

THE  
DAUGHTER OF A GENIUS;

A Tale for Youth.

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BY MRS. HOFFLAND,

AUTHOR OF "THE SON OF A GENIUS," "ELLEN THE  
TEACHER," &c. &c.

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SECOND EDITION.

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LONDON:

J. HARRIS AND SON,  
CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.



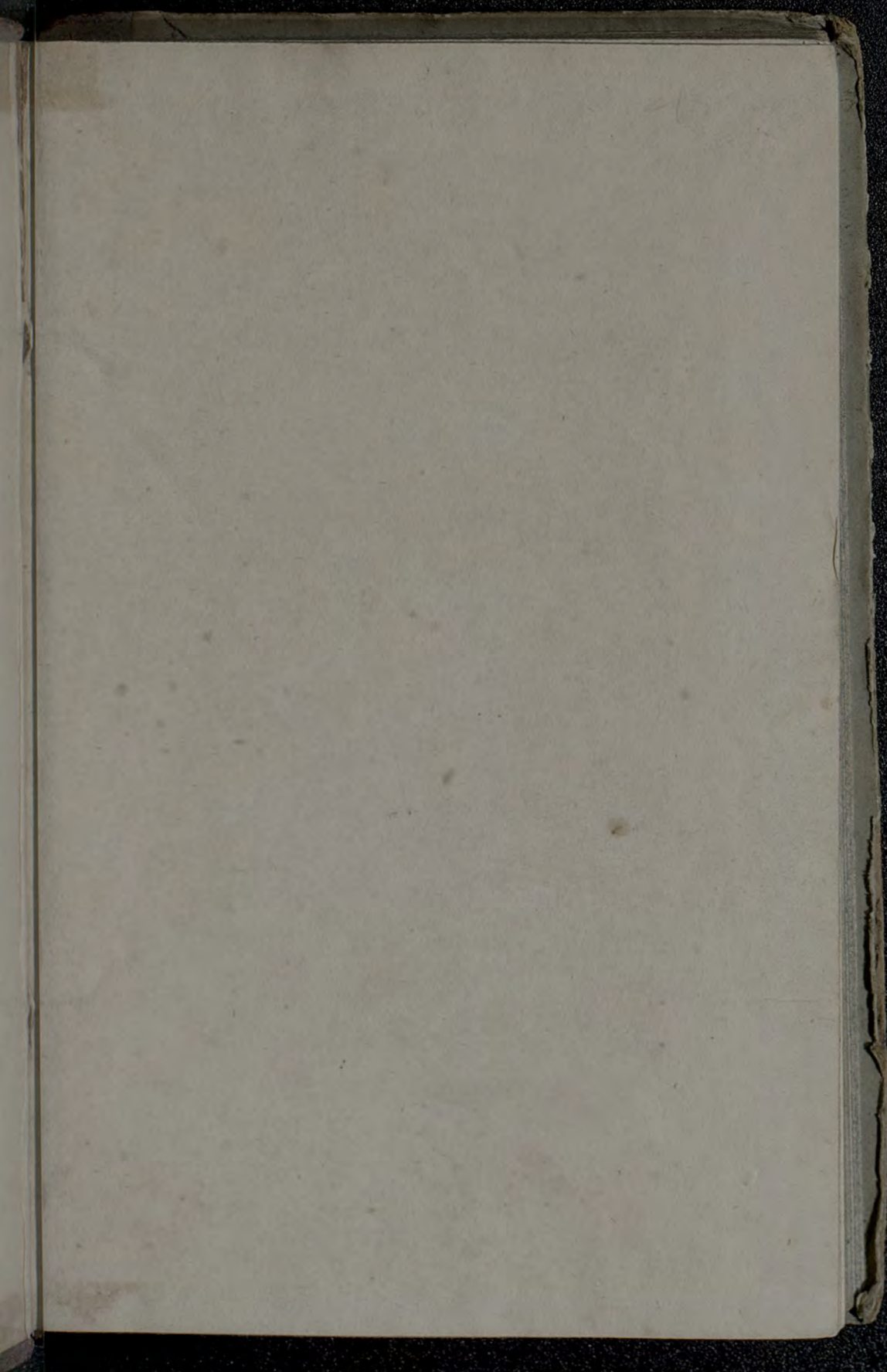
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1823

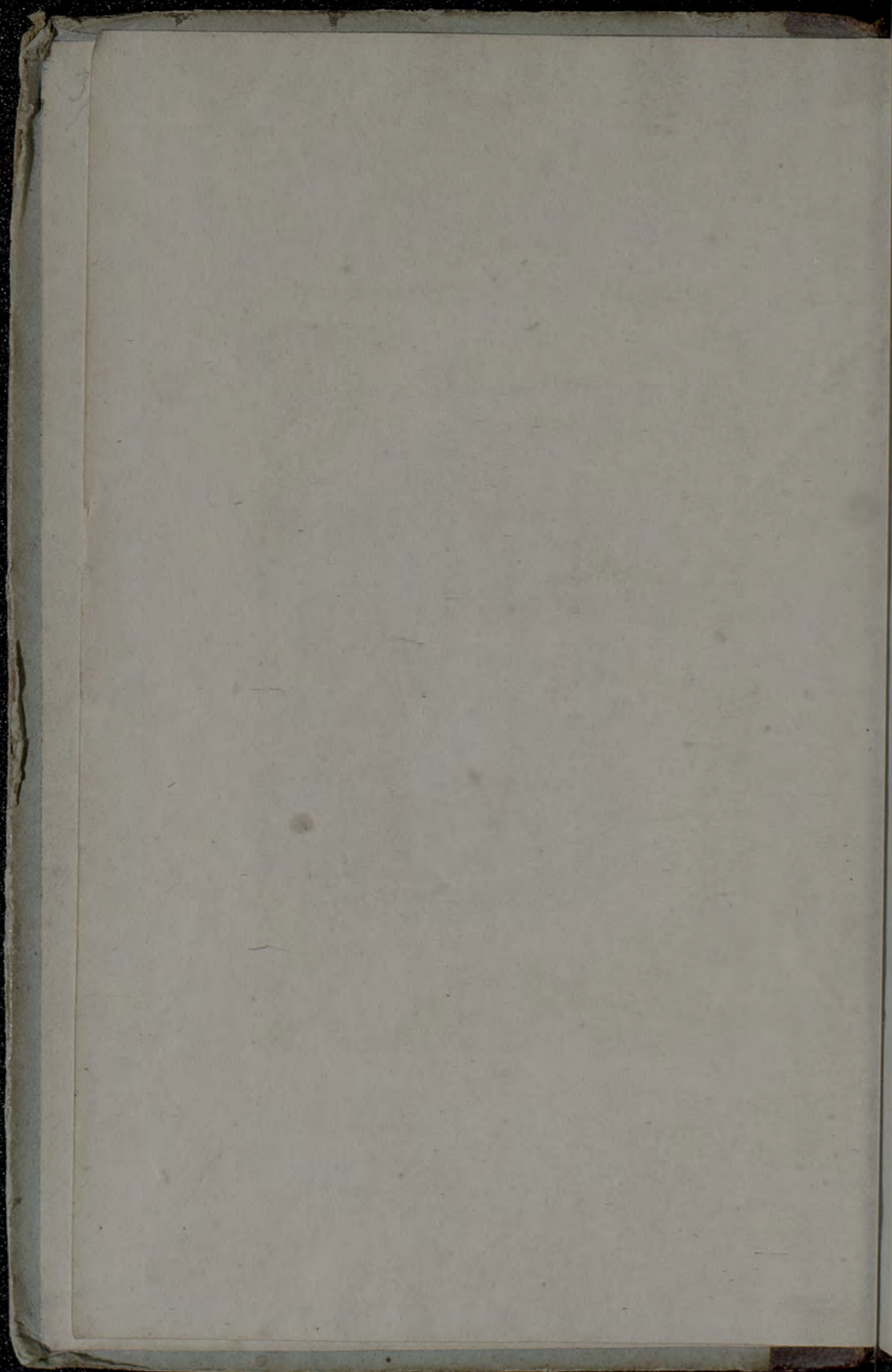


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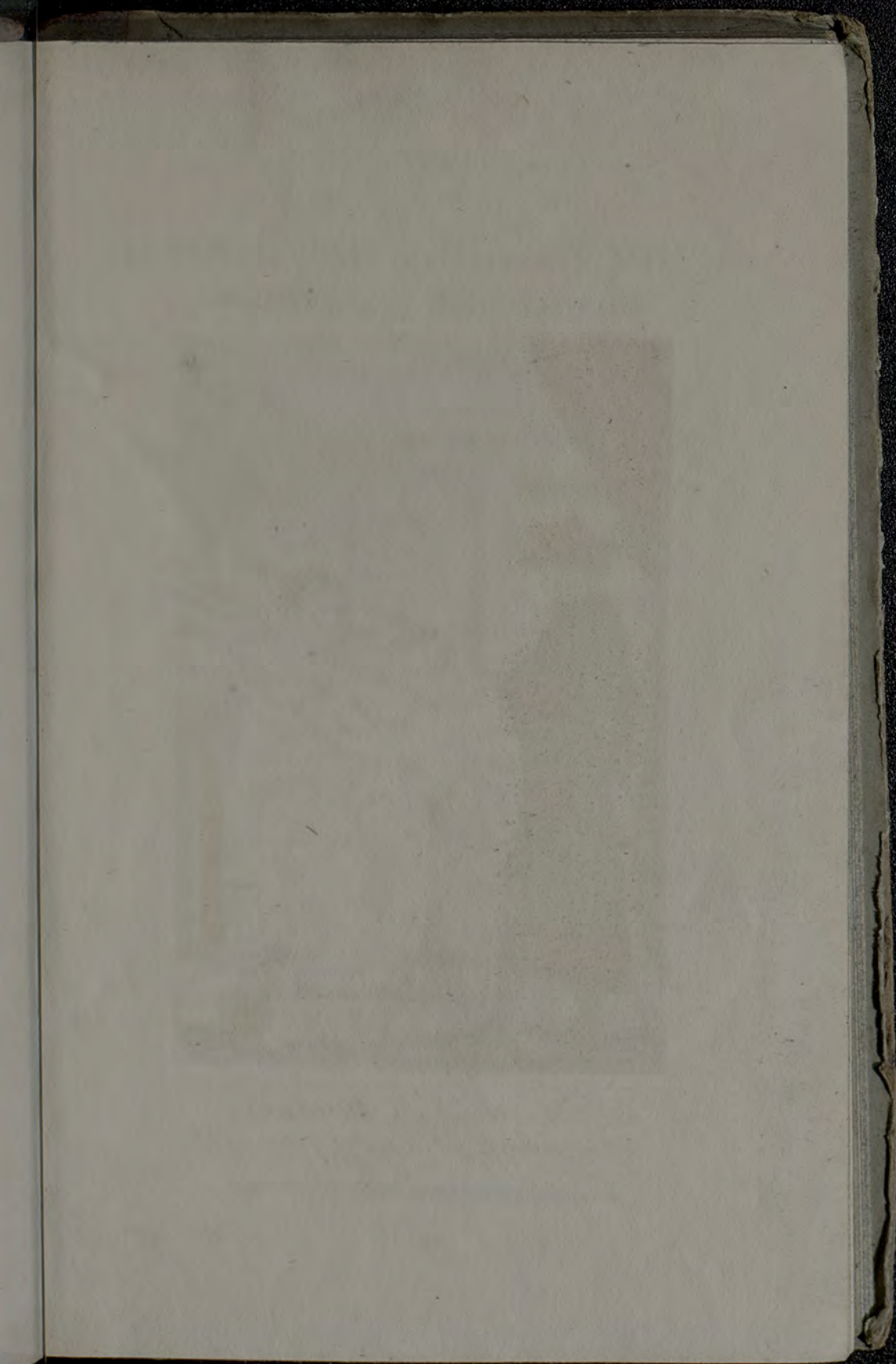














DAUGHTER OF A GENIUS.



*"Dear, dear Mamma,  
See what I have found!"* Page 123.

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"Perhaps I might have envied such powers in any one else; but she was so kind-hearted, bore her faculties so meekly, was so ready to advise, and so eager to encourage and assist, that she quelled the evil spirit."

Boarding School Reflections.

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WITH IMPROVEMENTS.

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A NOVEL IN THREE VOLUMES

BY MISS MARY ELLEN

IN THREE VOLUMES  
LONDON: G. WOODFALL, PRINTER, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.

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Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.



TO THE YOUNG LADIES  
OF  
MRS. HAUGH'S ESTABLISHMENT,  
DONCASTER.

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DEAR YOUNG LADIES,

Permitted by your excellent Governess to offer you this little work, I present it with the good wishes of a heart alive to the best interests and most endearing claims of your age and your sex: entreating each individual to consider my simple story as offering her a personal lesson and a practical example.

I flatter myself you will at least learn from these pages how much more happily you are situated than the pupils of Mrs. Albany could possibly be, notwithstanding the exertions of her meritorious daughter; since the comforts of your elegant and "pleasant home," the system of your expansive education, is conducted by a mind of extraordinary powers, under the control of that wisdom and experience which are alike necessary to the formation of character and the cultivation of intellect.



Without desiring to detract from that gaiety of heart, and sprightliness of manners, which properly belong to the spring-time of life (and which were unhappily denied to my little heroine), I must yet entreat you to reflect on the value of the time and privileges you are now enjoying, in order that your industry may be confirmed, and your grateful affections excited, towards all the friends to whom you are indebted for these blessings, whether daily administering, or distantly contributing to them. Many of you are called to consider these subjects in connexion with that the most sacred and important. You have taken your baptismal vows upon yourselves, and publicly announced yourselves Christians—remember this your “high calling,” your honourable distinction, demands especially a humble heart, a teachable spirit, and that daily progress in well-doing, which proves that your manners as gentlewomen, are built on the best foundation, the self-subduing, yet truly ennobling precepts of Christianity.

I am, my dear young ladies,

Your sincere friend,

B. HOFLAND.

23, Newman Street,  
January 10.



THE  
DAUGHTER OF A GENIUS;

A TALE.

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CHAPTER I.

MR. and Mrs. Henville were sitting one evening surrounded by their young family, which consisted of five children, when their attention was suddenly awakened by the loud laugh of the youngest, who was the only boy in the family, and a person that enjoyed uncommon privileges.

Arabella and Maria, who were considerably older than the two following sisters, had been employed some minutes before by their mamma in winding two skeins of silk for her, which were held for each by



a younger sister. Belle was still carefully pursuing her task, and following the entangled thread through all its labyrinths; but Maria, having found the employ too wearisome for her more volatile spirits, had suddenly cut it, and thereby occasioned the exulting laugh of little Charles.

“Why did you cut the silk, Maria?” said Mrs. Henville.

“Oh, mamma, it was so tiresome, I could not disentangle it.”

“I told you it would be so, yet you insisted on trying.”

“And I did try, dear mamma, in the most Griselda-like manner, but all at once my patience ‘oozed out,’ as the courage of Acres did, and then alas! ‘the gordian knot I did unloose’ in the Conqueror’s manner.”

Mr. Henville smiled, but his lady looked only the more grave, as she replied—

“I wanted the silk to be wound, Maria, and it makes me no amends for spoiling it, that you can quote a line of poetry, or refer to an historical fact—in the walk of



life, to our sex there are every day many petty cares, and active services called for, which have little to do with either knowledge or imagination ; and are yet of great importance to happiness, and virtue. I wish you had possessed more patience, or less confidence."

At this moment Belle laid her ball of silk in silence on the table.

"Thank you, my dear, *this* will be useful."

Maria hastily ran out of the room, her heart throbbing, and the tears perforce starting from her eyes. Belle, who tenderly loved her, saw her disorder, but not wishing that it should be further noticed, desired the little ones to say good night, and she would put them into the hands of the nurse-maid, and in a few minutes the worthy couple were left alone, on which the following conversation ensued.

"I think, my love, you were a little too hard on Maria, for her feelings are so acute, the poor girl is just heart-broken with a word from you."



“ Very true, my dear, and it is frequently heart-breaking to me to give it, but the more I am compelled to admire the wit, ability, good-humour, and sensibility, the dear child certainly displays, the more I feel it my duty to correct the exuberance of her fancy, and to guard her from eccentricity to which she is very prone ;—in my opinion there is as much necessity for restraining her faculties, and chaining down her mind to the common duties of life, as in general it is necessary to stimulate children to application, and compel them to exertion—with her talents, if she is not well directed, we have every thing to fear.”

“ And every thing to *hope*,” said the father exultingly.

The door was re-opened, and Maria entered with a number of little balls on her hand, on each of which she had wound a needle full of the silk, and she laid them before her mother with an air of tender submission, which proved that she was far from satisfied with her own conduct even yet.



“ Well, my dear, this is certainly the best way you could manage it,” said Mrs. Henville.

“ My sister told me how to do it—I don’t believe I should have had the sense to find it out.”

“ Yes you would, my love, if you had thought about it—Belle generally does right, because she never despises any thing as not worthy of attention, yet as seldom desponds”——

“ Desponds !” cried Maria, resuming her usually enthusiastic expression, “ Oh ! no, why should she ever despair of judging right ? with her sound understanding, and her calm gentleness, so full of reflection and real goodness—but there never was such a girl as Belle—*never* !

“ But there may be one as good as Belle if she would try—one as useful to her invalid mother, and as good a companion to her solitary father.”

Maria flung her arms alternately round the neck of each dear parent, blushing,



weeping, and resolving that she would be all, and more than all, that their wants, and their wishes, would have her; and when she had retired for the night, her sweetness of disposition, her abilities, and her oddities, again engaged the attention of her parents—the father persisted in the belief, “ that the strength of her mind would conquer every trifling defect ”—the mother, “ dreaded that advancing time would confirm the romantic, and desultory turn of her thoughts ”—but both agreed that with affection so ardent, and habits so obedient as hers, poor Maria could never go far astray, although she was apparently gifted with the dazzling, but dangerous pre-eminence of Genius.



## CHAPTER II

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MR. HENVILLE was a country gentleman—his fortune was affluent, though not large, and his estates were unfortunately settled on his male offspring; so that he was under the necessity of living considerably within his income, or subjecting his daughters to the evils of poverty in case of his death. As, however, he was an excellent father, this was not likely to occur, for he lived in a retired manner, and regularly laid by a considerable portion of his income for their future fortunes. Mrs. Henville, though still a young and elegant woman, had, unfortunately, contracted a rheumatic affection, whilst attending on her young family through a fever; but her active mind was ever seeking to benefit her children, and



she endeavoured so thoroughly to impress on their minds the situation in which they stood in life, as to fit them either for exercising judicious care over a large and splendid establishment, or submitting to the privations of narrow fortune. Her cares and wishes took their full effect on Belle; who, although scarcely a year older than Maria, was naturally more employed about her mother's person; and, from being very thoughtful and attentive to her comforts, more frequently became the confidant of her wishes and plans. Maria, who was exceedingly fond of reading, very agile in her person, and full of novelty, even to wildness, in all the excursions of her fancy, and the wishes of her heart, was more frequently the companion of her father, who delighted in storing her mind with knowledge, and in witnessing the unpruned excursions of her imagination, her exquisite perception of the beauties of nature, and the power she possessed of seizing almost intuitively on all those accomplishments which bespeak a



polished taste, and a mind attuned to elegant pursuits and refined enjoyments.

Mr. Henville was not ignorant that his darling combined with these accomplishments, a reprehensible love of singularity, a contempt for her general acquaintance, and an over-weening approbation for the few she preferred—that she submitted to the usual occupations of her sex as a duty, but rarely adopted them from choice—that she was in some things so conceited in her own opinion, as to hold all advice superfluous; and in others, so timid, as to allow herself to be led by her decided inferiors—that she was frequently so indolent in matters of study, as to learn nothing well; yet was capable of exertions which she occasionally made to a degree that astonished all, and awoke the envy of many, the approbation of few. But with this knowledge he did not take any effectual means of removing the evil he lamented, for he could ill bear to check the vivacity that amused him.

