would not be ſeen upon the ice juſt at this time; I

have a reaſon for it." "O, if that be all, come along with me, I'll conduct you to a place where there will be nobody but ourſelves." So far Humphreys ſaid right; for in that place the water was ſo very deep, that no prudent perſon, in the preſent ſtate of the froſt, would venture upon it. Edmund ſuffered himſelf once more to be enticed by this artful companion. Humphreys took off his ſkates, and having arrived at the ſolitary place of appointment, fixed them upon Edmund's feet, and led him about, till he could ſtand upright alone, and ſoon after move along from place to place. He had however no power of directing himſelf with certainty, but was run away with, firſt in one direction, then in another, whilſt Humphreys was ſliding backwards and forwards on the place where Edmund had ſet off. An unlucky turn at length carried him to a hole which had been broken open for the purpoſe of getting water; down he fell into the deep hole! His right arm caught the edge of the ice, and had any one been near, they might have dragged him out. He cried out moſt lamentably! Humphreys

discovers his situation. "Aye, very likely," says he to himself, "shall I go to expose my life, and afterwards get nothing but abuse from his friends? not I, I'll run off; find him out that can, mum's the word for me." Away he ran! leaving his companion, the unhappy victim of his own credulity. If Humpreys had gone and called for assistance, the youth might yet have been saved; but that was not for his purpose, he was determined not to be seen in the business.

Mr. Aimworth, the schoolmaster, however, not reconciled to Edmund's absenting himself from his duty a second time, sent to know the cause of his absence. Mr. Trueman, greatly alarmed at this message, ran out, half distracted; the ice immediately occurred to him, and he knew not how far the temptation might have proved resistible; his fears, alas! were too well grounded. Master Edmund had not been seen by any one on the river; no body could give any account of him. A decent, elderly farmer happened to be looking about his concerns in the fold-yard, and him they questioned.

This farmer had ſeen two boys at a little diſtance, running towards the river down below; one of them appeared to have a pair of ſkates in his hands, but his eye-ſight was not very good, he could not conjecture what boys they might be. But ſeeing the affliction of Mr. Trueman, and the extreme concern of the meſſenger, for every body loved little Edmund, he offered to go with them in ſearch of this ill-fated

little boy. They came at length to the dreadful ſpot; here were footſteps of two people to be traced on the ſnow, (which

had not been ſwept away for reaſons before mentioned,) and the irregular marks of a pair of ſkates were alſo traced to the broken part of the ice. The father's heart now ſunk within him—he had loſt his all!—his only hope, his darling child was loſt! was gone for ever!—his ſenſes forſook him—he fell down upon the ice.

Farmer Heartwell, for that was the good old man's name, was ſtruck by the appearance of ſomething he did not perfectly comprehend. He left Mr Trueman to the care of the young man who accompanied him, whilſt he endeavoured to account for a cavity which appeared to have been recently made in the hedge, alſo for the ſnow being conſiderably diſturbed on that ſide of the hole next to the hedge. He goes to the other ſide, into a cloſe adjoining the river. The father at this time recovers, and as they raiſe him up from the ice, he hears Farmer Heartwell cry out, with a tranſport little ſhort of madneſs, "He's here! I've found him! I have him!"

But oh! What language can deſcribe the ſcene, when he bears young Edmund

to his father's arms! pale, and ſhivering indeed, but, evidently, in a ſtate of recovery. A Newfoundland dog belonging to a gentleman in the neighbourhood came up to them ſhaking his tail; it ſeems he had been ſtrolling that way, and coming near to the ſcene of diſtreſs, ſeized Edmund by the arm, juſt as he was ſinking, and drew him, nearly exhauſted, out of the water.

The ſequel of my hiſtory is as follows:

Edmund is taken home, and ſoon re-

covers; this check which he has received from the arm of Divine Providence, opens his eyes fully to the danger of bad company; he repents, reforms, and is forgiven. Humphreys is charged with tempting him to go upon the ice; he denies the charge, and says he was not on the ice that day. Farmer Heartwell observes that the left foot of one of the persons who had been there, from the impressions left on the thin snow which covered the ice, was turned inwards, and exactly answered to a deformity in that of Humphreys! besides, the skates which Edmund had on were marked R. H. He is proved guilty; and, continuing in his bad habits, (for he never would confess his fault, nor acknowledge the truth, but, in spite of all remonstrance, went on from crime to crime,) he was at length shunned and avoided by all who were not as base as himself.

