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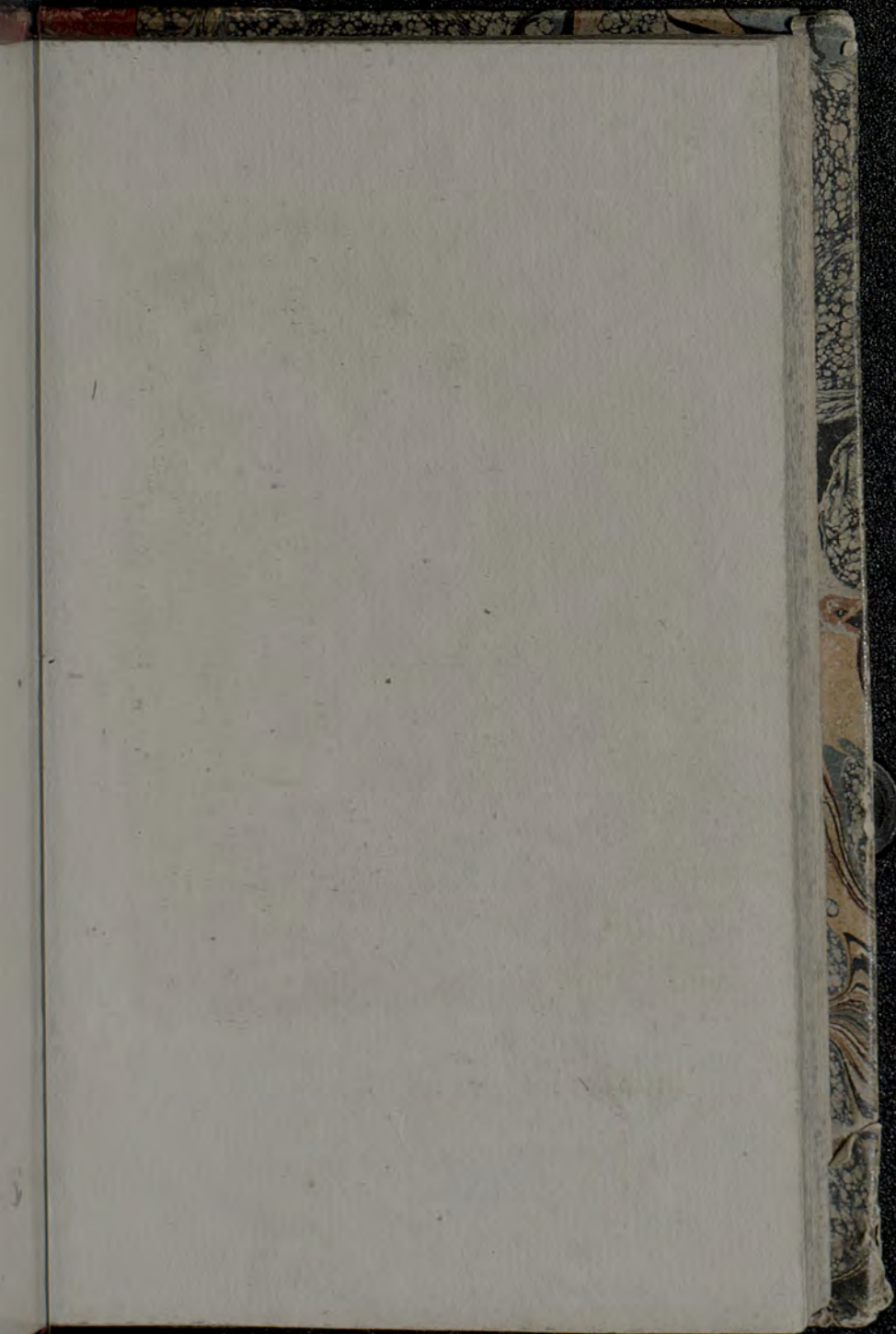
8 Nov. 1918

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Rational Brutes.

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THE
RATIONAL BRUTES;

OR,

TALKING ANIMALS.

BY M. PELHAM,

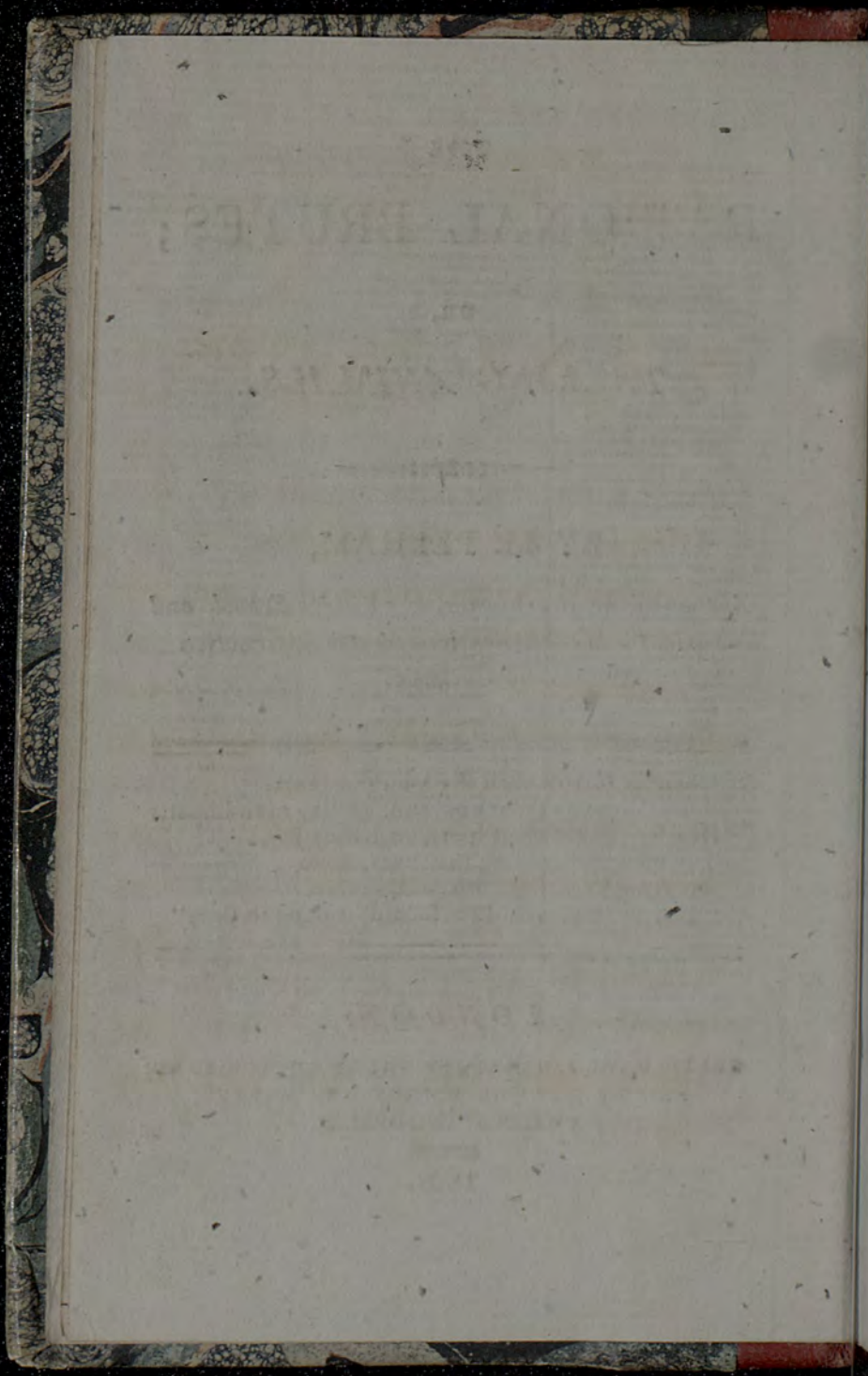
*Author of the Rotchford's, the Village School, and
various other Publications for the Instruction
of Children.*

If tender sorrow melt thy youthful heart,
Hear what BEASTS, BIRDS, and suffering FISH impart;
Nor for thy transient sport, or lulling joy,
The bliss of any thing that lives, annoy;
But always recollect this wise decree,
"Do, as thou wouldst it should be done to thee."

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AND BY AND FOR DARTON AND HARVEY,
GRACECHURCH-STREET.

1803.



THE
RATIONAL BRUTES;
OR,
TALKING ANIMALS.