The young people advanced towards wo-



manhood under these circumstances, and little change occurred in the family until the winter, when Maria became seventeen, when a gentleman from London came to settle upon his estate in their neighbourhood, and as he was an old and much respected friend of Mr. Henville's, his frequent visits were a great accession to their pleasures, and he soon became domesticated in their family.

Mr. Albany was a bachelor, about forty-five, a man of good character, extensive information, and fine taste, which he had improved by travelling. His property was, like that of Mr. Henville, entailed, and his present heir was a cousin with whom he was not on pleasant terms, which was thought to be one reason why he had hitherto never resided on his estate, or took any pains to improve a place, which was singularly worthy of embellishment. It appeared that he was at this time much struck with the beauties of his paternal home; for he planted trees, laid out walks, and even spoke of



erecting a handsome mansion in a better site than that of his present antique but comfortable dwelling.

Maria, charmed with any circumstance that exercised her fancy and her taste, entered with such avidity into every plan he spoke of, and more than all into that of building, that he was naturally induced to pay great attention to all she advanced, which he was the more easily led to do from observing that even her father held all she said well worth consideration. By degrees, approbation rose to deference and admiration; and the family beheld, with surprise, that the grave gentleman whom they had considered as another papa, behaved like a young lover to the lively Maria.

As soon as he could, with propriety, Mr. Albany spoke to Mr. Henville on the subject—the latter, in great anxiety, revealed his old friend's proposals to Maria, at the same time saying, “I do not suppose child that you will marry my friend; but I insist upon it you do not laugh at him.”

“I have no intention, dear papa—on



the contrary, I shall be very glad to marry him, and to build his beautiful new house. I shall be thankful for a protector through life, whom I certainly love much better than any man I have ever seen save yourself; and shall be most thankful to Providence for placing me so near all my dear connexions, and affording me the assistance in my married duties I am conscious of wanting."

These sentiments surprised her parents, but were most gladly acceded to, for they thought a man at once steady and agreeable, would be the exact person to guide their daughter, and they readily consented that the marriage should take place soon after her eighteenth birth-day. When she left home, Mrs. Henville advised her to persuade her husband to embellish his old house, rather than to engage in the expense and trouble of building a new one; which, if he had no heir, would be only the means of stripping his daughters to enrich the son of a man, who was already more wealthy than himself."

"Dear mamma," cried Maria, "per-



haps *he* might give up the plan, but I am sure *I* cannot. I have been studying Architecture these six months, Palladio, Vitruvius, Wyatt, and Steuart, are all at my fingers end. Poor Belle, who has seen after my wedding clothes, knows that the only order I gave was to measure stadia of ribbon, and to make a frock sleeve of the Ionic order. Oh! I must have the house."

"I would rather my daughter should manage a house, than build one; you know, my dear, Milton says, *that* is woman's "chief glory and her good".

"True, mamma, but Solomon tells us "a wise woman buildeth her house;" and he is far better authority. Milton was a divine poet, but a cross husband;"

A tyrant, even to the wife he loved,  
A traitor to the king his heart approved.

"Well, well," said the mother with a suppressed sigh, as she kissed her cheek, "we must remember your carriage, and, what is more important, your husband, is



waiting ; go, my love, and may God bless and guide you."

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### CHAPTER III.

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MR. HENVILLE was not long before he perceived, with much concern, that the empire of his fascinating daughter over the heart and the purse of her husband was absolute ; and that in her delight in the new and favourite pursuit, she abandoned her house to the management of her servants, and suffered the ill will of all her neighbours from relinquishing their invitations, and neglecting the common forms of social life. Though very handsome, she was so devoid of personal vanity, as to be entirely careless of her dress, except as to its cleanliness, from which she ever set out in the morning with being delicately nice ;



but as no state of weather stopped her peregrinations, she was frequently drenched in the rain, bespattered by the mud, and yet never failed to be engaged at the time of dressing for dinner. Careless what food she ate, and always forgetful of the names of a dish, and even the forms of a joint of meat, if she had a guest who was accustomed to a good table, he was rarely able to make a dinner, to the great mortification of her husband; for the cook became soon as careless as the mistress, and the underdone and overdone meat could always meet with an apology, in "Mrs. Albany never being true to her time." Sometimes, on these occasions, Mr. Henville, who often walked over to see his dear child, would point out the impropriety he witnessed, and particularly desire her to remove a few of the innumerable prints, plans, drawings, and folios which filled up her rooms, and obstructed all movement without injury; and *his* observations were ever attended to. But the husband, charmed with her vivacity and beauty, and proud of her talents,



assumed no authority, and acted as if he conceived her faultless.

When Maria became the mother of a little girl, her affectionate family was sincerely rejoiced ; because, knowing the warmth and tenderness of her heart, they conceived that her attachment to this new and endearing source of interest, would confine her more to her household duties, and that she would dismiss her late solicitude on the subject of columns, architraves, pediments, and measurements, for those which appertain to caudle cups, and christening robes. This was, however, far from being the case. She was devoutly thankful to God for her returning health, and her lovely babe ; but as a young child rather supplies an object for the heart than the mind, and her situation in life did not necessarily exact personal attendance on her babe, it soon appeared that all the change effected by her confinement, was a determination to alter the dwelling hitherto planned as an Italian villa, into one more calculated for English comfort, as she had



now discovered, "that warmth was not less indispensable than air."

So many, and so various, had been the changes made in this unfortunate mansion, for which all the records of Egypt and Hindostan, the beauties of Greece, the sublimities of Asia, the alterations of Rome, and even the fantasies of China, had been examined and descanted on a thousand times, that it had already made great inroads on the well stocked purse of the owner, and was yet far from finished, but summer was now before them, and in the autumn, "doubtless their work would be complete."

One day, during July, Maria had mounted a ladder placed to the entrance of an upper story, and was standing upon a slight plank, when her footman followed her with a note brought from her father's in great haste. Mr. Albany was standing below, not being so light and agile as his young wife; but on perceiving, that as she read the note, her colour changed, he became alarmed lest she should faint, and he hastened to her assistance. The plank broke



under him, and they both fell down a considerable distance, followed by much rubbish, and the heavy hod of a bricklayer, which descending with violence on the outstretched leg of poor Mr. Albany, broke it above the ankle. Maria was bruised, but had no limbs broken, and the agitation of her mind rendered her totally forgetful of herself. The note which occasioned this misfortune, was to tell her that her father had been seized with a fever two days before, which had now assumed an alarming appearance, and put the family in great distress, especially as it appeared to be of an infectious nature. The love which Mrs. Albany bore for her father was almost idolatrous, and to fly to him, to nurse him, and even to die with him, was the first wish of her heart; and even as she lay on the ground, she called out for her carriage to be instantly prepared. But when her husband, bleeding, bruised, and helpless, was drawn out before her eyes, how could she leave *him*? especially when she recollected that it was his kind sympathy with her



feelings, that had produced his misfortune. Irresolute, distracted, she had neither the power to aid him, nor direct herself.

Happily the servant who brought the note instantly galloped back to Mr. Henville's, knowing that he had left two medical gentlemen with his master, whom he should probably meet on the road. He was successful, and the immediate help thus given to Mr. Albany, placed the sad accident under the most favourable character it could assume. Maria was herself bled, to guard her from the fever her extreme agitation threatened, and whilst this operation was performing, a slip of paper was again brought from her kind, considerate sister, on which was written :

“ My dear Maria I need not tell you how truly I sympathize with you—be assured that you shall hear from us constantly, and do not think of coming—you can do your beloved husband the greatest service ; but poor papa is now raving, and would not know you—therefore you could



do no good here, and would only endanger your own life, and add to mamma's distress."

"I will go instantly," cried Maria, "I will see my father, no power on earth shall hinder me."

The surgeon protested against this resolution—The husband entreated—but Maria went.

Mr. Henville was in the height of delirium, when his daughter scarcely less wild, rushed into his room, and throwing her arms around him with a violent motion, broke the bandage of her arm, and deluged the bed with her blood. The patient, terrified and astonished, in the agitation of the scene, increased his fever to a degree which medical help was never able to subdue, and he continued to rave against what he called a "murdering maniac," for a week; when he expired.

Maria, fainting from loss of blood, was taken from her father's bed to be placed in another, but as soon as she was restored,



she begged so earnestly to be returned to her husband, and suffered so exceedingly from hearing the increased ravings of her father, that it was judged right to remove her. Alas! she had taken the fever, and communicated it to her husband, whose constitution was not proof against the united attack. Maria was not rendered so violently ill as might have been expected, owing probably to the weak state she was in from excessive bleeding; but she was long confined to her bed: and before she left it, her husband and father slept in the grave, and she had not the consolation of knowing that she had soothed their sufferings, or obeyed their wishes. Her exertions had been injurious, and her love unavailing.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

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THERE is a resistance to the pressure of sorrow and weakness, in early life, however



acutely they may be felt, which seems the peculiar gift of divine mercy to those who have yet much to learn and to suffer. By degrees Mrs. Albany recovered from the double calamity she had experienced, and returned to her usual avocations. Her books and her pencil divided her hours, with the attentions demanded by her little girl, and her still mourning family. During the winter which followed, and when spring came, she roused herself to action and determined on finishing the house.

Her mother heard this resolve with unfeigned astonishment, for the house was no longer hers. The heir and present owner was in Canada with his young son, where he had a large estate, but it might be expected now, that he would soon return, and take immediate possession.

“He will undoubtedly repay me with thankfulness for having erected a house worthy of his fortune,” said Maria, “and as I am now of age, I shall certainly finish it with my own money. I know I have no right to touch my husband’s property; be



assured dear mother, if I am imprudent I will never be unjust to my child."

"Not intentionally, my love, but surely in spending your own money, Maria, you wrong your child who has done nothing to excuse you for disinheriting her."

"But, dear mother, I am *certain* this gentleman will pay me for the house, and then she will have that also."

"He is not bound to do so by law—nor by courtesy, for your husband and he were not friends."

"But he is by reason, and justice, and feeling—I should do it, for which reason I think he will—Why should I think his sense of honour less high than my own?"

"Because your husband did, and he was a good man, and would not say so without cause."

Maria confessed there was something in this, and she happily agreed to curtail her schemes of improvement, and merely render the house habitable, truly observing "that till it was so it did good to no one, and



placed the excellent materials in a ruinous state." Agreeable to this resolution she proceeded, and by indefatigable exertion, and with a skill that astonished professional architects, finished it under her own inspection in the most masterly manner.

There was still much required in the interior, when Maria one day received a visit from a professional gentleman, who after some circumlocution, informed her, "That his client William Frederick Albany, Esq. having given all due consideration to her feelings and convenience, had appointed him to receive the rents due on the estate, and also to request her immediate evacuation of the premises."

Maria felt surprised, almost shocked; yet she had the common sense to know that she had no right to be so; and she hastily said, "she would go away directly, but she had been busy lately, finishing the house—she hoped some consideration—some"—

"Madam, your attorney and I must have some talk together. I am directed to



take your live stock and farming materials, if desired, but to resist all claims for buildings, dilapidations, stone quarry working, &c. &c.

Maria could not speak—she felt aware that she had done wrong, and she abandoned her house, as suddenly, and delivered it as unreservedly into the hands of the new claimants, as she had formerly pertinaciously insisted on finishing it; and, according to her usual custom, on lesser occasions, when, by delivering deeds, and signing unread parchments, she had finished the mischief, drove away to her sister to lament her situation, and ask advice.

“The only thing you can possibly do *now*, is to get the new comer to pay the debts due at this time, which he will certainly do, for though large, they are a small portion of the whole—you had better, my love, look out for a small genteel house near us, and bring your affairs into the least possible compass—as your husband left you sole executrix, you have the power of doing what you please, that is one great comfort.”



Maria instantly busied herself in looking out for a house, which, in her ardent imagination, was to combine all the simple elegance of a cottage ornée, with the many comforts of the mansion she was leaving; and, in her desire to find blooming roses, twining woodbines, green lattices, and climbing ivy, seemed to forget the important change of situation, which was, in fact, combined with her removal.

It was her custom, on these occasions, to leave her child with her mother during her absence, and call for her on her return. One evening she was later than common, which she accounted for by saying, that she had gone to see a place which lay on the other side of the town near which they lived, and there was such a crowd in the principal street, that she could not proceed, and was, therefore, obliged to make a considerable circuit.

“ I fear something had happened ?” said Mrs. Henville. “ Oh, yes ! there was a terrible run on the bank, and the whole town was full of confusion and distress ; if one



were to believe them, our old friend Mr. Spencer is absolutely ruined."

"Ruined!—Mr. Spencer ruined!" cried Belle, "God forbid! of course you went to the Bank some way?"

"No, indeed, I ordered James to turn round, I would not have gone at such a moment for the world; it would have been extremely indelicate, it would have looked as if I were wanting money from him, do you think I could distress him at such a time as that?"

"Maria, Maria," cried Mrs. Henville in agony, "your false delicacy has ruined us all; you know that all your sisters' fortunes, and your own too is in that bank. You ought instantly to have returned and told us, Belle would have gone immediately; even I would have crawled there, weak as I am, to have saved something for my poor orphans."

Miss Henville, in the utmost alarm, immediately set out, accompanied by Maria, who, now aware of her own error, bitterly lamented it; and added, "that in addition



to her own paternal fortune, all the ready money of her late husband had been placed in that bank since her widowhood."

The sisters went together, the sad tale was now confirmed ; the bank was insolvent, and its losses had been such as to render it probable that a very small dividend would be ever paid to the creditors. It appeared that during the morning, a very large sum of money had actually been paid to those who first presented themselves, and Mr. Spencer had been heard to say as he anxiously looked through the crowd, " Oh ! I see no claimant here for my old friend, what can the trustees of Mrs. Henville be about?"

These trustees were not to blame, for they could not foresee the circumstance, and had been requested, in the will of Mr. Henville, to allow the money to remain there during the minority of the younger children. But Maria felt overwhelmed with consternation and self-reproach, since she was now aware she might, at least, have saved something from the general wreck. The sight of her mother and her child added to her misery,



and she passed the rest of the night in strong hysterics, unhappily adding to the trouble and alarm of her distressed family.

As soon as possible, Belle obtained an interview with the trustees of her late father, and, professing an intention of devoting herself to the benefit of her family, she proposed to them that they would accept her as a tenant on the estate of her little brother, during his minority; saying, "that as at this time farming was a very good business she would become a farmer for herself and little sisters. It was the only way in which she could maintain them, and by the aid of the old servants she feared not doing it well."

"Ah! my dear young lady," said one of them, "you know not what you undertake."

"Yes, Sir, I do—we will sell the carriage, plate, wine, and the superfluous furniture. With the money this brings I will increase our stock of cattle and sheep: we must use the coach-horses in the plough, and sell our saddle-horses. My little sisters must leave



school, and their education be finished by me, as I shall have no visits to pay, or receive, I shall find time for every thing, and depend upon it I will be a faithful tenant to the dear child I have ever loved so fondly."

"We will trust you : " said they all with tears in their eyes ; and thus, at this early age, and in the prime of her days, did this admirable young woman enter a situation so full of care and labour.

The first business of Miss Henville, and the most painful, was to discharge the upper servants, as she intended to retain only the lower, for whom she meant to procure subordinate assistance ; but all the house, as if inspired by her example, declared, " they would never leave her if she would permit their stay." The coachman would assist the bailiff, the footman undertook to be shepherd, the ladies' maid professed a knowledge of the dairy, and, even with tears of thankfulness, accepted diminished wages, and increased labour. Every circumstance of expense was examined, every debt was



paid, and a quiet, but complete system, entered upon, before the widow had been able to fix on any plan, or do any thing, save weeping over her little girl, and protesting that she "knew not what to do."

So care worn and ill did Maria now appear, that as soon as she was able, her sister began to examine *her* accounts for her, and take that cognizance of *her* affairs she had been doing of her own. When her property was sold, there remained a sum in her hands, which although very far inferior to the wants of a gentlewoman, was yet equal to maintaining herself and the child in a comfortable obscurity, which now seemed to be all she desired, and she again determined on seeking a cottage, but of a much more humble description, and a much greater distance from her late home.

"But why go further from us, Maria? we are alike under a cloud, let us support one another."

"Oh, no! I cannot bear to see you so situated, I could do any thing, endure any



thing, in my own person ; but really I have not courage to see you and my mother so reduced."

Belle knew that this was indeed the language of her sister's heart, which was ever devoid of selfishness, though she was at times self-willed. She had been for some time negotiating with the attorney who had taken possession of Mr. Albany's estate, in the hope that she should prevail upon him to pay those debts contracted by Maria during her widowhood for the house, but she found him inexorable on the point, "because," he said, "that it was, however excellent, useless to his client, and a burthen instead of a benefit to the present proprietor, since he would neither let it to another, nor live in it himself."

During the late troubles the creditors waited patiently, but after the sale they became clamorous of payment from some quarter, and the folly of Maria in her expenditure was more spoken of than her late disappointments, and present sufferings. At



length her sister laid the case before her, and lamented that it was impossible for her to help her beyond a mere trifle.

“ I do not need even that, my love ; I have more than enough to pay them all you know ; it was *me* they trusted, and from *me* shall they be satisfied.”

“ True, my love, but still to give as it were, your property to a rich man, and leave yourself destitute !”

“ I am not destitute,” said Maria, at once recovering her energy, “ no, Belle ! I am your sister, and you shall see what power your example has given me. I will pay every debt this unhappy affair has brought upon me, to the last shilling. I will then go to France \*, as the road is once more open. I will make myself mistress of the language, improve my knowledge of music, and when I come back, in some method apply my talents so as to support myself and my poor child. And should I suc-

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\* This was in 1801.



ceed, I shall make up to her the fortune she has lost."

The conclusion had by no means an echo in the heart of Belle, who could not consider her sister as of a description to *save* a fortune, even if she got it. But as she had the highest opinion of her abilities, as well as the tenderest regard for her person, and really thought the scheme a very good one, she entirely approved it, and readily engaged to add the little Maria to her family during the absence of her mother. From the time Mrs. Albany adopted this intention she became evidently happier, and daily recovered her health, which had been much impaired: but her design was a little protracted, and somewhat altered, by a new occurrence.

The late Mr. Albany had only one relation living besides his successor and *his* son. This was Mrs. Margaret Albany, a maiden aunt who resided in a very retired manner, though her fortune was ample, in the neighbourhood of Southampton. This lady had



heard with pleasure of her nephew's marriage, but she was by no means equally satisfied with the birth of his daughter. She had been much grieved with his death, and still more so on learning, by slow degrees, and general report, that his affairs had come to such a sorrowful termination, and not bearing to think that any person of the name of Albany should be returned upon their own family for support, she wrote to request the young widow and her daughter would become her guest, so long as it might suit their conveniency.

The sisters saw immediately that it was the duty of Mrs. Albany, for her child's sake, to cultivate this lady's good will; and as going to Southampton was so far in her way to France, they did not delay to profit by the invitation, and the little Maria, now in the most engaging period of infantine captivity, set out for a very different home, to any she had hitherto known, with her unhappy anxious mother.



## CHAPTER VII.

Mrs. MARGARET ALBANY received the travellers with a mixture of stateliness and benignity, of real kindness but reserved profession, which fell on the enthusiastic heart of the Woman of Genius, like ice-drops on a burning glass. She was, in fact, in a kind of indignant constraint, which compelled her every moment to recall her sister's words to her mind, which were, "for your child's sake endure a little inconvenience:" but poor Maria soon found it was not a *little*, for she had been so tenderly beloved in her own dear family, and had lived so very little out of it, that she was by no means prepared for new manners.

