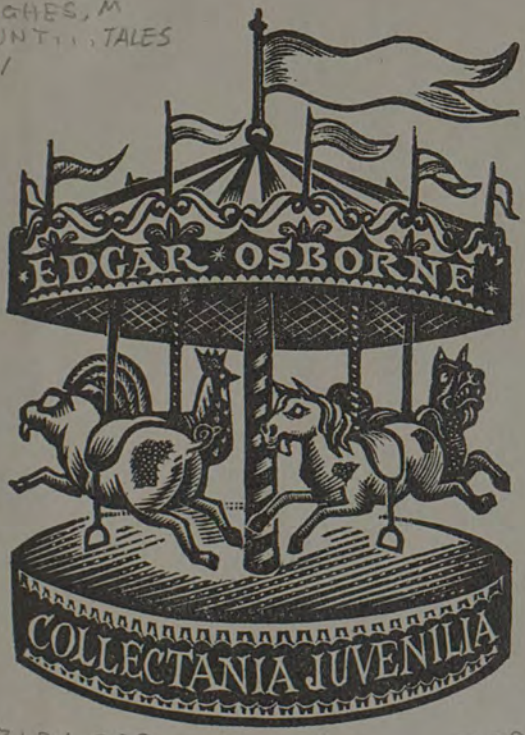
From Aunt Gascoigne
to Thos Campbell
1812



Frontispiece.

Aunt Mary's Tales.

See page 123.

AUNT MARY'S TALES,

FOR THE

ENTERTAINMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

OF

LITTLE GIRLS.

ADDRESSED TO HER NIECES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR DARTON, HARVEY, AND DARTON,
No. 55, GRACECHURCH-STREET.

1811.

Darton, Harvey, and Co. Printers.

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TO MY NIECES.

I WILL not take any more time, my dear little girls, than is absolutely necessary for settling myself at home, after the long visit which I paid at Elm Park, before I hasten to comply with the request, which you made to me at parting, to send you the stories with which I used sometimes to amuse you, during the long winter evenings we spent together. I fear, however, that you will find, on a second perusal, that their only merit depended upon their being applicable, at the time, to some little incidents which had taken place amongst

amongst us; and that now, when the impression is worn off, the stories will appear trifling and insignificant. No apprehension of this kind, however, shall induce me to withhold them from you; convinced that, when the wish to oblige is discernible in what we do, we seldom fail to give pleasure. In transcribing these little stories for your amusement, I shall, myself, have no small degree of gratification; for I shall naturally be led, in so doing, to retrace the circumstances which gave rise to them. The little incidents of the first story, which I have entitled *The Governess*, bring to my recollection the reserved manner in which my dear little girls received me, the first day of my arrival at Elm Park. This gave me considerable concern, till I discovered that it arose from your

having

having heard that your Aunt Mary was an old maid; and, perhaps, from being in the habit of considering all old maids as very stiff and formal, you might take it for granted, that, instead of being pleased with your pursuits and amusements, I should check your gaiety, and be a constant restraint upon your actions. I flatter myself, it was not long before you discovered your error, which was frankly acknowledged; and the tears which were shed at our parting, were a pleasing promise that the old maiden aunt would not meet with a similar reception on her next visit.

I trust that none of the stories will be found contrary to those sentiments of virtue, which it is always my wish to encourage; and I shall feel myself fully rewarded for any trouble which they

may

may have occasioned me, if I may hope that they have been instrumental in implanting one amiable propensity, or correcting one unpleasing disposition in your minds.

It is unnecessary to repeat the circumstances which gave rise to each particular story: the tales themselves will easily recall them to your memories. I shall only, therefore, add, that they were purposely designed for your use; and if they contribute, in any degree, to your amusement or improvement, they will fully answer the desired end of your affectionate aunt,

MARY.

AUNT MARY'S TALES.

CHAP I.

The expected Governess.

EMILY was the daughter of a gentleman who resided in a pleasant village in the neighbourhood of London. She had the misfortune, when quite an infant, to lose her mother, and as her father was obliged, by his business, to spend the greatest part of every day in town, she was left, in his absence, entirely to the care of servants. Her father had frequently been advised, by his friends, to send her to school; but Emily's tears and entreaties never failed to persuade him to give up the idea; and when she sat on his knee in an evening, and talked to him of her amusements, or dressed her dolls by his side when he was busy writing or reading, he was wil-

ling to believe that the day-school which he supposed she regularly attended, was all that was necssary for some years to come. But the little that he saw of Emily, who was very fond of her father, and consequently desirous of appearing to the greatest advantage before him, was very inadequate to give him an idea of her general conduct. The servant under whose care she was placed at her mother's death, was a very weak woman, and showed her silly fondness in the most foolish indulgence; and nothing was too extravagant or improper for her darling, if she chose to beg or cry for it. Emily was a lively child, and liked play much better than work, and, consequently, very seldom chose to go to school, and Kitty could not find in her heart to force her to go against her inclination. She had no doubt, she would say, that they used the poor child very ill, or she never would have such a dislike to school; for she was such an affectionate little creature, that she would soon have become fond of them, if they had been kind to her. But

the

the truth was, that at school Emily was obliged to sit still and attend to her work, and attention, with her, was always a task. "Now, my dear Kitty," she would sometimes say, throwing her arms about her neck, "do let me stay at home to-day? Do smile, and say you will just let me stay this one day? Oh, I am sure you will, for I know you love me; and I do so love you, for you are the very sweetest Kitty in the whole world."

"But what will your papa say, Miss Emily, when he comes home and finds that you have not been at school."

"Oh, papa will not be angry: he will only say, 'Kitty, you are very wrong to let this child have so much of her own way. If she does not go more regularly to school, I must send her to be a boarder.' And then I will climb upon his knee and kiss him, and say that I will not go to be a boarder, and leave my own dear papa. And then he will smile and put his arms about me, and think

no more of the nasty school and stupid lessons."

"No, Miss Emily," replied Kitty, "I know he will not so soon forget it as that, for it was only last week that he gave me a charge about your going to school; so that, if you do stay at home, your papa must not know it. I will say, when he asks why you are at home so early in the afternoon, that I brought you home sooner, that you might be dressed ready to sit down to dinner with him; or that I was afraid of the damp evening, on account of your cough, so I brought you home early."

Thus was this little girl brought up in idleness, and in the habit of thinking that deceiving her father was of no consequence if she could but gain the desired end. And yet she had not herself any wish to deceive, but rather acquiesced in Kitty's proposal than practised it of her own accord. She had not any one near her, to tell her, that those who countenance the falsehood of others, are, themselves, guilty of deceit.

In

In this manner she went on till she had reached her eighth year, when her too indulgent father began to think that she ought to have some superior advantages to any which she had yet enjoyed. Though still as unwilling as ever to part with her from under his own roof, he at length determined upon engaging a governess for her at home, and consequently began to make enquiries amongst his friends, for a person to whose care he could entrust so precious a charge. Not feeling confidence in his own judgment in an affair of such importance, he left the choice to a female friend on whom he could depend; and it was not long before he had the satisfaction of hearing that she had been fortunate enough to engage a lady, whom, in every respect, she believed would be an acquisition to his family.

"Well, Miss Emily," said Kitty, who had heard of these transactions much sooner than her master intended, by listening at the door, and whose pride was piqued at not being thought sufficient for the care of one little girl: "Well, Miss Emily, I have

grand news for you. So you are going to have a governess."

"A governess," said Emily: "what is that? Is it any thing good or pretty."

"Oh, very good and very pretty," replied Kitty, swelling with rage: "that you will soon find; for it is no less than a school-mistress, to live constantly in the house, and to be teaching you from morning to night."

Emily, to whose terrified imagination the idea of having a school-mistress teaching her from morning to night, presented itself with all its horrors, exclaimed, "I will not have a governess. I will tell papa that I do not like to have one, and then I am sure he will not let her come into the house."

"Ah, poor thing," said Kitty, in a tone of condolence, "you are mistaken if you think that will do any good, for it is your papa himself who has engaged her to come; and I heard him promise that he would give you up entirely to her care, and that you should be with her constantly: so that you will have a grand time of it, I can foresee.

But

But do not distress yourself, my dear Miss Emily, and, I warrant you, we shall manage well enough."

Just as Kitty concluded this improper speech, Emily received a summons to attend her papa, which, after having wiped away her tears, and being charged by her maid not to say a word of what she had been told, she obeyed.

"Come hither, my dear little girl," said her father, as she entered the room: "I have sent for you, to tell you what will, I hope, give you pleasure. You know, my love," added he, taking her on his knee, "that I have often told you what a misfortune it was to you, to lose your dear mamma, for she would have taken a great deal more care of you, than it is in my power to do. To make up for this loss, I have met with a lady who is so good as to consent to come and live here and take care of you, as your mamma would have done if she had been alive. I have sent for you now, to tell you that she is coming to-morrow, and I hope she will find my Emily a good and pleasant little girl."

"Oh, papa," cried Emily, her eyes again filling with tears, "do not let me have a governess, for I am sure I shall not like her. I know she will be very cross, and make me very unhappy."

"Why do you think so, my love?" enquired her father: "you do not know any thing of Mrs. Wilson, and you will soon find, when you do know her, that she is not cross; but, on the contrary, will be very good and kind to you."

"I know I shall not be happy with her," replied Emily, pouting: "I am sure I shall hate her, and I will not do any thing she desires."

This was too pert a speech even for her indulgent father to hear without displeasure, and Emily was sent out of the room with a severe reproof. Her grief soon reached the ears of her maid, and consolation was offered in various forms.

"I knew this would be the case," said Kitty to another servant who was near. "I was sure, as soon as I heard of this new scheme,

scheme, that the poor child would be miserable; and it seems I was right, for even my master has begun to be cross with her. But they must have their own way; only I know this, if they begin to confine and punish her, they will soon break her heart: it is what she has never been used to, and cannot bear."

After many reflections on the severity of her fate, Emily was put to bed, and taught to view the approach of to-morrow, as of a day of misfortune; and she sobbed herself to sleep, with the determination to give her new governess as much trouble as possible, in the hope of soon wearying her of the office which she had undertaken.

CHAP. II.

The Butterfly.

"COME, Miss Emily, it is time to get up, or you will not be dressed soon enough to receive your new governess," said Kitty, as she roused the little girl out of a sound sleep, in which she still lay, though the morning was far advanced. "Your papa is not going to town to-day, because he expects Mrs. Wilson; and he desires that you too may be ready, for she is to come very early."

"Oh, why did you wake me," cried Emily, in a peevish tone; and she turned herself over and pulled the bed clothes about her, to compose herself to sleep again. "I did not wish to know it was day, and that it was so near the time for my governess to come. But I will not get up. I will go to sleep again; and then, at least, it will be longer before I see her."

She

She then closed her eyes, and even covered her head to shut out the light, but all in vain: the idea of her governess, and of all the hardships which were to attend her, had been recalled to her recollection, and banished sleep from her eyes. At last, out of humour, and quite tired of ineffectual efforts to sleep, she called her maid to come and help her to dress. But at this operation another grief awaited her. Though hating the idea of seeing her new governess, she had an idea of being smart to receive her. Perhaps, like many other silly children, she fancied she should be looked upon with more *respect* if she was smartly dressed, and did not know that a good-natured countenance and obliging manners, are far more engaging than the finest clothes.

She had a very handsome new frock, which she had never yet worn, but which she was determined to wear on the present occasion. Kitty said it was much too good; but as Emily had never been taught to give up her will to the judgment of others, it was

not

not to be expected from her in the present instance. She was determined to have it on, and snatched at it, to get it out of her maid's hands, who was folding it up, to replace it in the drawer out of which Emily had taken it; but alas, the frock was of too delicate a texture to bear such rough treatment, and in pulling it, she tore the body almost entirely from the skirt. Mortified at being thus disappointed in what she had set her mind so much upon, she burst into a violent flood of tears, and was in this situation when the door opened and her father entered the room.

"What, in tears again, Emily," said he, as he advanced towards her: "I hoped to have found you a good girl this morning, and came to take you to your new governess, who is waiting in the parlour to see you."

This was not likely to stop her tears, which only flowed the faster, at the thought that the dreaded moment was arrived, when she was to bid adieu to all pleasure and amusement. At length, after a little coaxing from Kitty, and some remonstrances from her father, she wiped

wiped her eyes, and having got on the next best frock which her drawer afforded, she was conducted into the parlour. She was not, however, in a humour good enough to endeavour to look pleasant on the occasion; nor could the good tempered voice which accosted her as soon as she entered, induce her to raise her eyes to look at the person who spoke. Had she done so, it is probable that even she, foolish and ignorant as she was, would have been able to discover that there was nothing of the harshness and severity which she expected to have seen. "This is the very weak, silly little girl, Madam," said her father, "of whom you are so good as to take the charge. She has been sadly too much indulged; and I am afraid you will have a great deal of trouble, before you can prevail upon her to be what you wish."

"You must, if you please, Sir," said Mrs. Wilson, taking Emily kindly by the hand and drawing her towards her, "leave us to form our own opinion of each other, and not seek to bias our judgments. We

shall soon get acquainted, and then, I have no doubt, we shall be very good friends."

There was something so encouraging and gentle in the tone of voice in which this was spoken, that Emily was induced to raise her eyes, and take a peep at Mrs. Wilson's face. She thought it looked more pleasant than she expected; and her father at that time going out of the room, she condescended to answer a question or two, which Mrs. Wilson put to her; till at length gaining a little more courage, she fixed her eyes steadily upon her, and said, as if it was the result of an argument which she had held in her own mind: "But I do not like to have a governess."

"Then do not call me governess," said Mrs. Wilson: "call me your friend, and take me to see the little garden which your papa tells me you are so fond of working in." At the mention of the garden, Emily's countenance brightened. "What! do you like gardens," said she eagerly: "and will you let me sometimes work in mine, and not keep me always at my lessons."

"Yes,

"Yes," rep ed Mrs. Wilson, smiling, "I do like gardens, and wish very much to see yours." This was enough for Emily, who led the way, with delight, to the little spot which she called her own: but what was her surprise and pleasure, on arriving there, to find a neat little spade, rake, and watering pot, all lying, as if to be ready for her the next time she came to work in her garden.

"Oh, what pretty little things," exclaimed she, as she took them up to examine them more closely: "how neat they are! I wonder who brought them. I dare say it was papa, for he is always surprising me with something or other."

"No, my dear," said her papa, who just then came up, "it is not to me that you are obliged for this pretty present. It is to your friend Mrs. Wilson, and I hope you will shew your gratitude by being a very good girl, and doing whatever she wishes."

"Yes, papa," replied the delighted little girl, "I will go directly and say a lesson, and will read as well as ever I can."

"I would rather see you make use of your garden tools to-day," said Mrs. Wilson; "and to-morrow, perhaps, when we are a little better acquainted, we may set about work."

With such a set of new play-things, and nothing to do but to amuse herself, it was not any wonder that Emily spent this day very happily, even though it was under the inspection of her governess; or that at night, when Kitty was undressing her to put her to bed, she should endeavour to convince her maid that she was mistaken in her opinion of Mrs. Wilson. "She is not at all cross to me," said Emily, in a tone of delight: "she has let me play all day at what I liked, and has told me what will be best for me to set in my garden; and says she will give me some mignionette, and some lupine and sweet-pea seeds, and that I shall help her to take care of all papa's large garden."

"I am sure I am very glad," said Kitty, in a voice which ill confirmed the truth of her words: "I am very glad, Miss Emily, that you like her so well; but wait till this time

time to-morrow night, and then see how it will be. It is only a trick, to please you at first; but, take my word, you will have to pay for it to morrow. For my part, I hate governesses, and wish there had never one entered this house. I once knew a little girl who was as happy as the day was long, just as you used to be, Miss Emily, with me, till she got a governess; and then she was kept so close at work from morning to night, that it made her very ill, and at last she died."