I shall forbear making any comments on this little story. It is brought here to show you the dreadful consequences which may arise from associating with wicked companions; and I hope it has placed the

danger so full to your view, that you will not "walk in the way of the evil man," but "avoid it; pass not by it; turn from "it, and pass away."

ELDEST BOY.

I never read any thing which left a stronger impression upon my mind than the subjects of this evening. O, my little friends and brothers, never let them be forgotten. At present, indeed, we are protected from bad company, we do not mix even with the *little world*, but live in our own select society; the time may come, when we must issue forth into the *great world*; let us remember that the enemy of mankind is constantly going about, assuming every shape to allure and insnare the virtuous; and we see plainly, that the best of us may fall into his hands, if we are not as constantly on our guard.

THE SIXTH EVENING.

ELDEST BOY.

WELCOME once more, my little friends, to the enjoyment of the retired fire-ſide, and rational amuſement.

We open the buſineſs of the night with another ſerious ſubject,

THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

You are here preſented with the figure of an old man, fleeting along upon wings, bearing an hour-glaſs in one hand, and a

ſcythe in the other. This old gentleman holds his glaſs up to us, I ſuppoſe, to remind us, that as ſwiftly as he flies, ſo ſwiftly is the ſand of the hour-glaſs of our lives paſſing away; and the ſcythe ſeems to denote, that he means to mow us all down, before he has done with us. A few ſcattered ruins which appear behind him, ſhow what devaſtation he makes; and the darkneſs which ſurrounds him, intimates to us, that he can travel as faſt by night as by day. What is to be done with this formidable perſonage? Let us take him by the forelock; if we cannot check him in his career, we will at leaſt make him uſeful to us, as we fly along with him.

———"Arreſt the preſent moments;
For be aſſur'd they all are arrant tell tales;
And though their flight be ſilent, and their path
Trackleſs, as the wing'd couriers of the air,
They poſt to Heav'n, and there record our folly."

THE SIXTH EVENING's READING.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME, *Its Uſe and Value.*

Nothing is more commou, than to hear people complain of the ſhortneſs of Time; and yet how much more have moſt of us than we make a proper uſe of, and many of us than we know how to uſe at all. "Our lives," ſays Seneca, "are ſpent either in doing nothing at all, or doing nothing to the purpoſe, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them."

Yet as faſt as our time runs, we ſhould be very glad, in many parts of our lives, that it ran much faſter than it does. This ſeems extraordinary, when we conſider, that, notwithſtanding the *buſineſs* of life, there are ſo many amuſements to fill up the ſpaces of time. The mind, indeed, cannot be always intent on ſerious application; it is neceſſary therefore, to find out proper employments for it in its relaxations. "I muſt confeſs I think it is below reaſonable creatures to be altogether

converſant in ſuch diverſions as are merely innocent, and have nothing elſe to recommend them but that there is no hurt in them. It is wonderful to ſee perſons of the beſt ſenſe paſſing away a dozen hours together in ſhuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other converſation but what is made up of a few game phraſes, and no other ideas, but thoſe of black or red ſpots, ranged together in different figures." Thus putting themſelves on the level, or perhaps ſuffering themſelves to be overcome by men of the weakeſt underſtandings: for it is remarkable, however obſtruſe the ſcience of card-playing may ſeem, perſons of the meaneſt capacity have been known to excel in it. Would not one laugh to hear people of this ſpecies complain of the ſhortneſs of life, whilſt they are calling to their aid, cards,

——————"With all the tricks
That idleneſs has ever yet contriv'd
To fill the void of an unfurniſh'd brain,
To palliate Dulneſs, and give Time a ſhove."

The mind never unbends itſelf ſo agreeably as in the converſation of a well-choſen friend; this caſes and unloads it; clears

and improves the underſtanding; engenders thought and knowledge; and animates virtue and good reſolution.

There are many uſeful amuſements of life which one would endeavour to multiply, that one might always have recourſe to ſomething, rather than ſuffer the mind to lie idle, or run adrift with any paſſion that chances to riſe in it.