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Margaret, when the change of Maria's dress shewed her really fine person and young artless countenance.—"Well! who would have thought



that my grave nephew, who resisted female allurements and the troubles of matrimony so many years, should have married a child at last?"

"He married the daughter of his friend, Madam."

"True, my dear, I have no fault to find with his marriage, but I lament his misconduct under it, to go and build a fine house, and run into debt as he did, with his experience, is inexcusable."

With all the frankness and honesty, which was the most striking trait in her character, and without at all taking into account the peculiarities of her hearer, Maria instantly began to defend her late husband, and take upon herself all the charge of folly and imprudence which could possibly belong to the case. Nor did she once offer the palliations which certainly belonged to it; as unquestionably Mr. Albany, as a very healthy and temperate man, had the prospect of living many years, and rearing many children. But Maria, ever subject to extremes, set no bounds to her own condemnation,



and her praises of the kind indulgence and tenderness of her husband ; from all which Mrs. Margaret inwardly concluded, that her nephew was an old fool, to be led by a silly girl, and half ruin himself by her extravagance.

In such a gay place as Southampton, it was not possible for a person of Maria's appearance, and elegant, though somewhat eccentric manners, to escape without attracting observation, and this circumstance alone would have rendered her residence with Mrs. Margaret insupportably annoying ; and it is probable she soon repented of her invitation, as she watched the looks, dress, and manners of Maria, with an eye that seemed to say, " I wish you would commit yourself." This, however, was never the case. Maria never studied propriety, nor supposed that decorum of manners was a virtue, but she was truly and unaffectedly modest, and the high powers of her mind threw a dignity about her, which kept the frivolous ever at a distance : and in a short time the old lady would say to herself,



“ Well, well, she is a gentlewoman, however ; but I really fear she is a genius.”

At length Maria broached her plan, which, with some few objections, Mrs. Margaret approved. She said, “ living in France was cheap, and so far good ; that as widows could have nothing to do in society, shutting themselves in a convent was very proper, provided they did not turn papists, and of that there was little danger, if they read their Bible and prayer-books ;” and added, “ as the little girl was very good, and had a dimple in her chin very like the Albanys, particularly her own, she would keep her till her mamma’s return.”

The heart of Maria ached, as she thought of leaving her little playful darling in the prim mansion, and with the sober damsels who constituted Mrs. Margaret’s household ; and these were moments when she resolved to break through all restraint, and send the child back to her own dear native home. On mentioning this to Belle, she was strongly advised to the contrary ; and



as she well knew the goodness of the heart, and the soundness of the judgement, which dictated that advice, she complied with it, and, with an aching heart, tore herself from a creature which would, in its innocence and fondness, have attracted her strongly under any circumstances, but was her fatherless and only daughter.

In despite of herself, Mrs. Margaret had been amused by the versatility of mind, and the extent of information, together with the originality of Maria's character, and after she was gone, she felt herself dull. This sensation did not, however, take its natural bent in her mind, for instead of seeking company to supply the loss, she the more peremptorily closed her doors on society ; prohibited reading in her house, and inveighed bitterly against all modern education, protesting, " that for the short time the little Maria was under her care, she would guard her from her mother's failings."

Alas ! the time proved long : Mrs. Albany, like others, was soon placed under



that imprisonment, which laid many of our countrymen in a foreign grave; and the little Maria, bereft of her mother, and at a distance of almost 200 miles from her affectionate relatives, who were scarcely remembered by her, became under the sole management of one, who, with good principles, and good disposition also, was yet an entire stranger to the wishes and the wants of children, and with much charity had yet little tenderness.

Mrs. Margaret, at seventy-two, was tall and straight as a pine, and this she happily imputed to walking before breakfast; from which circumstance she always insisted on the little girl walking for one whole hour up and down the trim walks of her long narrow garden. Otherwise, except when she accompanied her to prayers, the poor child was denied all exercise. She was taught reading and sewing by the upper maid, a stately damsel, who would as soon have thought of setting the house on fire, as romping with the little girl, or allowing her active limbs their natural propensity to



run and jump. Her little round face become elongated with anxiety, and her natural vivacity and curiosity suppressed with the dread of acting improperly. Naturally affectionate, and remembering how dearly she had loved, more than the *persons* whom she had loved, she concluded that all the affections of her heart had been given to her mother; and day by day she pined after this unknown parent, with an intensity of anxiety not to be expected at her age, and arising entirely from her situation.

As she was never admitted into the parlour when the few visitants Mrs. Margaret saw were present, her only view of the world was at church, and she never failed to consider every handsome and elegant woman she saw, as resembling her dear mamma; and when she read in the Bible, or heard in the lessons, any example of female excellence, she never failed to conclude that it was the precise conduct her mother would have adopted. Thus, the few ideas she received from external objects, served to rivet the affections of her



heart, and present a continual object of esteem and love, in a situation which tended to congeal every warm sentiment, and damp every tender emotion.

By slow degrees, a little improvement dawned on the dull life of Maria. When she could work a sampler, she was promised a History of England, which was, according to Mrs. Margaret, the regular follower of the Bible, of which, as a history, poor Maria was fully mistress. The delight with which she pursued this new object, can scarcely be estimated by those who have the treasures of knowledge in their possession, and know not the "hunger and thirst" after information which Maria felt.

In fact, this little girl naturally resembled her mother much, in the quickness of her comprehension, the acuteness of her feelings, her desire of pleasing those around her, and an ardent curiosity respecting all the productions of nature and art which met her eye. But alas! those with whom



she resided were in the opposite extreme to her departed grandfather, and, instead of stimulating her to knowledge, invariably repressed her most laudable inquiries. If she asked Mrs. Margaret a question about a flower, or a bird, she was cut short, with—"You see the flowers grow, and the birds fly; it is the will of God they should do so, and that is enough for you. Little girls are brought up to sew neatly, and keep themselves clean; not to preach and be wise."

As the first words which ever met her ear, were on subjects of architecture, and the first objects on which her eye rested, designs of various description, she had naturally caught a few words from those around her, and she one day asked Mrs. Sally, as she returned from prayers, "if the church were not Gothic?"—"Gothic!" cried Sally, in a fright, "why, in the name of wonder, how came such a word into your head?—To be sure its no such thing, for its a fine ancient place; and



I hope you will never let such a word slip out of your mouth again, 'specially before my mistress."

This "'specially'" was unfortunately uttered much too often, and the fear of offending Mrs. Margaret which it inspired, chilled the heart of the child towards her relative, and rendered her situation doubly uncomfortable. Had she met with kindness from the servants, she would have doubtless had more pleasure, but she would have been probably taught cunning and artifice. But they did not tempt her to this sin by any little indulgencies in their power to give, although they frequently accused her of it, and had called her so often "a little lump of deceit," that the child was exceedingly puzzled; and ventured at last to ask, "if deceit came from smelling flowers?"

"What do you mean? why do you ask, child?"—"Because, ma'am, the maids say 'I am full of deceit,' and that 'I am a lump of deceit;' and I am afraid I get it that way, for it is true I do smell them



very much in the morning, and perhaps it is not good when one is fasting?"

Mrs. Margaret was indignant with the liberties it was evident her servants had taken with her niece, and she soon gave them to understand, "that she was by no means one of those elderly ladies, who, in the decline of life, sink under the control of those about them." She charged them to exchange no words with Miss Albany but in her presence, and ordered Maria's little bed to be taken into her own room, and undertook herself to be her preceptor.

From this change the poor child had the advantage of seeing and being seen by occasional visitants, and among the rest by the clergyman whose church she attended with her great-aunt. As Maria had attributed in her own mind all possible beauty and virtue to her unknown mother, so she concluded all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom dwelt in this gentleman, and she gazed upon him with a mixture of admiration and awe, which almost took the appearance of terror.



The good clergyman was a family man, and so fond of children, that he soon began to make acquaintance with the little pale, timid girl, whom he always found diligently working a tent stitch chair bottom; and when at last, by her aunt's permission, she laid it down, and advanced towards him, he inquired,

"Why do you look afraid of me, my love? do you think I shall run away with you?"

"Oh no!" said Maria, with a deep sigh, as if she thought such a circumstance by no means to be feared.

"Why then, my dear?"

"Because, Sir—because I thought you were such a sea of knowledge—and so I wished—I was afraid."

Overpowered with confusion, she suddenly stopped; and though her kind interrogator could not forbear to smile at his own appellation, and readily conceived that the sea, as the sublimest object she beheld, or imagined, furnished her with the idea, he did not distress her by observing so, or



commenting on what she *wished* or *feared*, for he apprehended both, and earnestly began to intreat that she might be permitted to visit at his house, where his little girls would be delighted to see her.

“Your daughters, Sir, are older than Maria; their pursuits are of course different—I will consider of it.”

The invitation was repeated—the consideration followed, and at length consent was given: but, on the very day for which she had so anxiously looked, a severe cold, taken some time before by Mrs. Albany, suddenly took a formidable appearance, and, by threatening inflammation, put the house in bustle and alarm.

Maria was not sorry to hear knocks at the door, and see the usual clock-like movements of the house exchanged for quick steps and bustling motion; but she was exceedingly sorry to find her aunt (usually so active) obliged to lie in bed the whole day, and since she was not forbidden, she ventured on tip-toe to steal into her apartment, and creep by her bed-side.



“ Oh! how I wish—” said Maria, but she checked herself suddenly.

The suffering invalid, with more than common sympathy, enquired “ what she wished for?”

“ I wish my Aunt Bella was here, for I remember she used to cure every body that was ill—she made caudle for John Turner’s wife, and physic for the brown cow; she was good to every body, O! very good—and so neat and pretty.”

Mrs. Margaret well remembered, that the child’s mother, when speaking of her sister, had said “ that her cares prolonged the life of her only parent.” The old lady, though very spare and thin, had enjoyed uninterrupted health till now, and was by no means inclined to endure with patience her present disease, but rather to fly from one remedy to another, with blameable and anxious celerity: and she instantly conceived that there must be a kind of talisman in the attentions of Miss Hanville to the invalids who benefited by them, or such a child as Maria could not have



that of children at her age in the same rank of life, gave her the sincerest pain. Often would she regret that she had not, at the hazard of offending Mrs. Margaret, taken the dear child to her own house, and placed her under the care of her younger sisters ; but the recollection of her own inability to provide for her, situated as she now was, and that the offence so given would have been revenged on her exiled sister also, somewhat reconciled her to the circumstance ; and she was fully convinced that all occasional visiting would have been a source of suffering to the child, as the freedom of *her* house, and the tenderness of *her* mother towards her only grandchild, would have rendered the restraints of Mrs. Margaret on her return insupportable.

To improve her mind, to place her in a way to receive education and dispose Mrs. Margaret to admit of those innovations, against which she had so long protested, was of so much importance, that the benevolent and active aunt protracted her stay for some weeks, after the convalescence of



Mrs. Margaret, with whom she became every day a greater favourite. In all her plans she was warmly seconded by Mr. Somers, the clergyman of whom we spoke, and from their united influence the comforts of the poor little girl were increased, and the prospect of cultivation in some degree offered to her ardent mind.

It was agreed that when her aunt was gone, she should begin to take certain lessons with the daughters of Mr. Somers, but Miss Henville put off the time until that event took place; because she was well aware how severe a stroke parting with her must be to a child so situated—a child, that with all the ardent, artless affections of early life, and with a more than common sensibility to the loss it sustained, in being robbed of both its parents, had yet for five long years never thrown its tender arms round the neck of a friend or relative, never been pressed to the heart of a human being—who rather imagined, than remembered its mother; and yet now, that she had found a friend who would listen to



her, could recount dreams of affection, and describe feelings of love for that long-lost mother, of the most affecting nature.

The labours of Miss Henville for the benefit of her little niece were by no means lost on the heart of Mrs. Margaret; for, though cold and stately, and full of mistaken ideas of duty and propriety (wrong only in their excess), she was ever well meaning. With respect to making a favourable impression on the subject of her sister, she toiled in vain. Her talents, her sufferings, her banishment, when spoken of, sometimes elicited a short observation of, "she's to be pitied, *certainly*, but she's a Woman of Genius, and they are so odd."

"Alas! ma'am, genius only serves to give a finer edge to our feelings, and thereby increases the evils of life. A common mind might, in this long period, have become reconciled to its fate; but my sister's letters prove to me the acuteness of her sorrow remains in full force."

"Probably!—I have often known your very clever people show great adroitness,



both in tormenting themselves and others—they most obligingly call their fancy to assist the evils of their situation.”

“ My sister will never trouble *others* much ; she was always disinterested, both in temper and conduct.”

“ Yes ! that she was, even to a fault, as she confessed to me, since she gave up her property, like a fool, even without a struggle, to Frederic Albany : he is my relation, one remove further than her husband was, and, though I have removed him for ever from my good opinion for accepting the property, I, nevertheless, blame her excessively. We ought to be just to every one, and ourselves among the rest. If we take that which is not our own we are thieves, and not to take our own is little short of the same sin ; since we tie our own hands, curtail our own charities, and live below our own rank.”

This was all so true, and spoken in such earnestness of anger, the advocate dared not reply lest it should be followed by some sweeping protest against the unfortunate



absentee ; but when the lady was become calm, she took an opportunity of pleading for Maria.

“ As you have had the goodness, madam, to allow my little niece to learn to write, I hope she may also learn a little geography ?”

“ I don't see any occasion for it—she already knows what a continent is, because her mother is upon one ; and she is aware what an island is, because she can see the Isle of Wight from the windows—but, however she may learn ; it is not a study to quicken the genius.”

“ Thank you, ma'am—perhaps, too, a little music may be allowed ? if it would not disturb you.”

“ To music I do not object, for I learnt to play myself, and there is my spinnet in the back attic now, which I will have brought down for her.”

“ You are extremely good—I dare say you were also a dancer in your time—a very good dancer ?”

“ You are right, my dear, I was an ex-



traordinary dancer : I begun early, and was the pride of my master."

"Then, as Maria is eight years old, perhaps she is not too young?"

"I think not—and, perhaps it would cure her of a propensity I find she has for drawing, and which, if I had permitted either paper or pencil, would have exhibited itself strongly before now, for I have often caught her tracing with her needle on her works; and even in the garden she has scratched flowers on the walls with pebbles. I checked this positively, for I considered it a strong indication of genius. She might have crept on from this beginning till she wrote odes and sonnets, and, I believe, even her mother never came to that pass?"

Belle did not answer, for she knew that her sister had really made verses ever since her childhood, the remembrance of her early happy days awakened a sigh.

"Ah! my dear young lady, you may well sigh, when you think on the folly, and eccentricity, and degrading pursuit, or unfe-



minine occupation, which are continually rising to one's memory when you talk of any art that brings *genius* to one's mind—and accomplishments always do that, and, therefore, I have hitherto so strenuously avoided them."

"But surely, dear madam, there is a medium?"

"There *may be*, but I confess I have never found it, and of the two evils, I would rather have a woman stupid and ignorant, than knowing, conceited, wild, learned, poetical, and fantastical; and I'm sure all your clever women, when I was young, came under some of these descriptions—what slatternly dresses, littered houses, neglected children, and dissipated husbands, have I not witnessed in my younger days from such causes!"

"But I believe the world is really much improved in the last thirty years, madam; accomplishments being now common to every gentlewoman."

"And many also who are *not*, nor ever



will be gentlewomen—but go on, I confess I have lived out of the world many years—I listen to you with pleasure.”

“I merely say, ma’am, that a stock of knowledge, once considered extraordinary, is now common, and a girl now blushes for a deficiency, but rarely exults in the acquisition: for a woman must prove very great powers and talents, united to a very sound understanding now, before she can make any pretensions to genius; which is a term confined to the men, and very few of them.—I may add, that a woman does not necessarily neglect other duties, in order to attain knowledge, since, in your days, many hours were unavoidably consumed in dress which are now entirely spared; a circumstance that has the further merit of withdrawing people from contemplating their persons too much.”

Mrs. Margaret was a long time ere she replied, for all elderly people have a natural love of defending those times and customs, in which their best days were spent. But her understanding was too good not to admit



there was truth in what Miss Henville advanced to a certain degree ; and after giving many deep sighs to the memory of her nephew, the late Mr. Albany, for having been so blind as to prefer Maria to Belle, she consented that the little girl should from this time take instructions, like other children, under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Somers. At the same time she insisted on her own right still to direct the operations of the needle in all proper hours, observing probably with great truth, “ that she had never known a woman equal to her duties whatever might be her station, who could not sew quick and well.”

Miss Henville now returned to that dear mother whom she had never left for so long a period before, followed by the grateful esteem of Mrs. Margaret, and the uncontrollable sorrow of Maria, for whom her own eyes overflowed with tender tears, and her heart was filled with the most lively solicitude. Such a chasm did her departure make to the child, that it would probably have quite overpowered her if she had not



been speedily and happily engaged by Mrs. Somers, in the hitherto decried system of education; but between shame at her own innocent deficiency, eagerness to overtake others who were more advanced, and delight in the branches of knowledge offered to her attention, her mind became employed and her sorrows forgotten, and she looked forward with delight to the time when she should be able to write a letter to her dear aunt, and tell her of her companions, her happiness, and her improvement.

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## CHAPTER VI.

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MR. SOMERS was almost inclined to think that Maria had lost very little time, from the circumstances which had protracted the commencement of her education, so rapidly did she now proceed. Under Mrs. Mar-



garet's tuition she had not gained knowledge, it is true; but she had gained a good soil whereon to plant knowledge in the persevering habits of industry, and patient attention, to which she had been inured so long. Early rising, for the purpose of set walks, now became invaluable to her, as she could study her tasks at the same time she procured air and exercise; and it was soon perceived how wonderfully her looks improved, and how tall and strong she grew, under a regimen which permitted the expansion of her faculties, and with those advantages congenial to her age. The first of these, undoubtedly, is society: all young creatures delight in the company of their kind, whatever be their nature or the degree of intellect with which the Creator has endowed them. From the lambs that run races in the meadows, to the party of intelligent children who arrange their sports or pursue their tasks, all things are done best in parties. Seldom, indeed, will it happen that a child educated singly, will exhibit any talents that are untainted by conceit,



or any mode of action untouched by self-ism. When he is well brought up, those around have been compelled to play the child in order to furnish him with companions, for such a want is the absolute cry of nature, and should ever be attended to\*.

It is true Maria's situation, though greatly improved, was still very different to that of Mr. Somers's daughters, or that of most other young people, for it was very seldom, indeed, that she was permitted to accept an invitation, to spend one hour with the family beyond those when she was actually engaged in her lessons. She saw in their parlour numerous books which she earnestly desired to read, but which she dared not even name at home, for Mrs. Margaret had set her face against all reading, save that

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\* It is a fact, which observation will verify, that children in schools, who can only receive the occasional lessons of a teacher, learn quicker than those at home, to whom the constant attention of very excellent teachers are devoted.



which was absolutely necessary; so that grammars, spelling-books, and translating lessons, still bounded her narrow library, and even from these she was restricted until her allotted task of needle-work was done. The melancholy condition of the old spinnet, with all its deficiencies of keys and chords, was also a sad damp on her spirits, and made her feel what she had hitherto been too young to think of—that she was not like other little girls who had papas and uncles to buy them things, but a poor orphan, who depended for every thing on the caprice and charity of a rich relation, whom she could not presume to ask for any indulgence.

Although Maria still held the same affectionate conception of her mother's person and character which she had ever done, combining it also with the person and manners of her beloved aunt Henville, yet now her mind was so much occupied, she no longer thought upon her so incessantly, or pined after her so painfully, but when by any chance the banished Mrs. Albany could



send her a few lines, they excited in her the most lively interest, and the elegance of her mother's stile, the warmth of her sentiments, awakened in her opening mind an admiration and desire of gratifying her accomplished parent, which had the happiest effects of emulation, unmixed with envy. It was almost singular that this high veneration and ardent fondness should thus continue, since Mrs. Margaret, as she advanced in years, became more explicit in giving her opinion of her mother before her; and whenever she thought that Maria became too much absorbed in elegant pursuits, never failed to give a strong philippic against women of genius, which the poor child well knew was intended for her dear mamma. Perhaps the idea that there was something mean and cruel in thus reflecting on the absent and suffering mother, rendered her still dearer. Besides, her aunt Belle never failed to nurse in her heart the duty and affection she owed to her only parent; and she could give unreserved credit to all her aunt's assertions, since even Mrs. Margaret



spoke of Miss Henville as the wisest and best of women.