Again Emily's former fears revived, and again she met Mrs. Wilson the next morning with renewed fear and aversion.

"Now, my dear little girl," said that lady, as the breakfast things were removed, "I have got a pretty little book here, which I think you will like, and I shall be glad if you will read a little to me this morning."

Ah! thought Emily, now my work is to begin, and I suppose I am to be kept working and reading all day long, or at least till papa comes home to dinner; for it is not like school, from which we come home at twelve

o'clock, and do not return again till two. Now I shall always be at home, and always at school."

At this her eyes filled with tears, and she hung lounging over the table, without touching the book which had been laid down for her. Mrs. Wilson took out her work-bag, and began to work without appearing to notice Emily's manner, thinking it better to let her have a little time to recollect herself. But this time, which was so kindly given her, was not used by this silly girl for so good a purpose. She began to consider, that if she did not choose to do what was required of her, there was nobody to force her to it against her will; for her papa would not allow any one to punish her, and if her governess should do so, she could tell him, and then she was sure he would send her away. She therefore determined that she would not read, and on being again asked if she had not any curiosity to know the pretty stories which were in that book, instead of making any reply she amused herself with

pulling

pulling to pieces a damask rose, which was in a flower-pot near her.

It was a beautiful morning in June, and the windows were thrown open. Perhaps it was the pretty rose, which Emily was so idly destroying, that tempted a large gold-eyed butterfly in at one of the windows, for it was not long before it settled upon one of the neighbouring flowers. "Oh, what a beautiful butterfly," exclaimed Emily, as she endeavoured to snatch at it; but the insect was nimbler than she, and was soon at the other end of the room, whither Emily pursued it.

"Do not attempt to catch it, my dear," said Mrs. Wilson: "your touching it will both hurt it and spoil its beauty."

But Emily was determined to have her own way, and continued to follow it from side to side, till at length she succeeded, and caught hold of its beautiful long wings. The poor insect struggled in vain for freedom: Emily held it fast till she got a glass to put it under; but what was her mortification, on seeing it open its wings, to find they no longer retained

retained their former colours. "Oh, how ugly it is now," said she, in a tone of vexation, "and yet I am sure I have not done any thing to spoil its beauty."

"Look at your fingers," said Mrs. Wilson, "and tell me what there is upon them."

"Nothing but some of the dust off the butterfly's wings," replied Emily, looking at the finger and thumb with which she had held her little prisoner. Mrs. Wilson opened a drawer and took out a small frame which had a glass fixed in it, and desired Emily to rub some of the dust off her fingers on a piece of paper, over which she placed the glass, and then to look through it and tell her what she saw.

"I see a great many beautiful feathers," exclaimed the astonished little girl: "how pretty they are! where did they come from?"

"This is the very dust which you rubbed off the poor little butterfly," replied Mrs. Wilson: "the fine colours which you admired so much, were as perfect a plumage as can be seen on the gayest birds; but of so delicate

delicate a texture, that almost the slightest touch will destroy it."

"Oh, dear, what a pity it was to rub it off," said Emily, with an ingenuous look of concern; "but I did not know that I should spoil it: nobody ever told me they were feathers. Pray, Ma'am, how did you find it out."

"By reading, my dear," replied Mrs. Wilson; "and there are a great many other equally curious things to be read of, both about butterflies and many other animals."

"Are there, indeed," said Emily, "I wish you would read them to me just now, for I like to hear of such things as butterflies having feathers on their wings. Do pray read about them to me directly."

"No," said Mrs. Wilson, "you must learn to read them yourself. Besides, you know, you must show a wish to oblige me, and to do as I desire you, before you can expect me to comply with your wishes."

"I know what you mean," said Emily, blushing: "you think I ought not to have caught

caught the butterfly, when you wished me to let it alone; but I did not know it would be any worse for it; and I only thought that you told me not to catch it, to tease and vex me."

"When you know more of me, I hope you will find out that I have better motives than a wish to tease and vex you," said Mrs. Wilson, with a good-tempered smile: "at present, however, I will leave you to examine the poor disfigured butterfly at your leisure, whilst I go to make some arrangements above stairs."

She then went away; for seeing this lesson had made an impression on the mind of her pupil, she thought it best to leave her a little while to herself to think it over, before she directed her attention to any other object.

CHAP. III.

The Scarlet Fever.

THE mild and gentle manner in which Mrs. Wilson had shown to Emily the impropriety of her conduct, was felt very forcibly by the little girl, and excited at the same time a desire for information. On the return of her governess, therefore, to the parlour, she requested, with great earnestness, to be allowed to read a further account of the butterfly. Pleased with this sign of amendment, as well as with the frankness of disposition which it discovered, Mrs. Wilson readily complied with the request, and taking up Mrs. Wakefield's *Domestic Recreations*, gave her the account which it contains of the butterfly, to read; at the same time keeping the insect, which was still under the glass, to show her the different parts which were there described:—"For," said she, "though it is very

very wrong to give pain to any animal, for our pleasure merely; now that this little creature is a prisoner, it will not suffer much more by our keeping it a little longer for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with its structure, particularly as by that means we are likely to be more careful of, and set a higher value on butterflies in future. Emily was delighted with the description of its wing; (which Mrs. Wilson made her understand more clearly by comparing it with those of the living insect;) with its flying in the irregular manner which she had often noticed, for the sake of avoiding the pursuit of birds; and the various changes which it underwent before it arrived at the butterfly state; and still more so, when to this was added an account of the silk-worm, some of which Mrs. Wilson promised her she should keep next year, when she was a little older, and more likely to take care of them. In this manner instruction became gradually pleasing, and but for the frequent insinuations of her maid, she would have been convinced,

vinced, before many days were over, that she had met with a real and kind friend, in her so much dreaded governess. Much judgment, however, cannot at any time be expected from a child of eight years old, and still less from one so much neglected as Emily had been; it was not, therefore, to be wondered at that Kitty still continued to have great influence over her mind; and when it was insinuated that her governess was severe, and expected too much from her, that she should occasionally be inclined to rebel, without taking time to consider the propriety of what was required, or to recollect that Mrs. Wilson's superior age and experience made her a much better judge of what was good for her, than she could possibly be for herself. Emily had been some time under the care of Mrs. Wilson, when that lady was obliged to go to town for a day or two, which she did with great reluctance; for she was unwilling to leave her little charge so long under Kitty's care, particularly as her father, too, happened at that time to be from home. But as busi-

ness of importance required her attendance, and made it, at the same time, impossible for her to take Emily with her, she had no other alternative. On the day on which Mrs. Wilson left her, Emily was engaged to pay an afternoon's visit to a young friend who lived at a short distance; but just as she was ready to set off, she received the following note.

"My dear little girl may be assured that it gives me real concern to be obliged to disappoint her of her promised visit this afternoon. I must, however, request that she will send Kitty to beg Mrs. Groves will have the goodness to excuse her. I hope I shall be able to return home to-morrow or next day, when she shall know my reason for making this request, and will, I have no doubt, think it a good one, and be assured of the affection of her sincere friend,

"JANE WILSON."

Though Emily felt exceedingly disappointed, after she had managed to spell out this

this note, she folded up the paper very composedly, and went to give Kitty her message. Her maid, however, was not inclined to take it so quietly; and on hearing of the mortification which her darling was to undergo, she wondered, for her part, how people could think of disappointing children so, just to please their own fancies. She knew very well it was only a whim, and that though she was taking her own pleasure, she could not find in her heart to let the poor child have any.

"But Mrs. Wilson says, she has a good reason for desiring me not to go," said Emily, "and that she will tell it me when she comes home."

"So she may say," replied Kitty, "but if it had been a very good one, she would have told it at once. But she knew very well that nobody would think it a good one but herself, so she thought it best to keep it to herself."

"I wish I might go," sighed Emily:" I wonder why I may not?"

"And so do I," said Kitty: "I am sure

there is no good reason for your staying at home: it is a beautiful afternoon, and you are ready dressed. Besides, it will be such a disappointment to Miss Groves if you do not go, for she has been talking of your visit all this week."

"But what would Mrs. Wilson say if I were to go against her will," enquired Emily, whose wishes seconded all Kitty's arguments.

"Oh, as to that," said Kitty, "you may easily burn the note, and say you never received it."

"No," said Emily, looking at the note as she held it in her hand, "I must not go, Mrs. Wilson is so very kind."

"Very well, do as you please," said Kitty, "if you think it is so very kind to tell you not to pay a visit which you have been so long promised, without telling you why you had better stay, and I will go with Mrs. Wilson's message." "Stop," cried Emily, as she saw Kitty leaving the room, "you do not need to be in such a hurry. If I thought

Mrs. Wilson

Mrs. Wilson would not know, I think I would venture; for I do not see what harm there would be in it. Do you think there would be any, Kitty," added she, still willing to be persuaded, though against her judgment.

"Harm! no indeed, Miss Emily, if I thought there would be any harm in it, I should be the last in the world who would persuade you."

"Well, then, I think I will go," said Emily, and silencing the last struggle of conscience, she set out, accompanied by her foolish and deceitful maid. On arriving at Mrs. Groves's, however, her pleasure was a little damped by finding her friend very much indisposed; but as she was not too much so to bear company, Kitty left Emily, with a promise to come for her at eight o'clock.

Emily made several attempts at gaiety, but in vain. She thought it was owing to Miss Groves's illness; but the truth was, she was not at peace with herself. She was conscious she had done what was not right, and that idea hung like a load on her mind. She could not take

pleasure in any thing which was going forward; and though Mrs. Groves made many attempts to amuse both her and her daughter, Emily seemed the least willing to be amused of the two, and wished much more anxiously for eight o'clock, than she had done for the time at which she had to pay her visit. At length eight o'clock arrived, and Kitty was not long after. Had Emily met with nothing else to convince her how little good can arise from deceit or disobedience, the uncomfortable state in which she had passed the whole of this evening would have been a sufficient caution to her. But this was far from all she had to suffer. The next day appeared a very long one: neither her garden nor doll could please. Her mind dwelt continually on the idea of Mrs. Wilson's discovering that she had paid the forbidden visit; for she had not yet learned to fear committing a fault, so much as being found guilty of one. Another day, however, passed without bringing Mrs. Wilson, and Emily's uneasiness only increasing with her lengthened stay, she went to bed

very

very early, with the wish to sleep away the time till Mrs. Wilson's return; yet almost dreading to see her, lest her conscious countenance should betray her. She awoke early in the morning with a burning heat on her skin, and such a violent pain in her head, that when she attempted to rise, she found herself unable to sit up. Kitty, terrified at the state she was in, sent immediately for a doctor, who arrived at the same time that Mrs. Wilson returned, and declared that Emily's symptoms were those of a scarlet fever. Mrs. Wilson watched over her pupil with the most anxious solicitude, as she rolled her uneasy head on the pillow; but whenever she addressed her in a voice of tenderness, Emily felt less pain from her indisposition, than from the reflection that she had deceived so kind and good a friend. Before midnight she was quite delirious, and talked incessantly about her having been so naughty a girl; begged Mrs. Wilson to forgive her, and said she knew every body hated her, and that her governess would not come

near

near her, because she had been so disobedient. She was too ill to know that she was watched over with the most anxious tenderness; nor was it till the end of the third day that the fever so far abated as for her to be at all sensible of where she was, or who was near her. At length, after a deep sleep, she opened her eyes and was conscious that her father and Mrs. Wilson were both standing by her bed-side. "Ah, papa," said she, "are you come home again?" Her delighted father, overcome with joy at hearing her speak in a sensible tone, burst into tears. "I knew papa would cry," said Emily in a voice of agitation, "when he knew what a naughty girl I have been." Mrs. Wilson, in a gentle whisper, begged her father to leave the room, lest his emotion should be too much for Emily in her present weak state. On his doing so, she took Emily by the hand and begged her to compose herself, that she might be sooner well; for her father wept for joy at her recovery, and she might be very sure the sooner she was restored, the happier it would make

him.

him. It was not long before she sunk again into a sleep, in which she remained so long, and slept so soundly, that by the time her doctor paid his next visit, he pronounced her out of danger, and Mrs. Wilson told her, with a smile of delight, she might now talk a little if she wished it. "Ah," said Emily, her eyes filling with tears, "you would not speak to me so kindly if you knew how naughty I have been."

"I shall always speak kindly to those who are so sorry for their faults," said Mrs. Wilson, "and will not add, by reproaches, to what you have already suffered."

"But do you know what I have done?" said Emily, who now felt it necessary for the relief her mind, to make an open confession of her disobedience.

"Yes, my love," interrupted Mrs. Wilson, "I know it all, and would rather not put you to the pain of repeating it. I found by a neighbour of Mrs. Groves's, who was in the coach with me the day I went to London, that your friend was ill, and that her complaint

plaint threatened to be a scarlet fever; I therefore thought it quite necessary to prevent your going near her, but was unwilling to mention my reason for doing so, as I knew Mrs. Groves was in a very delicate state of health, and was afraid of alarming her, which I was pretty sure Kitty would do if she was acquainted with the nature of Miss Groves's illness. On my return home, however, when I found the state you were in, I immediately began to suspect what had happened, and on enquiry amongst the other servants, learnt that you had been very much influenced by Kitty's persuasions. Your papa therefore determined to dismiss her from his service, thinking it dangerous, till you were older and wiser, to have so weak and silly a woman in the house. And now," added Mrs. Wilson, kissing Emily's pale cheek affectionately, "the sooner this affair is forgotten, the better."

"Your are very good, Ma'am," said Emily, who felt more from Mrs. Wilson's gentle kindness than she would have done

from

from more severe treatment; "but I am sure I shall never forget it."

"No, my love," said her father, who had returned to the room whilst Mrs. Wilson was speaking, "nor is it desirable that you should. Rather let it live in your remembrance; and if it serves to convince you, in future, of the impropriety of indulging unjust prejudices, or makes you more sensible of the happiness of possessing so kind a friend as Mrs. Wilson, to take care of and instruct you, this severe illness, which has so nearly deprived me of my dear little girl, may prove in the end one of the happiest events of her life."

CHAP. IV.

The Lily.

EMILY'S mind being relieved from anxiety by the ingenuous confession which she had made of her fault, her recovery was very rapid. It was some time, however, before she was strong enough to take any exercise, and whilst in that state, her kind friend never failed in her exertions to amuse her. She selected such entertaining books as were best suited to her comprehension, and found that the *Evenings at Home*, *Parents' Assistant*, and *Juvenile Travellers*, afforded never-failing sources of amusement. At length, to her great joy, she was allowed to go into the garden. "Oh, how pleasant every thing looks!" said she to Mrs. Wilson, as they seated themselves on a garden chair: "I never saw the flowers look so beautiful before. How rich those lilies look: how sweetly the roses

roses smell. I do not think any thing in the world is so pretty as flowers? Do you, Mrs. Wilson?"—"I do not know that I do," replied her friend, "and one great excellence in them, is, that the better we understand their nature, the more we admire them."

"Oh, yes, that is what you and Dr. J—— were saying the other day, when you were talking about botany being such a pleasant study. May I learn botany when I am old enough?"—"You are old enough now," said Mrs. Wilson, "and may begin, if you please, as soon as you are a little stronger."

"Oh, no, I do not think I could understand it yet," said Emily, "for I know there are a great number of hard names, that I could never remember."

"There are certainly some hard names to be learned, before you can make any great progress; but you may begin, by degrees, with such as you can understand and remember, and get acquainted with the hard names afterwards; for botany is of little use, where the hard names are made the chief object."

"But what else is there to learn," said Emily: "it can only be to teach us the hard names of flowers; for the common ones we know already; at least you do, I dare say, for even I know a great number of them."