MRS. BENFIELD, who was an exceeding good woman, took as much pains to please and amuse her children, as she did to instruct and teach them to behave well. They were all very fond of hearing pretty stories; and on a winter's evening, when they could not walk out, to divert them, she used to relate histories to them,

as they stood about her, whilst she sat at work. She took care that the stories which she told them, should be such as might *instruct*, as well as *amuse* them; and if she could think of any thing which had really happened, that would be of that nature, she preferred it to what is called *make-believe* stories. It happened, however, one evening when her children came to her, begging for some true histories, that none occurred to her recollection, which she thought would be entertaining to them. "My dears," said she, "I cannot think of any history just at present. I have already told you those which I remember; so you must excuse me tonight." "Oh, no mamma," they all

all together exclaimed, " we cannot excuse you indeed. You always find something so entertaining, and so true; so pray think, and you will soon recollect something that will do very well, and that we shall much like to hear." They all then remained silent for some minutes, in order to give their mother time to revolve in her mind some event that had happened when she was young, and of which she could make some pretty story. Mrs. Benfield also continued silent, till one of her children, whose name was George, gave her a jog of the elbow; saying at the same time, " Come mamma, are you gone to sleep? we are all waiting to hear you begin." " My love, she replied, " I can recollect nothing that

will amuse any of you. I was then thinking of a little silly book that I had when I was a little girl; but it was a very foolish one, for it supposed that birds and beasts, and fish, could talk and reason, which you know is quite impossible." "O! dear, exclaimed Peggy, do pray mamma tell us something about that; I am sure we shall all like to hear it. What was the name of the book?" "It was called, The Gossiping Assembly of Dumb Animals," replied Mrs. Benfield. "O! what a droll name," said Peggy; "but pray be so kind as to tell us about it." "I recollect some of the pictures and stories very well," resumed Mrs. Benfield, though it is a long time since I saw them. The first

first picture in the book, represented an horse, a cow, an afs, an hog, a cat, a dog, a squirrel, an owl, a pigeon, a duck, a parrot, a sparrow, and a glass globe, with gold and silver fish in it.

“ O! dear,” said George, smiling, “ *how pretty* it must be. I wish I had such a picture.” I believe, replied his mamma, when I go to my bureau I can shew it to you, and a good many more of the pictures; and I think I could find some of the histories also, for I know I saved some of them after one of my little sisters, who did not like reading, tore the leaves out of the cover, and was throwing them into the fire.”

“ O! Pray mamma,” said the children,

dren, be so kind as to go and fetch it down, and read it to us." "Well!" replied Mrs. Benfield, "I will go and look for it; but I will not promise to find it, for it is a great while since I last saw it." She then went up stairs, and shortly afterwards returned with the tattered remains of the old book in her hand. "O! here it comes, thank you mamma, let me see it," was repeated by each of the children, who all came round their mother to look at the pictures. She shewed them the first, and George enquired what all the different beasts and birds were doing? "They are all supposed," replied Mrs. Benfield, "to meet together, to converse and amuse themselves, by relating their dif-

different histories, and telling what they have seen and heard in the various families in which they lived." "That must be very entertaining," said Charles, "I am glad you have found the book." "Pray mamma," enquired George, "Do the gold and silver fish ever speak?" "O yes," replied Mrs. Benfield, "the fish talk just as well as all the other animals, and you must remember, George, that it is only *make believe*, as you call it, for you know it is impossible for dumb beasts to speak." "To be sure mamma, I know that," said George, "so pray begin and read it to us, for I long to hear what they all said." "I will read it to you as well as I can," replied his
mamma,

mamma, "but the book is so sadly torn, that I am afraid I shall not be able to make it all out. It begins with the horse speaking first, who says

"My good friends and neighbours, I am very happy to see you all met together; and still more happy am I to be one of your company. I have frequently heard of this agreeable assembly, and very much wished to be able to join your party; but it has always hitherto so unluckily happened, that upon those days you had a meeting, I have been fetched out of the field, either for my old master to ride upon me, or else for my young ones to drive me in their little *car*, as they call it. This, I assure you, has sadly disappointed me; for you must acknowledge

I judge it is very provoking, when one has a strong inclination to do one thing, to be obliged to do another quite disagreeable. And such are both the employments in which I am so frequently obliged to be engaged. When I carry my old master, he sits so intolerably heavy, that he makes my back ache, and chuses I should go such a little slow *jog* trot, that I am sometimes almost asleep, and in danger of falling down with him, which I should be very sorry to do, as he is an exceeding kind master, and takes all the care of me in his power; he always looks out the best part of the road for me to go upon, and if we come to any turf, he lets me go upon it, because he thinks it will be soft, and cooling

cooling to my feet. He rides, indeed, with both whip and spurs, but he never in his life touched me with the latter; and I heard him tell a gentleman, who rode with him one day, that he only wore them because it was the custom so to do; the whip he makes more use of, and he often teazes me with that; but as it is with a kind intention, I cannot be displeas'd with him; his design is to keep the flies off from my face and eyes; and in order to that, he keeps perpetually whisking the lash backwards and forwards in a very unpleasant manner; sometimes he makes me fearful he is going to correct me with it; sometimes he tickles me almost as much as the flies would; and sometimes

times he really flirts the end of it into my eyes; but as I know it is done out of kindness, I forgive him, and make it my study to please him, and go the paces I judge most agreeable to him."

"You have a very happy place indeed," said the ass, "I wish I could boast of such treatment; but I declare the usage I meet with is so bad, that I am quite weary of my life."

"I am sure that I can pity you," replied the horse; "for, though my *old* master is thus kind and gentle to me, he has three sons who seem resolved I should not have too much happiness in the world. I only wish it was in my power to acquaint their father with their behaviour to me;

and I am certain I should soon be released from their cruelty; he would make them feel some of the lashes they lay upon me, and see how they would like to be whipped till their flesh was whealed all over them."

Here little George interrupted his mamma, by enquiring, Why, if the horse was supposed to talk, he could not tell his old master how his sons behaved. "Because," said Mrs. Benfield, "though the animals are *made-believe* to converse together, yet it was not imagined to be in any language that mankind could understand."

"Oh, very well," said George, "pray go on with what the horse was saying, for I like it very much indeed."

"Sometimes," continued the horse,
"the

“ the boys take me the moment their father dismounts; and instead of leading me into the stable to be taken care of and have some corn, as my master supposes to be the case, they only fasten me to their abominable *car*, which is a heavy, clumsy, wooden kind of a cart, which they made out of an old large chest, and have put four low thick wheels to it, upon so bad a construction, that it is almost as heavy as a stage waggon. This they fasten to me, with harness made of ropes, in so uncomfortable a manner, that was the carriage I had to draw ever so light, it would be very uneasy; but when that is loaded with half a score boys, as is generally the case, it is quite intolerable. Then

nothing will please them, but I must gallop ; I wonder how they can expect I should gallop with that weight lumbering at my heels ! indeed it is quite impossible I should ; for it comes so close, there is not room for my legs as I push forward ; but, because I do not gallop, the boys take it by turns to stand upon the foot-board, from whence they drive, and lash my sides till their arms ache, and I am sure, till my flanks are in such agonies, I am almost mad with pain. And then, if I plunge and kick, they come and bang me about the head with the but end of the whip, and with great sticks. I believe one day I should have been blinded by their barbarous blows, had not my
good

good old master happily chanced to come into the field, and rescue me from their hands. I never shall forget the joy I felt upon hearing his voice call out in a very angry tone, "Boys, what are you doing there?" "Only at play, Sir," one of them answered. "Play," repeated he; "do you call that *play*? I will *play* with you, I promise you, at the same game, if ever I see you strike the horse again. Are you not ashamed of yourselves, a pack of cruel wretches! You all deserve to be flea'd alive, and have every bone in your skins broken, to use a poor dumb animal in such a barbarous manner; and, if ever I know you misuse the horse again, I will horse-whip you,

till you learn to have some compassion for a poor beast when you see it lashed again." Then coming to me, and gently patting my whealed sides, and stroking my face—"Poor fellow," said he, "have those inhuman boys so misused you? O! If ever they do it again, they shall smart for it, I promise them." Afterwards, taking out a knife from his pocket, he cut the ropes, or the *traces*, as the boys called them, that fastened me to their car, and holding me by my forelock, led me gently into the stable, encouraging me all the way, by many kind words, and much commendation, for all my good qualities; at the same time, threatening how he would punish my young tormentors if ever they

they abused me again. What passed farther between my master and his sons, I know not, as I was shut up in the stable. I only know, to my great happiness, that I have not fallen into their power since. Once I was in a terrible fright lest I should, as two of them came into the field whilst I was grazing. I thought, as they had ropes in their hands, that they were coming to *harness* me with them; so beginning to trot from them, as they advanced near me, one of them threw a stone at me, saying, in an ill-natured growl, "Go along, you *dainy hided beast*, that may not be touched; I wonder what good you are doing here, fluffing your guts for nothing?" The stone gave me a disagreeable blow
upon

upon my hock, that made me limp for a little time; but I did not much mind that;---when I saw the boys pass on laughing, because I went lame."