A perſon who has a taſte in muſic, painting, or architecture, is like one that has another ſenſe, when compared with ſuch as have no reliſh for thoſe arts. The floriſt, the planter, the gardener, the huſbandman, the turner, or he that employs himſelf at the anvil, when theſe are only as accompliſhments to the man of fortune, are great reliefs to a country life, and many ways uſeful to thoſe who are poſſeſſed of them.

"How various his employments whom the world
Calls idle, and who juſtly, in return,
Eſteems that buſy world an idler too!
Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps a pen,
Delightful induſtry enjoy'd at home,
And nature in her cultivated trim
Dreſs'd to his taſte, inviting him abroad."

But, inaſmuch as it behoveth perſons in every ſituation of life to conſider that they

were not created to to live for themſelves alone, they ſhould "take care to keep their conſcience peculiarly alive to the unapparent, though formidable perils of unprofitableneſs."

It is neceſsary to habituate our minds, in our younger years, to ſome employment which may engage our thoughts, and fill the capacity of the ſoul at a riper age. For, however we may roam in youth from folly to folly, too volatile for reſt, too ſoft and effeminate for induſtry, ever ambitious to make a ſplendid figure, yet the time will come when we ſhall outgrow the reliſh of childiſh amuſements; and, if we are not provided with a taſte for manly satisfactions to ſucceed in their room, we muſt of courſe become miſerable, at an age more difficult to be pleaſed.

Frivolous excuſes for not attending to ſerious employments, are whimſically imagined by Mrs. Chapone, who ſuppoſing a modern lady of faſhion to be called to account for the diſpoſition of her time, makes her defence run thus:

"I can't, you know, be out of the world, nor act differently from every body in it. The hours are every where

late, conſequently I riſe late. I have ſcarce breakfaſted before morning viſits begin, or 'tis time to go to an auction, or a concert, or to take a little exerciſe for my health. Dreſſing my hair is a long operation, but one can't appear with a head unlike every body elſe. One muſt ſometimes go to a play or an opera, though I own it hurries one to death. Then what with indiſpenſable viſits, the perpetual engagements to card-parties at private houſes, and attendance on public aſſemblies, to which all people of faſhion ſubſcribe, the evenings, you ſee, are fully diſpoſed of. What time, then, can I poſſibly have for what you call domeſtic duties? You talk of the offices and employments of friendſhip—alas! I have no hours left for friends! I muſt ſee them in a crowd, or not at all. As to cultivating the friendſhip of my huſband, we are very civil when we meet, but we are both too much engaged to ſpend much time with each other. With regard to my daughters, I have given them a French governeſs, and proper maſters, I can do no more for them. You tell me I ſhould inſtruct my ſervants, but I have no time to inform myſelf, much leſs can

I undertake any thing of that ſort for them, or even be able to gueſs what they do with themſelves the greater part of the twenty-four hours. I go to church, if poſſible, once on a Sunday, and then ſome of my ſervants attend me; and if they will not mind what the preacher ſays, how can I help it? The management of our fortune, as far as I am concerned, I muſt leave to the ſteward and houſekeeper; for I find I can barely ſnatch a quarter of an hour juſt to look over the bill of fare when I am to have company, that they may not ſend up any thing frightful or old-faſhioned. As to the Chriſtian duty of charity, I aſſure you I am not ill-natured; and (conſidering that the great expenſe of being always dreſt for company, with loſſes at cards, ſubſcriptions, and public ſpectacles, leave me very little to diſpoſe of,) I am ready enough to give my money when I meet with a miſerable object. You ſay I ſhould inquire out ſuch, inform myſelf thoroughly of their caſes, make an acquaintance with the poor in my neighbourhood in the country, and plan out the beſt methods of relieving the unfortunate, and aſſiſting the induſtrious, but this

ſuppoſes much more time, and much more money, than I have to beſtow. I have had hopes, indeed, that my ſummers would have afforded me more leiſure, but we ſtay pretty late in town, then we generally paſs ſeveral weeks at one or other of the water-drinking places, where every moment is ſpent in public; and, for the few months in which we reſide at our own ſeat, our houſe is always full with a ſucceſſion of company, to whoſe amuſement one is obliged to dedicate every hour of the day."

THE READING CONTINUED.

I have here given you a ſpecimen of a life ſpent in unprofitable toil and unſatisfying pleaſures. No pleaſures are ſatisfying, or worthy of a rational being, but ſuch as are conſiſtent with religion and virtue. I will here give you, from the ſame author, an account of a family whoſe manner of living differs conſiderably from that of the lady you have juſt been reading about.