"Botany," replied Mrs. Wilson, "is to make us acquainted with the peculiar properties of plants, and the uses for which they were designed. All plants were intended, no doubt, to be of service to some animal or other, and those that are very beneficial to one, have often a very contrary effect upon another; on which account, it is necessary that their natures should be understood, to prevent the mischief which ignorance might occasion. But as you seem to think yourself already pretty well acquainted with every thing but the Greek names of flowers, let me hear what account you can give me of the different parts of a plant."

"Which plant?" said Emily.

"No matter which; suppose you take that beautiful scarlet lily which is close by your side."

"Well,

"Well, then," said Emily, hesitating a little how to begin, "I would say it has a root, which keeps it fast in the ground; and a very tall, green stalk, which is almost covered with long, narrow leaves; a number of scarlet flowers form a circle at the top, which look as if the plant had a scarlet crown on its head."

"Very well! this will do for a description of the flower; but there is a great deal more that I want to know. Can you find out no other use that the root is of, besides keeping the plant firm in the ground."

"I do not know what else it can do; for the root of the lily is not like that of the potatoe, and many other vegetables: it is not good for food."

"No," replied Mrs. Wilson, "it certainly does not afford nourishment to any one; but it is the means by which the plant receives its support. The small fibres which are connected with it, may be said to be so many mouths, through which the juices which support the plant are admitted into it. It

has, besides this, another part to perform. You know, as the winter advances, not only do the flowers decay, but the stalk itself soon becomes like a piece of dead straw, which is pulled up and thrown away; and yet, on the return of spring, though there are no fresh plants set, no seeds sown, we have the same sort of beautiful flowers. How do you account for this."

"I do not know," said Emily: "I always thought that the gardener took care to set them again in the spring."

"No, my dear," replied Mrs. Wilson, "the root performs the part of a nurse to the young plant, and keeps it wrapt in its bosom till the warm air of the spring draws its green leaves once more above the ground."

"Oh, how nice that is," exclaimed Emily: I had no idea that the root was of so much use."

"All plants, however," said Mrs. Wilson, "are not preserved in this manner: this is only the case with what are called bulbous, or or round rooted. Some are kept in seeds,

you

you know, and require to be set afresh every year; and others, which have strength to bear the winter, are propagated by means of slips. But now for the stalk." "Oh," interrupted Emily, "it is very easy to see what that is for. A flower would look very strange if it had not a stalk, but was fast to the root."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson, "it would look as you would do, if your head were set upon your feet."

"Oh, dear," cried Emily, laughing at the idea, "what a sad little fright I should be."

"You would, indeed; but that would not be all, for how would it be possible for you to live in such a state. You could then have no blood-vessels, for your blood to flow in; nor lungs, by which you could draw air into, or give it out again from your body. Just so would it be with either this or any other plant; for the stalk contains vessels, through which the sap circulates with the same order and regularity that the blood does through our bodies; and the leaves, at the same time,

serve the purpose of lungs, and as they move backward and forward, either admit fresh air, or assist in carrying off that which has already circulated through the plant. We now come to the blossom, which all agree in admiring, but all are not equally sensible how worthy it is of admiration. You perceive, my love, that besides the leaves of this flower, there are some thin, slender threads, which grow from the middle of the blossom. The centre one, which is rather thicker and stronger than the other, is called the pistil; and the six slender ones, which surround it, are called stamens. At the end of these stamens you see a small oval head suspended: each of these is, in reality, a little box, which, when the flower is perfectly ripe, uncloses, and disperses a quantity of dust, which fixes on the top of the pistil, and by degrees works its way into the flower, and forms that part of the seed from which the young plant springs. You see, therefore, what a variety of contrivances there are, and what wonderful skill the Great Being who made all things

has

has displayed in the formation of this simple flower. And yet this is but a very small part of what you have yet to learn."

"Oh, I should like very much to study botany, if it is any thing like this. When may I begin, Mrs. Wilson?"

"You have already begun, my dear, and have now received your first botanical lesson."

"What! is this botany?" exclaimed Emily; "and is it all like this? then it will be nothing but amusement. But, indeed," added she, looking at her governess with grateful pleasure, "you make every thing I learn, pleasure and amusement."

"I wish to make it as much so as possible," replied Mrs. Wilson, "but you must not expect to find all you have to learn so pleasant and easy. Whatever is desirable or excellent, requires much pains and trouble; but this very circumstance only serves to make it more valuable to us when once acquired. But it is now time, I think, for us to return into the house."

As

As they walked along, Emily appeared to be in deep thought, and at last suddenly exclaimed: "How very clever God must be."

Mrs. Wilson was amused at the abrupt manner in which she discovered the subject of her contemplation, but she was too much gratified at finding the turn which her thoughts had taken, to run the risk, even by a smile, to throw a damp upon her feelings.

"His power is indeed infinite, my dear," said she, "but that is not the greatest of his perfections. His kindness and benevolence are still more admirable. Nothing is so likely to inspire us with confidence in his perpetual care and watchfulness, as an acquaintance with what are called the lower orders of creation; for when we see the attention which has been paid to their preservation, we may, I think, say: 'If all this be done for them, how much more will he not do for us!' "

"They had now reached the house, and Mrs. Wilson,

Mrs. Wilson, as was her custom, left Emily alone, to meditate upon what she had heard, and to impress the new ideas which she had gained, upon her mind.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Hands were made to be used.

MRS. WILSON, from the time of her first acquaintance with Emily, discovered that her faults were such as were more to be attributed to the influence of improper company, than to any real defect in her disposition. It was her wish, therefore, to draw her, as much as possible, from the pernicious habits which the example of Kitty had left, without appearing to do so. For she was afraid, should her pupil discover her wish, it might, perhaps, have a contrary effect; and thought it better to give Emily inducements to prefer her society, rather than to caution her against being with her new maid. She was, besides, particularly afraid of giving her an idea that servants are a lower class of beings, who may be treated in any manner that caprice or inclination may direct. She

wished

wished her rather to consider them as an unfortunate set of fellow-beings, who, from not having been placed in situations in which they could improve themselves, were not desirable companions; but who have, at the same time, a right to every kindness and civility from those who consider themselves as their superiors. After the dismissal of the old favourite, the work was more easy. Kitty's departure had broken many bad habits; and as, during Emily's illness, Mrs. Wilson had taken her so much under her own care, Susan, Kitty's successor, had not had an opportunity of getting into any particular degree of favour. Still, however, it was necessary to put her pupil into a way of doing many things for herself, that she might be more independant of the assistance of servants, and, by that means, acquire a habit of acting for herself, which she thought it desirable that every child, whatever may be its situation in life, should early obtain. Emily had always hitherto been accustomed to have her maid to dress her, so that she had

not

not the least idea of putting on the smallest article of clothing for herself. Mrs. Wilson thought the best way of making her sensible of the propriety of overcoming this indolent practice, would be, to make her feel the inconveniences of it; and induce her to lay it aside herself, instead of insisting upon her doing so. For she was particularly careful not to exact any thing from her, which might tend to strengthen the ideas of mortification and severity, which had been so early associated in Emily's mind with the thoughts of a governess. One morning, when Emily (who slept in a small bed near Mrs. Wilson's awoke, she found that lady already dressed, and preparing to go down stairs. "How early you are dressed this morning, Ma'am," said she.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Wilson, "I am ready earlier than usual, because I fixed with the poor woman I told you of last night, to come and bring her children to me this morning; and she can only come early in the morning, before her sick husband is up."

"Oh,

"Oh, are they coming this morning. I should like, of all things, to see them. May I ring the bell, ma'am, for Susan to come and dress me?"

"Certainly, if you cannot dress yourself."

"Dress myself!" exclaimed Emily in a tone of surprise, "no, indeed, I cannot do that."

"And yet you have as many hands as I have, or even as Susan has, whom you expect to dress you; and are able to use them, when you choose, with as much ease."

"Well, but then you know Susan has nothing else to do but to wait on me," said Emily.

"And is that any reason why you should submit to be helpless, and unable to assist yourself?" asked Mrs. Wilson, in a gentle tone.

"But besides, Ma'am, you know," said Emily, blushing and hesitating, "you know, people would think it so very strange, if I were to dress myself."

"What people?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"Why, all the young ladies that I am acquainted with," replied Emily; "for they all have maids to do every thing for them."

"Then I am sure they are very much to be pitied," said Mrs. Wilson, calmly.

"Oh, I do not think so," replied Emily: "and I remember, Kitty used to tell me of a great many people who wished they were in my situation, and had a maid to wait upon them constantly, as I had."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Wilson, "then pull the bell for Susan, and I hope you will be dressed in time for breakfast. I must now go down to the poor woman and her children, whom I see coming towards the house."

"Oh, dear, is she coming already," cried Emily, pulling her bell in a great hurry: "how very soon she is come. Do pray, Ma'am, make her stay till I come down. I shall be ready in a few minutes," added she, again ringing her bell violently.

"I certainly cannot keep her after I have done with her," replied Mrs. Wilson: "you must

must consider, my dear, that she has a sick husband at home, whom she must attend to."

Emily rang her bell still more violently than before, but Susan did not appear; nor was it till she had rung and called till she was quite out of patience, that her maid came to her.

"Oh dear, how long you have been in coming," said she, peevishly, as her maid entered. Susan gave some trifling reason for not attending sooner, and then began to dress her young mistress. Emily never thought the operation of dressing so tedious before. At length it was completed, and away she ran down stairs; but when she entered the breakfast-room, she found Mrs. Wilson sitting quite alone."

"Where are they?" cried Emily, as she looked round the room.

"Where are who, my dear?" said Mrs. Wilson, raising her eyes from the book she was reading.

"The poor woman and her children,

Ma'am. I was in hopes that they would be here when I came down."

"They have been gone this half hour," replied Mrs. Wilson: "the poor woman was impatient to get back to her husband, who is worse this morning."

"I might have been here half an hour ago, if Susan had but come when I first rang for her; but she is always so long in coming."

"Those who depend upon others for assistance, in what they can do with ease themselves, must make up their minds to meet with many mortifications such as this," replied Mrs. Wilson. Emily had not yet learned to bear disappointments with composure, and she sat down to breakfast with a look of great dissatisfaction. Nor did she show any inclination, after the meal was over, to turn her thoughts to any other object, but sat in gloomy silence; for she had not yet begun, since her illness, to have her regular course of lessons. Mrs. Wilson took her work without noticing her pupil, who got up, and after looking

looking out of the window for some time in silence, said, in a discontented tone: "I am very sorry it rains to-day, it will make the time appear so long. Do not you think this will be a very long day, Mrs. Wilson?"

"No, my dear, I am only afraid it will be too short for what I have to do; for I am going to be very busy." "I wish I was going to be busy," said Emily, in a melancholly tone.

"And so you may," replied Mrs. Wilson, "if you choose to join me in my work. I am going to make some clothes for the poor children who were here this morning."

"And may I help you with them," said Emily, starting up with delight at the idea: "will you let me work at them too."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson, much pleased to see her readiness to join in a work of charity, "you shall hem the bottom of this gown for the youngest child."

Emily's ill-humour was instantly dispersed, and she sat down with great glee to her new employment. "How much do you

think I can do to-day" said she: "I can do more than this hem, I am sure, it is so soft and easy to sew.—I wonder if I can finish it by twelve o'clock.—Do you think I can, Ma'am? If I do, I shall be able to sew a great deal more in the afternoon. Oh, I am very glad to have such nice work; and how I shall like to see the little girl with it on. When will they come, Ma'am, to get their new clothes?"

"I have desired them to come in the evening for all that is finished, for they are now almost entirely without covering." Emily's fingers went quicker at the thought, and Mrs. Wilson saw, with pleasure, the benevolent feelings which urged her forward. Her work was finished, even before the clock struck twelve; and she would have begun something else immediately, if Mrs. Wilson would have allowed her, but she was not thought strong enough to sit so closely at work for so long a time. She was now, however, in good-humour with herself again, and would have been able to see the rain fall

with

with composure. But the sun, at twelve o'clock, broke through the clouds which had enveloped it all the morning, and was now shining forth with mid-day splendour.

Emily ran to the window to enjoy the cheerful scene. Every thing seemed refreshed and invigorated by the soft rain which had fallen, and the inhabitants of the air came flocking from their shelters to the enlivening rays of the warm sun. Emily watched them with delight. "How pretty the birds and butterflies look, as they flutter about," said she: "how I like to see the butterflies flying. Do you know, Ma'am," said she, "I have always liked to see them, ever since the day that I was so naughty, and would catch that which came into the room, when you desired me not to do it."

"That is rather a curious reason for liking to see a butterfly," said Mrs. Wilson, smiling.

"Oh, I do not mean that I like to remember that I was naughty, but that you were so good to me, and showed me, so kindly, your reason for not wishing me to catch it."

"Whilst

"Whilst you take a pleasure in remembering such circumstances, my dear Emily," said Mrs. Wilson, "there is no fear of your soon being able to overcome every bad habit, and becoming, in time, all that your papa and I could wish you."

Emily's countenance beamed with delight. "Do you know, Ma'am," said she, "that I have learned to repeat that address to a butterfly, which you wrote the other day."

"You must not give me the credit of writing it, my dear," said Mrs. Wilson, "for all that I did was to put it into verse, that it might be more easily committed to memory. The original is a translation from Berquin, by Mrs. Barbauld's elegant pen."

"Mrs. Barbauld has written a great many pretty things, I think."

"Yes, the young people of the present age are more indebted to her, and her brother, Dr. Aiken, than to any other persons."

"What! more than to Miss Edgeworth?" asked Emily, who remembered the pleasure her ingenious and fascinating stories never failed to give her.

"I do

"I do not know whether Miss Edgeworth may not have laboured as much, and as usefully, for the improvement of youth," said Mrs. Wilson; "but Mrs. Barbauld, and Dr. Aikin, have the merit of turning the public taste to the plan so ably begun by Mr. Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton;* for till that time, no one seemed to consider it worth while to employ their talents in a way apparently so trifling as that of pleasing and instructing children."

"It was very good, I am sure," said Emily, "for such learned people as they are to take so much trouble."

"It was, indeed," replied Mrs. Wilson, "and I hope those for whom they have done so much, will reward them in the way which, I believe, will be most gratifying to them, by becoming as wise and good as they have endeavoured to make them. But we are forgetting the address to a butterfly, which I suppose you intended to repeat."

"No, not just now," said Emily, "for I have taken a great deal of pains to get it perfectly,

fectly, that I might repeat it to papa, if you have no objection."

"That I cannot possibly have, my dear; and you shall repeat it to him to-day, after dinner, if he have leisure to attend to you."

After dinner Emily was accordingly called upon for her little poem, when, in a clear and distinct voice she repeated the following

INVITATION TO A BUTTERFLY.

COME hither, pretty butterfly,
  And taste the flowers which round me blow;
To hurt you I would scorn to try,
  Or keep you when you wish to go.

No hungry bird shall you devour,
  Nor hand mischievous cause your death;
No nipping frost, no pelting shower,
  Is here to stop your harmless breath.

A friend to all your race am I,
  And love to see you sport around;
Upon the rose's bosom fly,
  Or from the lily's cup rebound.

I love

I love that taper form to view,
  Those light, long wings, with colours gay;
To see you sip the crystal dew,
  Or glitter in the sunny ray.

Short, very short, must be your time,
  With pleasure then that time employ;
A few short days will waste your prime,
  Then, whilst it lasts, your life enjoy.

Come hither, pretty butterfly,
  And let me see you hover near;
A friend to all your race am I,
  And nought from me have you to fear.

Emily had scarcely finished, when a servant came to tell Mrs. Wilson that the poor children were come. "Show them into the breakfast room," said she, "and I will come to them there."

"May I go too, Ma'am?" asked Emily. "Yes," said Mrs. Wilson; "it is a reward which you deserve for working so diligently for them."

"And may I help to dress them? May I dress this pretty little creature?" said she, running to the youngest, who was about three years old."