Here the Horse paused; and the Ass advancing, said, "Well, I think it would be the happiest thing for this nation that ever yet was thought of, if some plan could be contrived to destroy every *boy* upon the island; there certainly is no animal in the creation so destructive as *boys*; they do more mischief than all the race of *foxes*, *rats*, or *hedge-hogs* put together, and are ten times more barbarous than *hornets* or *gadflies*. If it was not for *boys*, one might pass one's time comfortably enough; but they destroy
the

the happiness of one's life by their inhumanity, and their tricks. I do not wish to be vain, or make any boast of my own good qualities; but yet, in justice to myself, I must say, that I have not the smallest desire to hurt any one, and am as patient, and as inoffensive, as any living creature can be. But all this serves to no good purpose; I only get the worse used for it; and because I do not bite, and kick, they bang me about as if I had no feeling, and call my *patience*, *stubbornness*; and my *gentleness*, *stupidity*. Whereas, was I to return their ill usage, they would pay more respect to me, and at least learn to be afraid to attack me. Why now my master keeps in the same yard with me a
great

great dog, that is as fierce almost as a lion, and the boys never dare teaze him, because if they do, he flies at them, and would tear them to pieces. One day he very near killed a boy who was throwing things at him, on purpose to provoke him. The dog was laying quietly enough by the door of his house, without any intention of hurting any body, when a foolish boy, (for to be sure *boys* are the most foolish things upon the face of the earth) kept pelting him; first he threw little bits of dirt at him, which did not much hurt him, though they disturbed his nap; then he threw small pebbles, which certainly were very disagreeable, tingling against his sides. The dog lifted up his eyes, looked at him

him, and growled, to give him notice that he did not approve of such sport; still the boy persisted, throwing larger and larger, till they absolutely became quite painful to the dog, who then got up, and barked angrily, advancing slowly to his foolish tormentor, (I may well call him foolish, for notwithstanding the dog gave him all this notice, he would continue his *fire*, as he called it; till the dog was so provoked, that he resolved not to bear it any longer;) therefore seized upon the boy, threw him down, and tore him so violently, that he certainly would have been killed in a few minutes, had not his screams brought out my master; who coming to see what was the cause of such cries, found

found him in that situation; he soon called off the dog; but the boy was so much hurt, as to be obliged to be under a surgeon's hands for many months, and I believe will always be lame as long as he lives; but I am sure it serves him right."

"Aye, that is a sure thing it does," said the hog, "for to be sure it is a terrible thing, that rational creatures, who ought to behave the best of all the creation, so frequently behave themselves the worst. They seem, I think, to take pleasure in tormenting every creature that comes within their reach; and instead of trying to make animals fond of them, endeavour to make themselves hated, and abhorred by every one. Some *dogs*, I know, have

have a very great dislike to *me*, and all my relations; and if they could help it, would never suffer any of us to remain upon the face of the earth. This makes it very distressing to us if we chance to meet with them; especially to my *young* relations, who are ignorant of the best method of defending themselves; because such dogs catch hold of our long and handsome ears, with their great sharp teeth, and tear them in a most dreadful manner, O! my friends! you cannot imagine the agonies of such an attack! the pain is beyond description. Only fancy to yourselves the great teeth of a dog, fixed through any part of your bodies, dragging and shaking you by the piece they hold in

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their

their mouths, regardless of all your cries, and deaf to your entreaties for mercy.---I can find no words to express the torture of it. To have a limb, or an ear *cut* off, every body must think painful enough; but that is nothing to compare to the pain of having it *dragged* and *shook* off, by the griping teeth of a great beast. But inexpressively bad as this is, it still might be pardoned in a dog, who, fierce by nature, has never been taught to consider the consequence of things; and, perhaps, never having had his own ears so pulled, does not reflect upon the torture it occasions to be so torn. But what must we think of *boys*, and of *men*, who can be so cruel as to suffer us to be thus tormented;

mented; and not only see it done without preventing it, but also actually employ themselves in teaching the dogs to do it, by setting them at us. I do not want to be unreasonable, or to say that *swine* should always have their own way, and never be contradicted, but be allowed to go wherever, or eat whatever they please; because I know some of my relations are of a very nasty, greedy nature, and for the sake of getting at any roots, or seeds which they like, will not scruple to grub up the ground and do much damage to flowers and plants. Certainly, therefore, there can be neither harm nor injustice in people taking care of their own gardens and plantations, and in case any

impertinent hogs should enter, to drive them out as quick as possible, and shut the doors against them. But then, would it not be less savage, and more becoming *human creatures*, to turn them out in a rather more civil manner? Could not they by brandishing, and smacking a whip, frighten them with the sound of it, and the apprehension of feeling it, without so barbarously setting dogs to tear through the gristle of their ears? O! it is a wicked practice; and, in my opinion, it degrades the person who does so, beneath the dignity of the poor beast he tortures. Indeed, I have heard my own mistress say the same. She is a very kind and good creature, and looks well after all the animals

animals she has the care of, and tries to make them all as happy as possible. I one day saw her whip a little boy, for pinching a pig's tail, in order to make it squeak: "O! said she, if that is your fun, and you like squeaking, I will make you squeak and squall-too." So she took him up and whipped him heartily; and then bid him remember not to hurt pigs, or any thing else, for the sake of hearing them squeak and cry out for mercy, unless he liked to be hurt himself. For," added she, "the pig's tail can feel as much as you; and if *you* do not like to be hurt, be careful not to hurt any thing, that has life in it, and can feel as well as you." If all people would but be careful to

D 3 teach

teach their children humanity, the whole creation would be much happier than it now is; and I am *sure* would be in as good order. Why now my master's and mistress's farm-yard, is in ten times better order than is John Hunk's, whose ground joins to ours; when his cows are to be milked, some of the family have to go half a mile after them, and to drive them about for an age, before they can get them into the cow-house, because, poor creatures, they so much dislike going in, knowing they shall receive a good many hearty blows before they get out again; whereas, all our cows, the moment they hear my master or mistress call them, come directly to be milked, without giving any

any farther trouble to any one. And it is the same by the horses, the poultry, the pigs, and every thing else. We all, you know my friends, like to be used well, and love those people, who are kind to us; but if human creatures, in return for our services, will only repay us with cruelty; and because we do not immediately understand their language, put themselves in passions, and knock us about, as if we were made of wood; if, I say, they will so misuse us, they cannot wonder we should be wild, sullen, or mischievous, when we have an opportunity. But I think I may answer for all my dumb fellow creatures, that if we are treated gently, and used generously, there is not one of us, that

would not be willing to do all that lay within our power to please and assist our masters."

This speech was highly applauded by all present. The horse neighed his assent to the justice of it; the cow was loud in her lowing of praise; the dog barked; the lamb bleated; the cat purred; the squirrel squeaked; and the ass brayed approbation.

The pigeon then came forward and said, "I hope my silence, amidst the general shouts of applause, that have been bestowed on the very eloquent speech of Mr. Hog, will not be misconstrued into any contempt of that worthy gentleman's opinions. But my *conscience* forbids my assenting to all that has been said against
the

the human race. Some of them, I know, are cruel and misbehave themselves. But surely it is doing great injustice to condemn them *all*. How, my good friends, should you like to be treated in such a manner? For I suppose you will not deny that there are *vicious* horses, *stubborn* asses, and very *savage* hogs. But because *some* of the species are bad, is it just to condemn the whole? It is owing, my worthy friends, to passing such ungenerous judgments, that the sufferings you complain of are so great. *Some* horses may require severe treatment; and therefore mankind, just in the same manner as you are doing now, class all together without distinction, and
treat

treat the good the same as the bad. But let us not imitate them in this part of their character. Let us, my friends, be *just*. Let us be generous. We have no reason to wish that *all* boys were destroyed from off the island; but only that the *bad* ones, the *cruel* ones were removed. Surely, my friends, you must all know, by your own experience, that there is great difference in the dispositions of the human race. How gentle and kind are some of them to every dumb creature that they meet with; how cruel and tormenting are others. For my own part, I have the happiness to belong to a family of the good kind. My master has fitted us up a house in the most commodious manner;

ner; and furnishes us with every necessary we can wish. He has five children, who all frequently visit us; but so far are they from coming to torment us, that they never appear without bringing us some beans or tares, or crumbs of bread, or something which they know we like. If, therefore, they call "Pigy, Pigy," we gladly attend the summons, and instantly fly to them, perching upon their hands, their shoulders, and their heads, without any apprehension of being hurt by them; but on the contrary are sure of being stroked and fed. We are all so fond of going to them, that sometimes the five children are almost covered with us, in the same manner as you may remember