"Sir Charles and Lady Worthy are neither gloomy aſcetics, nor frantic en-

thuſiaſts; they married from affection, on long acquaintance and perfect eſteem; they therefore enjoy the beſt pleaſures of the heart in the higheſt degree. They concur in a rational ſcheme of life, which, whilſt it makes them always cheerful and happy, renders them the friends of human kind, and the bleſſing of all around them. They do not deſert their ſtation in the world, nor deny themſelves the proper and moderate uſe of their large fortune; though that portion of it which is appropriated to the uſe of others, is that from which they derive their higheſt gratifications. They ſpend four or five months every year in London, where they keep up an intercourſe of hoſpitality and civility with many of the moſt reſpectable perſons of their own or of higher rank: but they have endeavoured rather at a *ſelect* than a numerous acquaintance; and as they never play cards, this endeavour has the more eaſily ſucceeded. Three days in the week, from the hour of dinner, are given up to this intercourſe with what may be called the world. Three more are ſpent in a family way, with a few intimate friends, whoſe taſtes are conformable to

their own, and with whom the book and working-table, or ſometimes muſic, ſupply the intervals of uſeful and agreeable converſation. In theſe parties their children are always preſent, and partake of the improvement that ariſes from the well-choſen pieces which are read aloud. The ſeventh day is always ſpent at home, after the due attendance on public worſhip; and it is peculiarly appropriated to the religious inſtruction of their children and ſervants, or to other works of charity. As they keep regular hours, and riſe early, and as Lady Worthy never pays or admits morning viſits, they have ſeven or eight hours in every day free from all interruptions from the world, in which the cultivation of their own minds, and thoſe of their children, the due attention to health, to economy, and to the poor, are carried on in the moſt regular manner.

"Thus, even in London, they contrive, without the appearance of quarrelling with the world, or of ſhutting themſelves up from it, to paſs the greater part of their time in a reaſonable and uſeful, as well as an agreeable manner. The reſt of the

year they ſpend at their family-ſeat in the country, where the happy effects of their example, and of their aſſiduous attention to the good of all around them, are ſtill more obſervable than in town. Their neighbours, their tenants, and the poor for many miles about them, find in them a ſure reſource and comfort in calamity, and a ready aſſiſtance in every ſcheme of honeſt induſtry. The young are inſtructed at their expenſe, and under their direction, and rendered uſeful at the earlieſt period poſſible; the aged and the ſick have every comfort adminiſtered that their ſtate requires; the idle and diſſolute are kept in awe by vigilant inſpection; the quarrelſome are brought, by a ſenſe of their own intereſt, to live more quietly with their family and neighbours, and amicably to refer their diſputes to Sir Charles's deciſion.

"This amiable pair are not leſs highly prized by the genteel families of their neighbourhood, who are ſure of finding in their houſe the moſt polite and cheerful hoſpitality, and in them a fund of good ſenſe and good humour, with a conſtant diſpoſition to promote every innocent plea-

ſure. They are particularly the delight of all the young people, who conſider them as their patrons and their oracles, to whom they always apply for advice and aſſiſtance in any kind of diſtreſs, or in any ſcheme of amuſement.

"Sir Charles and Lady Worthy are ſeldom without ſome friends in the houſe with them during their ſtay in the country; but, as their methods are known, they are never broken in upon by their gueſts, who do not expect to ſee them till dinner-time, except at the hour of prayer, and at breakfaſt. In their private walks or rides, they uſually viſit the cottages of the labouring poor, with all of whom they are perſonally acquainted; and by the ſweetneſs and friendlineſs of their manner, as well as by their beneficent actions they ſo entirely poſſeſs the hearts of theſe people, that they are made confidants of all their family grievances, and the caſuiſts to ſettle all their ſcruples of conſcience or difficulties in conduct. By this method of converſing freely with them, they find out their different characters and capacities, and often diſcover and

apply to their own benefit, as well as that of the person they distinguish, talents which would otherwise have been for ever lost to the public."

What a charming description of well-regulated life do we find here! What tranquillity, what true enjoyment in the "best pleasures of friendship, of parental and family affection, of divine beneficence, and a piety which chiefly consists in joyful acts of love and praise!"

ELDEST BOY.