"No,

"No, my dear," replied Mrs. Wilson, "those who will not take the trouble of dressing themselves, must not expect such an indulgence." Emily cast her eyes on the floor and was silent; but she made no complaint, for she was conscious of the justice of the punishment. She was delighted, however, to see the children's pleasure at their comfortable clothing, and saw them depart with a satisfaction equal to any which she had ever felt in her life before.

The next morning, Emily was up, and had almost dressed herself, before Mrs. Wilson awoke, who was very glad to see that the lesson of the preceding day had had so good an effect; though she thought it better not to say much about it till she saw whether it was any more than a single effort. The following morning, however, she did the same; and Mrs. Wilson had the pleasure of seeing that Emily did not only do it because her governess wished it, but that she seemed to have a satisfaction in the feeling of independance which it gave her.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Morning Present.

ONE morning Mrs. Wilson missed her pupil for a longer time than it was usual for her to be absent, and searched in all the rooms which she was accustomed to sit in, without being able to find her; till, on passing the door of her papa's library, which was half open, she saw Emily sitting upon a little stool, deeply engaged in reading. "Emily," said Mrs. Wilson; but Emily was too much engrossed with her book to hear. Mrs. Wilson went forward, and put her hand gently on the book. Emily started, "That must be a very interesting book," said Mrs. Wilson.

"Oh, yes," replied she, "it is indeed. I am just in the middle of the prettiest story, and am in a great hurry to finish it."

Mrs. Wilson took the book out of her

 hand,

hand, and saw it was the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*. "I am sorry that you have got so much interested in it," said she, "as I cannot now expect you to lay it aside till you have finished it; and it is a book that I do not approve of your reading. I must beg, however, my dear," added she, putting the book again into Emily's hand, "that in future you will not begin to read any book, without first consulting me whether it is proper for you, and you may be fully assured that I will never make any unnecessary objections. But I had almost forgotten the cause of my searching for you, which was to invite you to accompany me to the poor woman's cottage, whither I am going, to take her the remainder of the things which we have made. Should you like to go, or would you rather stay and finish your story?" "I will go, if you please, Ma'am," said Emily, and went to make herself ready for the walk. Emily was very thoughtful all the way, and said very little till they came to the cottage, where Mrs. Wilson told her that

that she might have the pleasure of dressing the little girl in the frock which she had herself made for her. On their return home, Emily went directly up stairs, as Mrs. Wilson supposed, to finish her story; but that lady was not more surprised than gratified, when she saw her return almost immediately, with the book in her hand, which she gave to her governess. "You said you did not approve of this book, Ma'am," said she, "yet were too good, when you saw me interested in it, to desire me to leave it unfinished; but if you please, you shall put it by, for I would rather not read in it any more. I used to think that you refused me things only to tease and vex me; but I am not so silly now, and am glad to have an opportunity of showing you that I have resolution to withstand temptation." Mrs. Wilson kissed her little girl with delight. "My dear Emily," said she, "the pleasure which I feel at this moment, fully repays me for all the trouble and anxiety which you have ever caused me. With such readiness to benefit by the instruction which is given

you, it will need little effort on my part to make you, not only a clever woman, but what is much better, an amiable and virtuous one." Emily's cheeks glowed, and her eyes sparkled with self-satisfaction; and she could not help contrasting her present feelings with the dread and anxiety which she so well remembered to have experienced after her stolen visit to Mrs. Groves's, for which she paid so dearly. Emily had now entirely overcome all her foolish prejudices against her governess: she viewed her in her real character, that of a sensible and affectionate friend; and Mrs. Wilson saw, with pleasure, that her instructions were received with a desire to improve by them, and that, as the mind of her young pupil unfolded, she displayed a variety of amiable dispositions, which were calculated to make her both useful and happy. In this manner the winter was spent, and on the return of spring, Emily expressed a wish to begin the year with attending to the gradual progress of vegetation, and solicited Mrs. Wilson to

assist

assist her in the examination; she discovered, one morning, on her dressing table, a parcel directed to herself, and opening it, found it contained a copy of *Martin's Translation of Rousseau's Botany*, with beautifully coloured plates; a press for dried plants; and a very excellent botanical glass; accompanied by the following letter, which the delighted Emily read with great eagerness.

If Friendship's voice can your attention claim,
  And draw you from what now your thoughts employ,
Trust me, dear girl, 'twill only be my aim,
  To change your pleasure, and increase your joy.

To nature's landscape I would lead the way,
  For health again has brac'd your languid frame;
Where opening plants their half-form'd buds display,
  And the young student's nice inspection claim.

What tho' chill winter, with his icy breast,
  Still lingers near to check the vernal gale;
And spring, half fearful to unfold her vest,
  Scarce throws a flow'ret in the sheltered vale:

Still may the earliest bud of opening flowers,
  Give as much pleasure to the thoughtful mind,
As if the sun had deck'd the rosy bowers,
  Or the full year its fragrant stores resign'd.

Be ours, kind Nature's gradual course to trace,
  From the first shooting of the slender stem;
Each truth it offers, freely to embrace,
  Nor a mean flow'ret's lessons dare condemn.

The embryo nurs'd within earth's ample bed,
  Puts forth its leaves to meet the eye of day;
Woos the soft breeze its opening buds to spread,
  And gains new strength from every genial ray.

By slow degrees the fragrant blossom blows,
  And, rich in beauty, courts the curious eye:
Each grace of Nature's ripen'd beauty shows,
  And lifts the mind in ecstasy on high.

And when the various parts to it assign'd,
  Are all perform'd, and Nature's wrecks appear,
Its fruits to earth's rich lap are all consign'd,
  To wait the coming of another year.

You, dearest girl, are but a budding flower;
  Your youthful mind is opening still to view;
And aided by instruction's genial shower,
  Soon may the flowers of virtue bloom in you.

But

But on your watchful care, still let me say,
  Depends the grace, the fragrance of each charm;
Let not neglect obscure one genial ray,
  But active zeal your youthful bosom warm.

Hope not at once, perfection's heights to gain,
  For wisdom but rewards maturer years;
By slow degrees you only can attain
  That happy state where labour disappears.

Then rich in virtue, rich in every joy,
  You'll bloom your season thro' in calm content;
In the best ends of life your time employ,
  And shed the fragrance of a life well spent.

And when at length, the wintry storm of age
  Your form shall wither, and decay shall bring,
Hope will the pangs of drooping life assuage,
  And lead you forward to an endless spring.

And sweet to me, if such should be my power,
  To teach you thus to view the meanest sod;
To see new beauty in the simplest flower,
  And lead you up to its creating God.

THE END OF THE FIRST TALE.

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THE TWIN SISTERS;

OR,

Envy and Emulation.

CHAP. I.

The Removal.

MRS. SUMMERS was the widow of a rich manufacturer, in the large and populous town of Manchester, who had left to her the entire care and guardianship of two daughters, who were twins, and, at the time of their father's decease, were about ten years of age. On the death of her husband, Mrs. Summers determined, immediately, to retire into the country, and to devote herself to the education of her children, whom the gaieties which she had found herself, when in town, obliged to enter into, had hitherto, caused her

too

too much to neglect. The situation which she fixed upon, was not more than three miles out of the town, but, as it was very early in the year when they took possession of their new house, the little girls, who had never been accustomed to the country, were not at all inclined to admire the change.

"Oh, how dull it will be," they exclaimed, as they looked out of the window, the first morning after their arrival; "there is nothing to be seen but a number of bare trees. There is not one good house in sight: only a few poor cottages. What could induce mamma to come to live here: it is not half so pleasant as Manchester. How dull it will be wandering about here. It is not to be compared to Piccadilly, or the Infirmary Gardens."

"Wait a little, my dears," said their mother, who heard the exclamation, "till the weather be finer; and then, I hope, you will be in better humour with your new habitation."

"But, mamma," said Cecilia, "you know the

the Infirmary is a nice clean walk, either in summer or winter; for when every place else is dirty, it is clean, and we can walk there and see all the company and carriages that pass up and down Piccadilly."

"If company and carriages constitute the whole of the beauty of your landscape, Cecilia," said Mrs. Summers, "I am afraid you will never admire the scenes of this place; but I hope you will find out, before very long, that they are not the only pretty things in the world."

The following day was much finer than the preceding one had been, and the little girls ventured into the garden. The snow-drops and crocuses had raised their heads above the ground, and even dared to unfold their blossoms. The trees were all putting forth their young leaves, and the birds sang so sweetly on the boughs, that every thing wore a different appearance. The little girls ran from flower to flower, raising the heads of the snow-drops, admiring the delicate green shading in the inside of their

snowy

snowy white leaves; and examining the different colours of the crocuses. They then stood listening to the notes of the birds. Sometimes the chirping of the sparrows caught their attention, as they hopped about picking up the bits of hair and wool which were near them; at others, they were attracted by the short, clear whistle of the thrush, or stood watching the lark as it soared on high and filled the air with its warbling.

"How delightfully these birds sing," said Ellen: "I am sure Cecilia, it is much pleasanter to hear them, and see all these pretty flowers, than any thing that is to be met with in Manchester streets."

"Yes," replied Cecilia, "but then we cannot be looking at them constantly, and when we go into the house and it begins to be dark, and the birds are all gone to their nests, what can we have then to amuse ourselves with? for, you know, there will not be any company in the drawing-room for us to go to, as there used to be in the town."

"But I dare say we shall find something instead,"

instead," said Ellen; "do not you think we shall, mamma?"

"I hope so, my dear."

"But nothing that I shall like half so well, I am sure," said Cecilia; "for it is so nice to be in the drawing-room, when it is full of ladies; to listen to all that they are talking about, and to admire all their elegant dresses."

"And to be admired in return, Cecilia, I suppose," said her mother.

"Well, you know, mamma, it is very pleasant to see that people like one, and to be a favourite with them."

"It is first necessary to know why they like you," replied Mrs. Summers: "whether they are well enough acquainted with you, to admire you for qualities that are worthy of admiration, and which would stand the test of more intimate acquaintance. Such favour and admiration are, indeed, worth striving for, Cecilia; but, I fear, a crowded drawing-room is not the most likely place to find them in."

"Mamma," said Ellen, who had gone on a little before them, "see, here is a primrose beginning to bud; how glad I am to see it, they are such pretty flowers: and then it is so soon fine weather after they begin to appear, you know, mamma."

"Yes," replied her mother:

> "Short, very short, is winter's reign,
> Sweet flower, when you return again."

"What book is that in, mamma?" enquired Ellen.

"I know," said Cecilia: "it is in an address to a primrose that I have seen in *Holland's Exercises:* is it not, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear," replied her mother; "and I would advise Ellen to read it, if she do not know it, for it is a very pretty little poem."

"But it is not in the last edition, which you bought for us the other day, mamma," said Cecilia; "I do not like that edition quite so well as I did that which we used to have at school."

"You

"You will like it better when you are a little older, I hope," said Mrs. Summers: "it is a very elegant collection, and contains a great deal of information; particularly on subjects of Natural History, which it is very desirable that every one should be acquainted with."

"I liked some things very much that I read in it yesterday," said Ellen: "there was the Butterfly's Ball, about all the little bees and spiders, and beetles going to it; and Susan's Lamentation for her Lamb; and Aurelia and the Spider: is not it a very pretty fable." "And the Tulip and the Myrtle," said Cecilia. "How the conceited tulip destroyed itself with its pride; was it not rightly served, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear," replied her mother, "and I hope it will serve to convince you, Cecilia, that beauty is of little value, when unaccompanied with amiable manners."

"I do not know why it should be a lesson to me," said Cecilia, pouting, "any more than to Ellen. It is as necessary that she

should learn to be amiable, as that I should."

"But you know, Cecilia," said Ellen, in the sweetest tone of good-nature, "you are much handsomer than I am, so that you are in greater danger of setting too high a value on beauty."

This compliment to her beauty, though generally very gratifying to her, did not reconcile Cecilia to the idea of her mamma's directing a lesson to her in particular; and she walked on, without joining any more in the conversation, till their return to the house.

These two sisters, though twins, and though they had never been separated, were of very different dispositions. Cecilia, who, because she had entered the world about half an hour before her sister, gave herself the title of the eldest, was generally thought very handsome, and when they first were seen, always excited the most admiration. Her abilities were good, and her manner sprightly; and

and as she was exceedingly fond of admiration, she took great pains to lay herself out to obtain it; and with those who only saw her for a short time, she was always successful in her efforts; whilst Ellen, who, from her gentle disposition, never sought to intrude herself upon the attention of strangers, sat quietly by, and felt as much pleasure in the admiration bestowed upon her sister, as she could possibly have done, had she been herself the object of it.

Cecilia, on the contrary, frequently lost much of what she had before gained, by the mortification which was always visible on her countenance when any thing particular happened to call the gentle Ellen into notice. They were both exceedingly attached to their mother, and Cecilia loved Ellen, excepting when she appeared at all in the character of a rival, which had not been often the case; for Ellen had not the inclination to push herself forward, and no one hitherto had taken much pains to draw forth her abilities. Her affection, too, for her sister,

was so entirely free from any tincture of selfishness, that she delighted in her praises, and took every opportunity to make her appear to advantage.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Evening Amusements.

THE evening was closing in, and one of the long nights which the little girls were afraid of, was near at hand, when their mother invited them to join her, with their milk, at the tea table, instead of taking it by themselves in another room, as they had always before been in the habit of doing. "You are now my only companions," said she, with an affectionate smile, "and as I depend upon you for all the pleasure and amusement which I hope for, I expect, on that account, you will exert yourselves for my entertainment."

"Nay, mamma," said Cecilia, "I think you are more likely to entertain us; for you know you have seen a great deal more than we have. You might give us an account of some pretty play that you have seen, or something of that kind."

"I might

"I might so," replied her mother, "and shall do it, if I find that we are at a loss for amusement. But you must let me have my tea first; for you know I am very fond of that sociable meal." Ellen's eyes beamed with delight as she placed her chair at the table. It was the highest treat she could enjoy, to be with her mother when she had leisure to attend to her, which had not often been the case; and she had frequently felt great regret, when she saw her so much engaged with company, that a passing word, or an occasional act of endearment, was all she could obtain. "Well, Ellen," said Mrs. Summers, (taking up her work when the tea-things were removed, whilst the little girls produced their drawing utensils,) "have you read the little poem which I recommended to you this morning?"

"Yes, mamma," answered Ellen, "and like it very much; for it just gives such a lively picture of the appearance of the first primroses as I think they deserve; only I cannot find out why the woodcock should dislike them."

'It

"It does not mean that it has any objection to the flower itself, my love," replied her mother, "but only that the season which brings the primrose forward, is not agreeable to the nature of the woodcock. You see it says,

'It flies to northern Lapland's darker skies.'"

"It is very strange," said Ellen, "that it should dislike fine weather."

"And still more strange, I think," said Cecilia, "that it should know where to find cold. I should not have thought birds had so much sense."

"There are very few animals which possess more of that extraordinary quality called instinct, than birds do," said Mrs. Summers, "of which we have many wonderful instances, particularly among what are called migratory birds."

"Which are they, mamma?" said Ellen.

"Such as the woodcock," answered her mother, "that repair to different countries, at different seasons of the year. Swallows, too, which are mentioned in the next line by the

the name of *progne*, (which is a poetical title for that tribe,) are very remarkable for that instinct, which enables them to find their way, many thousand miles, across the sea; for though it is, I believe, proved almost beyond a doubt, that they usually spend their winters in Africa, the same birds have been known to return to the same nest for many successive years."

"Dear me," said Cecilia, "can that be possible, mamma?"

"I have no doubt, my dear, that it is not only possible, but really true; and indeed, any one who has observed with attention their manner of building their nests, will have no difficulty in believing any other circumstance, however extraordinary, which is recorded of them."

