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IMPROVING
TALES

1817

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Mrs Mary & Annoda. Yagers

July 30th 1818

P 181

Framwell House Highgate

A present from her daughter Mrs. [unclear]

Miss M. C. Higgins
From Miss Sumner
Her dear friend —

Highgate
Middlesex

June
May 1st 1815

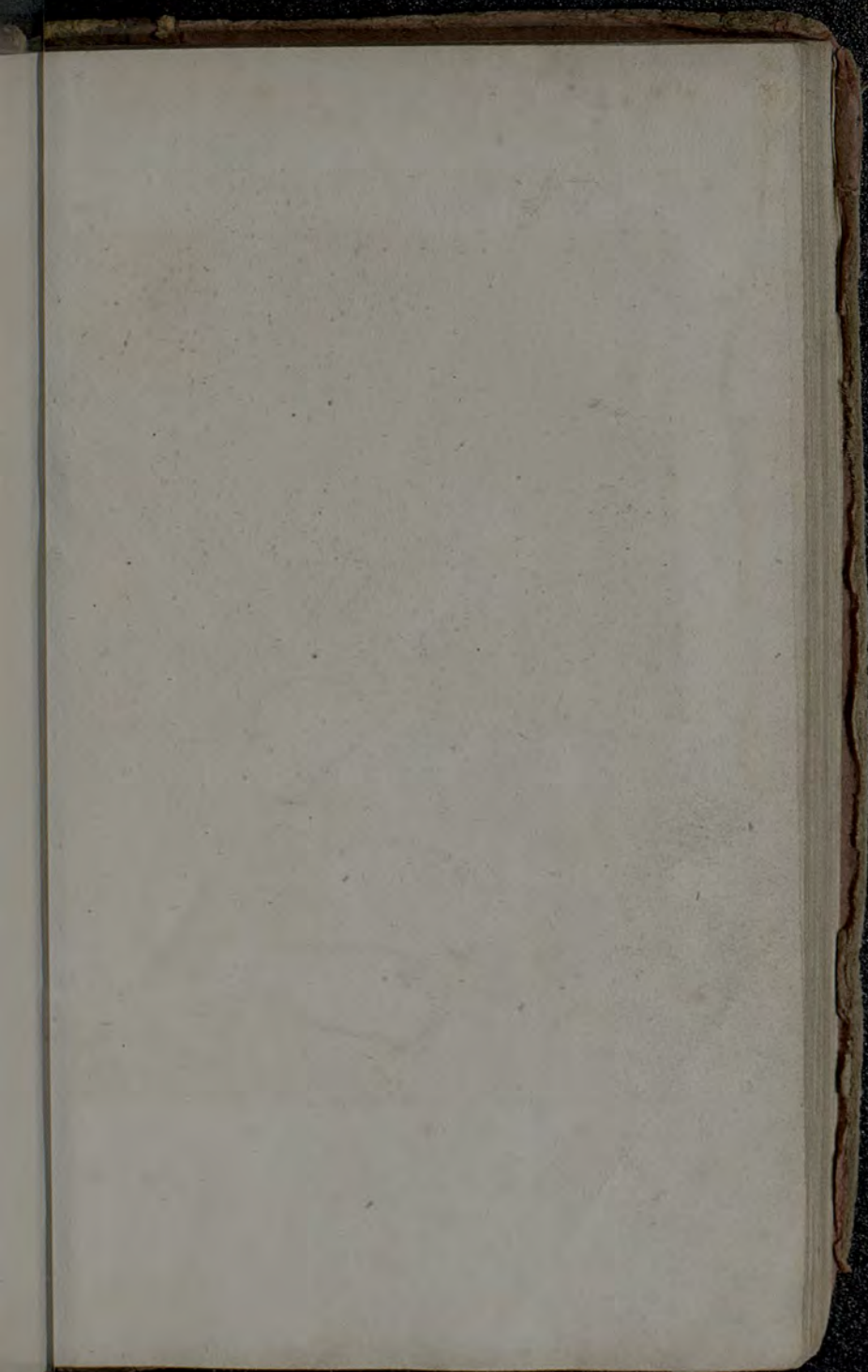
IMPROVING TALES.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

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77

MEMORIALS

MEMORIALS OF THE
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED
IN THE YEAR 1774



1508
77

IMPROVING TALES.



The body of a Little Girl now floated
almost to the Feet of Henry.

Mary Higgins

IMPROVING

TALES.

CONTAINING

*THE STORM; BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY;
THE MIDSHIPMAN;
AND ATHLONE CASTLE.*

"Sparsa coegi."

London:

Printed at the Minerva Press, for

A. K. NEWMAN AND CO. LEADENHALL-STREET.

1817.

BO
7

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF LONDON

BY JOHN STOW
AND JOHN WARD

THE SECOND EDITION

LONDON
Printed by J. Stow, at the Sign of the Sun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, in the County of Middlesex.

1633

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IMPROVING TALES.

THE STORM.

THE cottage of Martin, an honest labourer, stood on a rising ground, unsheltered by any friendly trees from the bleak northern wind;—its being but a short distance too from the sea, rendered its situation in winter particularly dreary.

On a cold evening in January, when the blast seemed to howl in

B

hoarser

hoarser murmurs than usual across the plain, and the hail beat loudly against the shattered windows of the little tenement already mentioned, its frightened and shivering inhabitants drew nearer and nearer to the embers on the hearth, and the kind-hearted master declared—"It was so dreadful a night, he would not turn out even an enemy's dog."

The youngest boy, and for this reason only, the favourite, clung close to his father's knees, praying daddy to warm him; and, in order to effect this, the good man, hugging him to his bosom, enveloped him in the ragged coat that had covered his own weather-beaten limbs for many a year; whilst the happy little fellow soon slept as soundly as if cradled in
the

the lap of Luxury, or reposing on pillows of down.

His mother, after having busied herself in taking every possible precaution to keep out the wind and rain, such as hanging up an old coverlet before the broken casements, and placing a screen by the fire, sat herself down to work in the chimney-corner, while two rosy-faced girls and a healthy-looking boy arranged themselves in the best manner they were able, each knitting as quickly as their half-numbed fingers would allow, and each rejoicing with their parents they were so comfortably sheltered from the pitiless storm. A favourite old cat was reposing most happily on the lap of one of the girls, and puss completed the group.

A loud rapping at the door soon, however, interrupted the employments of the little party. The countenances of the children immediately exhibited the strongest symptoms of fear; that of their mother was not indeed entirely devoid of terror, as she tremblingly asked her husband if he meant to give admission to the stranger.

He hesitated for a moment; but as it occurred to him that it was most likely some traveller in distress, he dismissed all ideas but this from his mind, and instantly withdrew the bolt that gave fancied security to his cottage.

His surprise was extreme when, instead of encountering a stranger, he beheld Sir Richard Percival's eldest

est son, accompanied by the coachman, who was laden with great-coats and various other articles of dress; the young gentleman himself was very little guarded from the inclemency of the weather. This he seemed not to regard; but eagerly demanded of Martin if he would instantly accompany him to the seaside, where his assistance, and that of his boy, might be of infinite use to some poor creatures, who were just escaped from a vessel that had been for some hours endeavouring in vain to clear the shore, and was now a wreck on the beach.

The request of the youth was complied with without any hesitation; and, heedless of the storm, which but a few moments before seemed to in-

spire them with horror even to think of, Martin and his son accompanied the young philanthropist on his benevolent errand.

To account for his appearance at the peasant's hovel, we must describe a scene very different from the one we have already portrayed, and convey our readers from the clay walls, miserable furniture, and frugal fire of Martin's cottage, to the spacious dome, elegantly-ornamented apartment, and blazing hearth of Sir Richard Percival. Round the latter were assembled himself, Lady Percival, their daughter Marianne, and their two sons, Henry and William.

The close-drawn curtains seemed to exclude every breath of air, whilst the well-carpeted floor, with all the
other

other appendages of luxury and comfort art could invent, appeared to bid defiance within doors to the utmost severity of the storm that raged without.—But so much are we the creatures of habit, and so little sensible of the real value of those blessings that we every day experience, that, comparatively speaking, the pampered child of Luxury scarcely estimates his enjoyments more highly than the poor cottager does those few comforts his own industry affords, or that perhaps are the occasional offerings of benevolence. So it was with the present party; neither the Baronet, his Lady, nor their children, felt more happy in their splendid shelter from the angry elements,
than

than did honest Martin and his family beneath their humbler roof.

This by no means arose either from ingratitude to Providence for its goodness to them, or want of feeling for their fellow-creatures ; both these they possessed in an eminent degree. It seems, indeed, as if the peculiar kindness of Heaven had distributed the power of enjoyment in so equal a measure, that situation merely has little to do with it, and that its permanent abode is only in the mind.

“ My dear Sir Richard,” said Lady Percival, “ if this weather were to continue very long, I should be almost tempted to try to persuade you to cut down the fir trees before these windows ;

windows; for the wind sounds so dismally amongst them, that it absolutely gives me the horrors."

She shuddered involuntarily as she spoke; and the little Marianne, with that happy facility of imitation that so generally belongs to childhood, declared the howling of the wind made her too quite low-spirited, and that she should be very glad when the fine weather came, that she might play about again without being afraid.

"For my part," replied William, to whom the latter part of this speech was addressed, "I see nothing to be afraid of, and I think it is really delightful to hear the wind and the rain, and the hail beating against the windows, for then it is such a treat to get closer and closer to the
fire,

fire, and think how comfortable it is that you have not to go out in the wet."

"That is a comfort," said Henry, "I could never yet feel so much as you do. To be sure, I am happy in being sheltered myself; but then I cannot help thinking how many poor creatures want a fire to warm them, and what a number of others are exposed to the piercing cold. Besides this, I never listen to the tremendous gusts of wind, or hear the sea roar, but I fancy at that moment many a brave sailor may be perishing!"

As he spoke his eyes filled with tears. They were not the tears of affected sensibility, but of true, genuine, and unadulterated feeling.

His

His father viewed them with delight, for his own mind, like that of his son, was attempered with every gentle, every humane disposition. His good-humoured vivacity now soon dispelled the *horrors* that Lady Percival had declared were stealing fast on her nerves; whilst all the fears of Marianne were lost in a game of romps with papa.