member to have seen the top of a dove-house in a sun-shiny day. Have we any reason then, think you, to wish *all* boys were rooted out like weeds from the ground?---though I will most heartily join in wishing the *bad* ones were. Never shall I forget the affliction I once suffered from an act of cruelty from one of them. I was taking a short flight with my little young pair, who had just left the nest, and were beginning to learn to exercise their wings; when some boys, who were walking beneath us, said one to another, "Look, there are some pigeons, I will soon fetch some of them down." I saw him stoop to pick up a handful of stones. O! how my heart throbb'd with fear
at

at that instant. Fly, my children, said I, swiftly fly, for mischief is designed against us. They endeavoured, poor dears, to hasten; but their pinions were so young and weak, that their efforts were vain. They clapped their wings faster but made no way. The boy then threw a stone, which gave me a very severe blow on my side; it made me stagger, but I rejoiced that it struck not my beloved young ones. Alas! I had not much cause for rejoicing; for the cruel boy then threw another, which instantly brought one of my darlings to the ground. I saw it fall! and I saw also these boys all run and scuffle together, to pick it up, whilst I heard one exclaim, "Have done Jack, you will

will kill it if you lug it so." "Kill it?" repeated the other; why it is almost dead already; what a nice aim you have; look, you have knocked one of its eyes out." O! my friends, it is impossible to express what I felt at that dreadful moment. I saw it flutter its pretty wings, and struggle in the agonies of death; whilst the cruel boys only bobbed it into one-another's faces; laughing as if it had been the best joke in the world. The little innocent I had with me was so terrified, that it was with difficulty it could keep on the wing at all; and just as we had arrived at our own abode, where had it fallen, (it could be of no service to the boys, as they could not get at it in the yard,) they threw
another

another stone, which broke its thigh. It had power to reach the nest, where poor thing, after passing two days and nights, in the greatest anguish, (for a broken limb my friends is *very* painful) it died a miserable death. So I think you must all allow, that I have sufficient cause to join the wish, that all *bad* boys were out of the world. But, though I have so severely suffered from *their* cruelty, yet I will never be so unjust, as to condemn the whole *human* race for that reason; because I am convinced there is as much difference between boy and boy, as there is between a dove and a kite."

"Your remark is certainly very right," said the cow. "I know the truth

truth of it by experience. As the world goes, I have no great reason to complain of my fate, for I lead a tolerably easy life; but I know I should be much happier, if it was not for the ill-nature of one young man, to whose turn it comes frequently to fetch me up, and milk me. Very often, whilst I am grazing, or laying chewing the cud, with my back towards him, the first notice I have that he wants me, is a great blow with a thick stick he has in his hand; and when I get up, instead of quietly turning me the way he wants me to go, he runs before my eyes, extending both his arms, and brandishing the club stick, as if he thought I was going to attack him.

Then

Then he bangs me across my horns, for no one reason in the world, but because he chuses to do it; quite regardless of the torture it puts me to. After this, he drives me along much faster than I ought to be made to go; striking me as he runs after me across my hocks, and giving me bruises that I feel for several days. And all this for nothing, but because it is his cruel method. Had I been guilty of some fault; had I gored him with my horns or refused to be milked, there would be some little excuse for his ill usage; but to be treated in so barbarous a manner for no cause, is very provoking; at other times he ties my legs together, till he almost rubs off the skin from them,

because he says I kick down the milk; that to be sure I have done twice, when he has been milking me, but there was good reason *why* I did so; he pulled and hurt me so, I could hardly bear it; added to which, he is so accustomed to kick my shins, and to snarl so angrily at me, that I think he is going to strike me with his stick; and when I fear the blow is coming, I cannot forbear moving as far as I can on one side, to avoid it, regardless of the pail which stands under me; and by that means, I confess, I have those times I mentioned, tumbled it over; upon which, he put himself in such a passion, and beat me in as unmerciful a manner, as if I was the wickedest creature in all the world;

world; when the whole fault was each time entirely his own. When smarting under such undeserved ill treatment, I confess I have most heartily wished that there was not a *human* creature in the world; and have thought that the universe would be much more perfect without any such *unjust* and cruel beings in it. But then, when my young master has brought me a nice apple, or some turnips, and so kindly patted and stroked me—when my mistress has milked me so gently, and given me sweet hay to eat the while, and spoken to me as kindly, as if I had been a child of her own;—when, I say, I have been used in such a manner, I then think it is wrong to condemn

demn *all* mankind, though some are barbarous and cross."

"Certainly," said the *owl*, "some are much *worse* than others; yet I am of Mr. Afs's opinion 'that we should do much better without them.' For my part, I do not want any of their assistance. My master and mistress, I dare say, think they are very kind to me; and I will do them the justice to believe, that they really *intend* to be so; but all their kindness is so disagreeable to me, that I had ten times rather be without it, and be left to my own care. I was born in a very large barn, and had just begun to enjoy the company of my twin brother, and to rejoice in the society of my mother, when one evening, just after she had
left

left us, to seek for food, a great man mounted a ladder, and came up to the top of the unthreshed corn, where we were laying comfortably talking together; we screamed out at the sight of him, never having before beheld such a monster. "I have found them," said he, "I shall have them in a moment." He then advanced on his hands and knees towards us. My brother in his fright scrambled away from our nest, and got down a hole between the trusses of corn. What became of him afterwards, I cannot say, as I have never heard any tidings of him, from that time to this; as for myself, I was carried away by my two wings over my back, whilst the whole weight of my body was hanging upon them,

them, and carried down the ladder; where two children, a little girl and boy, were waiting with great impatience for me. "O! Here it comes, here it comes," they exclaimed, clapping their hands, and jumping as they spoke;—"Let *me* see it first; let *me* have it;" they both called out at the same instant. "I cannot give it to you both at once," said the man, "you must have it *betwixt* you; Miss Betsy shall be its mamma, and you Johnny its papa, and a beautiful child you will have of it; I would not keep such a frightful creature for the world." "*Frightful*, do you call it," replied the little girl, "I am sure I never saw such a pretty creature in all my life.

life. How white it is! How soft it is! And only look at its beautiful great eyes; why they are as large as the black buttons upon your jacket, John. Pray let *me* have it, for I shall love it above all things." "Well, hold your lap for it Miss," said the man, "and much good may it do you to keep it." "I was then put into the little girl's frock, which she held up to make a bag to carry me in; and away she ran (jolting me almost to death with the motion) to shew me to her mother, and other friends within doors. Here I again heard various opinions respecting my beauty and deformity; some thinking me extremely ugly, whilst others declared I was uncommonly handsome,
and

and had something remarkably *noble* and *majestic* in my countenance. I now thought I had made my escape; for flying; or rather tumbling from the table on which I had been placed to be examined by every one, I scrambled beneath a very large book-case, which was so close to the ground, there was scarce room for me to squeeze myself under. I went to the back part of it, and was not a little delighted by hearing Betsy and John declare, as they laid their cheeks down on the floor to look after me, that they should never be able to get me again. They then attempted to reach me with their arms; but the book-case stood so low, that they could not possibly
get

get them any farther than to the bend of their elbows, which was very distant from the place I stood at. "O! What shall we do?" said they, as they peeped sideways under: "Let us get a stick and poke it out." They then fetched a stick, with the end of which they gave me some severe raps across my toes and legs, but still their attempts were all in vain to remove me. "Come my dears, let it alone," said the mother, "it will come out by and by, when it is hungry, if you leave off teasing it. Do you think whilst it sees you both laying there, and tormenting it with that stick, it will ever come to you."

"But it will be starved, mamma," said the little boy, "it had better
F have

have stayed in its own nest, than to be smashed to death there." "Indeed it had," replied his mamma, "I wish you had not taken the poor thing from its mother. How should you like that a stranger should take you away some morning whilst I was gone to market to get your dinner?" "O! that would be shocking, indeed," said the child; "but do you think, mamma, that this poor little creature, and its mother, feel so sorry as you and I should, if we were to be so separated?" "I do not," replied his mother, "suppose they have all the same sad melancholy reflections which we should have upon such an occasion; yet, there is no doubt, but that when the mother re-
turns

turns with a mouthful of food, which she has been taking pains to fetch for her brood, she will be dreadfully distressed to find her nest forsaken, and her poor little young ones taken away. And do you not suppose that the young one, which is now panting under the book-case, must be in a dreadful state? It has always been used to lay soft and quiet in the nest where it was hatched; think then what its distress must be, to be pulled about by a number of strange hands, and now to be gone into that cold hard place to hide itself from you." "But why," enquired Johnny, "should it want to hide itself from us? I am sure we would not hurt it, or do it any harm—we intend to