"I think, mamma," said Ellen, "there must be some birds' nests somewhere about our house top; for I see them so often flying up, and hear them make such a twittering noise."

"Very probably," replied Mrs. Summers,

"for

"for swallows frequently build under the eaves of houses, which afford a shelter from the weather. The outside of their nests is formed of clay or mud, and fastened on to the straight wall, without any thing beneath for a support; so that you may suppose it must require some contrivance to manage to build them. Mr. White, in his *Natural History of Selbourne*, assures us, that the ingenious little architect has too much sense to proceed too fast with his work; but builds only in the morning, and then leaves it for the rest of the day to harden, before he puts any more on, lest it should be unable to sustain its own weight."

"It is very astonishing," said Cecilia: "one would almost imagine that they understood what they were doing, and the reason of it."

"It seems very like it, indeed," said her mother: "the birds which build in trees, however, show still more skill and workmanship in forming their little habitations. It is exceedingly amusing to observe how carefully

fully they first collect together the necessary materials; sticks, moss, or straw, for the outside, which form a good foundation, and which, too, so nearly resemble the colour of the branches among which they build, that they are not easily discovered. They then line the nest with wool or down, which makes a soft, comfortable bed, for the tender, unfledged young. Hurdis speaks of this piece of workmanship very beautifully, in one of his poems, and in language which I think you will be able to understand."

"Mark it well, within, without.
No tool had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join: his little beak was all.
And yet how neatly finish'd. What nice hand,
With every implement or means of art,
And twenty years' apprenticeship to boot,
Could make me such another? Fondly then
We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill
Instinctive genius foils."

"I understand all but *instinctive genius*, mamma; but I do not know what that means," said Ellen.

"It

"It means," answered Mrs. Summers, "that power of acting, which is bestowed by nature, on animals that do not possess reasoning faculties; and which enables them to act in the manner best suited to promote their good: as, for instance, it is necessary, you know, that they should have nests to rear their young in, and as they have no other way of obtaining them, but making them themselves, that kind Being, who takes care of, and provides for the meanest of his creatures, has implanted in them the propensity of preparing for their young ones beforehand, as well as of taking care of them afterwards, whilst in their infant state."

"Thank you, mamma, I understand now, I think, very well, and can tell better what it was that made the hen, which brought out the young chickens yesterday, manage so nicely about feeding them. I went to-day to see them fed, and was quite surprised to observe how carefully she broke their food into small pieces for them, and then called them to eat it, with a chucking noise, which

 they

they seemed perfectly to understand. And then, do you know, mamma, whilst they were eating, a very dark cloud came over the sun, and made it look as though it were going to rain, when she ran under a shelter, and collected them all under her wings, so snugly, till the cloud was gone, and then she ventured out again."

"Many such pleasing instances may be observed, by attending to the manners of animals, of the care which kind nature has taken, to implant in them a tenderness for their helpless offspring."

"But I have heard, mamma," said Cecilia, "that the cuckoo lays its eggs in other birds' nests, and leaves them to be hatched, and the young ones provided for, by them."

"So it has been said," replied Mrs. Summers, "and doubtless, upon very respectable evidence; but it seems so contrary to the general principles of nature, that I own I am inclined to give my judgment in favour of those gentlemen, who, upon apparently equal

equal authority, affirm, that cuckoos rear their young in the same way that other birds do. There is something quite unnatural in the account which Mr Jenner gives, in his communication to the Royal Society, of the poor little hedge-sparrow being thrown out of its own nest by the young cuckoo, and left to perish, whilst its enemy was fed and nourished in its stead. Not but that the parent bird would be as likely to provide for one, as another; but Nature, I believe, is too benevolent in her designs, to permit such instances as this often to happen."

"If Mr. Jenner's account be true," said Ellen, "the hedge-sparrows, and the other birds that it visits, have very little right to welcome the sound of the cuckoo's voice."

"No," said her mother, "they would rather, one might suppose, show as strong signs of terror, as many do at the approach of a bird of prey."

"Do they know a bird of prey from any other?" asked Ellen.

"Yes, almost all weaker birds discover

great signs of fear at the appearance of one. There is a very remarkable instance, mentioned in *Buffon's History of Birds*, of the Abbé de la Pluch's observation of a turkey hen," continued Mrs. Summers, taking down the volume, and reading the following passage: "I have seen a turkey-hen, when at the head of her brood, send forth the most hideous scream, without knowing as yet the cause: however, her young, immediately when the warning was given, sculked under the bushes, the grass, or whatever seemed to offer a shelter or protection. They even stretched themselves, at their full length, on the ground, and continued lying as motionless as if they were dead. In the mean time the mother, with her eyes directed upwards, continued her cries and screaming as before. On looking up to where she seemed to gaze, I discovered a black spot just under the clouds, but was unable, at first, to determine what it was: however, it soon appeared to be a bird of prey, though, at first, at too great a distance to be distinguished. I have

seen

seen one of these animals continue in this violently agitated state, and her whole brood pinned down, as it were, to the ground, for four hours together, whilst their formidable foe has taken his circuits, has mounted and hovered directly over their heads At last, upon disappearing, the parent bird began to change her note, and send forth another cry, which, in an instant, gave life to the whole trembling tribe; and they all flocked round her, with expressions of pleasure, as if conscious of their happy escape from danger."

"Little things," said Ellen, "how cunning it was of them to hide themselves so snugly."

"Yes," said her mother, "they were wiser than the ostrich is said to be; for when it is hunted, and is quite exhausted with attempting to make its escape, it hides its head in the sand, and fancies, I suppose, that it is not to be seen, because it cannot itself see."

"That is very stupid of it," said Cecilia.

"It is not a stupid bird, however," re-

plied Mrs. Summers, "but one, if I may so speak, of a most amiable disposition."

"It must be a very large bird," said Cecilia, "if the feathers, which are called ostrich feathers, are from it."

"It is the largest bird that is known," answered her mother; "but as you do not seem to know much about it, and as there is a very interesting account of it in *Bingley's Animal Biography*, you shall read it to us." She then gave Cecilia the book, who read the following account of

THE BLACK OSTRICH.

"The ostrich stands so very high, as to measure from seven to nine feet from the top of the head to the ground: from the back, however, it is seldom more than three or four feet, the rest of its height being made up by its extremely long neck. The head is small, and, as well as the greater part of the neck, is covered only with a few scattered hairs: the feathers of the body are black and loose; those

those of the wings and tail are of a snowy white, waved and long, having here and there a tip of black. The wings are furnished with spurs: the thighs and flanks are naked: and the feet are strong, and of a grey brown colour.

"The sandy and burning desarts of Africa and Asia, are the only native residences of the black ostriches. Here they are seen, in flocks so large as sometimes to have been mistaken for distant cavalry. There are many circumstances in the economy of this animal, which show it to be very different from the rest of the feathered race. It seems to form one of the links of union, in the great chain of nature, that connects the winged with the four-footed tribes. Its strong jointed legs, and, if we may venture so to call them, cloven hoofs, are well adapted both for speed and defence. The wings, and all its feathers, are insufficient to raise it from the ground; its camel-shaped neck is covered with hair; its voice is a kind of hollow, mournful lowing; and it grazes on the plain with

with the qua-cha and the zebra. It has been commonly believed, that the female ostrich, after depositing her eggs in the sand and covering them up, left them to be hatched by the heat of the climate, and the young to provide for themselves. The author of the book of Job alludes to the ostrich, 'which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain, without fear; because God had deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.' Late travellers have, however, assured us, that no bird whatever has a stronger affection for her offspring than this, and that none watches her eggs with greater assiduity. It happens, probably, in those hot climates, that there is less necessity for the continual incubation of the female——."

"What is incubation, mamma," interrupted Ellen.

"It

"It means, the act of sitting upon eggs to hatch them," replied her mother: "I am glad, Ellen, that you do not pass over a word which you do not know the meaning of: it is the only way to understand what you read, and, consequently, to enjoy it; but you had better, the next time, wait till the end of a sentence."

Cecilia then proceeded: "She frequently leaves her eggs, which are in no danger of being chilled by the weather; but though she sometimes forsakes them by day, she always carefully broods over them at night. And Kolben, who saw great numbers of these birds at the Cape of Good Hope, affirms, that they sit on their eggs like other birds, and that the males and females take this office by turns, as he had frequent opportunities of observing. Nor is what is said of their forsaking the young after their quitting the shell, more true; on the contrary, they are not able to walk for several days after they are hatched. During this time, the old ones are very assiduous in supplying them with grass

grass and water, and very careful to defend them from danger: they will even, themselves, encounter every risk in their defence. That ostriches bear great affection to their offspring, may be inferred from the assertion of Professer Thunberg, that he once rode past the place where a hen ostrich was sitting on her nest; the bird sprang up and pursued him, evidently with a view to prevent him noticing her eggs or young. Every time he turned his horse towards her, she retreated ten or twelve paces; but as soon as he rode on again, she pursued him, till he had got to some considerable distance from the place from which she started.

"The nest appears to be merely a hole in the earth, formed by the birds trampling in it for some time, with their feet. If the eggs are touched by any person in the absence of the birds, they immediately discover it at their return by the smell; and not only desist from laying any more in the same place, but trample all those to pieces with their feet, that are left. The natives of Africa, therefore, are very careful

careful, in taking part of the eggs away, not to touch any of them with their hands; but always drag them out of the nest with a long stick.

"The ostrich itself is chiefly valuable for its plumage, and the Arabians have reduced the chase to a kind of science. They hunt it, we are told, on horseback, and begin their pursuit by a gentle gallop; for should they, at the outset, use the least rashness, the matchless speed of the game would immediately carry it out of their sight, and, in a very short time, beyond their reach. But when they proceed gradually, it makes no particular effort to escape. It does not go in a direct line, but runs first on one side, and then on the other: this they take advantage of, and, by rushing directly onwards, save much ground. In a few days, at the furthest, the strength of the animal is exhausted; and it then either turns on the hunters, and fights with desperation, or hides its head, and tamely receives its fate. Sometimes the natives conceal themselves in the skin of one

of

of these birds, and, by this means, are able to approach near enough to surprise them. Some persons breed them up in flocks; for they are tamed with very little trouble, and, in their domestic state, few animals may be rendered more useful. Besides the valuable feathers they cast; the eggs they lay; their skins, which are used by the Arabians as a substitute for leather; and their flesh, which many esteem as excellent food: they are sometimes made to serve the purpose of horses.

"In a tame state, it is very pleasant to observe with what dexterity and equipoise they play and frisk about. In the heat of the day, particularly, they will strut along the sunny side of a house, with great majesty, perpetually fanning themselves with their expanded wings, and seeming, at every turn, to admire and to be in love with their shadows. During most parts of the day, in hot climates, their wings are in a kind of vibrating, or quivering motion, as if they were designed, principally, to assuage the heat. They are very tractable and familiar towards persons who

are

are acquainted with them, but often fierce towards strangers, whom they frequently attempt to push down, by running furiously upon them; and when these happen to be overthrown, they not only peck at them with their bills, but strike at them with their feet with the utmost violence.

"During the time that Mr. Adanson was at Podor, (a French factory on the south bank of the river Niger,) he says, that two ostriches, which had been about two years in the factory, afforded him a sight of a very extraordinary nature. These gigantic birds, though young, were nearly of the full size. 'They were,' he continues, 'so tame, that two little blacks mounted, both together, on the back of the largest. No sooner did he feel their weight, than he began to run as fast as possible, and carried them several times round the village, as it was impossible to stop him otherwise than by obstructing the passage. This sight pleased me so much, that I wished it to be repeated, and, to try their power, directed a full-grown negro to mount the smallest,

 and

and two others the largest. This burden did not seem at all disproportioned to their strength. At first they went at a pretty high trot, but when they became heated a little, they expanded their wings, as though to catch the wind, and moved with such fleetness, that they seemed not to touch the ground. Every one must, some time or other, have seen a partridge run, consequently, must know, that there is no man whatever able to keep up with it; and it is easy to imagine, that if this bird had a longer step, its speed would be considerably augmented.

"The ostrich moves like the partridge, with both these advantages; and I am satisfied, that those I am speaking of would have distanced the fleetest race-horses that were ever bred in England. It is true, they would not hold out so long as a horse, but, without doubt, they would be able to perform the race in less time. I have frequently beheld this sight, which is capable of giving an idea of the prodigious strength of an ostrich; and of showing what use it might be

be of, had we but the method of breaking and managing it as we do a horse.' "

"I wonder," said Cecilia, as she laid down the book, "that so strong a bird as the ostrich is, should submit to be ridden upon and treated so familiarly.

"It is always a sign of real greatness," answered her mother, to be docile and tractable. Those animals which possess great strength, are too conscious of their power, to find it necessary to display it on trifling occasions. So it is too with human beings: those who possess real merit, take the least pains to display it: their actions speak for them, and nothing more strongly shows their superiority, than their gentle, unostentatious behaviour. It is one of the many marks which we may constantly observe, of the care which Providence ever takes for the safety and comfort of its creatures; for what kind of a world should we have, were those animals which are as powerful as the ostrich, as violent and vindictive as the humming-bird."

"I have seen a humming-bird," said Ellen, "and a beautiful little creature it is; but I did not know that it was passionate."

"It is remarkably so," said Mrs. Summers; "but, as both its temper and size form a complete contrast to the noble bird Cecilia has just been reading about, you shall, if you please, give us the account of it which is contained in the same volume. We will take the two extremities of the line, the largest and the smallest bird, and can fill up the space between some other time: for there are many others, equally interesting and curious, which we have not noticed."

Ellen willingly obeyed, and read the following account of the humming bird: "The length of this diminutive creature is a little more than three inches; and that of its bill, three quarters of an inch. The male is green and gold on the upper part, with a changeable copper gloss; the under parts are grey. The throat and fore-part of the neck are of a ruby colour, in some lights as bright as fire. When viewed sideways, the feathers

appear

appear mixed with gold, and beneath of a dull garnet colour. The two middle feathers of the tail are the same as the upper plumage; and the rest are brown. The female, instead of the bright ruby throat, has only a few obscure, small, brown spots, and all the outer tail feathers, which in the one are plain, are, in the other, tipped with white. The bill and legs are black in both sexes.

"This beautiful little creature is as admirable for its vast swiftness in the air, and its manner of feeding, as for the elegance and brilliancy of its colours. It flies so swiftly that the eye is incapable of following it, and the motion of its wings is so rapid as to be imperceptible to the nicest observer. Lightning is scarcely more transient than its flight; nor the glare more bright than its colours. It never feeds but upon the wing, suspended over the flower it extracts nourishment from; for its only food is the honied juice, lodged in the *nectaria* of the flowers, which it sucks through the tubes of its curious tongue. Like the bee, having

exhausted the honey of one flower, it wanders to the next, in search of new sweets. It admires most those flowers that have the deepest tubes; and in the warmer parts of America, and some of the West India Islands, which are the countries that these diminutive birds inhabit, whoever sets plants of this description before his windows, is sure to be visited by multitudes of them. It is very entertaining to see them swarming around the flowers, and trying every tube, by putting in their bills. If they find their brethren have been before-hand, and robbed the flower of its honey, they will, in a rage, if possible, pluck it off, and throw it on the ground: sometimes they tear it in pieces.

"The most violent passions agitate, at times, their little bodies. They have often dreadful contests, when numbers happen to dispute the possession of the same flower: they will tilt against one another with such fury, as if they meant to transfix their antagonists with their long bills. During the fight, they frequently pursue the conquered into the apartments

ments of those houses, the windows of which are left open; take a turn round the room, as flies do in England; and then suddenly regain the open air. They are fearless of mankind, and, in feeding, will suffer persons to come within two yards of them; but, on a nearer approach, they dart away with wonderful swiftness. Mr. St. John says, 'that their contentions often last till one or other of the combatants is killed.'