Henry, who doted on the little girl, was quickly one of the party; but William, whose general habits inclined to indolence, took up the "Arabian Nights Entertainments," in which he was soon so much interested, that he could merely lay it down once to observe, that notwithstanding all his brother had said, and though he did not want
compassion

compassion for others, he still could not help thinking it was monstrously comfortable to get over the fire, and hear the trees blowing about as they now did.

Between each interval of the wind, the firing of guns was soon distinctly heard, and the gaiety of the little party was no more.

“They are signals of distress!” said Henry with emotion.

“They are indeed,” replied his father; “and let us not lose a moment, my dear boy, ere we hasten to learn whether it may not be in our power to afford the wretched sufferers some assistance.”

The eagerness with which the youth seconded the wishes of his father, was a convincing proof that his
sensibility

sensibility was not of that nature which contents itself with shedding a few tears for the miseries of others, but cannot tax its feelings by becoming personally acquainted with them.

The benevolence of Henry was of the active kind; and he hastened with his brother, who would not be left out of this party, Sir Richard himself, and several of their servants, to the beach, where the horrors of the scene that awaited them can be but faintly imagined from description merely.

The extreme darkness of the night was rendered even more terrible by the flashes of fire from the guns, which were scarcely silent an instant. The rain descended in torrents, and the
c dashing

dashing waves beat in tremendous surges close to the feet of those who had ventured near them—some from a motive degrading indeed to human nature, but too often, alas! the only one—the hope of plunder in case of a wreck; and others from the nobler impulse of humanity.

To these the agonizing shrieks of distress, which the tremendous gusts of wind conveyed more distinctly to their ears, were truly dreadful. Torches were immediately shewn on that part of the beach most accessible for boats; but the darkness of the night, and the fury of the storm, rendered it utterly impossible for any boat to go to the assistance of the unfortunate sufferers.

Whilst the people on shore were
yet

yet lingering in a state of anxious but horrible suspense, the dashing of oars was distinctly heard.

“They have taken to their boats,” said Sir Richard; “shew more lights this moment!”

His command was instantly obeyed, and he offered a fervent prayer to Heaven, with heartfelt devotion and sincerity, that the crew of the vessel might be saved.

All was again silent; but the silence was soon broken by a sound so dreadful, that it appeared to agonize every bosom—it seemed the shriek of death!

“Alas, poor creatures!” said Sir Richard Percival, “all, I fear, are now lost!”

“Perhaps not *all*,” cried Henry,

c 2

whose

whose feelings were wound to their highest pitch; "some, my dear father, may even now float ashore, and we may be happy enough to save them."

This idea induced many to continue on the spot; and in a few moments, by the glimmering of the torches, a boat was perceived, bottom upwards, in the surf, whilst several people were seen still clinging to her. Ropes were instantly thrown to them, and some had yet sufficient strength left to render them of service. Seven were drawn to the beach; and whilst every possible means were immediately made use of to restore those in whom animation was suspended, Henry, with the coachman, as has been already mentioned,

tioned, ran, or rather flew home for some warm clothing, and in his way back called for Martin, whose assistance was now required.

On Henry's return to his father, he had the happiness of finding the poor creatures had all shewn signs of life. They were placed on a waggon Sir Richard had had the precaution to provide, and conveyed to a small public-house, which was the nearest shelter they could have.

The body of a little girl now floated almost to the feet of Henry. He snatched her to his arms; a plaintive cry convinced him she had life, and wrapping her in a thick great-coat, he hastened, at his father's request, to convey her home.

Lady Percival, interested for the

fate of the unfortunate little being, so providentially saved from a watery grave, had her immediately put to bed, and watched her with almost maternal tenderness. Her attention was soon, however, called to another quarter.

Sir Richard was now returned, accompanied by several poor creatures who had happily escaped the wreck. Among these was a gentleman whose appearance bore every mark of respectability, but who had not yet sufficiently recovered his senses to be able to utter a word.

Those whose miserable situation required it were put in warm blankets, and every proper method applied to restore them to life. Sir Richard and his Lady were unremitting

mitting in their exertions during the night, and their humane efforts were attended with success.

From some of the sailors they learned that the wreck was a Danish vessel, and that the misfortune they had met with arose from their ignorance of the coast, and the want of an experienced pilot.

The commander and eight others had perished; about forty were saved; and what goods could be collected on the shore were conveyed in safety to a barn of Sir Richard Percival's.

The following morning presented a most miserable spectacle on the beach. Those poor fellows who were able to crawl there were bewailing

wailing their misfortunes, and the sad fate of their messmates.

In the course of the night, the bodies of two females had been washed ashore; one of them appeared young, and her dress bespoke her of the higher order. Pale and disfigured as it was, her face yet shewed the remains of beauty, though anguish of mind was visibly depicted in every distorted feature.

The poor woman who perished with her was her attendant; and Sir Richard learned that the first, whose lifeless form he was contemplating with melancholy earnestness, was wife to the gentleman, and mother to the little girl he had so kindly sheltered in his own hospitable mansion.

They were coming to England to
reside,

reside, Mr. Thompson having acquired an immense fortune abroad. He had been married very little more than two years to a lady twenty years younger than himself, and with whom he had enjoyed a very large portion of happiness.

“ Ah, poor thing !” said an honest English sailor, who had been giving this history to those about him, and whose eyes were filled with tears as he looked at the body of Mrs. Thompson, “ the last time I saw you, you were fast locked in the arms of your husband, and calling on him to save you from the storm; but you called, alas ! in vain; and his strength being so much exhausted, that he could no longer fold you

to

to his bosom, you were washed overboard together!"

"He is saved," said Sir Richard mentally; "but surely better he had perished with her, than live to know he has survived the partner of his affections, who vainly clung to him for support."

He thought, however, of the hapless innocent she had left, and checked the idea. On his return home, he found the little girl seated on the knee of her young protector Henry, who was endeavouring all in his power to amuse her; and though his good-humoured efforts were tolerably successful, she frequently looked earnestly and sorrowfully around her, and lisped out the names of papa and mama.

"Poor

“Poor little girl!” said Marianne, “is her mama lost in the frightful sea?”

“She is indeed lost,” replied Sir Richard, with a sigh; “but should she be wholly left an orphan, my house shall be her home if she wants one, and your mama a parent to her.”

“Then she will be my sister, papa!” said the delighted Marianne. “Oh, how charming!” And away she eagerly ran to seek her mother, in order to convey this delightful piece of intelligence.

Sir Richard, in the meantime, went to the chamber of Mr. Thompson;—his senses appeared gradually returning, and the first word he uttered, whilst he folded his arms
eagerly

eagerly together, as if he was again clasping his wife to his bosom, was the name of Emma. He looked at those around him with an expression words cannot define; but his eye rested not on the countenance he languished to behold, and he sunk again on his pillow in a state of insensibility. Cordials were administered with success; and having slept for some hours, Mr. Thompson awoke perfectly sensible, and very much amended in health.

Sir Richard was instantly called to him; and on his earnestly imploring him to tell him if he knew any thing of his wife and child, by degrees, and with the utmost caution and humanity, the good Baronet unfolded to his unfortunate guest
the

the severe trial he had to sustain in the melancholy loss of the one; but promised him, if he would be calm, to afford him some portion of comfort by bringing the other to his arms.

“The mother of my poor babe is no more,” sobbed out the unhappy invalid, “and I can never, never see her again; for every feature will recall to my mind the lovely sainted being I have lost for ever, and to gaze on her would be madness.”

Convulsive sobs choked his utterance; and his kind host, justly considering that to offer advice or consolation at such a moment would be mockery, stood in silent sorrow by his bedside, watching him with anxious solicitude.

From the weak state of his body,

D

his

his frame was soon so much exhausted by mental exertion, that in a short time he again slept. But his mind was disturbed, and dreadful visions seemed to float in his imagination. It was more than two hours ere he awoke, and a settled kind of despair appeared to have succeeded the agonizing frenzy he had before displayed.

Several days elapsed, and he continued in the same state. During this period the bodies of his wife and her attendant were deposited in Sir Richard Percival's family vault; and the sailors too, to whom he had shewn so much kindness, took their leave with every expression of gratitude.

In the meantime the little girl had

so gained on the affections of the Baronet, his Lady, and their family, by the loveliness of her person, her innocent endearments, and unprotected situation, that she was quite the pet of them all.

Henry had taught her to call him papa, and Marianne was proud to assume the appellation of mama; but when either of these names was pronounced, she seemed to recollect something was attached to them that caused her uneasiness, and for a moment her almost unceasing gaiety was lost.

The unremitting kindness of Sir Richard Percival, and the soothing attentions of his wife, at length, aided by Time's lenient power, restored some degree of composure to the

tortured mind of Mr. Thompson; and after thanking them one day, in the most grateful and animated terms, for their friendly and humane exertions in his service, he shed a flood of tears, which appearing to remove a weight from his mind, he ventured to ask for his child.

Lady Percival glided instantly out of the room; and the next moment he folded to his arms his motherless babe. The scene was affecting beyond description; and the kind protectors of the little Emma, as they viewed her agonized parent gaze with deep affliction on his last remaining treasure, wept in speechless sorrow.

Another and not less interested spectator had stolen to the door of

Mr.

Mr. Thompson's room—it was Henry; his sobs, however, soon betrayed him; and the poor child, terrified at the agonies of her father, which increased on receiving her infantine and endearing caresses, eagerly sought shelter in the arms of her young friend, from a scene she could not at all comprehend.

From this time Mr. Thompson was able to converse on those subjects which had till now been scrupulously avoided. He mentioned a circumstance which, he said, on account of his little girl, he rejoiced at most truly, and this was, the year before, having remitted a large sum of money to be lodged in the English funds. His property, therefore, in the vessel that brought him over

was inconsiderable, and of this great part was saved.

“I was myself an orphan,” Mr. Thompson one day began, “and left my own country very early in life, in the capacity of clerk to a West-India trader, who afterwards settled in one of the islands. To this gentleman vigilance and fidelity strongly recommended me; and in a few years he took me into partnership. Riches accumulated, and fortune seemed to smile on all my projects; but yet I was far from being happy, for I aspired to obtain the hand of the daughter of an immensely rich planter, and feared to offer myself, as it was well known the lady’s father was ambitious, and designed to send her over to England, where
he

he had connexions in the higher circles, and where he doubted not her fortune would purchase at least a coronet.