take all the care that is possible of it, and feed it, and nurse it, as much as if it was our own child." "Ah!" said his mother, "all your care will not make it half so happy as if you had let it stay in its nest till it was old enough to take care of itself." "Dear mamma, if you indeed think that is the case," said Betsy, "we will put it back again; for though I should like to have it above all things, yet I should be sorry to keep it to make it unhappy." "There is a good girl," said her mamma, "I think it would be much the best and kindest thing you could do with it." "But how shall we get it out?" said Johnny. Both the children then again laid themselves on the floor to
look

look at me; and holding a piece of bread, which Betsy was eating, towards me, called Owley, Owley, come my pretty beauty, we will not hurt you, come and eat, and we will carry you back to your own mother." I was going to advance towards them, encouraged so to do by hearing I was to be restored to my beloved parent, when an older boy entered the room, and immediately enquired where the owl was, which he had heard was taken. "O! it has got under this book case, replied Betsy, "and we cannot get it, but as soon as it comes out, we are going to take it back again to the nest." "What should you take it again to the nest for?" said he. "Because," replied

the little girl, "my mamma says its mother will be so unhappy to have lost it." "Pough! fiddle upon its mother," said he, "I dare to say she will soon get over her affliction, and have another young family. Besides *owls* are so wise, that she will be able to bear the loss of a child, without breaking her heart about it; it will be a thousand pities to take it back again. "Do pray, madam," said he, turning himself to his mother, "permit us to keep it." "You may keep it if you please," replied his mother, "though I must say it is, in my opinion, a cruel thing to take away the young from any bird! But pray, if you *do* keep it, take care of it, and do not pull it about and hurt it."

it." "Hurt it," repeated Tom, for such I found afterwards was his name. "I would not hurt it for the world; but come young squire Owlet, let us have a peep at your honour." He then laid his face on the carpet to look at me. "Ho, ho," said he, "you are in the *pouts* are you, Sir, and do not chuse to shew yourself? so I beg the favour of your worship to walk out, for I must and will have a look at you." "But he will not come out," said Johnny. "Don't tell me he *will not*," replied his brother, "I will *make* him, whether he likes it or not. I should never have thought of a young owl's presuming to say he *will not*, when I say he *shall*." He then left the room,
but

but shortly after returned, bringing a long stick, with a hooked head to it. "Now," said he, again laying himself upon the ground, "we will soon see what this little animal will do or not." He then poked the hooked end of the stick under the book-case, which soon caught hold of my legs, and he dragged me out in spite of all my endeavours to keep back; but not without most violently hurting the joints of my legs by so doing. The moment I was taken from my retirement, and found all hope of returning to my mother was at an end, I once more resolved to exert myself to the utmost to make my escape; I lay on my back and kicked and scratched, and bit the hands

hands which held me, but all to no purpose, I was only put into a more uncomfortable posture; for I was then held suspended by my two wings, in the same manner as I had been before, till my joints were almost twisted out of their sockets; and I had so scratched the neck of my kind little mistress, who wanted to return me to my nest, that her mother charged her not to touch me again; indeed, I felt concerned at the sight of her wounds, when I considered that she would have restored me to liberty had not her elder brother prevented her. It was now thought necessary I should be fed; but such stuff they crammed me with I never before had tasted; they called

it

it raw meat; what they meant by that I did not know; but to be sure, *raw meat* is most dreadful food, though I have now got better reconciled to it from constant use, than I then was, when I had just left my mother, and those nice dinners and suppers she used to provide for me in the barn. I observed that they *crammed* me, for that indeed they did in a very painful manner. The biggest boy used to take hold of my nose with one hand, and my under-jaw with the other; then pulling them open like a snuff box, held them extended, whilst one of the other children poked down my throat large lumps of the raw meat. I was then put into a square basket cage,

(in

(in which, I understood, a black-bird had died two days before) and hung up in the kitchen before a great blazing fire, which very nearly roasted me to death, as well as almost blinded me by the glare of it. Here I was left to meditate upon my wretched situation; and dreadful indeed were my sufferings both of body and mind;—my food disagreed with my stomach, the heat weakened my whole frame—the light to which I was exposed tortured my eyes—and the continual noise of the servants talking, distracted me with the head ache. I was in hourly expectation and hopes of following the black-bird, whose house I inhabited, when my state was somewhat mended, by
the

the compassion of the coachman, who declared that owls were never designed to be kept in kitchens; they ought, he said, to live in barns or hay-lofts, and not in a cage; and he gave it as his positive opinion, that if I remained there two days longer, I should certainly be killed. Accordingly I was committed to his charge, and passed my time as happily as I could expect to do, banished from my mother, and every other relation in the world. My diet was also much improved; for, besides the raw meat, I frequently was regaled with a young mouse, which I had ingenuity enough to catch whenever one came to rob the oat-bin; for I was released from the
cage,

cage, and had liberty to fly about the stable and hay-loft. It is a sad thing, my friends, for any one not to be contented when their state is tolerably comfortable, although it is not so perfectly happy as they might wish it to be. I have learned this lesson by experience, and would earnestly recommend you all to be satisfied with your condition, provided it is not very bad; I know I wish I had been so; I might then have lived on at my ease in the stable; instead of which, I am now confined again almost all day in the same cage, and only suffered now and then to come out to stretch my wings and legs a little, neither of which I can do in my prison, it being too small for me

to move about in. But dissatisfied with the confinement of the stable and hay-loft, I made my escape several times when the door was left open; so that the coachman, who had been my best friend, advised Miss Betfy to put me in the cage again, for fear I should be lost. "And you had better," said he, "clip its wings a little, or it will certainly, some day or other, give you the slip and fly away." A large pair of scissars were immediately fetched; the coachman held me tight round my body, while my wings were stretched wide out, and all the ends of the feathers cut off close to the pinions. Unconscious of the effect this operation would have upon me, the

the moment the man let go his grasp, (which really had hurt me a good deal) I attempted to fly as usual, and took a spring up; but instead of being able to support myself in the air, as I had been accustomed to do, down I fell upon my breast and beak."

"Poor dear fellow," said the little girl, taking me up and kissing me, "I hope you have not hurt yourself? Come, poor thing, I will put you into your cage, and keep you safe; you shall not be hurt any more—I will take care of you, that I will. There, get into your nice house," poking my head in at a small door as she spoke, "get in, my dear, and I will fetch you some food." She then left me, and I trembled so with terror, both from the operation

I had gone through, and the fall I had received, that when she returned she concluded I was shaking with cold ; and therefore kindly, as she thought, hung my cage up in the basking sun. The distress and pain this put me to, was greater than can be supposed by any one whose eyes are not like those of the owl race, formed only to be used in the gloom of the evening ; I thought I should have quite lost my senses, the effect was so great upon my brain ; and I certainly could not have long supported it, had not Betty's mother passed by and taken compassion on me. " My dear," said she, calling to her little girl, " who was it hung this poor creature up in the sun ? For pity's sake do take it down,

down and put it somewhere in the shade and cool; it will be roasted alive if it stays here. Owls should never be in the sunshine; they love the dark instead of this glaring light." "Do they mamma?" said Betsy, "I did not know that; I put it there to warm it, because it looked so miserably cold; but if you think it would be more comfortable, I am sure I will hang it in the shade, and to keep it warm I will put something over the cage." "It does not want any thing to keep it warm, I dare to say," replied the mother, "I think it must be warm enough now, for it is half roasted by the sun, do let it enjoy a little fresh air, poor thing." I was so dreadfully faint and ill, that

my feathers stood out rough, as you know my friends, our hairs and feathers are all apt to do when we are indisposed. This my little mistress still concluded was occasioned by cold; she therefore was determined to warm me in some manner or other, and she fetched a great coat of her father's, and hung over all the cage, so that it was with difficulty I could then fetch my breath, for want of sufficient air; however, my pain was less acute than when in the glaring sunshine. She kindly put plenty of raw meat into my cage with me, but I was so extremely ill that I had no appetite, and could not touch one mouthful. After I had been smothered up for some hours in this comfortless

fortless state, Betsy and Johnny came to visit me; but, finding I had not eaten the food that had been left with me, they pronounced that I was *sulky*, because confined in the cage instead of being in the stable. "He will be starved if he does not eat," said one of the children to the other. "Perhaps," said John, he did not see the victuals in the dark." He then, with his fingers, held a bit to my mouth; but my stomach was so much disordered that I could not accept his offer. "You *must* eat, my love," said Betsy, "you will be sick if you do not. Here, let me hold it to him, John, may-be he will take it from me." She then took a bit of raw meat in her hand, and stroked about
my

my beak with it; but the very smell of it was displeasing to me. "Well," said she "if you do not know how to eat now you are in your cage, because you have not been used to it for some time, I will take you out and feed you, my dear, for eat to be sure you *must*, or you will die." She then dragged me out through the same little door that I went in at, and, sitting down on the ground, took me in her lap; and holding me by the nose, (as you may, in your different families, have seen naughty children served who will not take their physic), she kept my jaws open whilst John crammed down my throat, as far as he could push his finger, several lumps of the raw meat.