Year after year passed on, and the long-talked of visit to grandmamma was still put off, even Aunt Henville herself was married, and Maria had passed her fourteenth birth-day, and yet no change took place; for Mrs. Margaret, now become much an invalid and extremely careful, refused either to part with the aid she received from her little attentions, or to find the money for her journey; still less would she have permitted her to accept it from any other person. The young ladies with whom she began to study had long completed their education; and now lessons, from being taken singly, cost more, the old lady was unwilling to pay for them, and poor Maria was cut short in her pursuits, at the time when she felt they were of the most value. She was again solitary, anxious, and cheerless; with many subjects of fear and consideration, from which in her infancy she was free.

But, all at one, the purchase of many



victories, *Peace* was proclaimed in the land, and in a house where news was never discussed, and circumstances connected with public affairs seldom transpired, even *here*, the sweet promise offered by it vibrated on the heart of Maria, with a transport she had never known before. Unable to contain her joy, even the measured steps of Maria danced with rapture, and she flew from room to room, crying—"there is peace! and my mother—ah, yes! my mother"—then, suddenly checking herself, she sunk on her knees, and humbly, though incoherently, gave praise to the great Giver of Peace.

Poor Mrs. Margaret was quite overwhelmed with painful astonishment, on witnessing such transports in a child whom she had drilled into tameness for so many years, and whose meek voice, and chastened manners, had so long indicated not only submissive temper, but subdued sensibility; and, clasping her hands, she exclaimed,

"Dear heart! after all I have done, the girl has her mother's genius!"



Maria rose from her knees, tears were in her eyes, veneration and tranquillity in her countenance; and, conscious that even her joy should have its bounds in the presence of one who had for so many years supplied a mother's place to her, she began to inquire as to the probability of her mother's return, with a calmness which proved, that though her perceptions were quick, they were yet under her own control.

“Your mother will probably return soon, but it is very possible that she may be delayed by the want of money, and the difficulty of procuring a passage, which so many will be eager to engage. You have an advantage in being on the coast, you know, which will forward your meeting considerably. Content yourself with it, and don't plague every body about you with hopes, and fears, and wishes, that are nothing to them, and are merely romantic in you. What do you know of a mother, who left you at three years old, child?”

Maria felt her ardour rebuked, but not therefore extinguished, though she hence-



forward concealed the anxious toilings of her affections and imaginations to herself, and for nearly a month had waited in patience, expecting every day to produce the event so long desired; when she was one evening called from a lesson she was unable to study, to see her aunt, who had unexpectedly arrived at Southampton.

"She is come to meet my mother," cried Maria, as she hastened to the parlour.

In a moment Maria believed herself in the arms of her aunt, who clasped her to her bosom in great agitation, but without speaking.—"My dear aunt, you are altered since we met, but I am sure you love me all the same—and" (in a low voice) "are you not come here to meet my mother?"

"This is your mother, my love," said a lady, coming forward, who was, *indeed*, her aunt.

Maria flung herself again upon the stranger's neck, and almost shrieked with joy; but the sober warning voice of Mrs. Margaret recalled both the mother and daughter to a sense of what she deemed



due to those around them ; although the kind hearted sister (now Mrs. Maynard) and her worthy husband soothed the vexation she appeared to feel.

In truth, poor Mrs. Margaret was somewhat to be pitied, for all changes and interruptions of our accustomed habits are serious evils at so advanced a period of life as she had now reached ; and it is certain that she wished the war and all its evils had been protracted a little longer, rather than any change should have brought to her house, either an inmate she disapproved, or taken from it one who was by this time become very dear to her, and she was fully aware that one of these misfortunes was inevitable.

Mrs. Maynard saw, with sincere concern, that notwithstanding her sister might have greatly improved in many essential particulars, yet her personal appearance and manners were, as might have been expected, more than ever at variance with Mrs. Margaret's opinions and prejudices, which were wholly and exclusively Eng-



lish. Mrs. Albany's dress was inevitably all French ; and she could not all at once change it, and even as the old lady said, " when she got an English cap she put it on like a French woman, or a woman of genius, for it was never straight—her words had an accent—her manner of eating an air—her language was poetry, her opinions papistical ;" in short, she had a thousand faults, and though poor, had too independent a spirit to brook being told of them.

Under these circumstances, Mrs. Maynard gladly recurred to the long delayed scheme of the boarding-school, observing that Maria was now of an age to be very useful to her mamma, as her kind protector had given her an excellent education for that end.

Mrs. Margaret, fixing a scrutinizing eye on the mother, observed, " I doubt not, niece Albany, you speak French as a mother tongue ?"

" I do, ma'am, precisely, and have often passed for a native."



“Um, um—I should suppose so—may I enquire what other studies have engaged your attention during this long period of exile? I suppose it would be painting, though the French had a painting mania upon them, while they were stealing pictures.”

“It was my misfortune to be far removed from those treasures of art, to see which would have compensated for all my banishment—but I was fortunate in living near a natural philosopher, through whose means I have studied, with delight and profit, mineralogy and conchology.”

“Merciful goodness! a woman spend ten years in handling stones and looking at shells.”

“Ten years, madam!—ah! well might these wonderful productions claim more than a life the most protracted, powers the most extended, and faculties the most devoted; they are the most brilliant, curious, and perfect of God’s creation, and their varieties—”

“Are many, undoubtedly—but, I beg



pardon, I have no passion either for *varieties* or *originals*, I am an old woman, and have no taste for new objects."

As this was the way in which all conversations closed, and as Mrs. Albany was naturally impatient to see the mother from whom she had been so long divided, it was proposed that they should all return to their own county together, Mrs. Maynard observing, "that she had a sum (unfortunately a small sum) to pay into her sister's hands, as the remaining dividend from Mr. Spencer, which she was sorry to say was all she had wherewith to begin life, as she had been obliged to remit the rest of her remnant of fortune for her maintenance in France."

Mrs. Margaret, harassed and uneasy, readily agreed to the proposition of the greatest favourite she had ever known, and even promised that for *her* sake, she would advance a moderate sum towards a scheme which she yet prophesied would certainly fail; and, in her joy at parting with the mother, she lost all present sense of sorrow



for the removal of the daughter, though she afterwards repented that she permitted her departure.

All was delight and wonder on the part of Maria, who yet did not leave her grand-aunt without experiencing pain, and evincing affection and gratitude ; she had never travelled more than two miles from the house since she first entered it, and the little she had been permitted to see of books of travels, had rendered her particularly alive to subjects combined with change of place and scene. The pure delight also experienced by her, in the acquisition of the dearest connexions of life, rendered her naturally anxious to enlarge the circle, and her grandmamma had long been a person of so much importance in her eyes, that to visit her under any circumstance was unspeakable pleasure, and every stage, as they proceeded, increased her joy.

Mrs. Albany, whose overflowing mind, polished taste, and fluent conversation, rendered her the most amusing of all travelling companions, soon became to her attentive



child, by much the most striking and endearing object to which her attention was called, and whenever she spoke, Maria was apt to say to herself, ‘ Yes! this is just what I expected—she is the very same mamma my mind or my memory depicted;’ and she would gaze upon her with an admiration so intense, as to absorb her whole mind in silent wonder. Her aunt well knew what was passing in Maria’s heart; but her mother did not, for she was not aware of the inward emotions she awakened in the heart of a child so timid and unused to society, and, at this time, it is certain that she suffered disappointment in what she conceived the common place information and bounded powers of her daughter.

When Mrs. Albany returned to her own neighbourhood, she was received in a very different manner from that which marked the cold welcome of Mrs. Margaret. Her constrained absence from her only child, during the engaging and important period of her childhood, the losses she had sustained, the prudence she had evinced in not



forming a matrimonial connexion abroad, the novelty of her dress, the fascination of her manners, the powers of her mind, and the unchanged warmth of her heart, by turns formed the topic of conversation in every house, and Mrs. Maynard, who had been so long the mother of her own family, rejoiced to perceive that, after settling all the younger branches of her house in comfort, her cares might extend satisfactorily to her who was ever the most dear and the most helpless.

Miss Henville, the anxious indefatigable Belle, had resolutely refused marrying the man she sincerely esteemed, until the close of her brother's minority, when she resigned the estate she had farmed into his hands, every way improved. She had given the elder of her two young sisters a small portion to a husband who required none; and the younger kept her brother's house. Her mother removed with *her* to the house of her husband, who received her with sincere affection; and as this house was within an easy distance, this united, respectable,



and happy family, now they had got their wanderer home, felt only anxious to forget their past sorrows, and tie still closer the bonds of filial love by placing her amongst them.

But although Mrs. Albany was delighted to see them all, to admire their improvements and rejoice in their prosperity, it did not appear that this was the neighbourhood in which she could either be happy herself, or enter on her plan for future subsistence with advantage. She had known, by many an hour of bitter privation, the value of that money expended on the house so long her idol, and which still stood solitary and untenanted, as if unworthy the owner's regard.—To her also, the walks where she had wandered with her father, the trees she had planted with her husband, were again fresh and distressing objects, which recalled sorrowful remembrances; and as her feelings were rarely controlled by reason, both her mother and sister saw the wisdom of saving her from such harassing emotions.

After some weeks of inquiry, a friend of



Mrs. Henville's wrote them such a description of a house, that the still sanguine widow lost not a moment in setting out, though the journey was a long one; and when arrived, being, indeed, satisfied with its appearance, she did not hesitate to take it, although it was certainly beyond her means, and though elegant, large, and salubrious, was yet deficient in many necessary conveniences. As, however, the deed was done, and several of their neighbours had declared an intention of sending her their daughters, her family did not hesitate to forward her plan by every means in their power. But both her mother and eldest sister much regretted that she was gone beyond their immediate cognizance; for they yet saw that their dear relative, even now, had need of a guiding hand: and whilst the neighbourhood rung with her charms and accomplishments, they were compelled to tremble for her in a case of such awful responsibility.

In order to obviate the errors too likely to affect the mother, these affectionate re-



latives endeavoured the more strongly to impress on Maria's mind the importance, the delicacy, the religious responsibility of the office in which they were about to engage. They drew her to consider it in all its bearings, and, without wounding her affection, or raising her inward indignation, as Mrs. Margaret was wont to do, by stigmatizing her mother under the contemptuous phrase, (for so she meant it) of "a Woman of Genius," they yet pointed out to her the early bent and the unhappy indulgence of her mother's mind, and taught her how to distinguish between the faculties and endowments her mother so eminently possessed, and those simple but indispensable qualifications necessary for conducting a family. Maria, on her first arrival, had been all wonder and delight ; but aware of the importance of the subject, and accustomed to the labour of thought, she soon gave her mind so entirely to the subject, as greatly to ease the hearts of her solicitous relatives, and she left them with a firm determination to be the right hand of her mother.



no means of ascertaining how far her mamma was in the right, when she professed "a positive determination to adopt no slavish rule, observe no common custom," nor in any way order her goings, as other ladies, in similar situations, thought proper to do. She declaimed much on the power of genius, the energies of mind, the natural direction and bent of the faculties; and after a lecture, in which many fine things were said, and many false conclusions drawn (in good language, and with great ability), concluded by directing every one of her pupils to employ themselves as they liked, observing, "that it would be her pleasing duty to inspect the effects of their several studies."

It was the business of her own daughter in this arrangement, to fly to books, hitherto held as forbidden things, and eagerly seek for that knowledge she was greatly sensible of wanting. This it appeared at present easy to effect, for her late father's library, which had been carefully preserved by her aunt, had now been forwarded to their present abode, and offered



great facilities to those who, amongst their inmates, really sought for solid improvement.

In a very short time the small reading party this singular mandate had formed, found themselves utterly unable to proceed, from the confusion which took place on all sides ; for though every child had begun to do something, want of direction, love of desultory trifling, the hurry to display ability, or the desire to indulge indolence, all made one person run in the way of another and thwart their plans. The whole place became one scene of confusion, in which the rude and the idle hindered the progress, and obstructed the plans of the industrious and well-behaved. Maria's heart sunk within her at this scene ; all hurry and confusion were so contrary to her habits, that they had become as abhorrent to her nature as dirt and disorder, and, to her own astonishment, she laid down her book, and heartily wished herself in Mrs. Margaret's back parlour.

Mrs. Albany, alarmed with the sound of



contention on the right, and of rapid motion on the left, laid down the compasses, with which she had been measuring an architrave in one of her old drawings, and enquired, "what was the matter?"

"We four, ma'am, thought we should like to dance—but as Miss Williams would practise her own lesson, she put us out."

"And I, ma'am, wanted to get geography, but I could not lay my books on the table, because Emily is spinning a tetotum."

"Well, and suppose I am spinning my tetotum? it is what I like best, and I can do none of the things you do."

This was fair reasoning on the part of the little girl, and her governess began to think that really regularity, though a stupid thing, was by no means without its use. She was also compelled to observe that, although drawing, dancing, and music, had all their votaries, yet not one child had taken up a French book, and she was well aware that all their parents expected, whatever might be their acquisitions in other respects, they would understand that language in perfec-



tion ; an assurance she had given them most unreservedly. On retiring, after this uncomfortable and unprofitable day, she mentioned the circumstance to Maria, as one that surprised her.

“ But, surely, it is not surprising, mamma, for who would sag at their French if they were not obliged to it ? ”

“ You would, Maria, for you have done it, and I will never believe that you were compelled to do it by aunt Margaret, because it was her aversion.”

“ But I had an extraordinary motive ; I wanted to talk with my mother.”

“ You are a good child—”

“ That was my grand stimulant, but having got over the beginning, I continued, because I liked it, and was enabled to read books in it, and that paid me for my labour.”

“ Oh ! I will soon teach them to read, we will begin to-morrow—they shall learn it as a mother tongue, I will not permit English to be spoken—the servants themselves must be obliged to speak French.”



On the morrow, the attempt was made, and nothing could exceed the pains Mrs. Albany took in explaining what she termed the principal points in the sounds, the peculiarity of the construction, the use of the articles, the declension of the verbs, the nature of the idiom followed. A *good* scholar would have been alike benefited and amused ; her own scholars were, with few exceptions, ignorant, and ignorant they remained. To her examination on these points, she became indebted for knowing that few had listened, and still fewer understood, and she had the single consolation of finding, that those words which she had repeated, were uttered by them with much propriety, for her sweet voice had made a due impression on their young and flexible organs.

“ Dear mamma, don’t grieve yourself,” said Maria, looking earnestly into the troubled countenance of her mother, “ if you will now and then teach them the sound, I am certain, in time, I can teach them the sense.”



Harassed and disappointed, anxious to fulfil her duties to the utmost, but without considering the nature and the difficulties of her task, Mrs. Albany at length suffered Maria to undertake the inculcation of that language she intended they should catch as if by infection, because she had done so herself. In this she made no allowance for the advantages she had enjoyed in early instruction, in positive necessity, and in a natural quickness, which is the gift of few, and ought never to be reckoned upon in the ordinary powers of intellect.

Every day brought with it experience of course, and it generally ended with a mortifying lesson to our well-meaning, but often erring Woman of Genius, who, now losing all self-confidence, ran into an opposite error, and, but for the anxious entreaties of her daughter, would have abandoned the scheme altogether, as one for which she found herself totally unfit, and to whose duties she was inadequate; but on the earnest entreaty of Maria, she adopted the wiser plan of procuring a well-instructed person,



accustomed to the business of tuition, and initiated in its necessary gradations, to superintend her school, and be the teacher, not less of her pupils, than herself.

Under this plan all went on well in the school-room, and the high and extraordinary powers, the various and extensive information, really possessed by the principal, when called into action for the benefit of the more advanced pupils, became highly efficacious for their good, by directing their taste, exciting their industry, and enlightening their minds. Alas ! from this beneficial and endearing discharge of her duties, she was frequently called by circumstances less congenial to her mind and her habits.

Mrs. Albany, long accustomed to the cheap provisions of France, and to the custom of that country in providing a great variety of dishes, could not prevail upon herself to recollect the dearness of living at that time in her native country ; in consequence of which, she was in the habit of loading her table with provisions of the most expensive kind ; and even took the



trouble to teach a cook how to make ragouts, and fricassees, that might stimulate the appetites of her children. The bad effects of this unfortunate system were not only found in the excess of her expenditure, which soon became alarming, but the sickly, inert looks of her pupils, who were all more or less affected by indulgencies always injurious to the constitution, but in youth absolutely ruinous. One became bloated with fat; another, though from the same cause, wasted with fever. Sunken eyes, pale looks, parched lips, and listless steps, the languor of disease, the tremor of nervous affection, and the stupor of indolence, were seen amongst those who should have exhibited the healthy looks, gay movements, sparkling eyes, and quick conceptions, peculiar to the spring tide of life.

Maria alone escaped the general debility; it was true she looked somewhat pale, and there were times when she could scarcely keep her eyes open, and her mother therefore classed her with the great family of invalids, for whom, with an alarmed and ach-



ing heart, she now sought medical assistance, although every one protested against it, saying truly, "that although something was the matter, they really could not tell what it was."

"They have lost their appetites, and—

"All but me, Sir," said Maria, "mine is very good."

"So I apprehend from the state of your tongue and your pulse, Miss; how have you managed to escape the general evil?"

"Because I only ate, Sir, of one dish, and remembered my Aunt's advice, never to eat quite as much as I could?"

"Excellent advice! but I understand *your* eyes are often observed to be heavy—is it from headach?"

"No, Sir, only sleepiness."

As Maria spoke, she blushed and looked down, her kind and judicious interrogator therefore pursued his inquiries in a low voice, and learnt by degrees that so anxious was the poor girl to improve herself in every department, that she regularly rose two hours before the rest of the family, and di-



ligently applied herself to various studies; observing the same order she had been wont to practise in her infancy, and never suffering her wish to pursue one branch, to interfere with the duty, which in her own just ideas, she owed to another.

“It is all very well, my dear,” said Mr. Stafford, “and has evidently not yet injured you, but I now must prescribe five o’clock instead of four, as the commencement of your tasks; I must, however, add to them the trouble of being housekeeper also, and charge you with providing for your young friends a joint of meat, and a pudding only; to be assisted by a skipping rope in the garden, and occasionally an evening dance in the school-room; in some few, very *few* cases, we shall be compelled to quicken its operation by medicine.”

The commands of the doctor were obeyed without murmuring on the part of the children, and the really anxious suffering governess was soon enabled to rejoice in a change so beneficial. But her deranged finances were not restored so soon; and



she had long reason to lament her misplaced generosity and profusion; the report of her fault, though not of a nature to injure her school, was one that rendered her trades-people suspicious, and her creditors troublesome.

Every day now increased the usefulness of Maria to her young companions, and her happiness in consequence. Her warm affectionate heart, could now expend all its treasured hoard of kindness, to the best purpose; and the ailing, the dull, the neglected, or the emulous, alike found in her sympathy, activity, and knowledge, the friend they wanted, and she found also the friend *she* wanted in Miss Thomas, the worthy and clever assistant of whom we have spoken.

Either satisfied with the plans she saw pursued, and the progress effected, or led away by the general versatility of her character, and her propensity to extraordinary and various attainments, Mrs. Albany now began to withdraw more and more from her school room, which her daughter imputed



to a proper desire of directing her household establishment, and retrieving the disorder to which her affairs had been subjected, for want of a controller in that department. As, however, she found that, on the contrary, her mother spent all her hours in her study, she felt it to be *her* duty, at every one of the few leisure moments she could find, to inspect the domestic economy herself, and she soon saw that from some latent cause, notwithstanding the late reform in their table, the weekly bills were even increased, nor was it long before she found that a regular system of fraud was carried on by the cook, whose dishonesty was flagrant.