“ His consent at length, however, sanctioned the wishes of each; for the heart of Emma had long been mine. It was obtained in what he thought a dying illness—an illness which induced him to give his child to the protection of a husband, when he feared she must soon lose that of a parent.

“ With his family my father-in-law had had no communication from the time he went abroad; and this was owing to a quarrel with his father, who had thwarted his wishes in an affair of love. He left home clandestinely, and was too proud to
give

give any account of himself, or solicit a reconciliation."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lady Percival with emotion, as Mr. Thompson was relating this part of his narrative, "tell me instantly the gentleman's name?"

"Orford," replied he, with no small degree of surprise.

"My heart," she cried, "augured then rightly, and it was indeed my brother!"

Mutual astonishment and congratulation succeeded this discovery. Mr. Thompson produced letters which Mr. Orford had entrusted to his care for some English friends, amongst which there was one for his sister, with whose marriage he had been made acquainted, though not
with

with the name of the gentleman to whom she had given her hand. Of the decease of his father he had likewise been informed.

Notwithstanding the opinion of the physicians, Mr. Orford lingered long enough after he had witnessed the marriage of his daughter, to fold to his arms his little grandchild; and six months afterwards he paid the debt of nature, fully satisfied with the choice his darling had made for herself, and happy in the conscious felicity of not having, by a foolish ambition, marred the comfort of two people so dear to each other.

The whole of his large property he left to Mr. Thompson, with the exception of a few legacies to servants, some particular friends in
England,

England, and a handsome remembrance of his sister. It was his whim that his death should not be announced to these friends till his son and daughter could themselves convey the intelligence; though he was aware it would be long before they could do so, having a multiplicity of business to settle ere they could leave the West Indies.

When this was arranged, affairs of importance called Mr. Thompson to Denmark. His wife accompanied him, and it was on their voyage from thence to England that the melancholy catastrophe occurred which we have already related.

Lady Percival wept over the letter of her deceased brother; and when she recollected the hapless
fate

fate of her niece, her tears flowed still more abundantly. She determined to be a mother to her child, whose relationship to the young Percivals, though it gave them pleasure to learn, did not in any degree increase their regard, for the interesting little stranger already possessed their whole hearts, and even William was active when engaged in contributing to her amusement. They rejoiced, however, most sincerely when they found she was to be a constant inmate of their family.

Mr. Thompson seemed so entirely unwilling to leave the spot which contained the remains of his Emma—a spot he visited very frequently, and so unequal, in the present state of his spirits, to arrange any business,
that

that Sir Richard Percival himself undertook a journey to London, in order to obviate the necessity of his friend's doing it.

On his return home, he found a visible alteration for the worse in the health of the still-disconsolate widow. A decline was the consequence of constant depression of spirits; and he seemed to welcome the approach of death as a blessing, for he felt it would reunite him to his lost treasure.

The hours of sickness were soothed by the kind attentions of his newly-discovered relatives; and though he often wept over his little girl, yet he felt truly grateful to Providence for having given her friends and protectors of whom he had seen enough
to

to be assured she might look up to them for support and advice in every situation of life.

A few days before the awful change took place, he delivered to Sir Richard Percival a will which he had just executed, and in which he told him he had ventured to offer himself and his Lady a small tribute of gratitude and esteem.

“My Emma,” he said, “I leave wholly to your care. Her fortune will be immense; and should she, at some distant period, be inclined to bestow it on either of your sons, let no false delicacy, my dear friend, because theirs may not be so large, induce you to repress the wish;—on the contrary, I would have you cherish it all in your power, for re-
E member,

member, I now assure you most earnestly, that, had my life been spared till Emma was of an age to marry, it would have been my fervent desire to have seen her united to her first and amiable protector Henry, or to his no-less worthy and open-hearted brother."

A very short time after this conversation had passed, Mr. Thompson became gradually worse, and he breathed his last sigh in the arms of Sir Richard Percival, who followed him to the grave with mournful sensations indeed, but with so perfect a conviction that his earthly prospects of happiness were entirely obscured, that he rather rejoiced at his early release from misery, than lamented his untimely fate.

The

The orphaned Emma now claimed his particular care, and that of his excellent Lady. They superintended themselves the present studies of their children, and allowed the little girl, for some time at least, to become the pupil of Henry. She rewarded his assiduous attention to her improvement by steady application and quick apprehension; and he was quite proud of the rapid progress she made.

Marianne continued to love her as a sister; and no envy, no petulance on either side weakened their regard. They often walked, accompanied by the brothers, to the cottage of honest Martin.

His ready attendance on Henry to the beach, and his active and hu-

mane exertions when arrived there, had not been forgotten by him, and he often expatiated on the subject to his father.

The circumstance had been mentioned likewise to Mr. Thompson, whose benevolence soon enabled the poor man to make his cottage, in his own eyes, a little paradise.

It was now guarded in every part from bad weather; and the white-washed walls, well-ranged cups and saucers on the chimney-piece, with the neatly-sanded floor, and comfortable fire, exhibited a striking and pleasing contrast to the appearance it had formerly displayed.

The liberal purse of Emma, when she became old enough to have a handsome allowance, supplied com-
forts

forts indeed to all who were within reach of her benevolence; and Lady Percival delighted to encourage such a mode of disposing of that abundance which she possessed.

Her gaiety and vivacity seemed an unfailing source of pleasure to herself and friends; and these were seldom checked, except when the remembrance of her parents occupied her mind.

Often would she ask of Henry every minute particular of their fate, and her own deliverance from the storm, and as often pour forth her gratitude to him and his parents in tears and tender endearments; nor did she ever forget on such occasions to offer her fervent thanks to Heaven likewise.

Sir Richard Percival's was truly a family of love; and the separations that the improvement of their children in time rendered necessary seemed the only trial they had to sustain.

In the course of years Mr. Thompson's wish was accomplished, and Henry, in the possession of Emma, received the full reward of that active benevolence, noble generosity, and ready humanity, that had always been the leading traits in his character; for her fortune, united with his own, enabled him to exercise all these virtues in the fullest extent.

BEAUTY

BEAUTY & DEFORMITY.

“**W**HAT a contrast!” exclaimed Mrs. Sedley, as she parted from her god-daughters, Maria and Charlotte Hastings, who had been introduced to her for the first time; “I can scarcely believe it possible that they are twins; the one is loveliness in its fairest form—the other has not an exterior charm.”

When we describe the young ladies who had made this unequal impression on the mind of their new acquaintance,

acquaintance, her exclamation will scarcely appear extraordinary.

Maria, who was the senior of her sister only a few hours, was, we might almost venture to say, a perfect beauty; her form light and elegant, and her hair, flowing in natural ringlets on her neck and shoulders, gave an appearance to her figure entirely sylphlike. Nor were the charms of her face less attractive than those of her person. Her eyes, that sometimes sparkled with peculiar lustre through the glossy auburn locks that waved on her fair forehead, were of the darkest blue, whilst their long silken lashes gave to them an expression truly soft and feminine. The bloom of the apple-blossom was rivalled by the fine colour in her cheek;

cheek; and her teeth were of the most transparent whiteness. Not even the frowns of Maria could wholly deprive her countenance of attraction; but in her smiles there was fascination.

To the external appearance of her sister, Nature had indeed been very sparing of her favours. Her person was unusually diminutive, and a habit of stooping, that had been acquired from weakness and ill health, gave it almost the look of deformity. Her complexion was pale and sallow; and her dark eyes, which would have been otherwise really expressive, were rendered unpleasing by a humour that had fixed in the eyelids. Added to all this, that enemy of beauty, the small-pox, had made
dreadful

dreadful ravages on her countenance, which, indeed, but for this miserable disease, might have equalled that of her sister, though in a perfectly different style of loveliness.

Both the children had been inoculated at an early period of life; and whilst one got over the complaint without suffering more than a trifling inconvenience from it, the other not only lost her beauty, but, what was more unfortunate, was materially injured in her constitution.

The mother of these girls had formed at school a friendship with Miss Howard, more strong than the generality of such attachments usually are, and infinitely more lasting also. She married much earlier in life than her young friend, who,
being

being an orphan, was permitted by her guardians, at her own particular request, to reside with Mr. and Mrs. Hastings.

The character of the gentleman in whose house she had fixed her abode was conformable to every precept his doctrines enforced, and he was one of the brightest ornaments of the sacred profession he had chosen. Beneath his roof Maria Howard enjoyed more real happiness than in any of the splendid scenes she was afterwards called to adorn.

This happiness, however, was not of very long continuance. The young lady attracted the regard of the second son of Mr. Sedley, a rich nabob, who resided within twelve miles of the parsonage. Her own fortune
was

was considerable; and their attachment being mutual, no obstacle impeded their union.

After witnessing the birth of Maria and Charlotte Hastings, and answering for them at the font, Maria Howard gave her hand to Henry Sedley.

She soon consented to go abroad with him, as his father had procured him a very lucrative situation in the East Indies. The only regret Mrs. Sedley experienced in leaving her native country, was the separation from her valued friend, Mrs. Hastings. They corresponded regularly till the death of the latter; and after that event took place, Mr. Hastings himself frequently wrote to the long-esteemed companion of his lamented wife.

Henry

Henry Sedley's constitution suffered so materially from the heat of an eastern climate, that, after having resided there twelve years, he determined to return to England. But while his affairs were arranging, in order to do this as quickly as possible, the unfortunate young man lost his life from the effects of a severe cold which had brought on a fever, and an inflammation on the lungs.

Maria Sedley, still lovely in person, captivating in manners, and possessed of an ample fortune, immediately embarked for her native land; and on her arrival there, after having paid a few necessary visits to the relatives of her husband, she gladly left London and all its fasci-

F nating

nating pleasures, to take possession of the villa near Mr. Hastings, which she had prevailed on her father-in-law to allow her to purchase, as she found it was no longer a favourite residence with him. To her, however, it was endeared by a thousand tender recollections; and its vicinity to the house of her old friend, for whom she felt a sisterly regard, was not the least of its recommendations.

To this gentleman she paid a very early visit, accompanied by an unmarried sister of Mr. Sedley's, whom she had persuaded to reside with her, and whose good sense and accomplishments rendered her a truly-desirable companion. She was by no means a young woman; and therefore the retired way of life her sister-

in-

in-law adopted was the less objectionable.