In

In my kicking and struggling to get loose from this torture, I tore Betsy's frock, and terribly scratched her hand, the pain of which obliged her to let me go; and while she and her brother were looking at the wounds I had given her, and were trying to stop the blood, (which I understood, by what they said, flowed very fast), I very happily made my escape, and hid myself in a little dark corner behind a water-tub, which stood close by. Here I stayed the remainder of the day, free from being tormented by my mistress's judg'd kindness. I had scarcely concealed myself from the children before I heard them anxiously enquiring after me, and were diligently searching every place they

they could think of to find me; frequently they passed and repassed the place where I was hidden—once they stopped to peep behind the tub, but as it stood in the shade they could not see me; and very glad was I to hear them say, it was impossible I could be got into so small a crack as that was. After they had spent much time in seeking for me to no purpose, they went away; and I, tired with the various fatigues I had undergone, fell into a sweet sleep, from which I did not awake till very late in the evening. Finding then every thing quiet about me, and nobody stirring in the garden, I ventured out, and picked up a few slugs, and other vermin, which I thought most
delicious

delicious food. As soon as the sun began to rise I retired back to my hiding place, and again passed the day in peace; not daring to move out, till all of the human race were safe in their beds. In this manner I spent several days, and might have continued to have done so till my wings were again grown, had not my impatience to improve my state, and enjoy still more liberty, reduced me to my present bondage, from which I do not expect ever to be released. One evening, neglecting to take the precaution I had always done before, of not venturing out in search of food, till all the lights in the dwelling-house were extinguished, I came forth from my little snug retreat

treat as soon as I thought every body had left the garden. I walked about very briskly, and found a dainty repast of young frogs, on which I feasted most charmingly; after I had eaten them, I felt so invigorated that I thought I could easily make my escape by climbing up into a high tree, from which I fancied I should be able to fly to some distance, and perhaps might meet with some of my relations; for though I now lived free from being teased by any of the human race, yet it was a very melancholy state to be always alone, without one single creature to speak to. Accordingly, by degrees I clambered to the top-most branch of a lofty walnut tree; when
seeing

seeing one of my kindred fly slowly by, I screamed out, begging he would have compassion upon me, and at least come and sit by me and advise me which way I had better direct my course. Unfortunately a gentleman who loved walking by moon-light, was in the next garden; and hearing my voice, he looked to the place from whence it proceeded, and saw me sitting exalted on the tree. He knew that little Betsy, and Johnny, had been in search after me, and directly out of kindness to *them*, though regardless of *my* feelings, sent them word that I was perched in the great walnut-tree. The children were delighted with the intelligence; and their brother Tom, at

the hazard of his life, climbed the tree, for the sake of again having me in his possession. With horror I heard the children talking of me at the bottom of the tree, and beheld their brother advancing towards me; I sat still, till he had got so close to me, as to be able with a pole to reach me, when he gave me so many hard thrusts, as I clung by my talons upon the branch, that I was at length obliged, in order to prevent my being sadly bruised, to let go my hold, and endeavour to fly to a distance. But, alas! my poor clipt wings were unable to bare me through the air, and I fell down amidst a plantation of potatoes in the garden. Happily,
the

the haum of the potatoes prevented my being so much hurt as I otherwise must have been, though I was so giddy by falling in so quick a manner, that I could not recover sufficiently to hide myself from my mistress, who very soon found me out, and kissing me most affectionately, again conveyed me to my cage.— Finding every attempt to better my condition has only rendered it worse, I begin to learn to submit with more patience to my unhappy lot. Melancholy, indeed, is my situation! yet I must do the family I live with the justice to say, that it is not their *intention* to make me wretched; on the contrary, they seem very fond of me, and try all they can to do what they

think will make me comfortable. But what comfort can any being enjoy, shut up from all society, banished from every friend, and doomed to pass its days in perpetual solitude and silence? For though my little master and mistress talk to me a great deal, yet their conversation affords me no satisfaction, nor can I at all make them understand my language. But I beg your pardon, my friends, for thus long detaining you with my history:—I will not intrude another moment on your patience, but hope some one will favour us with their adventures, which may prove more entertaining to the company than any thing I have said can possibly have done.”

“ Upon

“Upon my word,” said the cat, who rose next from her seat, “I much fear we shall none of us be able to afford any thing more interesting to the public, than what you have related: my history will run much in the same strain. Like you, I was forcibly taken from my mother at a very tender age; I was just able to run alone, and began to be delighted with the fond attentions of my mother, who used to indulge me with letting me play with her tail, which she would whisk backwards and forwards on purpose for my entertainment, when one day, while innocently employed at that diversion, I was picked off the ground by some person I did not see, who crammed

me into a basket, which was instantly shut close upon me, and notwithstanding my pitiful cries, I was carried for a considerable time, jolting along, till I arrived at the house where I now reside. I was then taken from my confinement, and let to run about the room, or rather, I should say, *creep* about, for I was so alarmed on finding myself entirely amongst strangers, and in a new place, that I had no spirits to *run*, or be very brisk; and only sought to hide myself under the chairs, or amidst the ashes in the hearth. From this latter place I was presently sent out with a threat, that if I went there again, I should have a switch brought to whip me from going within the fender. After
I had

I had crawled about thus miserably for some time, a little girl came running in from school, who no sooner beheld me than she caught me in her arms, and held me with her two hands round my body to examine the colour of my eyes. I cried most piteously, which gave her an opportunity to see my teeth, which she admired for their smallness and beautiful whiteness; and, after having kept me in that uneasy posture whilst she endeavoured to count them, she put me upon her neck, holding down her cheek upon my back, and calling me by a thousand tender names. She then put me into a little cradle and began to rock me, singing at the same time:

MY

MY pretty kitten quiet lie,
For you shall live with me ;
And prithee do not mew and cry,
Since I will fondle thee.

I'll fetch some milk in Dolly's cup,
With crumbled bread and meat :
Nay, you with me on cake shall sup,
Or bits of chicken eat.

Then still my pretty kitten lie,
And pray don't mew again :
I cannot bear to hear you cry ;
Your sorrow gives me pain.

Notwithstanding she sung these words in the sweetest voice, I could not forbear mewling sadly, and scrambling out of the cradle as fast as possible. She then took me up, and holding me tight with both her hands, one of which was grasped round my neck to prevent my getting
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ting out of her lap, she sat down on a little chair, and rocking backwards and forwards, sung the same words over and over; till at last, tired with the fatigues I had gone through, I really did fall fast asleep in her lap. How long my nap lasted I cannot say, but upon waking I found myself much refreshed, and my spirits greatly composed, though my heart felt bitterly afflicted at the separation from my mother. I began also to be very hungry, never having been so long in my life, without sucking, and was glad to have my mistress (for such I found the little girl was to be) hold to me a cup of milk in her lap. It was the first time I had ever drank in that manner, always before having received

received my nourishment from my beloved mother: I therefore could not make a very hearty meal, as I did not understand how to lap without choaking myself every time I put my mouth into the cup; however, I managed to get enough to abate the pain in my stomach, which my hunger had occasioned; and my mistress also gave me some meat, which she kindly took great pains to mince very small for me. At night, when she went to bed, she took me up stairs with her, and put me inside of a muff to keep me warm. I did not at first like being pushed into such a little hole, but as she would not let me get out, I found it was in vain to attempt it, and again, I for-

got

got all my sorrows in a nice sound sleep, from which I did not awake till my mistress in the morning put her hand into the muff to feel for me, saying at the same time, "I am afraid it must be dead, for I do not hear it cry, and I do not think it has stirred all night." She then dragged me out, though not without hurting me a good deal, for, being awakened in so sudden a manner, and not knowing what was going to be done with me, I clawed hold with my nails, as fast as I could, of the lining of the muff, so that pulling me out hurt my toes a good deal. Again I cried upon being so roughly handled, and again my mistress soothed and stroked me, calling me
her

her *beauty*, and her *dear darling*. When she went to breakfast, she sat me upon the table, and let me lap out of her spoon; and I was beginning to be comforted by her kindness, when a servant coming in to bring a toast, roughly pushed me off the table:—I should certainly have been much bruised by the fall, had I not caught hold of the table cloth, and hung by my claws: this, in some degree saved me; but the man, in a very ill-natured manner, gave me a slap, whilst I was so hanging, and forcibly pushed me on to the carpet. My mistress caught me up to her bosom, exclaiming at the same time in a very angry tone, “how *can* you do so James? you *cruel* creature?”
I wonder