In the retired manner in which Maria had been brought up, she had scarcely known the existence of gross crimes, and was herself so artless, and unsuspicious, that although she discovered the existence of the evil, from her natural love of order, and her quickness in accounts, yet she would probably long have continued to wonder



and to doubt, if a letter from Mrs. Margaret (which though short and pithy, contained much good advice), had not led her to watch narrowly, and fully convince herself of this distressing fact. So afflicting and terrible did it appear to her, to accuse any human being of so wicked an act, that she dreaded to speak of it; yet, of course, the more she thought on the subject the more decidedly it appeared her duty; and, therefore, summoning all her courage to her aid, yet full of perturbation, she rushed to the study, and saw her mother sitting at her writing desk, deeply absorbed in thought, and repeating as she entered, with strong emphasis,

“In the soft vales where refluent Derwent glides  
His waves translucent and—

“His waves translucent”—“pshaw! ’tis quite, *quite* gone”—“dear Maria, what a loss this is: you have done me a world of mischief. I have had a great, I fear, an irreparable loss.”



"Yes, indeed, you have, mamma; but *I* have had no hand in it, I wish I could repair it."

"That, child, you will never do; good, dear, plodding little girl that you are, "rising early, and late taking rest" for me, yet never must I hope to catch poetic inspiration from any idea suggested by you, and it is that, child, you have robbed me of."

"Ah! mamma, but I speak to you of other and more important robberies."

"That I deny, child, for no robbery is so important, since no loss can be so great as that of ideas and language, calculated in the truth of the sentiment, and the beauty of expression, to convince, enlighten, and instruct the world. Mind I don't say that the lines I have lost from your entrance would have done this, but I seek to impress a vital truth on your mind, to show you how superior intellectual things are to those of sense."

"I am convinced of it, dear mamma; and am very sorry to interrupt you, since I



doubt not you are writing something that will greatly benefit us all, but yet—”

“ You are a good child, Maria; sit down, and I will immediately read you what I have written, which is merely the commencement of a grand design, and has not extended beyond 700 lines, being the introduction to a poem, entitled “ *Blue John*.”

“ Blue John!” cried Maria, “ dear mamma, I see you are joking, so you must allow me to beg you will lay Blue John down, and talk of black Jane, who is, in our house, a person of more consequence.”

Mrs. Albany was not joking, she rose from her seat with an air of majesty, not unmingled with indignation, and, waving her hand to exact silence, replied:

“ Unhappy child! fostered by avarice, nurtured by ignorance, and now fettered by dependence, it would be cruel to dilate on the darkness of a mind whose blindness is not wilful; I must therefore premise, by telling you, Maria, that “ Blue John” is the



most beautiful and valuable mineralogical production of the fertile mines of Derbyshire; that it is formed into vases which Phidias might have been proud to model, and the lip of Cleopatra delighted to press; that this choice production of nature is extracted from rocks of the most magnificent and fantastic forms, clothed with the foliage of mighty forest trees, and the wild flowers of the Caledonian heather.

“These rocks frown on vales of Elysian beauty, watered by streams of chrystal purity, and nourish a generous, hardy, independent race; surely you can perceive the power of rendering such a subject meet for immortal verse?”

As Mrs. Albany spoke, the animation of her expressive countenance, the sweet and varied tones of her voice, the air of inspiration, which seemed to throw a kind of magic charm around her, awoke in Maria all the enthusiastic admiration which she was wont to feel for a mother, whose very errors seemed allied to superiority. She took her hand with an air of tender re-



spect, and the expression of her countenance confirmed her words, as she said,

“ Indeed, my dear mother, it is my happiness not to be so blind to the excellence, and the beauty of your subject, as you suppose ; and to be proud of the talent you will display upon it ; and it is so grievous to me to press upon you the disagreeable matters which draw you from holding converse with the Muses, that no petty cares, no lesser subject than one of moral and eternal consequence, should induce me to trouble you.”

She then proceeded to state the affair, and her mother, though reluctantly, listened as one who is compelled to hear a neighbour's detail of things with which she has nothing to do—often repeating the words, “ where reflux Derwent glides,” as if she were trying to recall the line she had lost, and could by no means remember the tea, sugar, and loaves, of which Maria was speaking : but at length she exclaimed,

“ Well, child, 'tis a very sad thing ; you shall do just what you please in the affair,



only remember, "to err, is human; to forgive, divine."

"But, surely, to forgive her would be wicked; at least to keep her in our house would be madness:—consider how kind, how generous a mistress you have been to *her*."

Mrs. Albany paused; she even hurried her papers into her desk, her ardent mind called by the persevering though modest solicitude of her daughter, to consider, as it merited, the subject before her, retired for a few moments into herself; and then, with all the candour which formed so conspicuous a part of her character, she answered,—

"I have been a generous, but a most blameable mistress; blind in my confidence, and even tempting, to a weak and unfurnished mind, in my carelessness. Alas! the sin of permitting sin lies at my door, and the consequences to my fellow-creature will press heavy upon me, perhaps, to my latest hour. She came to *me* honest; I cannot send a dishonest woman



into another service, to injure another family—I cannot retain her to injure myself—nor can I throw her in a state of poverty upon the world, knowing, as I do, the way she will *now* seek for the means of life. Ah! what right had I to adopt the seclusions of a literary life, when my positive duties forbid *all* leisure, and call for perpetual activity. What can I do?”

In great distress and perplexity, the repentant mother, blaming herself beyond the occasion, slowly paced her apartment, whilst the daughter, turning every means of comfort in her mind, stood in anxious cogitation. The long closetting of the parties caused a whispering among the domestics, as if it augured evil, and it was at length interrupted by the guilty party herself, who, in equal terror and contrition, rushed in, and, throwing herself on her knees, confessed more than had been discovered, and implored forgiveness.

Mrs. Albany, agitated and full of self-reproach, was unable to speak, from various contending emotions.



"Oh! pray, pray speak for me, Miss Albany," cried Jane; "I know Mississ has been sadly too good to me, nursing me when I was bad, and in fifty ways—I do—I do"—

"Then, Jane, how could you be so wicked as to rob my mamma, who was so kind to you? knowing too, as you did, that she was a widow, and could not afford to lose any thing (having already lost her property.")

"Why, as to that, Miss, I know I was wicked; but I rarely did't think as how Mississ cared about things—so I took odd things now and then, and went on and on, till I confess—yes, I confess it was a constant thing."

"You must have confederates?" said Maria.

"Yes, I have, but not in the house; my fellow servants are honest, I'll give 'em their due, though they don't behave very well to me."

"If," said Maria, "I can persuade the house-maid to change places with you, and



engage myself to watch you, perhaps my mamma may be prevailed upon to try you once more?"

"Oh! Miss, Oh! Madam, do have mercy on me—I am sure I shall never do it again; but pray watch me as much as you will, only try me once more."

Mrs. Albany durst not trust herself to speak, so much was she affected, and so truly relieved by the proposal of her daughter; but she signified her consent: and as the woman considered her evident distress as proceeding solely from compassion, it had really a happy effect upon her, and she continued in her mistress's service without recurring to her former errors, being by the care of Maria placed out of temptation, and watched for a long time with a caution extremely painful in its exercise.

This incident recalled Mrs. Albany to her proper station in her family; and as she always carried the good and evil of her conduct to its greatest possible length, she now established in her house a system of



regularity and liberal economy, the most meritorious, useful, and agreeable, that could be acted upon. But it must be confessed, that when she had perfected the movements of her domestic machine, and assigned to every member its situation in the admirable system, again the master spring was too often out of its place. Like the worshippers of Baal, both pupils and servants might often have cried in vain to their idol, as one "that was journeying or sleeping," if her ever present, ever wakeful daughter, had not with inferior, but far more efficacious talent, supplied the chasm and removed the deficiency.

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#### CHAPTER VIII.

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THE establishment of Mrs. Albany increased to her wishes, and the testimonials



of parents and children alike evinced satisfaction and affection; so that the good report even reached the distant mansion of Mrs. Margaret, who now claimed the promise of a visit from Maria, when the next vacation should permit it.

Although the concern was certainly at this time doing extremely well, the debts contracted at the opening were yet only partially paid, and Maria was by no means without the hope, that as her venerable relative had really expressed more affection for her as a correspondent, during the two years in which they had now been parted, than ever she did during the many in which they lived under one roof; that she would give her some substantial proof of her approbation.

This did not prove the case. Mrs. Margaret, ever careful, though charitable, was not likely when turned of eighty, to disturb "the tenor of her way," thus far upon the path, by fits of generosity. All her property was placed in the funds, and other securities which she did not choose to disturb, and



she gave Maria clearly to understand, that she should alter her will according to circumstances: and indicated that "if she succeeded, she should be handsomely remembered; but that if she failed (or in other words, if her mother did), they might expect nothing from her," a conclusion not very consonant with humanity, but one which has abundant precedent to recommend it.

With respect to Mrs. Albany, the mind of Mrs. Margaret appeared to be little altered. She uniformly imputed the present flourishing state of her school, "either to her manners," which, she observed, "were certainly specious, and drew people in;" or, to the conduct of Maria, "who had been properly brought up by herself." She, however, never failed to allow great praise to Mrs. Albany for not marrying again, "which, as she was a gay, handsome woman, and left a widow when so very young, might have been expected, and would have been a very wrong thing."

"Yet my Aunt Maynard does not think



so. I have heard her regret that she did not marry."

"Your aunt, though a sensible woman, was wrong in that wish, for every Woman of Genius who marries herself, marries like a fool. All those who are well settled in life owe it to their friends: of course a widow of that description ought *never* to marry. Hold this in your mind, Maria; and if any circumstance arises that is likely to lead to such an end, in proportion as you love your mother, so let your exertions be, to save her from the miseries she might thus draw on herself.

The great age, the undiminished stateliness, and the occasional energy with which Mrs. Margaret spoke, rendered her words exceedingly impressive; and Maria registered her advice in her heart, as if she deemed it really oraculous. And, although she had the highest possible opinion of her mother's judgement, as well as the utmost filial obedience, she yet had seen so many instances of the beneficial effects of her own humbler understanding and exertions for



her mother, that she determined, if such an occasion should arise, she would, indeed, watch over her with even parental solicitude ; at present she seemed rather called to watch for herself.

Retired as were the habits of Mrs. Margaret, yet her vicinity to the gay town of Southampton, rendered it impossible for Maria to take a walk for her health, or attend a place of worship, without occasionally being seen. She was, at this time, a fine, tall, genteel girl, nearly seventeen ; and combined an air of fashion with that of retiring modesty, and the artless character of one who has not yet been introduced into society. She had repeatedly met a family with whom Mrs. Margaret had a slight acquaintance, accompanied by a young gentleman of dark complexion and a foreign air, of a noble aspect and fine features, whose attentive manners indicated so much admiration, as to be unpleasant and embarrassing to her. The family with whom he resided, seemed to take opportunities of crossing her path, and the head of the house



even called upon Mrs. Margaret, and held with her some private conversation, after which she did not see any of the party again. For a few days, it must be confessed that the stranger a little occupied Maria's mind: but as she drew near the end of her visit, and reflected on her mother's situation, matters of more moment entirely obliterated this, and it is certain she returned to her own home, though somewhat disappointed, yet with the sincerest pleasure.

This disappointment of money from Mrs. Margaret, induced Maria eagerly to enquire, "if her mother had got any aid from her brother, whom she had visited during the same period?"—"On the contrary," said Mrs. Albany, "finding the dear fellow was on the point of marriage, and that he wished to purchase some land contiguous to his estate, I offered to repay him the sum he first lent me, and, in fact, I have done so, with the payments received from my last bills."

"Then, what must we do with the tradespeople?"



“ Oh ! that I can’t tell : they must have patience.”

Although Mrs. Albany said this with great nonchalance, at the present moment, Maria well knew that, in fact, no person living was less able to meet the remonstrances of a dun than her mother, and that no person could be more sincerely desirous of paying every one not only to the last farthing, but beyond it : that her integrity was equal to her generosity ; and that although she had been profuse in her house-keeping at one time, and was still so in her hospitalities, yet she often carried her privations and personal self-denial beyond propriety, as she had frequently struggled through sickness, which required medical aid, without seeking it, and was generally much worse dressed than her situation in life actually demanded.

“ Perhaps my uncle Maynard could lend us something !”

“ I can never ask him, or consent that you should, Maria ; for he has now two children, and his excellent wife took him



no portion but her invaluable self; besides, Belle is so investigating, she would see where the error lay. O! we shall do very well, every body will wait when they see how the school flourishes."

But the fears of Maria were soon realized. Some creditors, long put off, could not wait: others who had observed how well the establishment answered, were not inclined to do it, especially when they found that Mrs. Albany had been paying money to her own brother. To this was added the whispers of some upon Mrs. Albany's charities; of others upon her dress, which had unavoidably been improved whilst a visitant at her brother's; and there were not wanting many who affirmed, "that she kept them out of their money, that she might accumulate interest at her banker's;" and others, who maintained, "that she was without funds either there or elsewhere, and would eventually cheat all her creditors."

During the whole of the ensuing half-year the vexatious reports thus disseminat-



ed, caused her perpetual applications, which she could not answer, and from which she shrunk with a cowardly timidity, which never failed to increase them; and feeling the shame of a creditor in her countenance, abstained even from meeting the gaze of her pupils. Poor Maria was compelled to bear reproaches, to fashion apologies, and then, with a trembling frame and aching heart, resume that appearance of authority, and that active management apparently renounced by her mother; who now, in her alarmed state, was every day threatening a circumstance that would double all her burthens, by parting with Miss Thomas in order to save the liberal salary she so highly merited.

Against this effect of despondency Maria incessantly strove, well aware that such a loss would prove the forerunner of certain ruin to the establishment itself; whereas so long as its real utility continued, and its income was on the increase, eventual injury could not arise either to their creditors or themselves, and as they no longer were



paying interest, the present oppression could not long continue. Alas! reason as she might, the pressure of the hour still bore down the lofty mind of her suffering parent: and that brilliant imagination, which was of old too apt to spread its vivid hues over every object, and distort them by its gorgeous colouring, now served to invest them in gloom, and throw on the future those troubles which belonged only to the present.

By the time that Christmas arrived, Mrs. Albany had literally fretted herself ill; yet, to the great distress of Maria, she positively forbade her revealing the cause or effect to her friends. She seemed to hold herself prepared to be sold up by her creditors, and ruin and disgrace were perpetually on her lips, until the receipt of money gave a sort of sickly smile to her sorrowful and altered countenance.

It happened (somewhat unfortunately), that Mrs. Albany, to her great joy, received all her money in two days. It was a handsome sum; and Maria, with great wis-



dom, proposed dividing it, in parts proportioned to the claims of each, to her mother's creditors, who were five in number. The mother consented; but before there had been time to do this, two of the most importunate called, and Mrs. Albany, who had been so long denied, that her presence was no longer expected, now she had money in her hands, could not resist the pleasure of seeing them, and paying them every pound she owed them. Charmed with the urbanity of her manners, rejoiced with receiving what calumny had represented as doubtful, they spread the news on every side, and the other three creditors ran for their share, and found—*nothing*.

It so happened that those who were treated the worst, by Mrs. Albany, deserved the best; a very common effect in things of this nature, as the importunate is frequently assisted in lieu of the patient creditor; where the debtor attends rather to his own ease than the justice of his claimants. Mr. Graves, a rich and highly reputable tradesman, who had considered Mrs. Albany's



convenience, and abstained from claiming his debt, became very angry with her, in consequence of learning what she had done, and he repaired to her house, with a declaration, "that he would not leave it without receiving the full liquidation of his debt."

The moment he appeared before Mrs. Albany, by unceremoniously following her servant into the parlour, the consciousness of her error rushed upon her mind, and her self-reproach inflicted a much severer pain, than any words which he could use. In fact, before there was time for Mr. Graves to begin the remonstrance, which he had prepared in his own mind all the way from his house to hers, he became dismayed by witnessing the paleness which overspread her countenance, the universal tremor of her frame, and the look of alarm and distress in her daughter.

Mr. Graves considered these appearances as indicative of approaching ruin, and, of course, the payment of a less considerate creditor was irritating in the highest de-



gree, and though his humanity in a measure overpowered his purpose, he yet stammered out a request that she would discharge his bill.

“I wish I could—but I have no money, I believe I have not a single guinea in the world.”

Mr. Graves began very naturally to complain that she lately had possessed many guineas, every one of which, it appeared, she had given to those who had less claim on them than himself; but, on seeing that his auditor grew every moment more pale, he suddenly checked himself, saying to Maria, “I think, Miss, your mamma is faint, pray reach her some salts.”

“There are some in my bottom drawer,” said Mrs. Albany, with difficulty, at the same time offering the key of the drawer to her daughter.

This drawer was the only one in her possession ever locked by Mrs. Albany; and as it was very seldom opened, and never by Maria, she was not surprised to find it in great confusion, as it was always her exclu-



sive office to keep her mamma's clothes in order. Remnants of cloth, scraps of flannel, papers of every description, from a medical recipe, to a manuscript song, were in the drawer; but she felt in vain for the bottle of salts.

"It must be here," said Maria to herself, as she snatched an old work-bag from the corner, and eagerly thrust her hand into it. There was something hard at the bottom, but balls of cotton and worsted, ruffled tape, and unstrung beads impeded her in her hurried, trembling search. She took the bag, and, turning it inside out on the bed, beheld all the contents in a moment.

There was, indeed, a smelling bottle: there was also, to the amazement of Maria, a multitude of bank-notes, and several guineas, which rolled about in every direction.

For a moment Maria gazed almost in terror, as if an actual miracle was performed before her eyes. Her next emotion was thanksgiving to Heaven; and having no doubt but that her poor mother had with characteristic carelessness forgotten this



treasure, she collected it with eager and honest haste, and flew down rejoicing to the parlour.

“Dear, *dear* mamma, see what I have found. It will do you more good than the salts, I know, to be able to settle partly with Mr. Graves.”

“Ah! child! what have you done? why did you touch the brown bag? That money is not mine.”

“Not yours!” exclaimed Maria, bursting into tears.

“No, child! do not weep, but listen to me. You have heard me speak of Mr. Spencer, the banker, by whom I lost my paternal fortune, as did my sisters. A little time before that dreadful event I called on his wife, then in a dying state. She said to me, ‘my dear Maria, I have a favour to request of you. You know my only son, whom I had by my first husband, is in the West Indies; his fortune is very small, but his father’s mother, at the time of her death, had saved a few hundred pounds, which she gave into my hands, charging me to pre-



serve them for him. I feel that I shall soon depart, and I beseech *you* earnestly to take this money and do your best with it for poor Tom. You are young, but you are a widow, and a mother, and will feel as you ought on the subject, remember only that for family reasons the affair must be kept an inviolable secret. Should my poor boy return no more, the money is yours.' "

" Well, dear mamma, did he return ? "

" Not that I know of. All I can tell you is, that I funded the money which was greatly increased during my long absence ; that I have managed it well, and this which you now bring is the last interest. When the next comes it also shall be funded, and added to the whole principal. "

" But, in the meantime, dear mamma ? "

" In the *meantime*, Maria, my misfortune, my mismanagement, may have ruined me ; even this very person, whom I unconsciously made my auditor, may have broken up my establishment, sold my furniture, and even thrown me into a prison ; and will it not be sweet to me, in such a situation, to



know that I have betrayed no trust, have yielded to no temptation, nor allowed my own abundant losses from the husband, to infringe on the sacred and secret promise given to the wife; will it not enable me, in humble confidence, to look up to Heaven, and pray that my own fatherless child may meet with like protection?"