The first meeting between Mrs. Sedley and Mr. Hastings was an extremely painful one; in succeeding interviews, however, the melancholy recollections of each became softened, and their intercourse was very frequent.

Mrs. Sedley's god-daughters were both at school when she first settled in their father's neighbourhood; but she obtained his promise that their next vacation should be spent with her, for she was particularly fond of the society of young people, and meant, if she found the girls pleasant, to try and prevail on Mr. Hastings to permit them to make a longer visit than their holidays would allow;

and this she had little fear of doing, as she intended to assure him their improvement should not be neglected.

She really looked forward with great pleasure to their arrival at the Grove, as she wished to repay to the daughters some part of the debt of gratitude she owed their lamented mother, for her kindness at a time when she most wanted it.

At the beginning of this little tale, the young ladies had been first introduced to Mrs. Sedley, who was really so much captivated by the uncommon beauty of her namesake, that it occurred to her she should feel pleased in adopting her wholly; and by introducing her in a few years to that circle where her loveliness

ness would shine most conspicuously, be the means, perhaps, of making her fortune. This was, however, but the thought of a moment, for there was a kind of injustice in it to the other poor little creature, of which her nature was not capable.

The ladies all met again at dinner, and the charms of Maria, if possible, appeared to still greater advantage. Mrs. and Miss Sedley, though kind and attentive to both the sisters, certainly noticed her the most; and as she was really a good-humoured, lively, and clever girl, though somewhat spoiled by the praises she had too often heard lavished on her person, they were extremely well satisfied with her manners.

Elated, indeed, by the marked

attentions she received, Maria exerted all her powers of pleasing. Poor Charlotte saw these marked attentions likewise, but saw them without envy; on the contrary, she rejoiced at the prepossession of their new friend in favour of her sister, who, in the course of the evening, after having played a few easy lessons on the piano-forte, called on her to accompany her in a song. This she instantly did, and exercised all her skill to give the voice of Maria every possible advantage. Mrs. Sedley, herself a proficient in music, was indeed astonished at her style of playing, in which were happily blended rapid execution and accurate judgment.

“Perhaps *you* sing too,” said Mrs. Sedley;

Sedley; "if so, my dear, favour us with an air."

Diffident of her own abilities, she complied with evident timidity, though without hesitation; and not only surprised, but delighted her auditors by the exquisite feeling and admirable taste which she displayed.

"Has your sister learned to play and sing as long as you have?" inquired Miss Sedley.

The answer was an affirmative.

"I should not have thought so," replied the inquirer; "though I do not mean to say she does not play very prettily."

Charlotte observed the face of Maria was covered with blushes; and remarked, with as much modesty as
good

good humour, that she had devoted a great deal the most time to it;— “for,” she added, with a sigh, “my ill health led me to seek every amusement of this kind, while my young companions were differently engaged; and I am sure, had my sister been as much in the habit of practising as I have, she would have played quite as difficult lessons as I do.”

Neither the blushes of Maria, nor the amiable humility of Charlotte, passed unnoticed by the ladies. Mrs. Sedley professed herself to be a strict investigator of character. The youthful mind she delighted more particularly to make her study; and she could not help thinking that mortified vanity had crimsoned the cheek of

one

one of her god-daughters, whilst the motives that had influenced the different conduct of the other were highly honourable both to her head and heart.

The young people went early to rest, and the two friends made them the subject of conversation till they themselves retired.

“My beautiful favourite,” said Mrs. Sedley, “is certainly by no means so clever as her sister; and, by the bye, it is a great pity that poor little girl has not fewer personal defects, for she really seems extremely amiable.”

“Those very defects,” replied Miss Sedley, “may have been the means of rendering her both estimable and accomplished; and Maria, with half
the

the beauty she now possesses, would possibly have learned a great deal more than she has done."

Miss Sedley was perfectly right in her conjecture. Conscious of her own attractions, because flattered and praised by many indiscreet people, Maria found that she pleased without taking pains to do so; and setting too high a value on what gained her general admiration, she was less sedulous in acquiring other charms. In dancing she certainly excelled, having been told by her French governess that her person never appeared to so much advantage as when exhibited in a reel. Notwithstanding all this, her errors were certainly venial; for they were merely the errors of a youthful mind led astray by vanity.

Accustomed

Accustomed to praise, she felt something painful in sharing it with others. Her abilities too were by no means common ones; but, for the reasons already stated, she had not cultivated them as she ought to have done.

Charlotte, on the contrary, well aware, from the few attentions she ever received, and the little notice she excited, that on her talents only she must depend to render herself pleasing, neglected no opportunities of gaining information, or improving in those accomplishments she was pursuing; and she soon discovered that though amongst strangers she attracted no admiration, and called forth no eulogiums, as her sister did, she could yet make herself equally beloved

beloved by those around her, from constantly preserving good humour, and performing for them a thousand little offices of kindness.

It was indeed truly gratifying to her feelings, when she beheld the tears of her young companions, even on parting with her for the holidays, as they were, she thought, the most convincing proofs she could receive of their attachment.

From the time the visit to their god-mother was projected, each of the girls had looked forward to it with delight; and its beginning seemed to promise as much pleasure as they had either of them anticipated.

Maria was charmed with the grandeur of the house, the splendour of
the

the furniture, the extent and beauty of the grounds and gardens, and, above all, with the notice and particular attention she had received from the mistress of the fair domains.

Her sister was no less happy in the idea of having it in her power to pursue all her favourite studies and amusements. She looked upon Mrs. Sedley as a superior kind of being; the easy elegance of her manners excited her admiration, but the benevolence that beamed in her smile, and her affability and condescension to all around her, awakened a softer sentiment, whilst the playful vivacity that sometimes marked her conversation led the way to confidence, and banished reserve.

As every succeeding day seemed

to establish more fully all these sentiments in the mind of Charlotte, so every succeeding day raised her in the opinion of Mrs. Sedley. Passionately fond of poetry, this lady was delighted to perceive a similarity of sentiment in this respect existed between them. She had discovered this one day in searching for a beautiful passage in one of her most favourite authors. Charlotte came in at the moment, and on being asked if she recollected the lines in question, repeated them in a manner so unaffected, and with an emphasis so judicious, that they appeared to Mrs. Sedley more delightful than ever.

“You never told me, my love,” said she, “that poetry had been amongst the number of your studies.”

“I did

“I did not know,” replied her god-daughter, “that you so much admired it; and my father, who first gave me a relish for its beauties, always advised me to conceal my taste for it, till accidentally called forth, lest by indulging it perhaps too frequently, it might become tiresome to others.”

“There is no chance that you will do so, however,” said her friend; “for there is more novelty in your character than in that of any young person I know.”

From this time Charlotte was often deputed to read to the party as they worked. Their mornings indeed were generally spent either in this way or at the piano-forte; and even Maria acquired a higher relish

for these amusements than she had ever before experienced.

Notwithstanding this, she saw, spite of the beauty which she was conscious had at first made so strong an impression on Mrs. Sedley, that the society of her sister was more courted than her own, and it required all the skilful management of the former to keep her perfectly in good humour, for she was too fond of receiving attentions, not to regret the loss of them.

A dance, however, that their godmother had promised to give them on their next birthday, when they would attain the age of fourteen, put her in high spirits; and nothing else was thought, talked, or dreamt of, till it arrived.

All

All the young people in the neighbourhood were invited; and no little gala, either in town or country, was ever more elegantly managed, or contrived with greater skill than this. Mrs. Sedley, who delighted in seeing young folks happy, and whose taste was of no common kind, spared neither expence nor trouble in ornamenting the apartments designed for the purpose, in such a way as might at once charm and astonish her guests. Variegated lamps of the most brilliant colours were dispersed about the rooms, while a variety of beautiful flowers, fancifully entwined amongst them, gave a very striking effect to the whole, which being reflected in immense mirrors on every

side, rendered it quite a scene of enchantment.

In the hall leading to the ball-room, an avenue was formed of greenhouse plants, the largest that could be selected; and these were placed so judiciously, that the party, on their first entrance, passed through a continued fragrant bower, into which very little light was admitted, that the contrast of the gaily-ornamented suite of apartments might appear still more brilliant.

The opinion of both the girls had been consulted in arranging all this; but Charlotte was by far the abler assistant in the business, and received due praise for it, when the visitors were commending the elegance of
the

the idea, and the excellence of its execution.

On this occasion, however, Maria certainly presided as the little enchantress of the fairy scene. All eyes gazed at her with admiration; and as Mrs. Sedley herself followed her light steps in the mazy windings of the sprightly dance, she still thought her the loveliest creature she had ever seen, though she did not estimate her beauty quite so highly as she had formerly done.

All the young gentlemen of the party were ambitious of gaining the hand of Mrs. Sedley's fair god-daughter, who, half wild with pleasure, and elated with the adulation she received, laughed, chattered, and danced with as many as she could.

Charlotte,

Charlotte, in the meantime, was quite in the background; she danced, indeed, but it was with those very little girls who wanted partners. She acquitted herself, however, much better than she had ever done on any similar occasion.

She was now in good health, and her spirits were unusually elevated; she enjoyed the scene, therefore, extremely; and her partial friend declared she did the steps nearly as well as her sister, though her figure, it must be owned, could not set them off to so much advantage.

Anxious to bring forward her now decided favourite, the mistress of the revels, after the young people had been refreshed with a variety of good things, served in a style of the
greatest

greatest elegance, proposed, before the dancing again commenced, that they should have a little music.

This was readily agreed to; and when several ladies had played, who were reckoned good performers, Mrs. Sedley led Charlotte to the instrument, and requested her to give them one of those lively and animated airs which she thought best adapted for the occasion, and most likely to excite general attention.

This she immediately did, and the design was fully answered. Universal admiration followed; and when she was prevailed on to sing likewise, all was rapturous delight. Indeed there were very few of the girls who heard her that did not envy her talents, and very few of their parents
who

who did not wish their children to excel as much as she did.

Though wished by some to continue at the piano-forte, yet aware that others would think the time passed heavily till they returned to the dancing-room, she declined doing so, though with the greatest good humour. And there was so much of this quality, as well as modesty, displayed in her general manners, that even those who felt most inclined to envy her accomplishments and abilities, could not help admiring and esteeming her; for those accomplishments were not ostentatiously displayed, and those abilities neither rendered her vain nor presuming.