I wonder how *you* would like to be knocked down so. I wish somebody would come and give you such a blow, *that* I do! “Why, what would you have me to have done, Miss?” replied the man; “What do you think your papa and mamma would say, to come and see the cat upon the table cloth?” “They would not say any thing to *you*,” replied Fanny, for such was my mistress’s name: “therefore you need not trouble your head about it: it is no business of yours, and I beg you will never touch the kitten again as long as you live.” “Not touch the kitten,” said the man, “indeed, Miss, I will touch it whenever I please; and I will break its neck too, if I please, if it comes

in my way, *a little toad!*” “You *ill-natured, good-for-nothing, cross, cruel man,*” said my mistress, “I am sure you deserve”————But what she was going to pronounce, he *deserved*, I do not know, as at that moment her papa and mamma entered the room, and the servant left it. “Good morning to you, my dear little Fanny!” said her papa. She made no reply. “Why, what is the matter with my little Fanny?” rejoined her father. Fanny, with tears in her eyes, replied, “James calls my kitten a *toad*; and he knocked it down off the table, and he says he will do so whenever he pleases, and break its neck too, if he likes it.” “O! is that all?” said her
papa,

papa, giving her a kiss as he spoke ;
“do not distress yourself about that —
he will not hurt her—he only says so
to tease you ; but do not you be rude
about the kitten. I dare to say you
said something to provoke and make
him angry, or he would not have
told you so.” Fanny then related
very exactly all that had passed be-
tween the footman and herself. Her
parents then gave her some good ad-
vice respecting her behaviour, and
reminded her how necessary it was
that she should at all times speak
with civility to every body, if she
wished them to treat her kindly, or
to have a good opinion of her. When
breakfast was over, it was time for
Fanny to go to school, which she

was very reluctant to do, upon the account of leaving me. "She did not doubt," she said, "but James would come in, and hurt her kitten before her return." "No, no," replied her mamma, "James will not hurt it: I will take care of it;—come, put it in my lap—I will nurse it for you." "Then do not let it go once out of your lap till I come home again," said Fanny. "O! I do not promise that," replied her mother. "I cannot pretend to sit still the whole time to nurse the kitten, but I will take very good care of it; so go along, my dear, or you will be too late." "Aye, trot away," said her papa, "or the misses will call you "*liddy, lodady, ten o'clock scholar-day,*"

day." Is not that what they call the lazy girls at your school, who come late?" Fanny only smiled; and kissed her papa and mamma, and me too very tenderly, before she went away. I continued for some time very comfortably in the lady's lap, till a little ball of thread rolled off the table by which she was working. It turned round so prettily as it fell on the floor, that I could not forbear the inclination I felt of going after it; so sliding myself down, I ran to it, and enjoyed a most delightful game of play with it, unwinding all the thread as I tost it from one side of the room to the other, before Mrs. Hopkins discovered what I was about. As soon as she saw how I

was employed, "You little beast," she exclaimed, "what mischief are you about?" Then getting up, she took it away from me, saying at the same time, "you little monkey, I will chop your head off if you serve me such tricks! Do you see how you have tangled, and spoiled all my thread?" Her husband smiled, and said, "I am sure, my dear, it is worth a skein of thread to see how prettily she played with it; you had better let her have it again;—but if you will not, I will make a plaything on purpose for puss." He then cut a cork into a round ball, and tying a packthread to it, rolled that before me. I accepted his kindness, though, to be sure, I did not think
it

it half so entertaining as the thread. From this time I began to enjoy myself tolerably well. My young mistress was so exceedingly fond of me, that I could not help having a great love for her, though to be sure she very often teased, and even hurt me sadly by her kindness as she called it. One time she took it into her head that I should catch cold if I went out of the house without something being put on me to keep me warm; so she made me a cloak with a hood to it, and little bags for my ears. This I was to be wrapped up in every time I stirred; and though I am well convinced she did not *mean* to hurt me, yet she very frequently did, as she pulled my ears to put them

them

them into their *hoods*, as she called them; besides, she tied the cloak much tighter round my throat and body than was agreeable. Then she made a spencer for me; and my fore paws were to be crammed into little sleeves every time she chose I should wear it, which was also a very uneasy job. At last my patience was so tired out by these troublesome dresses, that I kicked and scratched every time she attempted to put them on; this she thought necessary to punish; and, making a little rod, she whipped me heartily. In struggling to get from her, I gave her a great scratch down her face and neck, which obliged her to let me go, and away I ran, determined in my own mind
never

never to let her play with me again. She was wiping the blood from the wounds I had given her, when her mamma came in; and seeing her so terribly clawed, she enquired how it happened. "What have you been doing?" said she, "I am sure the cat would not have scratched you in that manner, had you not been teasing it." "I am sure," replied Fanny, "she scratched me first for nothing; I was only putting on her spencer—and she has lately got into such a bad habit of scratching every time I go to dress her, that I thought I had better whip her a little to make her leave it off; but I did not intend to do her any harm, or whip her very hard." "Pough! nonsense!" replied

plied Mrs. Hopkins, " I think she served you quite right; I wish she would scratch you every time you go to dress her, as you call it. You pretend sometimes to be very fond of her, and are prodigiously angry if any body speaks cross to her; but you tease her ten times more yourself, by dressing her up so foolishly, and contrary to nature. Cats do not require clothes—they are sufficiently covered with hair; and to tie them up in cloaks and spencers, is as disagreeable to them, as it would be to you if I was to put you on a stiff leathern case over your head, face, and neck. Besides, if you go on doing so, the kitten, instead of loving you, will never like to be near you at all,

all, or to come when you call it, or walk in the garden with you." "Do you think then, mamma," said the child, "I had better let her go without any thing to keep her warm, or make her look pretty?" "Yes, a great deal," answered her mother. "Well, then," said Fanny, "I will never put them on again." You may suppose I was rejoiced to hear this, as I kept snug beneath a large side-board which stood in the room; not only as I found I should be relieved from the continual teasing of being dressed, but likewise as it confirmed me in the good opinion I had of my little mistress, when I heard her so instantly resolve to follow her mother's advice; as certainly nothing
can

can give a better proof of a child's good disposition, than to see them willing to give up their own fancies upon the advice of their parents and wiser friends. Fanny then took out of her play-box my spencer and cloak, and holding the latter up by the two ear-cases, said, "Is it not a very nice cloak, mamma? Look how neatly I have made it;—and does it not look pretty with this blue fringe round the hood and ears?" "The work you have put upon it," replied Mrs. Hopkins. "is neat enough, to be sure; but I really cannot say I think it altogether looks very pretty." "Not pretty!" said Fanny with astonishment, "pray then look at the spencer, it not that pretty?"

A

pretty? Have I not put on a nice little cape? and are not these little buttons and the sleeves neatly done?"

"Aye," said her mamma, "it is all very neat, but a sad contrivance, being only calculated to tease a poor cat—and then to think of whipping her because she did not like it, was cruel indeed. I should have thought you had too much love for your kitten to use her in that manner; and indeed I should have hoped you had too much humanity to have used any poor dumb animal so unkindly. Was it any fault of the cat not to like to be muffled up in those clothes?—and should you like to be whipped when you had been guilty of no crime?"

I did not hear what Fanny said in
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reply; but she soon after came and tenderly called me as she stooped down to peep at me. I had so much disliked the pain I suffered whilst she was whipping me, that, unable to recover my entire confidence in her promises, I for some time refused to accept her invitation and go to her. At last, however, I slowly moved towards her hand, which she held out towards me; and in order to make me amends for her past behaviour, she fetched me a nice large piece of cold boiled mutton, and fed me mouthful by mouthful from her own fingers. After this, she took me into her lap, stroked me, and shewed every sign of the most tender regard; assuring me at the same time, that I should

should never wear either spencer or cloak again, if I did not like it. Our reconciliation was now quite complete; and I must do her the justice to say she has never either whipped me, or wilfully teased me, from that time to this, though I have now lived with her for above five years. I wish I could say as much in favour of her brothers, who come home twice in the year to be the torment of every one in the house, and of me in particular. I have not a moment's comfort of my life, from the time they first enter the door till the holidays are over. Sometimes they tie my head up in a paper bag, for the sake of seeing me try to scratch it off—sometimes they pinch my tail, that

they may hear me *sing*, as they call it. Barbarous wretches! they do not consider what real pain they put me too for their sport—they do not consider that when I am pinched, and kicked, I feel just as much as they would if they were served so. If ever they discover me walking quietly in the garden, they are sure to throw their hats at me, and, clapping their hands, scamper after me as fast as they can run, calling *scat, scat*; and thus their sport they continue till I find some little hole or corner to hide myself from their cruelty. I often wonder what *pleasure* they can find in such behaviour. Surely it would be more pleasing to gain the love of every creature, than
their

their hate and detestation. Supposing they are not like my mistress fond of me, or any of my race, yet why should they so misuse me? Could they not let me rest in peace, and I am sure I would never disturb them. But really some persons seem to think we dumb creatures are only made for them to torment, and be cross to; and instead of ever giving one a kind word, or desiring one in a civil manner to stand out of their way, bang comes a great knock, or a kick, when, had they only taken the time to inform us that they wished us to remove, we should very cheerfully have complied with their orders."