"Oh! my mother, my *dear* mother, how much do I owe you for this glorious example? God grant it may be a lesson for my life," cried Maria, falling on her neck, and bathing her with tears of tender admiration. "Doubt not but we shall yet struggle through; but may I not remove this money, since it is not ours? It ought not to be seen."

"Aye! take it away, Miss, take it away, my dear young lady," said Mr. Graves, wiping his eyes, "and don't look at me as if you thought I grudged it: no, no, I ben't the man to touch a shilling on't; and, what's more, if it's any convenience to your mamma, I've a hundred pounds at her service. I wish all I had was in as good hands. Talk of lessons! you have given me one,



Mrs. Albany, I shall never forget, and I only hope I may be able to leave it to my children after me."

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#### CHAPTER IX.

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MR. GRAVES was as good as his word, and in a short time all present pressure was removed: the school flourished, and Mrs. Albany, relieved from her late despondency, seemed to imbibe new powers, and exhibit new energies. She was never regular in her attendance, but the time she did give to her school was always rendered extremely beneficial, from the peculiarity of her mode of teaching, and the superior mind she displayed, which, therefore, impressed all she said on the memory of the pupils, and, as it were, rivetted the lessons already taught. She became by this time



known and admired in the neighbourhood ; and her spirits being restored to their natural tone, the fascination of her manners, and the cultivation of her mind, were everywhere spoken of, and her company earnestly sought after. Though fond of conversation, and conscious of her own talents, she yet in a great degree shunned society : and Maria was frequently led to regret that she would not join it a little more, for she thought it would be useful as extending their connexions ; and she had likewise a sincere delight in seeing her dear mother admired. She was well aware that her little peculiarities were continually descanted on, her dress ridiculed, her language mimicked, and all that could be sifted out of foible in her character delineated, by those who were deficient both in her virtues and her talents, with busy malignity : and therefore she rejoiced to exhibit her better qualities and higher attainments. Whilst Maria was thus thinking of her mother, and with hourly unabated perseverance in her manifold duties, for-



getting no one's merits or claims but her own, she was daily maturing in all solid excellence and elegant accomplishment, combined with a fine imagination, enlarged capacity, and refined taste. Though firm and steady, she had the playfulness of youth, and in its genuine sensibility and warm affections, proved, that though her manners were tamed to coldness by the commands of her austere preceptress, that her heart retained its glow, and was capable of untired benevolence, unbounded generosity, and an annihilation of selfism, combined with sound discretion, which united the powers of her mother with the prudence of her aunt.

During the latter part of this eventful but prosperous year, poor Maria's duties became more heavy than even her active habits and well regulated time could bear. This arose from the removal of Miss Thomas, who was called upon to attend the sick-bed of her mother, under circumstances which rendered her return so probable, that they could not think of supply-



ing her place ; and poor Maria continued to toil on until the vacation, at the commencement of which she had promised again to visit Mrs. Margaret, who was now declining very fast, and impatient to see her.

In order to fulfil the wishes of the old lady, Maria declined accepting an invitation to a ball given by the lady of a neighbouring Baronet, but proceeded the same evening in the mail to Southampton, having first, with the most studious kindness, dressed her mother for the occasion in the most becoming manner. In general, our Woman of Genius was either so careless, or so *outré* in her apparel, as greatly to disguise her person. Though slender, and finely formed, her clothing was frequently so cumbrous, or so slovenly, as to make her appear a large shapeless mass. Sometimes her really fine features looked coarse, from the total absence of her hair, which was all tucked up under a handkerchief turban ; at others they were nearly lost, by the number of half-curved, stray ringlets



falling in all directions over her face, aided by a multiplicity of dirty frills round her neck. Maria, permitted on this occasion to show her own taste, avoided all these faults, and rendered her dress simply elegant, and fashionably becoming. Nor were the cares of the good daughter wholly expended on the exterior: Mrs. Albany had a short time before written a very clever and spirited poem on a public character, which had been much spoken of, though very little seen as yet. It was scribbled on letter backs, and weekly bills, in a careless manner as to diction, as well as an unsightly one. Maria collected the whole, wrote it out in a beautiful hand, and even corrected its errors, and added to its poetic beauties, so that, if it were inquired after, it might be produced from her mother's reticule without a blush.

Mrs. Albany, grateful for the effect produced by these attentions on her person, which had, perhaps, never been seen to equal advantage (though she was now thirty-five), and, aware that her mental



advantages rendered her attractive to the circle in which she was about to shine, was in high spirits. Yet these spirits were checked by a sense of sorrow on parting from a beloved and only child, whom she would have beheld with pride in the splendid party, who could have justly appreciated her merits; and whom she could not help regarding as a kind of victim in her present journey, to visit the woman whom she herself beheld almost with terror. Under these various sensations she entered the brilliant party at the Baronet's, where she was received with distinction, and gazed at with surprise and admiration. When not under depression from bashfulness, her eloquence and the ingenuousness of her nature, which by turns glowed with wit, or moved by its touching sensibility, never failed to give a charm of uncommon captivation to all she uttered; and this was peculiarly the case on this eventful evening. Delightful to all, she was yet observed to be most singularly attractive to a young gentleman who was introduced to



her as a man of great poetic talents, and anxious for the honour of her acquaintance; and it appeared, indeed, that the similarity of their taste and endowments rendered them well qualified to entertain each other. The power of doing so was facilitated from Mrs. Albany's declining to dance, "as an amusement she had ceased to engage in," and the gentleman doing so "from his health being unequal to it."

Whilst time flew with the mother on rapid wings, the daughter pursued the weary night over heavy roads, in the coach which was to convey her to the lonely dwelling of querulous old age, and tie her, for six long weeks, to the lectures and the questions of a relative, never amiable, but now both deaf and cross. Yet Maria neither regretted the gaiety she left, nor deplored the visit she engaged in. With respect to the former, she was happy in considering that it was enjoyed by her mother; and for the latter, conceiving it to be her duty, she was happy in the fulfilment of it also: for Maria had been now so long inured to fulfil all duties regularly, and



to deem them alike the business and pleasure of her life, that she never thought of objecting to any of them. She was received by her great aunt with a satisfaction which more than repaid her for the sacrifice.

At this time, Mrs. Margaret kept her room entirely, was very weak and infirm; but still in the perfect possession of her faculties, and very full of enquiries on the conduct, affairs, and prospects of Mrs. Albany; in the course of which she frequently asked questions it was difficult to answer, by a daughter equally attached to truth and to her mother. When she learnt that, on the whole, the school was doing well, and that all the original loan was returned, she expressed much pleasure, observing, "that she had the greater hopes of eventual good, because she was now, in a manner, certain that Mrs. Albany would never marry, and no other circumstance was likely to injure Maria's prospects."

A letter from Mrs. Albany amused the monotonous hours of Maria's attendance, but she would have been glad that it had



been less amusing, and more consonant to Mrs. Margaret's ideas, since she was under a necessity either of reading it to her in a garbled manner, or exposing her mother to the charge of being either volatile, romantic, or in love with dissipation; as Maria thought, it contained only an account of the ball at Sir Thomas Devereux's. Every thing there was described with the air of a person, who seeing things through an exaggerating medium, spoke of them with an inflated air—"the scene was enchantment, the dancers fairies, the mistress of the house an universal genius:" but there was a sudden pause in the letter, as if the writer had been interrupted; after which it was continued, evidently by a hand shaken with recent sorrow: "Alas! Maria, I have received a letter which has torn my heart to pieces, and has been, from various circumstances, so long upon its way as to increase my concern for its contents. You have often heard me speak of Madame la Sondée, as the kindest and best of friends, during my residence in France; and lament, that for



the last two years, she has never replied to my letters. The reason is at last evident, and overwhelms me with sorrow. Misfortunes, disappointment, and sickness, have combined to distress her, and at the very period when she had a right to expect restoration to her property and station in society, she has been compelled to leave her country ; and is now living (if, indeed, she yet lives) in a cottage in the neighbourhood of Geneva, in want of all those comforts which are necessary for her many ailments, and, in fact, her years. She was a mother to me at a period of life when, but for her care and guidance, I should have been utterly lost." "I will fly to her relief. I cannot endure the idea of her lonely sufferings, her poverty, her death. 'A generous friendship no cold medium knows ;' and I should be unworthy the name of a *friend*, if I hesitated to sacrifice every trifling consideration. Even Mrs. Albany herself would approve my resolution. Adieu," &c.

"What can your mother possibly mean, child?" said Mrs. Margaret, drily.



“ She means, ma’am, what she expresses. Her deepest sympathy is excited for a lady of whom I have frequently heard her speak, as a widow who had suffered much from the revolution in her own country, which drove her to England, where she received great kindness, which she returned to my poor mother as far as she was able.”

“ That was all very well, and argued good feeling, but would not justify your mother in running over seas after her. She says something about flying to her relief, and I should not wonder if she were to set off on such a wild-goose errand.”

“ Oh ! ma’am, you mistake my dear mother’s figurative language ; not but if Madame la Sondée were within reach of any help from us, I have no doubt but my mother would not only go to her friend, but bring her home, and be to her as a daughter ; and surely it would be right that she should do so, even on a principle of gratitude. It is only the stranger in a strange land, that can fully estimate the value of such kindness and countenance, as



my mother undoubtedly received from this lady in her long and melancholy sojourn in France."

"That is very true; but from your account Madame la Sondée only returned that which she had received, and your mother was certainly a woman whom it was an honour to protect. However, I do not wish to depreciate the French lady's kindness. I am also well aware that in France they do really carry the virtue of friendship further than we do as to personal attention, which is its best gift; and it is therefore probable that your mother may have imbibed the idea, that it is only right that she should abandon every self-evident duty in her situation, and literally seek this poor woman in Switzerland, whether dead or alive."

"She will, undoubtedly, send her aid?"

"So she ought, and my mite for so good a purpose shall not be wanting, Maria, to assist hers; but let her send it to some respectable person, on whom we may rely, to visit the poor lady, and render her comfortable. I would leave nothing undone in such a case,



within our power, and I can even make every allowance for strong expressions, since the truth is, in the hour of trouble every person longs to fly to those they love and pity. Write to her my dear, and I will give you something to enclose, of more value than fine speeches."

Maria wrote, and enclosed a liberal gift from Mrs. Margaret, which she entreated her mother to acknowledge by return of post.

To the great annoyance of poor Maria this acknowledgement did not take place; and for three successive days "the carelessness of Mrs. Albany, the want of all common sense in Women of Genius," or the loss of her note, and the many good uses to which it might have been put, formed the sole subject of her aunt's conversation. Of course another letter was despatched, but with no better success than the former; and it forcibly struck Maria that the servant, whom we formerly mentioned, had found the double letter too great a temptation, and had probably taken possession of



it, and, of course, poor Mrs. Albany was innocent of all blame.

So uneasy did our young friend become under the certainty that something very wrong was going on at home, that valuable as her company could not fail to be to Mrs. Margaret, the old lady willingly agreed that she should return; insisting only that she should write to her more frequently than before. Maria's heart was very heavy on leaving her, for she saw clearly that she was now declining fast; and it was painful to her to consider that her visit had been productive rather of evil, than good, to one who had so many claims on her services, and whose advanced years demanded the most soothing attentions.

When Maria arrived at her own home, the door was opened by that very maid who had been the subject of her suspicions, which were in the moment of her entrance increased, for as soon as she saw the face of her young mistress she burst into tears and was greatly agitated.



“What is the matter? why do you cry Jane?”

“Oh! Miss, I be so glad to see you, I thought as how all was true as the people said.”

“What did they say?”

“Oh! I have had such a week of it as never nobody turned over; for ever since Missis set off, there have people been comin continually, and they say as how she have gone beyond seas, and took all the money she had, and that you would never come back: and Cook and Sally as they happened to be paid have taken themselves off, but I said, says I, that’s what I’ll never do—I’ll never forsake Miss Albany.”

“Gone!” cried Maria in great alarm, “my mother *gone*, did you say?”

“Oh! yes, the moment as she received your letter as had the bill in it, she put it together with all the money she had (and a fine heap it seemed to be to my mind) and she said, “this will do—now will I carry her relief;” and she made no more



ado, but got a place in the mail to take her to London, and she said that she should be in France as last night."

"And is there no letter for me?"

"No, no letter, ma'am, only this here card: but for sure and sartin, she ardered me to write to you the very next day, and beg you to come home, but I have been so flusterated; and people have talked so, and my fellow sarvants forsaken me, so that altogether I did not write as I ought to have done for sartin."

Maria eagerly seized the card, on which was written, "Farewell my dear child, I go to visit, console, and, if possible, bring back my worthy friend, whom I am certain you will receive as another parent."

It was then evident that Mrs. Albany was indeed gone; that in her enthusiastic gratitude and affection for her friend, she had torn herself from the first duty of life in her situation as a widowed mother. She had forgotten her obligations also, as one intrusted as a governess to fulfil parental duties to many, and she had disappointed



various persons of that money they fully expected to receive, by which their finances might be deranged, and their comforts very materially abridged. To this it might be added, that her mother, and indeed all her family could not fail to be alarmed and distressed by the intelligence, and all her hopes of the future assistance of Mrs. Margaret were undoubtedly cut off for ever.

Maria saw all this evil inevitable—she sunk down on the nearest seat, and wept long and bitterly. Scarcely could she refrain from accusing her beloved mother of cruelty, as well as inconsistency; since it struck her that she was forsaken for a stranger, and that her youth and inexperience, the distance of her residence from all her relations, and the evil reports in circulation from her mother's sudden journey, rendered her situation more difficult and indeed deplorable, than that of even Madame la Sondée.

Every day, and almost every hour, increased this distress, for every person who called upon her as an acquaintance, con-



doled with her upon her mother's absence, as if they were either certain that it arose from some bad cause, or were trying to get the truth out of her. To every enquiry which was made from friendship, Maria told the exact circumstances as they had occurred.

"But who is this lady, we never heard of her before?"

"A friend of my mother's during her detainer in France."

"I think I may have heard Mrs. Albany mention her, but she is no relation of your's I suppose."

"No relation certainly, but a beloved friend."

"Um—m—m? So it appears.—Such friendships often take place between young damsels in the country villages, and indeed between the young ladies in your own establishment, my dear Miss Albany, but really when a woman is turned thirty, one does not expect any thing so romantic. However, your mother is certainly always a *little* in extremes, somewhat Quixotic in



her benevolence ; very good, but a *little* singular."

Words to this effect implying curiosity, surprise, and, in fact, contempt, were in one shape or other rung in poor Maria's ears continually, and very frequently by women so utterly below her mother in all the best virtues of the heart, and the higher qualities of the mind, as to render it scarcely possible for her to hear their implied accusations with patience, even where she felt most acutely the power of those homely truths which were blended with their sarcasms. Yet, when obliged to meet a plain tradesman who said, "Madam had not used him well, she had gone away without either paying him or asking him for time, and he would not submit to it," she felt a still deeper wound, and the blush which dyed her cheek, the tears which filled her eyes, indicated a pang beyond all others.

When at length the children began to return, her distress rose to a pitch which admitted of no control. She was placed in the distressing dilemma of either confessing



that her mother was gone abroad for an indefinite time (which was tantamount to giving up her establishment altogether at the very time it was doing much better than ever, and was doubly necessary on account of the present expenditure), or of naming her absence "as a mere casualty, and her speedy return as *certain*," a deception which her heart abhorred.

A very short interview shewed the parents and friends who returned with the young people how the matter really stood, in consequence of which many were immediately withdrawn. The father of a daughter approaching womanhood, naturally said, "these young persons are much too nearly of an age for one to be the controller and guardian of the other. Miss Albany may be an excellent teacher to little girls, but she cannot exercise the power and the discretion called for in so momentous a charge as I require."

The tender mother of delicate children, on the other hand, observed, "I dare not



commit my pretty blossoms to so young and inexperienced a person as Miss Albany must inevitably be. I dare say she would do her duty in the school-room, but there are so many little points in which the cares of a skilful nurse and a tender mother are called for, that I cannot rely on so young a governess for my children."

One worthy couple who brought their three little girls from a considerable distance, arrived at the close of the first day, and found Maria alone: her complexion was pale, her eyes red and swollen, and her manners indicating a wish to suppress sorrow, but an inability to hide it; and when they enquired "if they were her first visitants?" the question was so afflictive, that she was compelled to give way, and wept abundantly.

As soon as she was able to speak, she mentioned all that had passed on that sad eventful day, completely exonerating every person not only from blame, but unkindness; saying, "that although her mother might,



perhaps, be at home within a month, and most probably would, she was not authorized to promise it."

An awful pause ensued, and each parent looked anxiously on the children, especially the youngest, who was a new scholar, and had never left home before.

"And have you no assistant Miss Albany?"

"Yes, Sir; Miss Rose Caversham, who is well known, and much beloved by your daughter—she is very active, very good, and highly accomplished."

Pleasant looks were exchanged at these words between the parents, and poor Maria, therefore, was compelled to add, from a just sense of integrity, "but —— dear Rose —— is as young as I am, and unfortunately she is not so tall."

"Is Miss Thomas, your former excellent teacher, utterly unable to return?"

"Alas! Sir, I understand her mother is a confirmed invalid from the rheumatism, and she cannot abandon her to the care of servants."



“ But she only lives about twelve miles distance, and could probably be removed hither, in which case there would be a double stability given to your family. My coach is remarkably easy, and as we must sleep in the town, I will lend it to you, and send you post horses an hour hence, for the purpose of fetching both these ladies, who will find in this large, pleasant house, many comforts unknown to their narrow circumstances, and will yield you a rich return in their experience and steadiness.”

The worthy pair departed with their family, and Maria awoke as from a frightful and oppressive dream, and began to rally all her energies. She had felt, not an hour before, so oppressed by fear and sorrow, and had been, for so many days, really ill from anxiety, that she believed she should die under the oppression and exhaustion which overwhelmed her. But a new light now broke upon her mind through the friendly advice thus given, and she could not forbear to wonder that she had never thought of this means to aid herself. “ Ah !” said she,



“ I have often thought that the cares of life had made me prematurely old ; but I see I am only like other young people, I need some one to think for me.”

It was a late and dark hour when Maria got into the carriage, in which she placed pillows, cloaks, and shawls, in abundance. She did not arrive at the town where Miss Thomas resided till after the old lady had retired, a circumstance which gave her an opportunity of fully explaining her situation to her friend, who rejoiced to see her, and readily acquiesced in her wishes so far as she was concerned, and, in fact, used the night in preparing for the change ; whilst Maria laid down beside her mother to gain a little repose. Every thing succeeded to their wishes, for the invalid awoke at an early hour, and readily agreed to accompany them : and before ten the following day, Maria had the satisfaction of seeing these ladies in her parlour conversing with the kind friends who had suggested this movement.

The gentleman and lady now left their



family with satisfaction, nor were any other pupils taken away in consequence of Mrs. Albany's absence; but notices were in general given, which rendered the stay of the pupils conditional, and poor Maria trembled for the event, knowing that she could neither pay the debt incurred, nor support the establishment, as it now stood, without an increase. In about a month's time she had the great pleasure of receiving a letter from her mother, but the contents soon damped her joy, as the reader may imagine from perusing the following lines:—

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE passed through innumerable dangers, and been at great expences from various causes, which I shall explain when we meet; but I am repaid for all by the sublime scenery of this magnificent country. Mountains like these carry the mind with them into a region of purer air, where the grovelling cares of earth presume not to enter, and where the soul expatiates in peace.