When she again joined the dance, she met with a vast deal more attention

tion than she had done at first; and now as many partners were at her command as had been before at her sister's; whilst her liveliness, evident desire to oblige, and constant good humour, made every one wonder they had so long neglected her.

The happy party separated at no very early hour, all highly delighted with their evening's amusement. Many of them remained at the Grove that night; and the next day, with several succeeding ones, likewise were again devoted to pleasure, and every kind of juvenile sport.

All this time Maria thought herself in fairy land; and her sister, who was among the first to promote fun, gaiety, and frolic, was always first consulted as to what should be the
amusement

amusement of the hour; for she generally decided in such a way as satisfied all parties.

At length, however, they were left to themselves, and Charlotte returned to her accustomed employments with renovated glee. Her first leisure moments were devoted to visiting the cottages of those to whom she had been in the habit of conveying, at her own particular request, the kind bounty of Mrs. Sedley, and of giving intelligence to her of what her pensioners most required.

Her manner of giving it had always rendered the gift more valuable; and her soft, conciliating manners had made her an universal favourite amongst all the poor people who knew her.

Maria.

Maria generally accompanied her in her charitable visits; but often thoughtless and inconsiderate, though by no means callous to distress of any kind, she wanted that attractive gentleness, so conspicuous in the whole deportment of her sister, and which had frequently gained her the appellation of angel, when the other's beauty had failed to excite even a word of approbation.

Mrs. Sedley had been for some weeks earnestly engaged in completing a work, which had not merely taken up a large portion of time, but had served to depress her spirits considerably. This was the ornamental part of an obelisk, that she meant to have erected in an elegant little pavilion that stood in a very retired

part of the grounds belonging to the Grove.

It was to be dedicated to the memory of her deceased and lamented Henry, with whom, in this very spot, she had enjoyed many hours of almost unalloyed felicity.

The design was beautifully simple, and was fully equalled in the execution, as far as this was yet carried. The base of the obelisk was of the most polished marble, and an urn of exquisite workmanship was placed at the top. For its four sides Mrs. Sedley was painting devices expressive, in some degree, of her own history;—two of these were already completed, and she had nearly finished a third.

The first represented a landscape,
in

in which the whole face of nature seemed to wear a smile. The beams of the sun gave a bright glow to the foliage, and reflected in the unruffled waves of a clear and calm river a little pinnace, that was lightly floating on its surface, and which was ornamented with gay streamers. On the foreground stood the Temple of Hymen; and the deity himself, arrayed in purple vestments, was lighting his torch, and beckoning to a young couple, just distinguished in the distance, though evidently approaching his sacred altar.

On the next space Love was portrayed keeping alive the torch of Hymen, and conducting a female figure to a vessel that was at anchor

in a fine bay. Its sails were spread, and it seemed ready to put to sea at a moment's notice: the lady appeared to be taking a parting look at the scenes she was going to quit, but, resting on her companion and guide, her countenance shewed no marks of reluctance.

On the reverse of the first division of the obelisk the same landscape was represented as in that, but the scenery was totally changed;—no sunbeams gilded the surrounding objects, but dark clouds obscured the sky, and a tempest seemed to have torn up many of the trees; the river was swelled to a great height, and the little pinnacle, before so gaily decorated with colours, was now dismast-
ed,

ed, and almost sinking beneath the waves, appeared as if nearly shattered by the storm.

Instead of the temple of Hymen, a tomb was raised, over which the melancholy cypress waved its dark branches. Love was weeping near; his torch had fallen to the ground, and was quite extinguished.

Mrs. Sedley had yet to finish the shading of the tomb, and the figure of a female dejectedly reclining upon it; but this seemed to her no very easy task: and Charlotte had so often seen her shedding tears over this last picture, so descriptive of her own situation, that she could not help sincerely wishing the whole work was done, that her kind benefactress might be saved from any

more painful recollections, which her employment so naturally awakened.

Mrs. Sedley and her sister, with their young visitors, were engaged to spend a few days at the house of a friend, who lived at no very great distance; but Charlotte thought, if she could possibly get excused from going, it would afford her an excellent opportunity of filling up the only remaining space of the obelisk, with some design that would be appropriate to the other three.

To this task she trusted her talents in drawing were fully adequate; and when she thought how much her beloved Mrs. Sedley's spirits had suffered, whilst engaged in paying this tribute to the memory of her husband, she could not resist the earnest

earnest inclination she felt to spare the sensibility of her friend any farther trial, and complete the work herself; particularly as an artificer from town was engaged to come, at a very early period, in order to erect it in the pavilion already mentioned.

With this plan in her mind, she begged Mrs. Sedley to leave her at home while she made her promised visit. But to this proposal she could gain no assent, till she so earnestly requested to remain at the Grove, on the plea of ill health, that she was at length permitted to do so, and the ladies departed without her; her godmother, for the first time, feeling a little displeas'd with her favourite, whose conduct she could not help
thinking

thinking rather inconsistent and capricious.

The very moment she had left the house, Charlotte commenced her employment most eagerly, and was so indefatigable, that the evening before the party returned, she had completed her undertaking.

Delighted with its success, she welcomed home her friends in high spirits; and Mrs. Sedley observed with an arch smile, that her health seemed fully recovered during their absence. She added, however, with great good humour—"Though I was certainly very much disappointed, my dear girl, by your not accompanying me in my visit, after having engaged you should do so, yet as you have so few, so very few whims,

whims, it is but fair they should now and then be indulged."

Charlotte thanked her friend for her kind consideration in the same rallying way; and was highly gratified, when, in the course of the evening, she overheard her declare to Miss Sedley, that she really dreaded returning to her melancholy employment the next morning.

"But finished in a week," she added, "it must absolutely be; and I must endeavour to conquer feelings that overpower my better judgment. Though I believe, had I guessed how much I should have tried them, I scarcely think I should have had resolution to begin the task."

Our young artist slept little all
night,

night, so anxious was she that her scheme, and the execution of it likewise, should meet with the approbation of her godmother. She thought it would never be daylight, and welcomed the first beams of the sun with joy.

She arose early, and waited the summons to breakfast with solicitude and impatience, as she well knew ere that time her motive for declining the visit would be discovered.

Mrs. Sedley, indeed, had desired not to be called so late as usual, as she wished to commence her employment before breakfast. She went for this purpose to the room where she constantly painted, and seated herself by the division of the obelisk that yet, as she supposed, remained unfinished.

unfinished. Every thing appeared just in the state she had left them; for easel, brushes, and colours, were exactly in their places, and not even her chair seemed removed. But what was her astonishment when, in raising the papers that covered her drawing, she beheld the piece completed, and completed in the most masterly style. The figure she had sketched was likewise shaded, and its features, she instantly perceived, bore a striking resemblance to her own.

“This must be the work of magic!” she exclaimed with rapture; “how beautifully touched! how exquisitely finished!”

But her delight and surprise were comparatively small to what she felt when,

when, on turning to the other side of the obelisk, she discovered the only remaining vacancy was also filled up. The same landscape as had been represented by her own pencil on the first and third space, was again delineated here; but neither in the bright glowing hues and gay features that marked the one, nor the dark gloomy colours and desolated scenery that characterized the other;—Autumn seemed to have mellowed the brilliant tints of the foliage, and sober Evening to have spread her mild beauties over the face of nature. A figure of Hope resting on an anchor, which was firmly fixed in a solid rock, that lifted its majestic head even to the clouds, with her eyes raised to Heaven,

ven, and one hand pointing upwards, completed the piece; and the more Mrs. Sedley contemplated it, the more was she charmed with the inimitable skill and execution of the artist, and the soothing ideas it was meant to convey to her mind: she gazed on it with tears of melancholy pleasure.

“Yes,” she cried, “my amiable Charlotte, for to you must I be indebted for this proof of regard; Hope does indeed point the way to those scenes where I shall again meet my sainted Henry!”

She heard a soft sigh near her, and turning round, discovered Charlotte Hastings herself, who could no longer refrain from seeking her pa-

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troness,

troness, whose lengthened absence from the breakfast-table had excited the curiosity of her sister-in-law.

Mrs. Sedley folded her tenderly in her arms; and the amiable girl received an ample reward for her exertions, in the animated thanks and warm eulogiums of her friend.

"How delicate, how modest, how admirable has been your conduct, my love!" said she. "You forbore to offer me your assistance, but you have given it in a manner the most pleasing."

"I was half afraid," replied the delighted Charlotte, "that I was guilty of no small degree of presumption, in taking the pencil from so able a hand as yours; but I was induced

induced to do so, that your smiles might again gladden the hearts of those around you."

A kiss of almost maternal affection spoke the gratitude of Mrs. Sedley, who, when she carried Miss Sedley and Maria to witness what had so much gratified her heart, declared before them both, she could never bear to part with one who had given such strong and convincing proofs of her regard.

This regard, indeed, on each side grew stronger every day; and in the next visit Mr. Hastings made to the Grove, for that gentleman had been a very frequent guest there during the stay of his daughters, after he had mentioned his wish that they should soon return to the parsonage,

having already been absent from home so long, Mrs. Sedley proposed retaining Charlotte as her constant companion.

The fond father had always been delighted with the apparent interest this lady had seemed to feel for both his girls, and had certainly thought it was not improbable she might take one of them entirely under her protection.

When such an idea occurred to him, he could not help being anxious that her choice might fall on Maria, whose extreme beauty rendered a female protectress more necessary to her than to her sister, in whose good sense, and greater prudence likewise, he was well assured he might rely in all situations; at any rate, she
would

would in the world be the least exposed to temptation, and in retirement, the most able to render it comfortable.

These sentiments, however, he would by no means avow to Mrs. Sedley, as he thought it unjust to do so, but begged her to refer the matter wholly to his daughter, with his full approbation of whatever she might determine.

Delighted at this, that lady immediately sought her favourite, and repeated the conversation that had just passed between her and Mr. Hastings. A glow of pleasure passed across the cheek of Charlotte, but it was succeeded by a flood of tears; and with a hesitating accent, a few moments afterwards she declined

availing herself of the kind offer she had received.

“I trust, my dear Madam,” said she, “you cannot attribute my refusal to want of affection. Next to my father, I love and venerate you; but—but—” she added, with an embarrassed air, “if you would change your plan, and take my sister, I am sure you would find her all you could wish.”