"This bird most frequently builds on the middle of a branch of a tree, and the nest is so small, that it cannot be discovered by a person standing on the ground; any one, therefore, desirous of seeing it, must get up to the branch, that he may observe it from above. It is from this circumstance, that the nests are not more frequently found.

"The nest is quite round: the outside, for the most part, composed of the green moss common on old pales and trees; and the inside, of the softest vegetable down the birds can collect. Sometimes, however, they vary the texture, using flax, hemp, hairs, and other similar materials

materials. The female lays two eggs, of the size of a pea, which are white, and equal in thickness at both ends.

"Ferdinandez Oviedo, an author of great repute, speaks, from his own knowledge, of the spirited instinct even of these diminutive birds, in defence of their young. When they observe any one climbing the tree in which they have their nests, they attack him in the face, attempting to strike him in the eye, and coming, going, and returning with such swiftness, that a man would scarcely credit it, who had not himself seen it. The humming-bird is seldom caught alive; a friend of M. du Pratz, had, however, that pleasure. He had observed one of them enter the bell of a convolvolus, and as it had quite buried itself to get to the bottom, he ran immediately to the place, shut the flower, cut it off the stalk, and carried off the bird a prisoner. He could not, however, prevail upon it to eat, and it died in the course of three or four days."

"I should not have thought," said Ellen, pausing,

pausing, "that a convolvolus was large enough to cover it so entirely."

"That flower, no doubt, arrives at much greater perfection in those countries," replied her mother, where they have so much sun, for which, you know, they show such a marked partiality." Ellen then proceeded: "Charlevoix informs us, that he had one of them in Canada, for about twenty-four hours. It suffered itself to be handled, and even counterfeited death that it might escape. A slight frost in the night destroyed it. 'My friend, Captain Davis, informs me,' says Dr. Latham, in his Synopsis, 'that he kept these birds alive for four months, by the following method: he made an exact imitation of some of the tubular flowers, with paper fastened round a tobacco-pipe, and painted them of a proper colour: these were placed, in the order of nature, in the cage in which the little creatures were confined: the bottoms of the tubes were filled with a mixture of brown sugar and water, as often as emptied; and he had the pleasure of seeing them

them perform every action; for they soon grew familiar, and took their nourishment in the same manner as when ranging at large, though close under the eye.' "

Just as Ellen had finished the last sentence, their maid came to ask if they were ready for bed. "Dear me! surely it is not bed-time yet," exclaimed Ellen. "It is beyond your usual time," answered Mrs. Summers, "for it is half-past eight."

"How very quickly the evening has gone," said Cecilia.

"And yet we have had neither drawing-room nor company, you see, Cecilia," said her mother, smiling.

"No, indeed, mamma; but yet I am sure I have been as happy as I could have been with a room full of company."

"And I much happier," said Ellen.

"Company is very pleasant occasionally," said Mrs. Summers, "but for real happiness we must depend on our own domestic circle. Such pleasures as home and books afford, have the great advantage attending them,

them, that they are almost always within our reach; and the more we have of them, the more they are enjoyed. But good night, my dears, for we must not keep Jenny waiting."

"Good night, mamma," replied the little girls, in one voice, and kissing their mother with affectionate warmth, they followed the servant who attended them up stairs, talking all the way of the pleasant evening they had spent.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Birth-day.

MRS. SUMMERS had often seen, with concern, a fretful peevishness of temper to which Cecilia was liable, and, desirous of overcoming it as soon as possible, she determined upon a plan, which, perhaps, had she taken more time to examine the cause of the evil she wished to correct, she would not have adopted. Ellen's sweetness of temper needed no amendment; but that easiness of disposition was the cause, sometimes, of a want of exertion which only required a motive; so that their mother was in hopes, that to let them have their lessons regularly, and be paid for them with tickets, for which a prize should be held out at certain periods, would have the double effect of inducing Cecilia to keep a guard on her temper, (as she should make her forfeit for any failure in that respect,)

respect,) and be a stimulus for Ellen to industry. "I will reward you for every thing you do well," said she to them, "and you shall pay me for whatever you do amiss; and whoever has the greatest number of tickets, at the end of three months, shall receive a prize. But remember, Cecilia, that peevishness and ill-temper must expect to pay a forfeiture; and you, Ellen, must suffer for idleness, whenever you indulge in it. Your first prize shall be a copy of Aikin's *Woodland Companion*, to give to your cousin Ann, who, you know, was wishing much for one, the other day." "Oh! how glad I shall be to give her one," thought Cecilia, "for she will think me so generous to work for her."

"How I shall like to give her this book, that she wishes so much for," said Ellen to herself, "for she is so good to us, and always so ready to oblige us." For some weeks the little girls went on very well; there was nothing particular to excite Cecilia's jealousy, for she was much quicker than her sister,

 and

and generally contrived to keep before her in her number of tickets; so that she found no difficulty in preserving her temper. Her mother observed, with great pleasure, the improvement that had taken place, and flattered herself, that the behaviour which she had been induced for a time to assume, might, perhaps, before the fixed period was elapsed, have become so much a habit, that it would require little effort, afterwards, to persevere in it. But alas, she had not gone to the root of the disorder, so that the cure was but in appearance, not in reality: as a thin gilding, put on by the hand of a skilful workman, which gives the glittering trinket the appearance of real gold, will, on a slight friction, soon wear off, and show the baser metal underneath.

Mrs. Summers had an intimate friend, who was a lady of considerable consequence in the town, and was particularly a favourite amongst young people, who were generally desirous of gaining her good opinion; and none were more emulous of that distinction, than

than Cecilia, who took great pains, in her presence, to appear to advantage. Mrs. Greenhill, (for that was this lady's name,) whose amiable mind delighted in doing good, and whose ample fortune enabled her to gratify the benevolont propensities of her excellent heart, had established a school, at her own expence, and under her own superintendance. She clothed and educated twenty girls, whom she afterwards placed in situations, either as servants or apprentices. She had so often been gratified by hearing of the good conduct of those who had formerly been under her care, that she was desirous of giving them a public testimonial of her approbation; as well to encourage them to persevere in the course they had begun, as to induce the younger ones to follow their footsteps. For this purpose, she determined to have a public day, and invite all who had ever been under her care, as well as her present scholars: to the former, those who had remained two years in the same situation, and could bring a good character from their

masters or mistresses, she purposed giving a silver medal; and to the latter, small prizes, according to their different deserts. This *fête* she fixed to take place on Ellen and Cecilia's birth-day, at which time she had always been in the habit of planning some amusement for them, of one kind or other. The long looked for day at length arrived, and the little girls set themselves to their lessons very early, that they might not be in any danger of being kept a minute longer than twelve o'clock, which was the time their mamma had fixed for their setting out. But Cecilia's head ran too much upon the expected pleasure of the day, for her to do her work well. Her French translation was incorrect; and in stretching over the table for something she wanted, she flirted her pen full of ink over her copy-book. This caused a failure of two tickets, and put her a little out of temper. As she evidently struggled, however, to overcome any expression of the peevishness which she felt, her kind mother was desirous of giving her an opportunity of recovering herself, and gave

gave them leave, because it was their birth-day, to put by the remainder of their lessons, and go and play for half an hour in the garden. "But be sure," said she, as they were going out, "not to go too near the green-house plants, which are set out on rather an unsteady frame, lest, in your play, you should hurt the verbinium which I have been rearing for Mrs. Greenhill. They readily promised to be careful, but when they got into the garden, the only game which Cecilia was inclined to play, was that of ball; and there was not any walk so suitable for it, as that in which the plants stood, and to which they repaired. "But we must not go there, lest we should hurt mamma's plants," said Ellen, recollecting her mother's charge, as soon as she saw them.

"We shall not do them any harm," said Cecilia: "we can stand at the bottom of the walk, and then we shall not touch them."

"We had better not go into the walk at all, and then we shall be sure to be safe," said the prudent Ellen.

"That is just the way you always do, when I want any thing; you are never willing to do what I wish you."

"No, not when you want me to do what mamma forbids; and you know, Cecilia, that is the case now."

"No, indeed," said Cecilia, colouring with passion, "I am as unwilling to disobey mamma as you can be, only I do not make such a show of my obedience. But if you will not play where I like, you shall not play at all," added she; and snatching her sister's ball, roughly, out of her hand, as she spoke, and turning hastily round to run off with her booty, she slipped her foot, and fell against the frame, which she overturned, with all its blooming beauties. Ellen hastened, with her usual kindness, to help her up; but no sooner had Cecilia recovered her feet, than the fear of being seen by her mother seized her, and she ran down another walk, as fast as possible, leaving poor Ellen to raise the broken plants at her leisure. As she turned the corner of the walk, she saw the gardener's son

sitting

sitting weeding, who, her fears immediately persuaded her, would be the person to betray her to her mother. "If I can prevent him from telling mamma," said she to herself, "I am sure Ellen will not, for she never tells of any thing that is amiss; and if mamma should ask me, I can say I do not know any thing about it, so that she will think it has been blown down by the wind, or something of that kind. As these thoughts passed quickly across her mind, she hastened to the boy, and thinking bribery the surest way of securing his silence, she took half-a-crown out of her pocket, which had been destined for a very different purpose, and putting it into his hand, "I will give you that," said she, in a hurried manner, "if you will not tell mamma who threw down the stand with the plants, if she should ask you;" then hurried off, without waiting to hear the boy's reply.

Poor Ellen, in the mean time, was mourning over the destruction of the beautiful verbinium, which she had just raised from the ground

ground when her mother appeared. "What is the matter here?" exclaimed Mrs. Summers, looking at her plants as they lay scattered about: "What is the reason of this? Did you throw down the frame, Ellen?"

"No, mamma." "Who then did it?" Ellen stood silent. She could not say she did not know, yet could not think of informing against her sister.

"Where is Cecilia?" enquired her mother." "I do not know, mamma." The hesitating manner in which Ellen spoke, and the uneasiness visible on her countenance, from the fear of being obliged to accuse Cecilia, gave her so much the appearance of equivocation, as to excite, in her mother's mind, a strong suspicion of a falsehood, though this was a fault of which she had never before had any reason to suppose her guilty.

"I find I am not to know the whole of this affair from you, Ellen," said Mrs. Summers, in a tone by which Ellen knew that she was displeased; "but this ball, may, perhaps, lead me further into the truth," added she,

she, taking one from the ground, which was no other than that which Cecilia had snatched out of Ellen's hand, and which she had dropped in the fall. Ellen followed in silence, distressed at the idea of her mother's supposing her guilty of a falsehood, yet determined not to vindicate herself at the expence of her sister. They had not gone very far before they saw Cecilia sitting upon a garden seat, reading, apparently, with perfect composure. "Cecilia," said her mother, "is this your ball?" "No, mamma," replied she, with a look of confidence, "here is mine:" and producing it, she showed "CECILIA SUMMERS," printed in large letters on one side. Mrs. Summers then turned to Ellen with a look of great displeasure: "I am now convinced," said she, "of what, indeed, I before strongly suspected, that you have both disobeyed, and attempted to deceive me. Go into your own room, therefore, where you must submit to spend the rest of the day alone, for I cannot think of taking you with me."

Ellen looked at her sister, as much as to say,

say: "And can you see me accused so unjustly, and be silent?" But Cecilia quieted her conscience with promising, in her own mind, to explain all the next day. "If mamma were to know to-day," said she to herself, "she would be sure to transfer the punishment which she has inflicted on Ellen, to me; and I know Mrs. Greenhill would never have a good opinion of me again. As for Ellen, she is such a favourite, that she will soon find some excuse or other for her doing wrong, or, at least, will soon forget it. It is most likely mamma will punish me more severely to-morrow than she would have done to-day; but I do not mind that. I would rather suffer twice as much, than that Mrs. Greenhill should know."

On their arriving at Mrs. Greenhill's, that lady eagerly enquired the cause of Ellen's absence, and when Cecilia heard the concern which she expressed on being informed of the reason, she could not but rejoice that she was not the object of it. "There is no fault that I punish with so much severity,

among

among my girls," said Mrs. Greenhill, "as deceit or insincerity; nor any thing that secures them so ready a pardon, as an open confession of a fault, with a promise of amendment. The virtue on which I lay the greatest stress, is honesty; and it is that, Cecilia, which you are now going to see rewarded, and, in the pleasing sight you will, I hope, feel a reward for your own good conduct." The flush of Cecilia's cheeks, at this praise, so ill deserved, betrayed an emotion within, which Mrs. Greenhill attributed to modesty, but which was, in reality, the colouring of conscious shame. They soon repaired to the lawn before the door, where there were about fifty girls assembled, from the ages of ten to eighteen. The twenty, at that time scholars, were examined in their different attainments, and rewarded with prizes according to their deserts. The elder ones then came forward, who had been placed in business or service, and produced written characters, which were read aloud by Mrs. Greenhill, in an audible and distinct voice, excepting when the

the agitation of her feelings caused it to faulter, when her hearers, in general, caught the infection. She then distributed her medals, after which she made a short address, expressive of the high gratification which she felt from such testimonials of their good conduct, and urging the younger ones to follow their examples, and reward her care of them, by enabling her, at a future time, to present them with similar tokens of her approbation. A young girl who sat near Cecilia and her mother, and whose peculiar characteristic was modest diffidence, seemed to be inspired with an ardour which made her forget that she was in the midst of an assembly of spectators, and clasping her hands together, she exclaimed: "I will work my fingers to the bone, but I will have one." "If you are so determined to deserve it, there is no doubt of your success, Amelia," said Mrs. Summers, patting her head with approbation. Amelia looked down and blushed, at finding that she had spoken so loud as to attract attention. The girls now had a summons to dinner, which

which was set out in a broad, shady walk, at one side of the house, where they were waited upon by the young ladies of the party. Their meal being finished, they were sent back to the lawn to amuse themselves, whilst Mrs. Greenhill and her friends partook of a cold repast. All was harmony and enjoyment. Cecilia, too, endeavoured to enjoy herself; but in spite of all her attempts, the recollection of the much-injured Ellen would cross her mind, and throw a cloud over the scene. "I will make up for it all to-morrow, however," thought she, "and will give up the prize to her if I should win it, so that she will not be much a loser." By such arguments as these, she endeavoured to reconcile herself to her own conscience; but in spite of all her efforts for enjoyment, and the many things which conspired to make the day pleasant, she had, in reality, much less pleasure than her solitary and injured sister.

When Ellen saw the carriage drive off, which conveyed her mother and Cecilia to

the scene which she had so long anticipated the pleasure of witnessing, the tears ran from her cheeks as she exclaimed—"Unkind Cecilia! I did not deserve this treatment." The recollection, however, of the generous part she had herself acted, soon restored her composure: "But I would not exchange places with her," added she. "Cecilia may enjoy the reward, but I have the superior gratification of having deserved it." She amused herself very comfortably, till the servant brought up her dinner, which simply consisted of cold meat and potatoes. Just as she sat down to it, and was putting the first morsel into her mouth, she was attracted by the sound of a child crying, apparently in great distress, directly underneath her window. She immediately threw up the sash to see what was the matter, and perceived a poor woman, who appeared very weak and delicate, sitting with an infant in her lap, and a little girl, about three years old, standing by her side, crying, and complaining of hunger. "I have not any thing to give

give you, my poor baby," said the mother, "and you see the lady is not at home." Ellen's gentle heart was touched with their distress, and she turned with pleasure to her own dinner, which she had not yet tasted, and putting it all into a large piece of paper, and tying it up: "Here, poor woman," said she, dropping it down, "here is some dinner for you and your little girl." The poor woman, who gazed at her with grateful surprise, gave a part of the food to the child, who looked up, every now and then, to the delighted Ellen, with an expression of the most perfect satisfaction; and when she had finished her meal, forgetting her griefs with the removal of the cause of them, she began to to play about, as though she had never known what distress was; whilst her poor mother ventured to take a few morsels herself, and was then beginning to put up the remainder, which Ellen observing, enquired why she did not eat more.