We must remember, my young friends, that to-morrow is the Sabbath-day; let us retire early, that we may rise betimes, and attend to the duties of that holy day.

Early in the morning we meet, if Heaven so will, and prepare our minds for public worship; and when the night comes, if our usual Sunday evening's avocations allow us time, we will go forward with our little book, as I see it concludes with the subject of

RELIGION.

THE SEVENTH EVENING.

ELDEST BOY.

"Come learn the way;
"Wouldſt thou have a pleaſant evening,
"Spend well the day."

I hope this, and every evening of our lives, will enable us to bear teſtimony to the truth of this axiom.

THE SEVENTH EVENING's READING.

My young friends, the ſeventh portion of reading is intended, if time and occaſions permit, for a Sunday's evening. We muſt, therefore, confine ourſelves to ſubjects ſuitable to the evening of that day which we are commanded, from the higheſt authority, *to keep holy*.

The ſubjects I fix on, then, for this night's reading are theſe: The duty of public worſhip—The efficacy of prayer—And the neceſſity of forming religious principles at an early age.

PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD.

"It is evident both from reaſon and ſcripture, that public worſhip is a moſt uſeful and indiſpenſable duty. It is equally evident, that if this duty *is* to be performed, ſome fixed and ſtated *time* for the performing it is abſolutely neceſſary; for without this, it is impoſſible that any number of perſons can ever be collected together in one place. Now one day in ſeven ſeems to be as proper and convenient a portion of our time to be allotted to this uſe, as any other that can be named. The returns of it are frequent enough to keep alive the ſenſe of religion in our hearts, and diſtant enough to leave a very ſufficient interval for our worldly concerns.

If then this time was fixed only by the laws, or even by the cuſtoms of our country, it would be our duty and our wiſdom to comply with it. Conſidering it merely as *an ancient uſage*, yet, if antiquity can render an uſage venerable, this muſt be of all others the *moſt* venerable, for it is coeval with the world itſelf. But it had, more-

over, the ſanction of a divine command, From the very beginning of time, God bleſſed and ſanctified the ſeventh day to the purpoſes of religion *. That injunction was again repeated to the Jews, in the moſt ſolemn manner, at the promulgation of their law from Mount Sinai †, and once more urged upon them by Moſes, "Keep the Sabbath-day, to ſanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee ‡."

After our Lord's reſurrection, the *firſt* day of the week was, in memory of that great event, ſubſtituted in the room of the *ſeventh*; and from that time to the preſent, that is, for almoſt eighteen hundred years, it has been conſtantly ſet apart for the public worſhip of God by the whole Chriſtian world; and, whatever difference of opinion there may have been in other reſpects, in this all parties, ſects, and denominations of Chriſtians have univerſally

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* Gen. ii. 3. † Exod. xx. 8, 9, 10, 11.
‡ Deut. v. 12.

and invariably agreed By theſe means it comes to paſs, that on this day many *millions of people*, are at one and the ſame time engaged in proſtrating themſelves before the throne of Grace, and offering up their ſacrifice of prayer, praiſe, and thankſgiving to the common Lord of all, "in whom they live, and move, and have their being."

There is in this view of the Lord's day ſomething ſo wonderfully awful and magnificent, that one would think it almoſt impoſſible for any man to reſiſt the inclination he muſt find in himſelf to join in this general aſſembly of the human race; "to go with the multitude," as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it, "into the houſe of God," and to take a part in a ſolemnity ſo ſtriking to the imagination, ſo ſuitable to the Majeſty of Heaven, ſo adapted to the wants, the neceſſities, the infirmities, the obligations, and the duties of a created and a dependent being!

The importance of a ſerious and devout obſervance of the Lord's day is moſt emphatically recommended, in a diſcourſe on

that ſubject, by the preſent biſhop of London, from whence the above is taken *.

SONG

On the Public Obſervance of the LORD'S DAY.

I.

How glorious 'tis to ſee the throng
Beneath yon vaulted roof attend;
Whence pious pray'r, and humble ſong,
On wings of Faith and Hope aſcend!

II.

Who would not quit each buſy care?
Who would not each vain pleaſure ſhun?
Who but with joy would haſten there,
And join the praiſes thus begun?

III.

How doth th' enraptur'd heart expand,
To think that in this bliſsful hour,
Re-echo'd from each diſtant land,
An UNIVERSAL PRAYER we pour.