“And why are you so earnest for your sister’s residence here?” inquired her companion with impatient curiosity.

“For a long time,” replied Charlotte seriously, “even my thoughts have been known to you, and I will not conceal them now. Believe me, to live with you, to be always near
you,

you, and to watch your very looks, would make me happy indeed; but to the lovely, the beautiful, and inexperienced Maria, your protection would be a yet greater blessing—it might save her from those dangers, which I have heard my father so often say are the bane of youthful happiness. From these the homeliness of my person is a sufficient security; and when I have said this, can you wonder, my kind and respected friend, that I should be eager to make any sacrifice, however great, that might guard the sister I so tenderly love from misfortune, and give tranquillity to the anxious bosom of a parent?"

"Generous, noble-minded girl!" said Mrs. Sedley, "I must leave you
for

for the present, in order to communicate your wishes to your father."

"Your Charlotte is an angel, my dear Sir," said she, as she recounted to him this conversation; "and both your girls must become my *protégées*; but remember you are at full liberty to see that I manage them properly; and I trust their being inmates of my family will induce you to become its very frequent visitor."

Mr. Hastings was no less charmed with Charlotte's conduct, than delighted with the decision it had caused. Such a guardian and friend as his children had gained, was indeed invaluable; they were almost as much also under his own immediate protection as if living at home,
and

and a weight of care seemed removed from his mind; for he had often looked forward with parental anxiety to the time he must remove them from school—a time when the maternal hand is so necessary to direct the steps of youth, and guide them in the paths of propriety.

The fond and happy father repeatedly poured forth his gratitude to Mrs. Sedley in the warmest terms; and as he affectionately kissed his dear girls at parting, rejoiced to perceive he left them both equally happy, and equally grateful as himself.

Nor did the amiable Mrs. Sedley ever regret the important charge she had undertaken; she watched her young friends with almost a mother's care, and delighted to reflect

on

on the felicity their own lamented mother would experience, could she view her darlings placed beneath her sheltering roof. Miss Sedley assisted her in completing their education; and both the ladies found it an employment satisfactory in its consequences, as well as pleasing in itself.

Mr. Hastings too was ever delighted when called upon to assist in the gratifying task. This was not very seldom; and he had such frequent opportunities of observing the manners, disposition, and conduct of Miss Sedley, that he could not help indulging the wish she would supply to him the place of his lost wife. To his home, indeed, he often returned from any visit in the neighbourhood, only to lament it was a
solitary

solitary one, and only to regret that no kind friend and agreeable companion presided there. Miss Sedley was without ambition; and the virtues and character of Mr. Hastings led her to think their union, in all human probability, would be productive of happiness.

The girls rejoiced when their father gave them so estimable a mother-in-law; and Mrs. Sedley herself, when she lost one long and beloved companion, felt comparatively easy, in having secured others that would give charms to her retirement.

The example of Charlotte, and her own good sense, corrected the little foolish vanity and foibles of Maria, who, now convinced of her
sister's

sister's innate worth, was among the first to admire her talents, and love her virtues. She became herself every day more accomplished; and every day she consequently valued less the charms of beauty.

The mind of Charlotte daily acquired new attractions; and in a year or two the defects of her person were far less conspicuous. But though her face always continued plain, and her figure homely, yet she was loved, respected, and admired by all who knew the goodness of her heart, the invariable sweetness of her disposition, and the excellence of her understanding.

The moral of my little tale is addressed to those beautiful inexperienced females, who are too early
fluttering

fluttering in the dangerous vortex of fashion and dissipation; and to those likewise, who, still confined in the school-room at home, or the public seminary, yet think with rapture of their introduction to the world, and the universal homage their charms will receive. I would teach them that *mere beauty*, though it may excite the buzz of admiration, and the whisper of applause, is powerless in itself alone to create friendship, or conciliate esteem, and only estimable when attended by mental excellence, and unaccompanied by vanity or affectation.

To those too of my own sex, whose want of personal attractions in themselves, frequently induce them to look with an eye of envy on those

of others, I would wish to hint, that they are apt to estimate beauty far beyond its intrinsic value. Let them contrast the admired belle who has studied little but outward decoration, with her who, with a homely person, has assiduously cultivated the powers of her mind; and though for a time the comparison may be in favour of the first, yet when youth is gliding away, they will find that, though every added year may steal a grace from the one, it will give a charm to the other.

THE MIDSHIPMAN.

“**Y**OU have chosen, my dear boy, a dangerous and, I fear, not a very pleasant profession; but you have followed your own wishes; and aware as you must be, that my confined income will not allow me to give you any other, should this prove disagreeable, I trust you are prepared to meet with fortitude, and to combat with resolution, the perils and the trials that may await you.”

These words were addressed to Henry Percy by his father. The young gentleman was on the eve of leaving the parental roof, in order to join his ship at Portsmouth—a period to which he had looked forward as almost to the summit of happiness; but when the morning arrived that was to take him from his native home—from the parents who had ever treated him with the kindest indulgence, and from the brothers and sisters whom he tenderly loved, he felt emotions far more painful than pleasurable; and could not help thinking, in the very moment that all his high-raised hopes were going to be realized, that he would gladly have given them up,
to

to have dried the tears of his mother, and checked the sighs that escaped from the bosom of his father,

Mr. Percy was a surgeon in a small market-town. He had no paternal fortune; and though his abilities were of the first rate, and his skill undoubted, yet his practice *was not* sufficiently extensive, and his family too large to allow him to gain an independence.

He had wished Henry, his eldest son, to follow his own profession, as he thought it would not only be a comfort to himself, but a future provision for him. This, however, the young gentleman's early and strong predilection for the navy had prevented.

It had been in a great measure
 κ 3 acquired

acquired by associating with a Lieutenant, who had made very frequent visits at the house of a near neighbour, and had shewn great civilities and attention to our hero, who had been in the habit of listening with delight to the animated account his friend gave of the various engagements he had seen, in some of which he had been wounded. His interesting description, too, of different countries, awakened in the enterprising breast of Henry an ardent desire to pursue the same path to knowledge, and purchase fame even at the same price.

Mr. Percy would not oppose his son's inclinations when he found them decidedly fixed; but a thousand anxious fears agitated his mind

as

as he was about to bid him farewell. He knew him to be generous, open-hearted, and sincere; but he knew him, likewise, to be warm, inconsiderate, and too often led away by first impressions. Without disguise himself, he was unsuspecting of it in others; and as his judgment was not sufficiently mature to discriminate character properly, his father apprehended he might, in the situation he was going to enter, be sometimes the dupe of the designing.

“Never, my dear boy,” said he, “be governed merely by appearances, nor suffer yourself to yield your own opinion to that of another, when you know it to be founded on right principles. Be equally careful, likewise, of obstinately maintaining it, when

when your mind whispers it is wrong. In giving up a point there is nothing unmanly; an error of the judgment is of trivial moment; and it is only an error of the heart for which you ought to blush.

“ Be not ashamed of continuing firm in your religious principles, and attentive to every religious duty, because it may excite the ridicule of the thoughtless, the giddy, and the dissipated. Be assured, in a very short time, if they find you steady in your own ideas, and constantly acting up to them, their foolish raillery will cease, and they will learn to respect in you what they want in themselves; while the esteem of the virtuous and the good will ever reward such conduct.

“ Above

“Above all, let not your faith be shaken by the subtle arguments of what is falsely called philosophy; and listen not to the delusive sophistry of the sceptic, and the yet more dangerous notions of the freethinker.”

Mr. Percy ceased speaking; and Henry, who had listened with attention to his precepts, determined in his own mind strictly to follow them. Again and again he affectionately kissed his mother and sisters, and wept on the bosom of his father; and when at length he was obliged to depart, sobs choked his utterance, and he sprang into the chaise that had been waiting some time at the door, with sensations those only can be aware of, who, like him, have taken leave, for the first

first time, of every dear and tender connection.

His own reflections rendered his journey by no means a lively one; and had it not been for his friend, the Lieutenant, who was his companion, and who good-humouredly used every means in his power to raise his spirits, they would have sunk most terribly; for now the idea that he had left all his natural connections, and was going totally among strangers, would obtrude on his remembrance. And considering the perfect retirement in which he had been educated, it is not to be wondered at that some fears arose in his mind, on his near approach to scenes, which he was assured must be so very different from any to
which

which he had ever been accustomed, and society in which he should doubtless feel himself at a great loss.

He expressed all these apprehensions to his friend Lieutenant Sinclair, who kindly endeavoured to banish them; and assured him, as he conceived himself in a great measure the original cause of his going to sea, he would use his utmost efforts to make his situation pleasant.

“And recollect, my good fellow,” said he, “that while I remain in the same ship as yourself, you will always have one friend near who is interested for your welfare, and who will readily give you his advice, whenever you think proper to call upon him.”

For these kind assurances Henry offered

offered his most grateful thanks ; and the morning after his arrival at Portsmouth, when he was equipped in his new dress, which he could not help thinking extremely becoming, all his former enthusiasm returned, painful ideas were banished, and he jumped with cheerful alacrity into the boat which was to convey himself and Mr. Sinclair to as fine a frigate, that gentleman declared, as any in the service.

To Henry, indeed, every thing appeared delightful, having never been on the sea before ; and when he got on board, his surprise and pleasure knew no bounds. The wonderful construction of the vessel itself, the admirable mechanism of the machines that governed it, and the

the order and regularity apparent in every department of it, were all matters that increased his surprise and admiration.

With his young companions, too, to whom Mr. Sinclair had introduced him in the most flattering terms, he was highly pleased, and they were equally amused with his observations. He saw them, almost with terror, fearlessly climb to the mast-head; and could scarcely believe it possible, when they assured him he would be able to do the same.

He soon selected one of the Midshipmen, who had from the first shewn him great civility, for his more particular acquaintance; and it is not to be wondered at that he was struck with the uncommon ap-

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pearance

pearance of good humour, high flow of spirits, and animated conversation of Charles Fairfax.

This lad was two years older than our hero, and possessed the most brilliant talents, though he gave but little time or attention to their cultivation. He was esteemed the life of the starboard birth; and though he sometimes led his young friends into terrible scrapes, yet he had generally sufficient ingenuity to come off himself unsuspected.