"Because, Miss," replied the woman, "my poor little girl will want something

more before night, and I have nothing else to give her."

"Have you nothing to live upon?" asked Ellen.

"I used to wind yarn," answered the woman, "but was obliged to go into the hospital when this little baby was born, and I only got out yesterday. The old woman whom I lodged with, has kept my little girl for me whilst I was confined, and I gave her all the money I had; but that was only two shillings, and I still owe her nine. She cannot afford to let me have the lodgings any longer, for she is almost as poor as myself, and has only what she can work for. I was told that the lady that belongs to this house is very good and charitable, and I came to see if she would be so kind as to try to get me something from the Stranger's Friend Society; for neither my husband, who is gone to be a soldier, nor I, belong to this country."

"My mamma is not at home to-day," said Ellen, "but if you will come here again at six o'clock, I shall then have my supper, and

and will give you some bread for your little girl; so you may venture to eat the remainder of what you now have yourself."

The poor woman thanked her more with looks than words, for her heart was too full to be able to give much expression to her gratitude.

The afternoon passed over still more pleasantly than the former part of the day had done. She recollected with pleasure the change which she had made in the countenances of the poor woman and her child, by exercising a little self-denial; and felt more anxious for her mamma's return, for the sake of their receiving further assistance, than for her own release from confinement. At six o'clock her supper was brought: Ellen then began to be very hungry, and felt tempted to eat the bread which she had promised for the little girl. "But if I feel so much inconvenience from the loss of one meal," said she to herself, "what must they do, who scarcely ever get one; perhaps, never as much as they could eat." At this thought

she drank the milk, which, in some degree, satisfied her hunger, and threw the bread down to the little girl, (who was very punctual to the time,) without a wish to deprive her of a morsel. In making some further enquiries of the woman, she found that she was at a loss for a lodging for the night, as her landlady had refused to take her in again, unless she could pay her a part, at least, of what she owed, which was nine shillings. "But I have no right to complain," said she, "for she has put off much longer than she could afford, and is in great distress herself for the money." Ellen recollected that she had half-a-crown, which she had been saving till she got enough added to it to buy a geographical game, which she had seen and been much pleased with. This money was no sooner remembered, than produced. "I shall be a little longer in getting my game," said she, "but that will not signify. Cecilia will get the Grammar Cards that she intends buying, and I can play with them instead; for I am sure she will lend them to me, when

I wish

I wish for them." But she little knew that Cecilia was as poor as herself, or for what purpose she had already parted with her money.

Ellen had now both fed this poor family and procured them a night's lodging. "I have now spent a birth-day, which I hope I shall always remember with pleasure," said she, whilst an expression of self approbation beamed in her eyes; and, with her young heart glowing with thankfulness, she sat down and arranged her thoughts into the following

BIRTH-DAY PRAYER.

Great Power, to whom I owe my birth,
By whose commands, upon this earth
I now perform a part;
By whose Almighty power I know
The various turns of joy and woe
Which agitate the heart.

Accept the tribute which I raise,
The grateful hymn of joy and praise,
All heart-felt, and sincere;

Grateful,

Grateful, that by thy kind decree,
From sickness and from sorrow free,
  I close another year.

Vast are the bounties of thy hand,
Various the gifts, that, by command,
  Unite to make me blest;
And though, at times, thy heavenly will,
My cup with bitterness may fill,
  And agitate my breast,

Oh, may I still on thee repose;
Rest all my pleasures and my woes
  On thy paternal care:
Receive with resignation calm,
Thy chastening rod, as healing balm,
  Nor yield to dark despair.

Whate'er may be my future state,
As held in the deep scroll of fate,
  May I await thy nod;
And should, in youth, life's pulses cease,
Or not till time my years increase,
  Resign myself to God.

She had just finished, when the clock gave her notice that it was time to go to bed, which she immediately obeyed, and laid her head

head down upon the pillow, in the sweet consciousness, that he who heareth prayer, would look down with benignity on his youthful votary.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Charitable Institutions.

WHEN Ellen opened her eyes the next morning, she saw Cecilia up and nearly dressed. "Well, Cecilia," said she, in as sweet a tone, as though her sister had never acted unkindly towards her, "had you a pleasant visit yesterday?"

"Yes, very pleasant," answered Cecilia, without raising her eyes, for she felt ashamed to look Ellen in the face.

"Did many of the girls get prizes? Did my favourite Amelia gain one?"

Cecilia answered her sister in as few words as possible, and hastened out of the room the moment she was dressed, fearful that if she staid to enter into conversation, Ellen might bring forward the unpleasant subject of her unjust and unsisterly behaviour the day before. But she did little justice to the sweet-

ness

ness of Ellen's temper by such a suspicion; for the first emotions of disappointment and mortification over, all which she now felt was regret that her mother should think her capable of deceit; and that she hoped she should be able, by her undeviating rectitude, before long, to prove was no part of her disposition. The occurrences of the preceding day, had, upon the whole, left a pleasing impression on her mind; and, with a bosom unruffled with one ungentle emotion, she repaired again to the work-room, not presuming to go into her mother's presence without a summons.

Cecilia was very restless and uneasy. As the time approached which she had fixed in her own mind for making her confession, her resolution began to waver. "I am afraid mamma will be very angry," said she: "I wish I had told her the truth at once. It would have been much easier to do yesterday, than it will be now. She will think so very ill of me, for letting Ellen bear the punishment which I ought to have done. I think I had

better

better not say any thing about it. The worst is over now with Ellen. Mamma will not punish her any more, I dare say, excepting, perhaps, not letting her receive any tickets for a day or two; but I can make up for that, by giving up the prize to her."

As Cecilia was thus endeavouring to bargain with her conscience, her mother entered the room, and almost immediately after, a servant came to say that a poor woman wished to speak to her. The woman, at Mrs. Summers's request, was shown into the breakfast-room, accompanied by her little girl, and described her situation to that lady in so satisfactory a manner, that she promised to visit her at her lodgings, in the course of the day; a practice which she always made a point of, before she gave any thing of consequence. The little girl, who had stood for some time with a look of great disappointment, at length began to cry; and on Mrs. Summers noticing it, her mother stooped down to ask what was the matter. "She is hungry, perhaps," said Mrs. Summers, as the

the child whispered into the ear of her mother: "Cecilia, my dear, ring the bell, and I will order them some breakfast in the kitchen."

"No, Ma'am, it is not that," said the woman, "she is only disappointed at not seeing the young lady that was so good to her yesterday."

"Did she expect to see her here?" asked Mrs. Summers.

"Yes, Madam, she was at one of the windows up stairs; and if it had not been for her, I do not know what would have become of me and my poor children," said the woman, bursting into tears: and she then gave an account of what Ellen had done, to which Mrs. Summers listened with delight, and Cecilia with shame. "I am very glad, indeed, to hear this account," said the former, as the woman ceased speaking: "such conduct as this, must wipe away the faults of yesterday. Go, Cecilia, and tell your sister that I wish to see her."

Ellen was not long in obeying the summons.

"This little girl," said her mother to her, as she entered, "has obtained your pardon, by being the means of my hearing of your praiseworthy conduct to her mother and herself yesterday; so, you see, she has already verified the old proverb, 'that a good action is never lost.'" Ellen kissed the little girl, who ran to her as soon as she came into the room, and was desired by her mother to take her pensioners into the kitchen, and give orders for them to have their breakfasts; a commission which she joyfully executed, and then returned to the breakfast-room to join her mother and sister at their meal.

Cecilia now saw her sister fully re-established in her mother's favour, and without recollecting that the impropriety of her own conduct still remained the same, she persuaded herself, that there was no necessity whatever, now, for her to expose her own faults. "I shall have many ways of making up for all to Ellen," thought she, "and she will soon forget it herself, for she never keeps ill in her mind long." But had Cecilia allowed herself

to

to think properly upon the subject, she would soon have been convinced, that Ellen's amiable and forgiving temper only made the duty stronger upon her, to clear her from the injurious imputation under which she laboured.

When the lessons of the day were over, and the usual time for walking arrived, Mrs. Summers told her daughters that they should attend her to Mary Wood's, (for that was the poor woman's name,) whither she was going, to see if appearances there confirmed the account which she had received. On arriving at the house, they found only her landlady at home; which Mrs. Summers was not sorry for, as it gave her an opportunity of enquiring into Mary's character more particularly than she could have done in her presence. The old woman spoke very highly of her, for sobriety and industry. "Indeed, Ma'am," said she, "Mary is a woman that will always do the best she can, and a great deal she has had to do for her husband, who is a worthless, idle fellow, and left her when

she was unable to do much; but she always contrived to get what kept them and saved her from debt, till she was obliged to go into the hospital: though, to be sure, it was a happy thing for her that she had such a place to go to. Only she had no way then of making any thing, or of paying me for keeping her little girl. I like it as well as if it was my own, poor thing, and would have been very willing to have kept her for nothing, if I could have managed it; but I am a poor widow, and have only what I can work for."

Mrs. Summers was perfectly satisfied with this account, and immediately paid off the debt; and Mary just then coming in, she gave her something to supply her present wants, and promising to do more for her before long, took her leave, loaded with blessings.

They walked silently on for some time, each seemingly engaged with her own reflections. Mrs. Summers was probably thinking, with pleasure, of the benevolent disposition which Ellen had discovered, in what

she

she had done for this poor woman; or of the most effectual way in which she could herself administer further relief. Cecilia, who had been exceedingly interested by their situation, felt a double mortification from thinking that she not only had not any thing to give them, but that the little which she might have possessed, had been devoted to so unworthy a purpose; and as she contrasted her conduct the day before, with that of her amiable sister, she felt, what she thought at the time, a sincere repentance for her own unworthy behaviour. Had that repentance, however, been as sincere as she believed it, she would no longer have delayed the confession by which she could alone make amends: but she still persuaded herself that it was now unnecessary, and that she could make sufficient reparation to Ellen in a more private manner. Ellen was the first to break the silence, and discovered the subject of her meditations: "Mamma," said she, "what is the price of the book which we are to have for a prize?"

"Half-a-guinea, I believe, my dear; but why do you make the enquiry?"

"Because, mamma," answered she, "I have been thinking, if you would be so good as to let us have the money instead of the book, we should both of us work for it with more pleasure."

"I am not fond of giving young people much money," said her mother, "and must, therefore, know the manner in which you would employ it, before I agree to the proposal."

"I think I know what Ellen means to do with it," said Cecilia, "and I am sure I should like very much to have it put to that use. She wishes to give it to poor Mary Wood, I dare say. Do not you, Ellen?"

Ellen answered in the affirmative. "That is a use I certainly cannot object to," said Mrs. Summers; "but how do you think your cousin Ann would like it?"

"Oh, I am sure she would be as willing as we are," replied Ellen; "but I have been thinking of a plan of getting a book for her, that,

that, I believe, she would like almost as well as the one we first thought of."

"What is that?" enquired Mrs. Summers.

"You know, mamma, you have a large book on forest trees, that you say is still better than Aiken's; and I have been thinking, if Cecilia, who, you know, writes very well, would copy out a short description of the trees, I would draw specimens of them; and we could have it neatly bound, and I think my cousin Ann would like that nearly as well as the other."

"This poor woman has made you quite ingenious, Ellen," said her mother, with a smile which showed how much she was pleased with the motive which excited such ingenuity; "and I am of your opinion, that this book of your own manufacturing, will be liked as well, if not better, than a printed one. I agree to your plan, provided you accomplish what you have undertaken; but remember, that I shall expect you only to devote your leisure hours to

it,

it, and not even those, unless you have done all your lessons well; and that, if the book is not finished on the prize day, which is now just a month distant, whoever it is that falls short in it, whoever may be the superiority of tickets, must lose the prize." They both agreed to this restriction with great readiness: "And now," continued Mrs. Summers, "as you are already, I dare say, in imagination, in possession of the money, let us consider in what way it may be used most to poor Mary's advantage."

"I should think," said Cecilia, "that the best way would be to give it to her, and let her do what she thinks best with it herself."

"Yes," said Ellen, "it will be such a nice sum for her, and will do her so much good."

"It will not, however," rejoined Mrs. Summers, "supply her children and herself with food, and pay her lodgings, above a fortnight."

"But then," answered Ellen, "perhaps by that time we may have got something more for her."

"It

"It will not, however, my dear, do for her and her children to depend upon a *perhaps*, for should that fail, what will then become of them."

"But what more can we do, mamma, with half-a-guinea?" asked Ellen, in a desponding tone of voice.

"A small sum," answered her mother, "when judiciously applied, will often go as far as three times as much given at random. In endeavouring to do this poor woman good, we must not seek to maintain her in idleness; for that would conduce neither to her present happiness, nor future welfare. Our object must be, therefore, to put her into a way of providing for herself as soon as possible."

"But what can we do with only half-a-guinea?" again asked Ellen, in an anxious tone.

"I doubt whether there is any town in England, London excepted, which contains so many charitable institutions, as Manchester," replied Mrs. Summers; "and there are very few cases of distress which we may

not

not find to come under the rules of some one or other of them. Besides an excellent Infirmary and Fever Ward, and the Hospital which poor Mary has already derived advantage from, for the poor belonging to the parish, there is a Poor-house, equal, I believe, to most in the kingdom; and for those who have not any right to parochial assistance, there is a Stranger's Friend Society, from which I have no doubt of getting some help for this poor woman. For such as are capable of fine and ingenious works, the Repository affords assistance; and, I believe, I am not mistaken when I say, that several hundreds of genteel and respectable females derive their principal support from it. Such as are unable to get employment in the factories, and are incapable of such nice work as the Repository requires, were without resource till of late, when a number of benevolent females took their cases into consideration, and formed an institution called the Ladies' Friendly Society, to which each contributed what she pleased or found convenient, and, with

with the money, they bought a quantity of goods such as were fit to be made up into clothing for the poor, which they sell at reasonable prices, to those who are able to buy; and, in the making of these things, supply work to such as are in want. Each individual subscribing half-a-guinea, has a right, I believe, to recommend one person to be supplied with work for a year, and so on in proportion. By this means, you see, your half-guinea may, in all probability, provide poor Mary with work for that length of time."

"Oh, yes," cried Cecilia, "that will be a very good plan, indeed."

"Thank you, mamma," said the benevolent Ellen, her countenance again brightening with pleasure, "for putting us into so good a way of serving her; I only wish that we could do as much for the poor widow she lives with."

"She may be your next object," replied her mother, "but she does not appear to be in such immediate necessity."

"But

"But a month is a long time for poor Mary to wait," said Cecilia.

"I will take care of her till the end of that time," answered her mother. "I have some work for her to do, which will keep her employed till you are ready to help her." They had now reached home, and the conversation ended.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Contest.