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* Sermons on ſeveral Subjects, by the Rev. Beilby Porteous, D. D. then Biſhop of Cheſter, (now Biſhop of London,) publiſhed 1783.

IV.

This *hour*, then, let us all repair
To celebrate our Maker's praiſe;
O! let our voices fill the air,
And join th' Archangels' choral lays!

F. A.

Since the obſervance of the Sabbath is founded upon ſo many wiſe and juſt reaſons, what have they to anſwer for, who not only neglect this inſtitution themſelves, but bring it by their example into contempt with others? I ſpeak not to thoſe who make it a day of common diverſion; who, laying aſide all decency, and breaking through all civil and religious regulations, ſpend it in the moſt licentious amuſements: Such people are paſt all reproof; but I ſpeak to thoſe who, in other things, profeſs to be ſerious people, and who, one would hope, would act right, when they were convinced what was ſo*.

Having ſpoken of public worſhip, let us now ſay a few words on the uſe and efficacy of *prayer in general.*

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* GILPIN.

There is one motive to this duty, far more conſtraining than all others that can be named, more imperious than any argument on its utility, than any convictions of its efficacy, even any experience of its conſolations. *Prayer is the command of God;* the plain, poſitive, repeated injunction of the Moſt High, who declares, "He will be inquired of." This is enough to ſecure the obedience of a Chriſtian, even though a promiſe were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this caſe, to our unſpeakable comfort, the promiſe is as clear as the precept, "*Aſk*, and ye ſhall *receive; ſeek*, and ye ſhall *find;* knock, and it ſhall be opened to you." This is encouragement enough for the plain Chriſtian. It is enough for him, that *thus ſaith the Lord.* When a ſerious Chriſtian has once got a plain unequivocal command from his Maker on any point, he never ſuſpends his obedience, while he is amuſing himſelf with looking about for ſubordinate motives of action. Inſtead of curiouſly analyzing the nature of the duty, he conſiders how he ſhall beſt fulfil it*.

* Hannah More.

As it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections, as well as to *ſanctify* them, the benevolent Chriſtian is not ſatisfied to commend himſelf alone to the divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God, will overflow with love to its neighbour. All that are near to himſelf, he wiſhes to bring near to God.

Neceſſity of gaining Habits of Attention and Virtue, and of forming Religious Principles at an early Age.

The great uſe of knowledge in all its various branches, is to free the mind from the prejudices of ignorance, and to give it juſter and more enlarged conceptions, than are the mere growth of rude nature. By reading, you add the experience of others to your own. It is the improvement of the mind chiefly, that makes the difference between man and man; and gives one man a real ſuperiority over another.

Beſides, the mind muſt be employed. The lower orders of men have their attention much engroſſed by thoſe employments, in which the neceſſities of life engage them; and it is happy that they have. Labour ſtands in the room of education, and fills up thoſe vacancies of mind which, in a ſtate of idleneſs, would be engroſſed by vice. And if they, who have more leiſure, do not ſubſtitute ſomething in the room of this, their minds alſo will become the prey of vice; and the more ſo, as they have the means to indulge it more in their power. If then the mind muſt be employed, what can fill up its vacancies more rationally than the acquiſition of knowledge? Let us therefore thank God for the opportunities he hath afforded us; and not turn into a curſe thoſe means of leiſure, which might become ſo great a bleſſing. But however neceſſary knowledge may be, religion, we know, is infinitely more ſo. The one adorns a man, and gives him, it is true, ſuperiority and rank in life; but the other is abſolutely eſſential to his happineſs.

In the midſt of youth, health, and abundance, the world is apt to appear a very gay and pleaſing ſcene; it engages our deſires; and, in a degree, ſatisfies them alſo. But it is wiſdom to conſider, that a time will come when youth, health, and fortune will fail us; and if diſappointment and vexation do not ſour our taſte for pleaſure, at leaſt ſickneſs and infirmities will deſtroy it. In theſe gloomy ſeaſons and above all at the approach of death, what will become of us without religion? When this world fails us, where ſhall we fly, if we expect no refuge in another?