Henry, by the advice of Mr. Sinclair, applied himself attentively to the study of naval tactics; and though he did not find it very entertaining, yet by perseverance and steady application, he at length acquired such a knowledge of them, as he not only
found

found useful to himself, but for which he gained great credit from others.

Young Fairfax often declared, as he saw him poring over his books, as he called it, that he had never opened one on that stupid subject, and that it was all nonsense to bother his brains about such dry stuff.

This young gentleman had a noble allowance from his father; yet he sometimes found it extremely convenient and necessary to borrow of his messmates. Henry, who had imbibed from his father a terrible idea of being in debt, could not, without wonder, see the ease and cheerfulness which Charles preserved, even when he knew him to be a debtor to no small amount.

His own purse, which had been as liberally supplied when he left home as his parents could possibly afford, was open to the demands of his new friend, who soon drained it so deeply, that its owner was obliged, much against his inclination, to apply to Mr. Sinclair for a fresh stock of cash.

This gentleman, after expressing his astonishment that he so soon called upon him, cautioned him, in the most friendly manner, to avoid with care the extravagance of which some of his companions were guilty.

Henry well knew to whom he alluded; but as he considered that he was bound in honour not to betray the secret of his friend, he satisfied himself with assuring Mr. Sinclair that

that he hoped, in a very short time, to convince him he was rather economical than profuse.

The marked and flattering attentions he had always received from young Fairfax, who we have already said was so much older than himself, and who had it so much in his power to please every age, had given him consequence in his own eyes, and gratified his vanity, for he had forgotten the advice of his father—"not to be governed merely by appearances;" and he was not sufficiently experienced to discover that Fairfax assumed the specious mask of friendship, only to answer designs of his own, for he had wearied out most of the other young men with borrowing their money; and when he had

been on shore with them, had so often contrived they should bear the blame of wild frolics and schemes which had been originally of his own invention, that they were heartily tired of being in his parties.

The generous and unsuspecting disposition, with the frank and liberal manners of our hero, led him to think he might perhaps find him convenient for his purposes; and discovering, with his accustomed penetration, that vanity, and the wish of being considered manly, were amongst his foibles, he so well humoured them, that he soon gained a complete ascendancy over him.

When Henry first became a Midshipman, he was too young not to feel gratified in hearing the title of

Mister

Mister conferred on him by every body. To this distinction Charles did not fail to add another, by very frequently reminding *Mr. Percy* of being entirely master of his own actions and conduct, except, indeed, in regard to naval matters; but all *officers*, he artfully observed, were obliged to submit to their superiors in command.

When they went on shore together, he always gave him as much consequence as he could, though indeed he often laughed secretly at the importance which Henry assumed, when giving his orders at the tavern they frequented, and receiving the low bows, fawning respect, and obsequious civility of the landlord, who had taken plenty of cash off the
hands

hands of Mr. Fairfax, and who declared that gentleman was in the habit of spending his money like a Prince.

The friends had engaged to go to a ball together, which was given by a party of naval officers. Henry had never been at an amusement of this kind, and he was more than ever delighted with Charles, for the friendly attentions he paid him there, and the unremitting pains he took to obviate the embarrassments which a youth of his age must naturally feel on a first introduction to parties of this kind. He got him partners, who, if they were not perfectly satisfied with their *little beau*, had yet good-nature enough to appear pleased themselves, and to enjoy the rap-
ture

ture our young hero expressed at the music, dancing, &c.

The friends slept on shore; and the following morning, Henry, after declaring the sound of the pipe and tabour was not out of his ears the whole night, readily agreed to accompany Fairfax in a ride, which he said would be the very best means of recovering from the fatigue of the preceding evening.

The officious landlord already mentioned procured them a horse and gig; and though not very expert in handling his whip, Charles drove off in a dashing style, and Boniface affirmed, as he looked after them, that "they were two as knowing young dogs as any in the fleet."

They had not gone many miles
before

before both recollected if they did not return with all possible expedition, the cutter that was to convey them on board would have gone off.

Fairfax immediately turned round, and heedless of the repeated entreaties of Henry to spare the poor horse, who was already half knocked up, and whose wretched appearance had excited his compassion, whipped him on most unmercifully, uttering so many oaths and execrations, that his companion began to think him half mad.

He had, however, very little time for reflection, as in turning a corner too sharply, the carriage was, to use the gentleman's own expression, "*capsized.*" Fortunately they sustained very little personal injury, except

except a few bruises. Their pockets, indeed, suffered materially, for the gig was broken all to pieces; and the demand made upon them in order to repair it, was more than their joint purses could furnish.

Even the ingenuity of Fairfax could not get them out of this dilemma; and it was in vain he assured the owner of the shattered vehicle he should be paid in a few days; for the man, irritated by the wretched situation of the horse, which had been extremely hurt also, insisted upon immediate satisfaction. Though Henry had not been in the least accessory to the demolition of the carriage, or the injury the poor animal had sustained, yet with his usual generosity, he offered his last guinea

to

to Fairfax, who, actuated by no sentiments of justice, and possessing no liberality of spirit, did not scruple to accept it; and our hero found himself without a shilling in his pocket, with the additional mortification of recollecting his money was all gone, without having procured him a moment's real pleasure.

He was too good-natured, however, to cast any reflections on his companion, though he began to see pretty clearly he had been made his tool on this as on some former occasions; and when he was asked by him to pawn his watch till the debt could be fully discharged, on the plea that his own was really much too valuable a one for such a purpose, he resolutely refused doing so, as it had
been

been the gift of his father, and he had promised never voluntarily to part from it.

Charles was a good deal surprised by the positive denial of his request, as he had fancied *Mr. Percy* could refuse him nothing; and after ridiculing his old-fashioned ideas, left his own watch, though with a very ill grace, in the hands of the man to whom the gig and horse belonged. To increase their chagrin, the cutter that was to convey them on board had left the shore, and they had no money to hire a boat.

They returned to the inn not in very high spirits; but Fairfax, observing it was in vain to distress themselves about what could not be remedied, paraded the streets in his

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usual

usual dashing style, and meeting with some old acquaintances from another ship, frankly told them his story; and after confessing that neither himself nor companion had a sixpence to pay for a dinner, gladly accepted an invitation to join their party, on receiving an assurance that a boat should be at their service in the evening.

Henry hinted that he thought it would be an infinitely better plan to request the loan of it immediately, as they had already transgressed by staying on shore many hours more than they ought to have done; but this idea was instantly rejected, and his apprehensions of the Captain's displeasure laughed at by his more daring friend, who comforted him
with

with the assurance that he could invent some pretty little tale that would get them off famously.

Henry, however, could not help cherishing his fears, and was so much disgusted with the levity of Fairfax, and the profligacy of his manners amongst his new associates, after he had partaken with them pretty freely of the bottle, that he secretly determined to be of no more such parties, and heartily regretted that instead of avoiding the society of Charles, after receiving the friendly advice and kind hint of Mr. Sinclair, he had trusted to his own judgment in forming an opinion of his character, and by so doing, involved himself in a situation very

unpleasant, as well as far from respectable.

But Henry's embarrassments did not end here; and he had to bear still severer mortifications than any the loss of his money could inflict, though that was by no means a trifle to so young a person. They afforded him, however, a salutary lesson for the future, and taught him, from painful experience, to be more cautious of forming hasty attachments, and of mixing familiarly with associates, of whose characters and principles he was ignorant.

The party sallied forth towards evening a good deal heated with wine, and in such a frame of mind as induced them to annoy every
body

body they met. Henry would have kept aloof, as he had been too little accustomed to such scenes to feel any relish for them; but Fairfax dragged him on, declaring it was impossible but he must enjoy such excellent sport.

Two young men, going home very quietly from work, felt inclined to resist the insolence of the heroes of the anchor; and Henry, though endeavouring by every means in his power to make peace, received a black eye in the scuffle that ensued. Fairfax did not come off much better; and the friends returned on board with very different sentiments for each other than those they had experienced on leaving the ship.

foundation of all kinds of vice ; and bad example, though its effects may not always be immediate, are too generally sure.

Before we conclude the subject, we will just say of young Fairfax, that he soon left the ship to which Henry belonged, and on joining another, launched into dissipation and folly with such avidity, that he spent a very handsome property ; and though naturally good-humoured, yet, from drinking to excess, became so irritable, that in an unlucky moment of inebriety, he challenged a superior officer, and for this offence was dismissed the service.

Henry's ship was, in a few months, ordered to the West Indies. He applied

applied himself more closely than ever to study, and fully retrieved his character in the opinion of his Commander.

He still, however, felt the ill consequences of his imprudent connection with Fairfax; he had been obliged, after all, to pay the greater part of the expence for repairing the damaged gig; and severely felt the inconvenience, in his present situation, of being without money. His spirits, indeed, were very low on the occasion; what cash he received from home was appropriated to the payment of many little debts he had unavoidably contracted, and of Mr. Sinclair he was unwilling again to borrow.

Chance betrayed the emptiness of
his

his purse to a sailor, whom he had at a former period treated with great kindness. On account of his conduct in some official capacity having been misrepresented by a messmate, he was ordered to be punished; but Henry, who knew the circumstances, so warmly interested himself in his favour, and so clearly proved his innocence, that he obtained his pardon; and in the hearty thanks of the poor fellow, received an ample reward for the trouble he had taken.

Our hero had almost forgotten the circumstance, but the grateful sailor had a better memory; and on learning by accident the occasion of his young patron's appearing "so mopeish," went into his cabin one morning,

ing, and after a great many bows, and no small degree of hesitation, "ax'd his Honour's pardon for being so bold as to interrupt him."

Henry, imagining he had some favour to request, gave him the most encouraging answer, and inquired if he could do any thing to serve him? The honest Tar, now acquiring courage, pulled out his canvas bag, and ventured to proceed in his speech.

"Finding as how your Honour is a little run aground for the shiners, which is the case with many young gentlemen besides yourself, I make free to say that your Honour can serve me, if you will take a few of mine that I got for prize-money, and that are of no use to me at all."

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The canvas bag was now extended to Henry, who was so affected by this mark of attachment and gratitude, that tears involuntarily came into his eyes.