But it is evident that the air of a milder climate can alone restore my poor friend—*restore* did I say? alas! that is impossible, her doom is inevitable, and a few months of protracted existence is all that the case admits. But the idea of going to Italy has taken such overweening possession of her mind, that there is no satisfying her without it. She even considers me cruel when I name England to her, nor will she compromise for Nice, which I have earnestly recommended. No, to Italy she will go, nor can I be sorry to visit a land so dear to the imaginative and recollective mind;—the land of warriors, of poets, and of painters. There may I gaze on the eternal city, and the records of its undying glories. Not only will the remembrance of its mighty chiefs, and its virtuous patriots, warm my heart, but the more holy and touching records of its Saints and Martyrs; those early Christians, who sealed, with their blood, that profession of faith which is the solace of life, and the hope of death; and is, I trust my love, a tie to you and me as strong



and sweet as that by which nature binds us to each other.

[When Maria reached this passage of her mother's letter, she cast up her eyes to heaven and earnestly besought a blessing on the writer, but her heart was deeply troubled at the idea of her lengthened journey, and she again anxiously began to read.]

Before you receive this, I trust we shall be far on our road, but I shall write to you from Milan, whither you may address your letter, and to which place you must forward me money in the manner I will annex. Of course you have got plenty, as I did not bring with me more than half of what I expected. Fail not to do this my love as my distress will otherwise be extreme, in a strange country, where I have not a single friend, and must be the sole support of an unhappy being, whom I shall doubtless be called upon to part with for ever.

Give my love to our dear pupils, guard the health of Louisa, and take especial note of Miss Aubrey's temper: her sister is indolent, correct that in her, and be careful



on the subject of my little darlings' pronouncement.—Yours, &c. &c.

“Money!—send *more* money, it is impossible,” said Maria,” sitting down with a look of despair, “my mother has absolutely forgotten that she left me involved in debt, and that at this very moment I am every way in the utmost difficulty.—Not one of the children she has named remain with me. She has forgotten every thing.”

But poor Maria could not forget these claims on either hand; for her uprightness of principle called upon her to remember her creditors, and her sincere love for her mother, and her dread lest she should be indeed driven to great distress, urged her to seek every means for her relief. To the difficulty she experienced on these points, was added a sense of awkwardness amounting to shame, arising from the peculiarity of the case, but she at length conquered it so far as to write to her aunt Maynard, and intreat *her* assistance—to do it to Mrs. Margaret was impossible.



Mrs. Maynard on finding that Mrs. Albany was not about to return, became seriously angry with her. She had considered her wrong from the first; but being herself a woman whose liberality was as great as her prudence, she thought it only consistent that her sister should seek to give essential aid to a friend who had been of important benefit to her (for any thing she knew), during that long season of affliction in which she was removed from her own connections. But that she should prolong her stay, ruin her establishment, distress her excellent child, and even risk the injury of her creditors, amounted to errors that could not in her opinion be palliated by her friendship. Mrs. Maynard had been herself the mother of her family: for them she had toiled, and meditated, and saved: she had denied for many years the husband she highly esteemed, and it was therefore natural in her to expect that her sister should have sacrificed an impulse which it was improper to indulge (though praiseworthy in itself); and all *her* feelings of compassion were



drawn towards her excellent niece, whom it was equally her duty and desire to assist in preference to her mother.

Under this impression, she wrote to Maria desiring, "that she would make herself easy for that she would send her mother a remittance by a friend," and begged "that she would apply her whole mind to those duties by which she was immediately surrounded."

This advice came at a time when those duties were much and happily increased, as at the commencement of the following quarter, all those pupils that had been withdrawn returned, in some cases accompanied by sisters and friends. Dear arms were thrown round her, smiling faces and shining eyes, which she never had hoped to see again, greeted her, and a spirit of bustle and emulation succeeded in the school-room, which had a good effect on all. Those who came last considered themselves as having much to gain in order to bring them to the standard attained by their friends, and those



who remained were induced to maintain that standard: all were animated, industrious, and happy.

At the ensuing vacation Maria spent a portion of her time with Mrs. Margaret, and devoted the rest to making excellent arrangements with her tradespeople, whose debts she so nearly discharged, that all were satisfied; but in doing this she inevitably deprived herself of many little conveniences as well as pleasures, to which she had a right. She still doubted the continuance of her pupils, and knew that whenever her mother returned she would be in want of every thing, as the letters which she had hitherto received were all pressing for money. At this period, Mrs. Albany was silent, and Maria therefore concluded that the gift of her aunt had reached her, and she only waited another letter, to answer it by sending all that now remained in her own power.

The school re-opened most favourably with great additions. "Here we come," said one little fairy, leading a younger sister



with the bounding step of early infancy, whilst another with the sober propriety of thirteen, introduced "her cousin Miss Emma."—Maria gazed around at her well filled table, and scarcely suppressed the tear of gratitude with which she thanked her Maker for his manifold gifts.

All was now well with Maria, for though her anxiety was unavoidably great, and her cares and toils unceasing, yet the belief that she was sustaining a useful part in life; the love and esteem of her friends, and the consciousness that she was supporting her mother, and securing her a provision for after-life, afforded her consolation and joy. But alas! after one short letter which spoke of Mrs. Maynard's remittance, as affording a *bare* supply, yet neglected to give directions to where the next should be forwarded, she was again silent.

The first keen frosts which took place in the ensuing winter, were observed to have that effect upon Mrs. Margaret, which is often experienced in life so far advanced, and without any specific complaint she



shrunk like a withered leaf. Maria's first information on this head was from Mrs. Maynard, who had been summoned to Southampton, and she lost not a moment in hastening thither herself, knowing that at the approaching vacation, Miss Thomas would find no difficulty in adjusting her well regulated accompts.

Mrs. Margaret preserved her faculties unimpaired to the last, and had evidently much pleasure in the tender offices which Maria continued to perform for her to the latest moment when she fell, "as a shock of corn grown fully ripe," into the hands of her Heavenly Father. Maria was truly thankful for those circumstances which had enabled her thus to fulfil this most awful and affecting duty, and not less so, that her steps were directed, and her solicitude shared by that kind relative, on whose love and wisdom she could ever rely implicitly.



## CHAPTER X.

Mrs. MARGARET bequeathed to Mrs. Maynard, the handsome legacy of three thousand pounds; the old servants had suitable annuities given, and her jewels and plate were left to her grand nephew Frederic Albany (whose father had lately died in Italy, and who was supposed to be now on his road to England): all the rest of her property was left under guardianship to Maria; but the name of her mother was not mentioned in the will. "Well, my dear girl," said Mrs. Maynard when she was alone with her niece, "I hope henceforward to enjoy *your* society at least, and trust that time will restore to us that of my sister. As your establishment is now so flourishing, no doubt Miss Thomas will be thankful to take it off your hands upon advantageous terms."

"But you forget my dear ma'am, that



my late excellent friend (kind as she has been) has yet left me literally nothing during my minority. It was always her maxim, 'that it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth,' and my yoke must continue about ten months longer."

"Surely my dear you may give it up safely: you are so pale and thin, I am certain rest is necessary; and when I consider you as born the heiress to one fortune, and become the heiress of another, I cannot think of your remaining in such a state of solicitude, and exertion."

"If I look *ill* and you fear my becoming so, the reason for my continuing in my situation greatly increases, since it is certain that if I should die before I come of age, I could make no other provision for my dear mother than that which the school affords, for the property left to me, in case of my death, goes to Frederic Albany. Depend upon it, dear aunt, that as soon as I can do it with safety, I will first make my mother the sharer of my property by a deed of gift, then resign my school to my worthy



assistants, and hasten to gain health and peace in your society, and that of my dear grandmamma."

As this was precisely the conduct this excellent woman would herself have pursued under similar circumstances, she yielded her consent to its adoption, though her heart ached exceedingly when she parted from her beloved relative, and she could not forbear again and again, to press upon her the necessity of attending to her health, and avoiding all unnecessary fatigue.

Maria observed all her advice, but she could not deny herself the pleasure of paying with her own hands every creditor of her mother's, to the full liquidation of their claims: but when this was done, and a handsome surplus left in her hands, she gave a deep sigh to the fate of that mother who was perhaps at this moment suffering for the want of it, and determined on writing again to the banker at Milan, and intreating his aid in seeking Mrs. Albany's present residence and conveying her assistance.

Week after week passed and yet no letter



arrived; and there were times when Maria was ready to conceive that it was as much her duty, as she felt it to be her inclination, to set out herself and seek this dear lost parent. But a few minutes of determined, calm, examination on the subject, never failed to convince her of the utter futility of such schemes, and show her that she could not better serve her mother than by continuing to walk in her present path of efficient duty, and wait with patience for the arrival of either Mrs. Albany herself, or some information respecting her.

In the month of May, Maria was one day called from her interesting duties, by a servant who said that "two gentlemen were in the drawing-room who wished to speak with her: they arrived by chance at the same moment, and were shown into the house together." Maria naturally concluded that they were fathers or guardians, who desired to place their children or wards under her care, and she always felt on these occasions timid, and painfully sensible that her youth was much against her, but as she was still



in mourning, and dressed with somewhat of a matronly air, she hoped that they would venture to repose that confidence in her accorded by many others.

On entering the drawing room Maria found two gentlemen, neither of whom appeared to visit her on the only errand for which persons of their description entered her house. One was a dark man of about forty-five, the other about half that age, of graceful appearance, and dressed in mourning.—Maria approached the elder, on which the other retired to a recess in the room to wait her leisure. “My name is Grantley ma’am;” said the former “I am the son of the late Mrs. Spencer, whose name is unhappily but too well known in your family. In the last communication I ever had from my poor mother, which was written in a tremulous hand just before her death, she tells me whenever I come to England not to fail seeing Mrs. Albany, who had something to communicate which could not be trusted to a letter. The bad news respecting my father-in-law reached me at the same



time with this account of her death, and I remained in the West Indies several years longer.

“In fact I never came over but once, and Mrs. Albany was at that time a detenu in France. I have now returned for life; but I find myself again unfortunate in the absence of your mother. Yet I cannot forbear waiting upon you, in the hope that you may have heard her speak of the circumstance, and thereby even thus late enable me to fulfil the commands of my revered mother.”

“Happily!” returned Maria, “I am able to satisfy you on this point. Mrs. Spencer had received from your grandmother privately a sum of money which she confided to my mother’s care, and this my mother had placed in the funds previous to her going abroad. She has accumulated it for you, and I will immediately place in your hands the necessary documents.”

“There is no haste, Miss Albany, allow me to call upon you another day.”

But Maria was already gone, and, in



another moment, she had, with a look of great satisfaction, placed the property in his hands, which she truly observed "was a pleasure her mother had long wished for."

Mr. Grantley knew not what to say; at this time, he wanted no money, and he felt as if he had rather not take it, but he could only, for the present, bow and retire.

The young gentleman now advanced. There was an air of mingled cordiality and respect in his manner, and a something in his countenance which induced Maria, on a nearer view, to believe she had seen him before, yet she had no recollection where. This was accounted for when he announced himself "as her relation Mr. Albany," for there was a distant resemblance in him to several of the old portraits in the house of their great aunt.

Maria courtesied timidly: she felt at once as if she had found a friend and an enemy; one, whom personally she had been taught to regard from her infancy, but who yet was associated, in her mind, with much that was painful and injurious.

"This packet," said Mr. Albany, as he



placed the well-remembered jewel case on the table, "has been given to me by the attorney of our late relative Mrs. Margaret Albany. I presume you are aware that it was her legacy to me?"

"I recollect it was, Sir."

"Probably you also know the contents, and the letter too, which I found in it?"

"Indeed I do not. I have seen the outside of the case, as it lay in the cabinet frequently, but our good relative was not subject to indulging childish curiosity, as you may recollect."

Mr. Albany opened the case, and placed it before Maria. There appeared many valuable jewels, set in a very antique manner, and several fine miniatures; but her attention was soon given to the letter, which was evidently written before the tremors of age had palsied the writer's hand, and which she found as follows:—

DEAR FREDERICK ALBANY,

In this packet you will find the portraits of some of your worthy ancestors; also those valuable jewels bequeath-



ed to me by my great grandmother. I charge you neither to look at the former, nor appropriate the latter, till you have determined in your own heart, to repay the widowed Mrs. Albany all which she has expended on the house built on her husband's estate, now in the possession of your father, and which must descend to you. The law, perhaps, may not require this restitution, and vulgar honesty may not feel bound to it; but the honour of a gentleman, and the religion of a Christian, imperatively demand it; and in this poor lady's case, compassion is also a goad to integrity. She is now a prisoner in France, and her daughter, a child of great promise, is under my care. I charge you to watch over this poor girl with the solicitude of a brother, for she is portionless, fatherless, and the daughter of a genius; and in each of these misfortunes requires protection.

I am, with every good wish for your virtue and happiness, your affectionate relative,

MARGARET ALBANY.



The kindness which thus looked beyond the grave, affected Maria, more especially in its reference to her mother, who was again placed in a state of exile, and she returned the letter in tears. They were also glistening in Mr. Albany's eyes, as he said, "I wait upon you, my dear cousin, to say, that being sincerely desirous to fulfil every wish of my honoured relative, as also to satisfy the demands of justice suggested by my own heart, I have already taken those steps in the affair most likely to conduce to this end."

Maria bowed, and he continued :—

"I have taken a regular surveyor to examine the house in question, and we have found it commodious, elegant, every way suited to my fortune, and far superior to any expectation my father had ever formed of it. The estimate made is yet probably much below the original cost, and when I have paid it I shall still remain your mother's debtor; but it has struck me that as money is liable to loss, it would be advisable for Mrs. Albany to accept payment



in some form which would produce regular income."

"I am decidedly of that opinion myself."

"Then take these title deeds, they are those of an estate I inherit in Dorsetshire, and produce somewhat above 400*l.* per annum. I shall feel easier when I have put them into your hands."

Maria took the writings thankfully, but she was incapable of speaking. The extraordinary circumstance of receiving at the same period, the man to whom her mother had so faithfully executed *her* trust, and the man who, in executing *his* duty, became her reward, made her feel sensible of the awful power of Providence; she felt as if in the more immediate presence of that righteous Judge who ordereth all things aright. Her thoughts were interrupted by the question of Mr. Albany, which he uttered cautiously,

"You have not heard lately of your mother?"

"No, indeed. I want to hear sadly."

"Then I must tell you that *I have.*"



“ Is it possible ? Why did you keep back this intelligence ? How did you hear of her ? ”

“ By mere chance. Believe me, had my intelligence been pleasant, I would not have delayed it.”

“ My poor mother,” cried Maria, bursting into tears, “ Oh ! what is become of you ? ”

“ My information,” said Mr. Albany, “ is from a friend, who tells me, as an article of news, that he has been the means of relieving a countrywoman of ours from great distress, who, calling herself by my name, had the more ready claim on his good offices. He says ‘ she had been so imprudent as to take a cottage among the mountains near Catania, with a sick friend, who died soon after her arrival ; and that the circumstance of a singular funeral going from such an obscure place, had naturally attracted the notice of the banditti, who lurk in the fastnesses of the mountains, and that on her return they had seized her and her little property, with that of the de-



ceased, which was probably their principal object. That she had been subjected to perpetual terror for her life, having escaped from them with great difficulty, and at length was obliged literally to beg her way to Rome; where he had been happy in relieving her distress, and where she must continue sometime to recruit her strength.' ”

Maria wept in agony; and as soon as she was able to speak declared an intention of procuring a proper escort, and setting out immediately, to bring her mother home.

“ Pardon me, Maria (for so I may call you now), you talk like a child. Your mother is provided for better than she would be by any such redoubtable knight-errant as yourself. This letter I received just after my arrival in England; and though I felt interested about my countrywoman, yet I had no idea that she had further claims upon me. On seeing the attorney at Southampton, I learnt the circumstance of your mother's absence in Italy; and I did not lose a single hour in dispatching a faithful servant on whose knowledge and fidelity I could place



unquestioned reliance to attend on the stranger, and conduct her home. I should have returned for that purpose myself, had I not been fully aware that he was equal to every thing, and more capable of pushing his journey than myself. I should not have mentioned this circumstance at all, if I could not have relieved your mind as to its most painful surmise. I hope, in a very few weeks you will receive your dear mother, and never lose her again. She is sick of travelling undoubtedly, and has gone through horrors enow to be the heroine of a melodrama : but all is over now, and will serve for amusement on her return."

Maria could not smile, for consternation and anxiety were awakened so painfully, that she could not in the first overwhelming sense of fear and pity, see how much cause she had to rejoice that so good an escort was provided, and how much she owed to the kindness and prudence of her new found relative. Maria was indeed very unhappy, but as she was aware that circumstances called imperatively for pa-



tience, and also that she had many blessings which claimed heart-felt gratitude to the great Giver of all good, she exerted herself to the utmost, to prove cheerful obedience to his will, and display a due sense of what was her duty, and her relief.

Her first care was to settle fully all the accounts belonging to the establishment; after which she offered it to her worthy assistants, at the close of the present season when it was well understood that an increase would be made to that prosperity it now enjoyed. The offer was received with gratitude, which brought tears of pleasure into the eyes of the old lady. But when the news was spread further through the house, tears of a very different nature flowed abundantly; and the late happy family, became suddenly converted into a scene of sorrow and dismay, in which nothing was heard but lamentation, nor any thing attended to, save the one great object of interest, the loss of their beloved young governess.

It was natural that, on her part, Maria



should feel much more from this momentous circumstance, than ladies so situated are subject to suffer on these trying occasions ; for she had been united to her more advanced pupils by ties of no ordinary description.

Her friendly assistants were aware of this ; and they exerted themselves to the utmost to lighten the task before her, and to render the occasion itself a lesson of importance to the young people by whom they were surrounded. They impressed it upon their minds as a duty they owed Miss Albany, to repress an expression of sorrow which evidently affected her more than her health was able to bear. They pointed out the superior value of suppressing and regulating the natural regret they felt, to displaying it, and called upon them to observe and imitate the conduct of her whom they prized so highly ; saying,—“ You cannot doubt but the sensibility of Miss Albany is at least as acute as your own, but she exerts her fortitude, and instead of suffering her spirits to be overpowered, she only



struggles the more determinably to fulfil her duties, by giving her mind no time to dwell on those cares which oppress her."

"But you know ma'am," said one of the little auditors, "we have no cares, nor duties, *unfortunately*; so we can't help crying."

"Yes, my love, you have many," replied Miss Thomas, who could scarcely forbear smiling at the *unfortunate*. "You are all called upon, especially at this time, to show how much you have improved in every branch of your education. You must be careful not only to gratify the friends you are about to meet, but to honour the governess from whom you are to part; and, in my own opinion, every individual in this respect resembles her invaluable friend: she has a great deal to do, and but very little time for the performance of many tasks; the good and the grateful, will be the most busy, though they may appear to be the least sorrowful."

This excellent counsel was happily acted upon; but it was soon perceived, that, in addition to ordinary occupations and tasks,



many important consultations were held, and many fingers busy even in the hours of play.

There was more than ordinary intelligence passing between eyes that sparkled with conscious knowledge of secret combinations : and, for many days previous to the last important one, Maria was enabled to go through the fatigues and duties of her station without any interruption from a source which she dreaded to encounter.

On the morning of that day, she rose very early, but was surprised to find that the whole of her family were already stirring. She was much affected as she read family prayer with them for the last time, for truly did her heart ascend with every petition to Heaven, for their future welfare ; and when she rose from her knees, she saw, with tender satisfaction, that many had experienced the same emotions of pious and sincere devotion. She spoke a few words to them of affectionate advice, which were rendered as brief as possible, and then retired, being desirous of leaving them to



reflect upon what she had spoken at a time when it was likely to make an impression, and also to make arrangements for receiving her uncle, who was coming over to assist her in a final settlement, and with whom she intended to return.

Having breakfasted, settled all her plans, and dressed for the day, Maria went into the drawing room, where she expected to receive many friends in the course of the morning, to all of whom she held herself obliged, and to many most gratefully attached, on account of the confidence with which they had honoured her, by giving a trust which calls for so many great qualities as well as good principles, to one so young, and so singularly situated as she had been.