For improvement in knowledge, youth is certainly the fitteſt ſeaſon. The mind is then ready to receive any impreſſion. It is free from all that care and attention which, in riper age, the affairs of life bring with them. The memory too is then ſtronger and better able to acquire the rudiments of knowledge; beſides, there is ſometimes in youth a modeſty and ductility, which in advanced years, if thoſe years eſpecially have been left a prey to ignorance, become ſelf-ſufficiency and prejudice; and theſe effectually bar up all

the inlets to knowledge. But, above all, unleſs habits of attention and application are early gained, we ſhall ſcarce acquire them afterwards. The inconſiderate youth ſeldom reflects upon this; nor knows his loſs, till he knows alſo that it cannot be retrieved.

Nor is youth more the ſeaſon to acquire knowledge, than to form religious habits. It is a great point to get *habit* on the ſide of *virtue*. It will make every thing ſmooth and eaſy. The earlieſt principles are generally the moſt laſting; and thoſe of a religious caſt are ſeldom wholly loſt. Though the temptations of the world may, now and then, draw the well-principled youth aſide, yet his principles being continually at war with his practice, there is hope, that in the end the better part may overcome the worſe, and bring on a reformation. Whereas, he who has ſuffered habits of vice to get poſſeſſion of his youth, has little chance of being brought back to a ſenſe of religion. In a common courſe of things, it can rarely happen. Some calamity muſt rouſe him. He muſt be awakened by a ſtorm, or ſleep for ever."

Piety to God is the foundation of good morals; and is a diſpoſition particularly graceful and becoming to youth. To be void of it, argues a cold heart—deſtitute of ſome of the beſt affections which belong to that age. Youth is the ſeaſon of warm and generous emotions. The heart ſhould then ſpontaneouſly riſe into the admiration of what is great; glow with the love of what is fair and excellent; and melt at the diſcovery of tenderneſs and goodneſs. Where can an object be found ſo proper to kindle thoſe affections as the Father of the univerſe, and the Author of all felicity? Unmoved by veneration, can you contemplate that grandeur and majeſty which his works every where diſplay? Untouched by gratitude, can you view that profuſion of good, which, in this pleaſing ſeaſon of life, his beneficent hand pours around you? Happy in the love and affection of thoſe with whom you are connected, look up to the Supreme Being, as the inſpirer of all the friendſhip which has ever been ſhown you by others; himſelf your beſt, and your firſt friend; formerly the ſupporter

of your infancy, and the guide of your childhood, now the guardian of your youth, and the hope of your coming years.

Do not imagine, that when exhorted to be religious, you are called upon to become more formal and ſolemn in your manners than others of the ſame years; or to erect yourſelves into ſupercilious reprovers of thoſe around you. The ſpirit of true religion breathes gentleneſs and affability. It gives a native unaffected eaſe to the behaviour. It is ſocial, kind, and cheerful; far removed from that gloomy and illiberal ſuperſtition which clouds the brow, ſharpens the temper, dejects the ſpirits, and teaches men to fit themſelves for another world, by neglecting the concerns of this. Let your religion, on the contrary, connect preparation for heaven with an honourable diſcharge of the duties of active life. Of ſuch religion diſcover, on every proper occaſion, that you are not aſhamed*!

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* BLAIR.

ELDEST BOY.

I, for one, am not aſhamed of ſuch religion, but glory in it.—So do we all.

Youth certainly is the ſeaſon to acquire knowledge, and to form religious habits. Let us keep this in our minds; by endeavouring to do ſo, we ſhall not be the leſs cheerful. This little book has ſufficiently proved to us, that to be good is to be happy. "There is no peace, ſaith the Lord, for the wicked."

We have now completed the Seven Evenings' Readings. The laſt will, I truſt, have repreſented religion to you in ſo amiable a light, that you will walk cheerfully in her pleaſant ways to the end of a happy life. "Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace:" but this is not all; they lead to glory, to everlaſting joy.—Now, having ſpent well the day, the Lord's Day I mean, let me intreat you to "bring the ſpirit of the Sunday's devotion into the tranſactions of the week," and let it influence your future lives.

I cannot close this little book without expressing my earnest and best wishes for the welfare of this society, and of all the little societies for whose use it is intended. You have my earnest prayers for your improvement in grace and useful knowledge, for your temporal and eternal happiness: and if the great Disposer of all events shall permit me to be, in some degree, instrumental to your attainment of these blessings, though it should be only in a single instance, I shall ever look back with delight on the hours so devoted to your service.

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