“No, no, my honest friend,” said he warmly, “I will not take from you the fruits of your industry and labour, and the just reward you have received for having risked your life in the service of your country, that would be cowardly indeed! And though I do not scruple to confess my poverty, I trust it will never lead me to commit meanness. Keep your money then for a worthier purpose, and assure yourself I equally feel your kindness.”

“If your Honour knew,” said Jack, “how your refusal grieves me,
I am

I am sure you would take the money. What can I have to do with it in this long voyage? I think I cannot send it on a better cruize; and I am sure your Honour must think so too, when you remember it was your kindness that saved me from the gangway."

His entreaties were so urgent, and Henry found he would really be so much hurt if he persisted in denying his request, that he at length consented to borrow five guineas, and by so doing, appeared to have conferred an obligation on the generous sailor, almost equal to the one which had excited his gratitude.

The first money, however, that Percy received, he made a point of discharging his debt, though much

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against

against the inclination of his worthy friend, whose conduct he never forgot, and whose services, which were offered on all occasions, he accepted as the most gratifying marks of regard.

After an absence from home of nearly three years, Henry paid a visit to his parents, which was not more pleasing to his own feelings than gratifying to theirs.

They saw him improved in person, and more polished in manners; but they saw him, too, equally ingenuous as when he left the paternal roof—equally amiable in disposition, and uncontaminated in principle. His mother shuddered as he modestly recounted the dangers to which he had been exposed; and his father
gloried

gloried in the cool intrepidity and undoubted courage which, he had learned from Mr. Sinclair, his son had displayed in an engagement which claims a distinguished place in the naval annals of Old England.

But more than all were his parents gratified by finding that humanity, one certain mark of bravery, was a leading trait in his character. We will transcribe part of a letter on this subject from his friend the Lieutenant to Mr. Percy.

“ Never, my dear Sir, could any situation more fully shew the calm courage and exalted humanity of your son, than the one to which we were exposed during our stay in

the West Indies. I have met with but very few young men, in a service of many years, who were cowards in facing the cannon of an enemy; but justice to Henry obliges me to own I have likewise seen few who, like him, would nobly brave the dangers of a disease fatally infectious, to alleviate the pain, and sooth the sufferings of his fellow-creatures.

“ When lying at Martinique, our Commander, finding the yellow fever had been brought on board by artificers from the dock-yards, was induced to take a cruize, in the hope that the purer air of the sea might subdue the distemper. This unhappily was not the case; for it increased to such a degree, as to leave scarcely men enough to work the ship;

ship; and to add to the horrors of the scene, the surgeon and his mate both fell sacrifices to its attacks, at a time when their professional skill was most required, as there were many poor creatures dying daily, and we were left to hear the groans, and witness the agonies, of others to whom we could afford no succour.

“ Few, indeed, from fears of personal safety, dared venture near them; but amongst those few, Henry, young as he is, was the foremost; and whatever he thought might give relief, he administered with his own hand. He spoke hope and consolation to the wretched sufferers; and though well assured by this he risked being the next victim of the disease, was indefatigable in his endea-

vours to soften its dreadful effects. Such was the admirable conduct of your son; and Heaven preserved him to be a blessing to his parents, and an honour to his country.”

Words could but ill define the sensations of a father on reading such an account of a beloved son; he folded him tenderly in his arms, and shed tears of unutterable pleasure.

Henry, with a good humour peculiar to himself, often amused his little brothers and sisters with anecdotes of the manners of the people, productions of the soil, and various curiosities to be met with in the West Indies.

They were enchanted at the idea
of

walking beneath the shade of the tamarind and the cocoa-nut tree; whilst the lime growing spontaneously in every hedge, and the orange and pine abundantly cultivated in every plantation, must afford a delicious regale to the palate.

○ Maria sighed that she could not catch fire-flies in the meadows of England; for then, she said, as her mamma would not let her have a candle in her own room, she would put two or three under a glass, as the negroes did, and write letters to her brother every evening by their beautiful and glimmering light.

John ridiculed the traveller's notion, as he called it, of oysters growing upon trees; till his brother explained to him that they adhered to
the

the roots of such as grew on the banks of the rivers, particularly the mango.

Marianne could scarcely believe that there were hundreds of little birds flying about no bigger than a bee, and whose plumage was of brilliant colours. She thought too it must be charming to walk in fields almost covered with the sensitive plant, though she should certainly tremble at every step, as she beheld it shrinking beneath her feet.

She likewise longed to see the beautiful cotton-trees, whose bursting pods appear like tufts of snow, and afford such a pretty employment to a vast number of little negro children, who pick the seeds from
them,

them, which answer the purpose of food for cattle, as well as sowing for other crops.

All the young folks were astonished at the account Henry gave of the flying-fish; and Mr. Percy himself was as much pleased as they were, with his description of the admirably-constructed machines used in making sugar and rum, and the ingenuity, skill, and industry, which converted every separate part of the cane into different uses, so that not the most trifling article was lost.

The little Percys sometimes listened to their brother, till they unanimously declared they should like to live in the West-Indies; but he soon shewed them the value they ought

ought to place on the comforts to be enjoyed in Old England, when he reversed the picture, and spoke of the disagreeables that were likewise to be met with in the land they so much admired.

The moschettos, that buzz about in every house, and whose sting he had himself found so troublesome, they did not appear to consider as very great evils; but when he described the venomous reptiles that also infest the country—such as the tarantula, whose bite is only, according to the ancients, to be cured by music; and the rattle-snake, which so often occasions death, though, fortunately for the traveller, it betrays its own approach, by the noise from which it derives its name, they

were

were less enthusiastic in their expressions of admiration.

They agreed, too, it must be very dangerous for strangers to see the fruits of the manchineel-tree, which perfectly resembles an apple, till they had been warned it was a strong poison; and they were also convinced that the extreme heat of the climate must prevent those who had not been long accustomed to it, from enjoying many of its natural beauties. Above all, the yellow fever was to be dreaded; and, in short, they were fully persuaded Old England, as Henry said, was the country of all others the most to be envied, and where the greatest number of real blessings were to be enjoyed.

Time

Time passed on with rapid strides whilst Henry remained at home. Every hour that was not spent in the delightful enjoyment of domestic intercourse was devoted to some pleasurable scheme; he visited all his old friends and companions, and received from all a gratifying and welcome reception.

The expiration of his leave of absence, however, too soon arrived; and our hero again left the roof of his parents. They felt equal regret, indeed, at his departure; but fewer fears agitated their minds, for he had learned some little wisdom from experience, and his conduct had hitherto nobly stood the test of example and temptation.

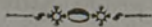
Nor were they too sanguine in
the

the expectation they fondly indulged, that it would still be regulated by right principles, and receive added stability from increasing years; for Henry continued all their warmest wishes could desire; and at their next happy meeting they had the pleasure of congratulating him on having obtained a Lieutenancy.

the explanation of the fact
 that it would be expected by
 right principles, and would not
 explain the fact. The
 laws of nature are not
 laws of chance, and their
 explanation is not to be
 found in the fact that they
 are laws of nature.

ATHLONE CASTLE.

A LEGENDARY TALE.



HIGH on a rock, where not a shrub
Adorn'd the frowning stone,
In Gothic grandeur rose sublime,
The towers of proud Athlone!

Amid a wild and rugged waste,
The gloomy mansion stood;
Before it spread the barren plain,
Behind it roar'd the flood!

And still, when rosy morning dawn'd
Across the eastern ground,
And when the dark grey evening threw
Her deep'ning shades around,

Sad Margaret to the turret hy'd,
That overlook'd the wild,
There watch'd, and wept, and never hope
The anxious hours beguil'd :

For many, many a tedious week,
And many a month had flown,
Since her lov'd Lord, at honour's call,
Had quitted proud Athlone.

The chill blast howl'd! the bittern scream'd!
The livid lightning flash'd!
The thunder roar'd! and down the rock,
The torrent hoarser dash'd!

Sad Margaret left her sleepless bed,
With trembling terror wild!
She hasten'd to the turret drear,
And clasp'd her sleeping child!

The savage blast had rudely torn
The casement from the wall;
And at her feet, with pond'rous crash,
She saw the ru'in fall!

To the defenceless breach she went,
Nor moon, nor stars appear'd ;
And thro' the wind and torrent's roar,
The thunder loud was heard !

Yet Margaret look'd across the plain,
To see her Lord appear ;
And tried, amid the whistling winds,
His well-known voice to hear.

But thick the damp fog spread around,
And nought was to be seen,
Save when the lightning's lurid flash
Illumin'd the wild scene !

Sudden!—the misty fog was gone !
The atmosphere was clear'd ;
And, by the radiance of the moon,
The distant hills appear'd.

Extending numerous o'er the plain,
She saw two martial bands ;
Their crimson banners wav'd in air,
Steel glitter'd in their hands.

She

She heard the deafening din of arms,
 She heard the victor's shout—
 She heard the shrieks of deep distress
 From the defeated rout.

The fog again o'erspread the plain,
 The hostile bands were gone ;
 And on the turret's mouldering walls
 Blue trailing wildfire shone.

And now a hollow voice was heard,
 Of deep sepulchral tone !
 Loud it exclaim'd, denouncing woe—
 " Deep woe to proud Athlone !"

And tho' the mist still spread around
 Its damp unwholesome sway,
 She plainly saw, athwart the gloom
 A funeral's black array.

Dimly the hallow'd tapers gleam'd,
 The bell funereal toll'd ;
 " The spirit of the waters shriek'd * !"
 Sad Margaret's blood ran cold !

* From Douglas.

“ Alas! my love! where art thou gone?
What mystery shrouds thy fate?
Ah me! the funeral hither comes!
It stops before the gate!”

She gaz'd—she shriek'd!—for as she gaz'd,
She saw upon the bier,
All cover'd o'er with ghastly wounds,
Her husband's corse appear!

At once the phantoms vanish'd all,
The howling tempest ceas'd,
And Margaret press'd, with wilder love,
Her infant to her breast!

The infant scream'd; but Margaret drown'd
Its voice with deeper tone!
“ Ah, never more my love shall come,”
She cried, “ to proud Athlone!

“ Nor ever more, my little babe,
Shalt thou thy father see;
What wilt thou do, thou helpless child,
Depriv'd of him and me!

“ I feel,

“ I feel, I feel my heartstrings burst !”
Sad Margaret shivering cried ;
She sunk upon the clay-cold ground,
Kiss'd her sweet babe—and died !

FINIS.

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