Whilst these thoughts were passing the mind of Maria, mixed as they necessarily must be with anxious remembrances of her distant parent, she was drawn from them by a gentle tapping at the door, accompanied by a low, half repressed sound as of many voices; and it struck her, that the dear children were all coming *en masse* to



bid her a formal, and painful adieu, which she felt at this moment of awakened remembrance unequal to encounter.

They did indeed all enter in a kind of procession, but their countenances though full of love, were not on the present occasion the harbingers of sorrow. In fact they formed a lovely spectacle, for every young head was adorned with a green wreath or a bunch of flowers from the garden. The first pair bore between them a large tea-board covered with small gaily-bound books which they deposited on the table as soon as they were able.

"These books, ma'am, are our Albums; we have been writing in them that which you were so kind as to say to us—for Miss Rose could repeat it exactly"—"and we come now to beg"—"to request, ma'am, you will have the goodness to write your name in every book, there are only thirty-seven."

"Only"—"well, my dear, I will fulfil your wishes with great pleasure."

"And we, ma'am," said the two last in



the train, now first appearing in sight, "have brought something, which we hope you will please to accept."

What the "something" might be, did not immediately appear, for it was laid also upon a large tea-tray, ornamented with garlands of flowers, and covered by a muslin mantle. When this was removed, numerous little elegant, and useful articles appeared, the tributes of ingenuity, industry, and affection, so placed as to form a beautiful pyramid: splendid purses, flounced pincushions, tapis, reticules, card-racks, baskets, and many other elegancies of the same description, got up in the most finished manner, at once revealed the mysterious avocations that had taken place, and the earnest desire each felt of being remembered by the invaluable friend to whom they owed so much.

It is unnecessary to say how highly they were gratified by the praise and admiration bestowed not only on the Pyramid, but its component parts, its bearers, attendants, and above all by the very agreeable sur-



prise, evinced by the receiver, who would not allow the form of her present to be disturbed for this day at least. It therefore remained in the apartment, and excited the admiration and approval of all who saw it, many of whom did not behold unmoved, this innocent memorial of warm and gentle affection towards one who in years to come would not be less esteemed than she was now fondly beloved. Tenderness and obedience are the flowers which the spring time of life produces in consequence of judicious culture; but at a more advanced period we have a right to expect decided virtues and higher excellence—the seeds sown in early life continue to flourish even to old age.

We will not expatiate on the kind adieus, the warm thanks received by Maria, the mingled pain and pleasure, which could not fail to agitate her, on leaving a place where she had suffered so much anxiety, conquered so many difficulties, and finally done so much good, and gained so much regard. It is enough to say, that her con-



cluding days in this place were marked with the same love of order, and strict justice, which had ever characterized them, and with numerous proofs of that charity and benevolence, which it was ever the dearest pleasure of her life to exercise so far as it was in her power. She had been ever desirous of living near her Aunt Maynard and her Grandmother, and was indeed extremely partial to the place of her birth, although she knew in fact very little of it; a circumstance in which her friends rejoiced, as they saw clearly that now the busy occupations of her late life were at an end, she would feel more acutely than ever that corroding anxiety for the fate of her mother, which had already greatly injured her health, and rendered change of air, and of scene, absolutely necessary.

Mr. Albany had returned to London, where his affairs rendered his presence necessary, immediately after the conversation with Maria which we have related; but as he corresponded with Mr. Maynard to whom he was about to become a near neighbour,



after Maria arrived at that gentleman's house, she was in hopes from day to day, that some news would arrive of her mother. Every member of the family partook in this hope, yet days, and even weeks passed, and no information arrived. The kindness of all around her was exerted every day to guard Maria from the natural effects of a suspense so exceedingly painful, and riding, walking, and visiting, was resorted to by turns, to fill up the anxious interval, until she assured them—"That she would rather remain at home, and seek to gain the fortitude and resignation called for in her situation by prayer, meditation, and domestic employment, than by seeking to drown reflection." Mrs. Maynard approved her motives of action, and assisted her in every endeavour to strengthen her mind, and increase her submission to the will of her heavenly Father.

One day whilst they were walking in a little grove, where the children of Mrs. Maynard were gathering flowers, one of the rustic servants from the house ran



eagerly to them, despatched by Mr. Maynard, crying, "Ma'am,"—"Miss—you must please to come home this varry minnit, for there's Squire Albany drove up to the hall door in his brooch with a forin leady, an old Madam Hanville have swounded away at the sight of her."

"It is my mother,"—"my dear! long lost mother!" exclaimed Maria, scarcely able to support herself, feeling assured that from the effects of her presence upon her grandmother, that she was returned in some most melancholy condition.

These fears were in a measure verified—the stranger was indeed Mrs. Albany, but so dreadfully altered in her person, that when Maria beheld her, and recollected how she had looked on the night when she had dressed her for the ball at Sir Thomas Devereux's, she could not forbear to weep over her in sorrow, even whilst her heart rose in thankfulness to Heaven for her restoration.

Yes! it was evident that care and sickness, and want, and self-reproach, had all



by turns afflicted her. Her fine countenance was become sharp and haggard, the fire of her eye was extinguished, her complexion was brown and withered, and her dark locks streaked with gray. But there was a sober propriety in her manners, a chastened simplicity in her language, and even an air of neatness in her dress, which struck every one around her as indicating improvement in her character. And indeed there had never been a period in Mrs. Albany's life when she had been so amiable and estimable as now, for never had she loved her daughter so tenderly, or so fully understood the merit of her character.

There was always an ingenuousness in the confession of Mrs. Albany, and a penitence for her errors when she discovered them to be such, which never failed to endear her to her friends, and gain pardon for her from those who blamed her most severely. It was therefore no wonder that the present circle readily accorded full pardon for all the past to one so dear, and whose suf-



ferings had in their eyes expiated her faults. But Mrs. Albany was too upright, and too deeply impressed with a sense of past error, to accept forgiveness without atoning for the past, by tracing the progress by which she had been led into such extraordinary difficulties.

“On my arrival” said she “at the abode of my poor friend, I found her not only sinking under incurable malady, but so weakened in her judgement, and so capricious in her temper, that she was rather a wayward child, than a sensible woman. Under these circumstances, I ought to have either insisted on her immediate return with me to England, or placed her in the best situation I could with regard to pecuniary aid, and have hastened home again to the more immediate duties of my station in life, which were the most responsible in which any woman can possibly be engaged. Instead of doing this, I suffered mistaken pity to comply with every foolish desire in this poor creature, and in consequence removed to Italy, although our journey was



productive of no good to her, and of great expense and trouble to me.

“After a short rest at Milan, we proceeded to a small town, where the air being considered very salubrious we determined to remain, and I sought for lodgings, and obtained some that were very eligible; but we had been settled a very short time before the same restlessness in the disposition of my charge which had brought us thither again affected her, and she began to think that the situation in which we resided was too sheltered and warm. She earnestly desired to return to Switzerland, and insisted we should seek for some situation that resembled as nearly as possible the country we had left.

“Unhappily I again submitted to follow where I ought to have led, and in my search for a new abode, unluckily found a place of such singular beauty as to its situation, that on my return I described its striking features by way of amusing my poor invalid. It was a dwelling formed partly out of a natural cavern in the rock, and



partly of wood and stones, built up so as to form two large rooms, which were covered with Alpine lichens, and the wild flowers which grew there in profusion. A tall aspen waved its light branches above the thatched roof, and a chrystal stream, after bounding from cliff to cliff, fell into a natural bason just beside the humble dwelling, and thence ran like liquid silver to the vale below.

From the time I spoke of this beautiful spot, Madame la Sondée became impatient to see it; and when I first led her feeble steps towards the spot, not less impatient to inhabit it. From an act of weakness originating alike in my own romantic disposition, and a blameable pliability with that caprice in my poor friend which arose, in a great measure, from the weak state of mind brought on by disease, I most unhappily complied with her desire. It was not difficult to obtain a place where no person ever thought of fixing a permanent abode; and, after purchasing a few articles of necessary furniture, and engaging a



country girl as our servant, we removed thither. But the great difficulty of taking the invalid up the hill, gave me a melancholy foretaste of the evils before me. From the very first night of our arrival, she became evidently much worse, for the air was a great deal too pure, and thin, for her respiration,—the falling of the beautiful cascade so near disturbed her, and she observed truly, ‘that there was such a continual sound, we could not talk to each other without closing the doors and windows, in which case we should lose our beautiful prospect.’ In a short time we also discovered that we had still greater difficulties to encounter ; for we were thrown so far from the village, that none of the peasantry would bring our victuals thence without doubling their price, and even in that case, we had only the refuse of the market, so that at a time when the delicate appetite of my suffering friend required the most tempting sustenance, she had victuals placed before her, which even the mountain air would not render palatable to me. If



we sent our maid to purchase, it took up nearly the whole day ; and, on her return, she never failed to come home with some terrible story of banditti, who infested the mountains, and might be expected to break in upon us, plunder our cottage, and perhaps murder us all.

Alas ! I had listened and complied, where I ought to have been firm and refused ; and having seen my error in this respect, I now became resolute, when I ought to have been yielding. Happy would it have been, if I had listened to Agathe's suggestion at the first, and returned to the lodgings we had left, since it was then in our power. But being naturally unsuspicious, and not subject to those fears which the happy security of my own country prevented me from apprehending, I turned a deaf ear to every suggestion of this kind, until the time arrived when my poor friend became too ill to leave her bed ; after which, of course, all thoughts of removal during her life were impracticable.

I now had the misfortune of becoming



sensible of my second error; I call it a misfortune, because it added the perpetual sense of terror to my actual insecurity. Ah! what dreadful nights have I passed in that beautiful spot, sitting by the bedside of that dying friend whose eyes might be closed before morning, and whom I earnestly desired to save from all those harassing thoughts which might disturb her hours—yet with what anxiety was I continually listening for those distant sounds which the rushing waters at once prevented me from hearing, and in their slight varieties of sound caused me perpetually to suppose I heard. What feeble barricadoes, what continual contrivances for resistance in case of attack, was I making! and when I was indeed convinced that I heard the sound of a distant carbine, or the halloo of a human voice, how did my heart throb, and my whole frame tremble! I have sometimes fainted from the excess of my fears, yet was compelled to hide the cause of my indisposition, on recovering, with the utmost care, lest it should infect my suffer-



ing charge, and render the poor maid more fearful than before.

When my health began to suffer from these causes, I procured an armed peasant to watch us. But my fears were little relieved, though changed, for my imagination being only too vivid, I soon dreaded my guard, not less than the robbers in our neighbourhood; nor durst close my eyes to sleep, lest I should be awakened by the terrific voice of a murderer in whose power I had placed myself. It was only during the midst of the day that I durst allow myself to seek the repose nature demanded, and this was unhappily the period when the fever of the invalid was at the highest. And as she was now frequently delirious, many a time was I awakened to sooth her distress, and calm her ravings, when my own mind was scarcely less deranged, and my aching head, and wearied limbs, almost rendered me helpless as herself.

Under these circumstances, I need not tell you that poor Madame la Sondée's death was a great release, and it is a conso-



lation to me to know, that she did not share the troubles in which I had been equally involved by her improper request, and my own improvident compliance. Great as had been my uneasiness during her illness, my trouble was much increased upon her death; for as we were both heretics, and in a remote part of the country where religious prejudices existed in their strongest effects, I could get no person willing to assist me, and even poor Agathe, who (although silly, was faithful and good natured) on this awful occasion, afforded more trouble than aid.

A wild, sequestered spot amongst the mountains was found at last by my late gaurdian, which he deemed suitable for an unblest grave; and, considering it as the last duty I could pay my poor friend, I followed, and, with Agathe, assisted in closing the earth over her body, and in planting over it some wild shrubs, which would protect the remains as well as mark the spot. That done, I employed the peasant in going immediately to the town, securing my late lodging, and purchasing for me a few neces-



saries; after which I took the arm of my maid, and with one sigh to the memory of her who had cost me so much, I returned to the cottage.

Unfortunately I had from this disposition of things, deprived myself of my guard, who, notwithstanding all my fears, was, I believe, truly honest. When I returned to my lovely home, my mind was fully occupied with the memory of her whom I had lost, and with the distant home, and the beloved child whom I had so blameably forsaken; and those fears which I had been harassed with so long were completely banished from my mind by these affecting subjects.

I was first roused from the reverie into which I had naturally fallen, by a piercing shriek from Agathe, who had preceded me, and in another moment, I was aware of loud sounds of revelry proceeding from the cottage. I looked in and perceived several men of fierce and hideous aspect sitting round our table, and drinking the wine I had left standing there. Agathe, recovering her powers of recollection sooner than me,



began to fly down the hill, calling me by every tender name her terror permitted her to use, and entreating me to follow her; but, alas! I had neither the presence of mind, nor indeed the bodily strength necessary for exertion. A few minutes decided my fate; he who appeared the ruler among this lawless tribe, ordered two of the men to seize and search me, and whilst this was taking place, he held a consultation with another, 'whether it were best to dispatch me on the spot, or keep me for the purpose of extorting money from those friends, or countrymen, who might be willing to ransom me.'

"Oh! mamma, dear, *dear*, mamma," exclaimed Maria, bursting again into tears, "were you indeed in such a situation as this?"

I was, my love, indeed, and I need not tell you that minutes are hours in such a situation. What I then felt I *never can describe*, nor would I wound your heart by a recital so full of grief and horror, even if I had the power. Do not weep, you see I



am *here*, and though I am weak and thin, I have no doubt that I shall recover both health and peace, with your good nursing.

But I see that my sad story affects you all too much, I will therefore hasten to a conclusion. The robbers considering that it was possible to make more plunder of me alive than dead, removed me with the rest of my property across the mountains, on horseback, by which means I became nearer the road to Rome than I had ever been; and as they were not aware that I understood their language, information to me of the most valuable kind was given in the course of their unreserved communications with each other. For some time I was so stunned with terror, and overwhelmed with despair, that I gave myself entirely up to the horrors which encompassed me; but when we became stationary for the night, and I was placed, more dead than alive, up on the grass, and a little wine and bread were given to me, my senses happily returned. I wept freely, and my mind became capable of prayer, and as my heart ascended to



heaven, I regained some degree of composure from a sense of reliance on divine goodness. I then began to attend to all that was said, to consider the possibility of escape, and the power I possessed of pursuing my flight. The more I thought on this, the more I was aware that I had but little strength, and must therefore trust rather to disguise than swiftness; and recollecting the talents of mimicry which I was remarkable for possessing as a child, it struck me that if I were shrouded in one of the long cloaks of the party, I could personate a little and somewhat lame man, who appeared the common servant of the tribe, named Michael. The party had once been apparently more numerous, for one of the poor animals which they drove, had many cloaks thrown over him; and I observed that they used them in the ordinary way of blankets, when after taking their last meal they seemed inclined for repose.

My perfect silence, and deep dejection, together with my sick looks, and the seclusion of the rocky dell in which they encamp-



ed, rendered them secure of their prisoner, and my exemption from all personal insult and neglect, were unquestionably intended to operate in their favour by procuring a higher ransom—Ah ! Maria, I will honestly confess, that never till the hour when I heard these wretches speak of my *price*, did I fully estimate your value, or feel the extent of my own duties. Bitter were the tears that flowed from my eyes, when I recalled the memory of your unceasing exertions for me in days which were past, and thought what you would suffer, and what you would achieve, could you have seen me in that dreadful situation.

As, however, I knew but too well that I had no friend in that country, and was aware that in case of disappointment, the most cruel treatment would be dealt to me by the ruffians who held me captive, I again reverted to the idea of escape: and when all were asleep, I wrapt myself in the black serge cloak they had lent me, and throwing off my head dress, began, though with trembling steps, to climb the rocks



which would take me most quickly out of view. This was absolutely necessary, for although I could perhaps have imitated the squeaking voice, and peculiar phraseology of Michael, in a calm moment, I soon found that I was incapable of doing it at a time when my life must be the forfeit of failure. My late habits had given me great facility in climbing; and it is probable that I was also assisted by the darkness, which was sufficient to hide my danger, yet not to preclude my flight. When I had got out of their immediate circle I knelt down, and returned thanks to God; and as the sun rose, and the face of the country seemed refreshed by his beams, I felt as if I also rejoiced beneath their influence, and was invigorated to pursue my journey.

This temporary spirit was of short duration, for I perceived that it was necessary for me to abandon my cloak, which I gladly exchanged for food. Having gained the road for Rome, from which I was distant, I believe about forty miles, I pursued my journey as well as I was able in the day-



time, and the two following nights took refuge in little hollows near the road, where I lay rolled up like an animal, and became so deplorable an object from dust and fatigue, that I did not offer a temptation to further robbery. On the second night, the want of the cloak, and more especially of my head dress, became terrible to me; and I was aware that a fever was seizing on me. but some remains of energy, some hope that in Rome I should hardly fail to find aid from my countrymen, urged me forward; and the more I became sensible of disease being upon me, the more did my spirits struggle to attain their object, which was at last effected by the charity of a peasant, who placed me in the cart which conveyed his vegetables to market.

“ Thus did I enter that most interesting, wonderful city, to which from early infancy I had felt an enthusiastic venerating attachment, and which I had desired to see so earnestly, that perhaps self-indulgence in that particular had mingled with my better intentions more than I was aware. But for



me, the Eternal City, the abode of heroes, the grave of martyrs, the emporium of art, had *now* no charms.—I was weak and delirious, without strength to beg, and without money to purchase even a pallet whereon to die.

“ ‘Tis enough to say, that in this condition I was found and relieved by a countryman, who loved and honoured the name I bore, and left no means untried of proving himself worthy of being the friend of that excellent young man, whose further attention to me you already know. At the time when his servant arrived, (with a supply of money so abundant, as to give me the power of being grateful as well as affluent) I was recovering by slow degrees from my sickness, and after that, friends poured in upon me on every side, and the power of gratifying my curiosity to the utmost was presented. Of course, during the remainder of a stay rendered necessary by my health, I availed myself in moderation of the opportunities offered; but the great object of my wishes, the daily subject of my prayers, was



for a re-union with my poor child, and even the humblest home in my native country.

“With the deepest sense of divine goodness, do I now find myself in possession of the blessings by which I am surrounded, and which I have so little merited. Henceforward the humility of Christian obedience, the self-control exercised by sober judgement, and the generosity which weighs the demands of various duties in the scale of even-handed justice, will outweigh in my mind the dazzling pretensions of genius, and the unregulated efforts of enthusiasm.

“Maria, my dear deserted girl, you shall be my monitress, it is meet that a mother who abandoned her duties, should submit to learn them from a daughter who practised her own so well.”

The heart of Maria had been so sincerely affected during this sad detail of her mother's past sufferings, that she could at this moment only reply by pressing the hand she still held to her lips—her looks were an assurance of entire love and confidence in the future, and oblivion of all that was past, so



far as any blame was attached to one whose errors had been punished so severely.

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Having thus brought the "Daughter of a Genius," to the close of that period through which she had with unremitting exertion, and modest firmness, sustained a part in life which is seldom the lot of one so young ; we now take our leave of her, with an earnest recommendation to our young friends, to study her character, and form their own upon the same undeviating principles of religious integrity, and persevering activity.

We will only add for the information of those who have interested themselves in this little history, that Mrs. Albany has at this time the satisfaction of seeing her excellent daughter the happy and honoured mistress of that mansion, on which she once expended so much, and where her early pupils still delight to visit her. This lady, no longer ambitious of being thought a woman of ge-



nus, resides herself at the house to which she married, in the possession of great comfort, and general esteem. . No longer vain, self-willed, or eccentric, her talents are beneficially and therefore happily employed, by uniting literary pursuits with the charitable occupations, and elegant accomplishments, which render a gentlewoman so situated, the ornament and blessing of her own circle, and an example to those beyond it.

THE END.







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