THE little girls lost no time in setting themselves to work, for they were very sure that they should have full employment for the ensuing month. If Ellen had a particular genius for any thing, it was for drawing, of which she was exceedingly fond, and took great pleasure in copying the specimens, and colouring them according to the various shades of nature. Cecilia, too, had great amusement, with her mother's assistance, in selecting and transcribing the different accounts of them, with which she hoped to make a very pretty little volume. They might, perhaps, have gone on pleasantly enough, (for Cecilia had ceased to strive for the prize, with any particular anxiety, from the idea that she was by that means making sufficient reparation to Ellen for all the injus-

tice which she had done her,) had not Mrs. Summers received a letter from Mrs. Greenhill, who was at that time from home, part of which she read to her daughters, and which was as follows: "Tell my dear little girls that I shall make a point of returning in time to be present when their prize is decided. I suppose there is little doubt whose it will be; but I hope, whoever gets it, it will only prove a stimulus to the other to deserve the same at a future period." The words, "I suppose there is little doubt whose it will be," sunk deep on Cecilia's mind, and again roused all her former anxiety to maintain the good opinion of that excellent lady. "She expects that I shall get the prize, and I must not disappoint her," said she to herself. "To be sure Ellen deserves it, and she shall have it too; for if I gain it, I will make her a present of it, and that, I know, will only please Mrs. Greenhill the more." As these reflections passed in her mind, they urged Cecilia to renewed exertions; for she had been less attentive for some time, than usual,

and,

and, consequently, was considerably behind her sister. It was necessary for her to work with great diligence, and she frequently did double lessons, with as much ease as Ellen managed her stated work. Ellen, however, was steady and persevering. She had never varied in her object. She was determined to do her utmost to obtain the prize; but the certainty that Cecilia would receive it, would not have made any difference with her. She wished for the pleasure of giving her poor Mary this desirable assistance; but she felt neither pain nor envy from the idea of her sister's superiority. She admired Cecilia's abilities, and was desirous of emulating them; but her heart was a stranger to the odious sensation of envy. "How many tickets have you, Ellen," said Cecilia, one day, as she saw her sister take out the little box in which she kept them.

"I have not counted them these two or three days," replied Ellen, "but I am just going to do so now, and will tell you in a minute. I have three hundred and twenty,"

added she, as she finished counting. Cecilia made no reply at the time, but when she was alone she counted her own, and found she had only a hundred and fourteen. She had, therefore, six to make up, to be equal to her sister; but it was necessary she should be superior, and it only wanted two days to the appointed time when the prize was to be given. "I shall never get them made up," said she in despair, "and what will Mrs. Greenhill think. She knows I can do my lessons a great deal better than Ellen, when I choose; and will conclude, therefore, that I have often been out of humour. Unless indeed," and as the thought crossed her mind, her countenance again brightened, "unless Ellen should not get all her specimens finished in time, and I know she has two to do yet. She spent so much time yesterday evening in hearing the gardener's children their lessons, that she did no drawing last night. I know she told them to come again this evening: if she spends as much more time over them, I am sure she cannot

get

get done. My book is all written, so that, if she is behindhand with her specimens, the prize will be mine after all. But mamma says that is Ellen's fault: she always puts things off till the very last moment." She saw, with pleasure, that Ellen spent an hour over the children's lessons the next evening. As soon as they were gone, however, Ellen set to her drawing with great diligence, and had made great progress in the branch of holly, before bed-time. In the morning, too, when Cecilia awoke, she found Ellen up before her, and going into the work-room as soon as she was dressed, she saw Ellen hard at work with her drawing. She had finished the branch of holly very beautifully, and had begun the hawthorn. Cecilia's heart again failed her. "She will get it, after all," thought she, as she looked at the branch of holly lying on the table before her, and which she could not but acknowledge, was very beautifully done. "She will not only be the most diligent, but the cleverest; for this is much prettier than any thing that I have to show."

She was peevish the whole day, but contrived, however, to save appearances before her mother, though to Ellen she gave way to many little bursts of ill-humour. But the gentle Ellen, so far from exposing or irritating her, did all in her power to soothe and compose her mind. The day's work was over—the last day! for the prize was to be given the following morning, and Cecilia, who had kept an exact account of all the tickets which her sister had received, found, that in spite of all her efforts, she was still two short. The prize, then, she was sure, was decidedly Ellen's; for there was no doubt of her finishing the branch of hawthorn that evening. The demon of envy now took entire possession of her breast. "She will get all the credit, and all the praise," said she, as she threw herself upon a garden seat in the evening, with a book in her hand, but with little inclination for reading, for she was listless and out of humour. Ellen was sitting at the work-room window, very intent on her drawing, where Cecilia had a full

view

view of her. But her happy and tranquil countenance was little in unison with the restless state of Cecilia's mind; and she got up, out of humour with her seat, yet not knowing where to find one in which she could be comfortable. Whilst considering where to go, she reached the work-room, almost without knowing that she had gone that way. Ellen was just finishing the last shade of the hawthorn branch, which was equal, if not superior, to any of the former specimens. "Is it not very pretty?" said she, as she held it up for her sister to look at, when it was finished.

"Yes, very," answered Cecilia, endeavouring to speak in a tone that ill agreed with her feelings.

"Lie there, you pretty little things," said Ellen, playfully, as she put the holly branch and hawthorn into her port-folio to the others, "and when I bring you out to-morrow morning, look just as you do now, and I shall be quite satisfied." Just then the servant came into the room, to say that her little scholars were below. "I will be with them in a minute,"

minute," said Ellen: "tell them to go into the arbour, and I will follow them as soon as I have put my paint-box and pallet by." This was soon done, and she went off, hop, skip, and jump, with a light heart, and a mind at peace with itself and all the world. As Cecilia sat alone in the room, after her sister had left her, the beautiful branches of holly and hawthorn still, in imagination, before her eyes, a plan occurred to her, which she executed almost without daring to think of it. She trembled lest any one should come into the room before she had done, and started at Jenny's happening to enter; though she had then got all put out of the way again, and had that not been the case, she knew, when she gave herself time to consider, that she had no right to suppose that Jenny would be conscious of what she was doing. She then hastened out of the room, and was very glad to receive a summons from her mother, to assist her in some domestic arrangements, which engaged her attention, and diverted her mind from itself.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The Letter.

AT length the morning appeared which was to decide the prize. Mrs. Greenhill arrived at ten o'clock, and at eleven the little girls were desired to bring their tickets, which their mother counted. Cecilia had three hundred and thirty-four, and Ellen three hundred and thirty-six. "If your book is complete," said Mrs. Summers, "the prize is Ellen's." Ellen's heart beat quick with pleasure, for she had no apprehension from the examination of her drawing. Cecilia's book was first examined, and pronounced correct, and exceedingly well written. "It does you great credit, Cecilia," said Mrs. Greenhill, "for it is beautifully done." Ellen's drawings were then brought forward, which were put in regular order, and each separate one admired, till they came

to the holly, when a general exclamation was uttered. "Why, Ellen, my dear," said Mrs. Summers, "what have you been thinking of when you did this: it is a mere daub. Nor is this at all better," added she, turning to the hawthorn. Ellen looked at them with dismay. "I am sure they——were not so when I left them," she was going to say, but at that instant, the idea of what had made them otherwise flashed on her mind, and she checked herself from finishing the sentence. Yet she was unable to repress her feelings altogether, at seeing her beautiful drawings thus disfigured; and recollecting that the person who had done it could be no other than her sister, from whom she was conscious of deserving such very different treatment, she burst into tears. "This is the consequence of putting off till the last minute," said her mother, "when you have been in too great a hurry to do them properly. Had you taken Cecilia's way, and got forward with them in good time, this would not have happened." Ellen made no reply, but soon recollecting herself, and drying up her tears, she heard

with

with a look of perfect composure, and without one feeling of envy, her mother pronounce the prize to be Cecilia's. "This ticket is yours, Cecilia," said she, presenting her with a ticket for the Ladies' Friendly Society; "take it, and I am sure you will feel rewarded for your virtuous exertions, by the pleasure you will feel in giving it to poor Mary."

"And allow me," said Mrs. Greenhill, "to hope that you will wear this medal, as a token of my approbation and affection;" so saying, she was coming forward to hang a small silver medal, with the words, *A reward for diligence and good-humour*, neatly engraved upon it, round Cecilia's neck, when she was stopped by Jenny's entering the room rather in a hurried manner.

"Here is your paint brush, Miss Cecilia," said she, holding out a small hair pencil to Cecilia, who started at the sight, as though she had seen something very frightful.

"It is Ellen's pencil, most likely," said Mrs. Summers." Cecilia was silent; but the colour

colour of her cheeks showed the agitation of her mind.

"No, Ma'am," replied Jenny, who was persuaded, from Cecilia's manner the night before, when she happened to go into the room, that this pencil was connected with something that was not right, and who had kept it till this time in the hope of its being the means of detection, "it is Miss Cecilia's pencil; for she dropped it last night, as she was putting her drawing-box by."

"You were not drawing last night, I think, Cecilia," said her mother. Cecilia still continued silent. Her mother then took the pencil, and telling Jenny she did not need to wait: "Bring me your paint-box, Ellen," said she. Ellen obeyed, and on its being examined, all her brushes were found to be there. "And yours, Cecilia," added Mrs. Summers." Cecilia, too, obeyed, but with trembling steps; and her hand shook so violently, that she could not put the key into the lock. "Ellen, unlock your sister's box for her," said Mrs. Summers, "for she does not

not seem able to do it herself." Ellen opened the box, and her mother examined the contents: there was one brush wanting. "It is your brush, Cecilia," said she, "and I must insist upon knowing what you painted last night." But the condemned Cecilia stood, still trembling and silent; whilst the affectionate Ellen, with a look of little less uneasiness, wished a thousand times that Cecilia had got the prize, and there had not been any more known about it. Mrs. Summers dipped the brush in water, and rubbed it on a piece of paper, when the colour proved to be exactly the same as that of the hawthorn. "It is but too plain," said Mrs. Summers, to see what this brush has been used for." She was prevented from saying more by Jenny's again entering the room, and addressing Cecilia, told her that Ben, the gardener's boy, wished to speak to her.

"What can he want with Cecilia?" asked Mrs. Summers.

"I do not know, Ma'am," replied the girl, "for he would not tell me. He said he wished

to see Miss Cecilia herself." "Tell him to come here," said Mrs. Summers: "he can have nothing to say to Cecilia, that is not proper for me to hear." Ben soon appeared, and Mrs. Summers desired to know what his business was with her daughter. The boy hesitated; but on being again desired to speak, under pain of her displeasure, he said, "I only came to give Miss Cecilia this half-crown back, Ma'am."

"What half-crown is it? and what did you get it for?"

"Miss Cecilia gave it to me, a long time since, Ma'am, that I might not tell who knocked down the frame that had the green-house plants on it; but father saw it lying in my box this morning, and when he found how I got it, he made me come directly to give it back, because, he said, it was given to tempt me to tell a lie."

"And who did knock down the frame," asked Mrs. Summers." The boy then related, very circumstantially, the whole of the conversation which had passed between Cecilia

cilia and Ellen on that occasion, and described exactly how the accident happened. When he had finished his account, Mrs. Summers told him he might go; but before he did so, he came forward to lay the half-crown on the table near where Cecilia stood; but Mrs. Summers desired him to take it to his father, whose conscientious behaviour gave him, she said, the best right to it. The boy then left the room.

"It is impossible, Cecilia," (said Mrs. Summers, when he was gone,) "for me to describe the pain which this double discovery of your unworthy conduct has given me; nor will I attempt to do it, for a little girl who could behave as you have done, is incapable, I fear, of feeling for any one but herself. Mrs. Greenhill will, I hope, transfer the medal to one who has, indeed, shown herself to be a most amiable and affectionate sister; but either it or the prize which she will receive, is of little consequence, compared to the reward which her conscience must bestow."

The medal was then placed on the neck of the

agitated Ellen, who wept bitterly for the painful situation in which she saw her sister. No looks of exultation or conscious superiority marked her modest and gentle countenance. Self was forgotten, in her concern for the trembling culprit; and she even avoided looking at her, lest it should add to her pain.

"You may now retire to your own room, Cecilia," said Mrs. Summers, with a look of great displeasure, "and I hope solitude will serve to impress upon your mind, that if we wish for the esteem and approbation of others, we must first endeavour to secure that of our own minds; for, sooner or later, falsehood and deceit will be discovered."

Ellen would have followed her sister as she left the room, but her mother desired her to remain where she was. "Cecilia is fittest company for herself," said she; "and, indeed, your presence must rather increase than diminish her uneasiness."

Very different were Cecilia's feelings at this moment, to what those of Ellen had been on a similar occasion. She could not

not bear reflection, and wandered about the room, impatient for bed time. Yet, when it came, she was unable, as she had hoped to do, to lose the sense of her uneasiness in sleep: it had vanished from her eyes, and after tossing about a great part of the night, she arose in the morning with no other prospect than that of spending another day, as miserable as the former one had been. She was just dressed when she received a summons from her mother to go down stairs; at which she was a good deal surprised, and which she obeyed with fear and trembling. When she entered the room, she found her mother alone. She stood near the door, without courage to go forward.

"Come in, Cecilia," said her mother, with a serious countenance, but with a look of more distress than severity: "I have sent for you, at your sister's particular request, who begged, as a favour to herself, that you might be released from confinement. And, as she is now removed out of your way, and, of course, in no danger of any further ill

treatment from you, I have granted her request, and shall not, therefore, attempt any further punishment than what your own thoughts must inflict."

"Oh, mamma," said Cecilia, her eyes streaming with tears, "that is punishment enough, for I hate myself for what I have done."

"I hope then it will prove a lesson to you as long as you live," replied her mother; "and that, by being deprived of such a sister, you may become more sensible of her value when she returns, which I do not intend she shall do, till I have good reason to be convinced of your repentance and amendment. Even your unkindness to her, has not been able to lessen Ellen's affection for you; and she was so much concerned at having to leave home without seeing you again, that I gave her leave to write to you. Here is her letter."

Cecilia took the letter, which her mother held out to her, and read, as well as her tears would allow, the following:

"My

"*My dear Cecilia,*

"My mamma and Mrs. Greenhill have agreed that I should go home with that lady to-night, and accompany her to Wales in a few days, where, you know, she is going to remain some months. It is very kind of Mrs. Greenhill to take me with her; but I would rather, if I might, have staid at home, unless mamma and you had been with me; for though I like Mrs. Greenhill very much, I love my dear mamma and sister still better. Do not make yourself uneasy, my dear Cecilia, at the thought of having used me unkindly. I am sure you did not mean to be unkind to me, but only wished for the satisfaction of mamma's and Mrs. Greenhill's approbation, and to have the pleasure of assisting poor Mary; and that, I hope, you will still have, by giving her one of the enclosed tickets, which you must do in your own name: the other, Mrs. Greenhill has given me for her landlady. I have very little time, so that I cannot say all that I wish; but I should be

very

very glad if I could persuade you not to think any more about this morning's business; and believe me, I shall not wish for any thing so much as to be allowed to return home again; for I shall never see any place I like so well, or any company that is so dear to your affectionate sister,

"ELLEN SUMMERS."

"Oh, Ellen," exclaimed Cecilia, as she finished reading the letter, and bursting again into tears, "how good and kind you are to me, though I have behaved so ill; and you are gone, without my being able to tell you how sorry I am for having treated you so."

"It would be well, my dear Cecilia," said her mother, "if we were always to remember, whilst our friends are with us, that a day or an hour may separate us from them, perhaps for ever. It would often prevent our doing things which cause many a bitter pang, when it is no longer in our power to make reparation. I hope, however, in time, when you have

have shown, by your behaviour, that you are fully sensible of the impropriety of your late conduct, that it may still be in your power to prove your repentance to your amiable sister, by endeavouring to emulate her virtues, without envying her the possession of them. This you will find the surest way of gaining the end, you before took so improper a method of obtaining; for you see, though she does not particularly strive to gain applause, she secures the love and approbation of all who know her."

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TO MY NIECES.

ENGAGEMENTS of different kinds, my dear children, have made me so much longer in fulfilling my promise, that I begin almost to apprehend that you may suspect me of having forgotten it. To convince you, however, that that is not the case, I send the only two stories which are yet finished; and should I find, by the reception which they meet with, that a continuation of them would be acceptable, I purpose having two more ready to meet you on your return home, at the commencement of each of your long holidays.

I now see you, in imagination, all assembled round a comfortable Christmas fire; and though

though I cannot personally exchange the compliments of the season with you, believe me, I most sincerely wish you all a happy Christmas. And that each succeeding year may witness your increase in knowledge and virtue, and, consequently, in happiness, is the heart-felt wish of your truly affectionate aunt,

Mary.

THE END.

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