"Indeed, indeed, Mrs. Puff," said the dog, as he rose to speak, "what you

say is very just; and I am sure I have cause sufficient to lament that more gentle methods are not universally practised by the human race. I have at this present time a violent pain in my leg, which often makes me walk lame, and which, I dare to say, I shall never get rid of, occasioned by a violent blow from a great stone, which a boy threw at me one time as I was innocently frisking about in my own master's field, and barking at the white butterflies which flew over my head. I was in as good spirits and good humour as any dog could possibly be in, without the least thought of injuring any one, or of being uncivil to those who passed by; when, all of a sudden, though

though guilty of no crime, a great boy, old enough to have known better, threw with all his force a stone at me. I never shall forget the pain I felt, as it struck me upon the joint of my hind leg; indeed, I thought it had been broke, as I found it impossible to move it, or put it to the ground. I could not forbear howling out with anguish, and went limping away upon three legs, yelping sadly all the way till I reached my own kennel, into which I crept, and was in great pain, without attempting to move for several hours. As I lay in that sad situation, I could not help reflecting upon the *unkindness* and *cruelty* of the human race, who could find in their hearts, for

no good end at all, so barbarously to give misery to harmless creatures who never offended them. I wonder, said I to myself, what they would think of us dumb animals, if we were to bite, or scratch, or kick, or any way hurt them for our pleasure, as they do us for theirs. And yet surely *we* should be much less guilty than they are, because we have not so much sense as they are blessed with; and if it would be wrong, and shew a bad temper in a *dog* to bite a man for nothing, surely it discovers a much more corrupt heart for a *man* to hurt a poor beast without any just cause. Methinks, said I to myself, if I had been formed a rational creature, I should have been

been ashamed to act in so cruel a manner. I would, if I had been blessed with *reason*, have used it to assist and make comfortable poor dumb creatures who could not help themselves, and not behave with less kindness to them than they do to mankind. These were the reflections I made as I lay confined by the pain of my leg; and often, and often, have I had occasion to make the same since; for though I pass my time tolerably comfortable, yet I receive many a blow, and what is still worse, many a great *kick*, for no crime of mine, but only because the people who come near happen to be in a bad humour. One day a little girl (who sometimes can be kind enough

enough to me) almost kicked my eye out as I was laying by the garden-gate, through which she was in a hurry to pass. She had left her book in the garden, where she ought not to have carried it; and her mamma had called her to say her lesson; so away she ran to fetch it, and wanted to get back again before her mother knew where she had been. I was laying, as I very frequently did, fast asleep by the gate; and the child, instead of giving me a little jog, or calling me by my name to wake me, gave me a violent kick with the toe of her sharp shoe just upon my eye, saying at the same time, in a pettish tone of voice, "Get out of the way, you tiresome beast, can't you!"

you!" I accordingly moved out of her way; but I thought it was *un-kind* treatment, and my eye continued very painful long after she had forgotten how she had used me. Another time I got sadly hurt by a man, who, to prevent my following him, flammed a door against my sides. He had not given me any notice that he did not choose my company, and instead of civilly saying so, let the door flap, and almost broke my ribs. But, my friends, I do not mean to take up your time whilst I recount the numberless unnecessary blows I have received from men and boys, or the unkindness with which I have frequently been treated. You are all, no doubt, fel-
low

low sufferers with me in this particular; and each one, I dare to say, joins with me in sincerely wishing they would learn to shew more humanity."

"Indeed," said the Sparrow, who next came forward to speak, "I think it is a very melancholy affair that mankind, who boast themselves of being the *head* of all the inhabitants of this earth, should so disgrace themselves by their cruelty towards us their inferiors; and it is surprising to me, that even those men and women who do behave tolerably peaceable themselves, yet suffer their children to distress and torment us without rebuke. I live in a family where there are several little boys and girls, and they all *pretend* to be
fond

fond of birds, and other animals; but it appears a strange kind of fondness, in my opinion, to teaze and torture poor creatures out of love, as I daily see them do. I myself, indeed, have gone through much cruel usage, which must have killed me had I not been blessed with an uncommonly strong constitution. At present, with one exception only, I live very comfortably, and that is the loss of my *liberty*, which is an ever-cessless source of unhappiness to me; but in every other respect I am treated with kindness and real affection. I was taken before I was fledged, together with four more of my brothers and sisters, whilst we lay very snug, and very comfortable.

in the nest our fond parents had provided for us. Our habitation was supposed to be a safe one, as it was placed behind a leaden water-pipe which came down the side of a house, far beyond the reach, as our parents thought, of any clambering boys to molest us. But, unhappily, one day a bricklayer was employed to repair some of the tiles which were near us, and seeing some little bits of the hay, of which our nest was composed, sticking out, he discovered our residence, and dragged us out, nest and all, in a very rough manner. He was just going to throw us down, regardless of the many broken bones we might have received from the fall, when his fellow labourer
stopped

stopped him, by saying, "Don't throw them down, Jim, give them to me: I saw a little boy just now in the house, I dare to say he will like to have them." "Here, take them then," said the other, "if you chuse to have them; but I think it is a pity to save them; because sparrows are such monstrous mischievous birds, they do more harm in the gardens and corn fields than a troop of horse would." We were then carried down in the labourer's hat; and the little master, whom the man had before seen, being called, we were presented to him, who received us with many thanks, and with great joy ran up stairs into the nursery, where we were instantly surrounded by three more boys and two girls.

It would be impossible for me to relate the clamour which then began amongst them, whilst they all begged they might have one of us for their own. "Give *me* one," and let *me* have one," was repeated over and over from every mouth at the same time; whilst the child who had got possession of us kept turning round and round, endeavouring to protect us from the others, who each tried to get us into their own hands. At last one of the biggest boys, whose name was Charles, snatched us all away from his little brother Dick; "There," said he, "you shall none of you have any of them, for I will keep them all myself." Dick cried, and every one called out upon the *ill-nature* and *injustice* of Charles, declaring

declaring they had as much *right* to us, as he had, and were determined they *would* have one. The nurse in the mean time tried in vain to make peace. She scolded Charles for vexing his little brother Dick, and assured him she would tell his papa, if he did not give him back the nest directly. "You may tell what tales you please," replied Charles, tauntingly, "to my *papa*, it is impossible *five* birds can be divided amongst *six*, and therefore to put an end to all disputes, I tell *you* that I *will* keep them all myself." "That you shall not! Master Charles," said the nurse, raising her voice as she spoke, "the birds are your brother Dick's, and he shall have them too, *that* he shall, I am *determined!*"

The nurse then caught hold of the nest, but Charles did not let it go; so that it was presently pulled in such a manner between them, as to let us poor little creatures drop out through the middle of it, and down we fell sprawling (one after the other) upon the floor. We were instantly picked up by the other children, who all ran clattering down stairs as fast as they could, leaving Charles and the nurse in close combat. We were now carried into the garden, and very amicably distributed amongst the five children. Dick, good humouredly asserting, "he intended to give some away; but he did not chuse to have us *snatched* from him in such a manner as Charles took us from him."

We

We were now in a dreadful unhappy state, much hurt by our fall, greatly terrified by the noise we had heard, very cold, and beginning to be very hungry, we all chattered aloud, begging for mercy, and to be restored to our parents, whose voices we heard in the garden, calling mournfully after us. The children seemed to pay little attention to our cries, but agreed together that we must be fed, or else we should die. "I will go and make them some victuals," said one of the girls, whose name was Polly. "Aye do," said her sister, "and bring some old pens to cut up into spoons to feed them with." While Polly was gone for the food, we were placed altogether upon the grass, which felt so damp

damp and cold in comparison of the soft warm feathers we had been used to lay upon in our nest, as to be quite painful to us, and to benumb our limbs with cold. "Poor things! said Tom, "how they shake; mine is so chilly I will hold it in my hand and warm it." I happened to be his portion, and I was held so close in his hand, that I soon became faint; I could scarcely breathe. At last Polly returned with the food, and old pens, the nibs of which were rounded off, to make them into spoons. We were all so hungry, that as we heard the voice of our mother, and other birds who were flying about, we opened our mouths, and in was popped a great lump of very disagreeable pudding, I believe
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it was, but it was something very cold and unpleasant. This was repeated till our little craws stuck out like wens, and we were made so ill we could no longer chirp, but lay panting for breath, almost ready to die. It was now agreed it would be best to put us to bed somewhere altogether, that we might keep each other warm. "Let us put them in the cage," said Sally, "with some hay at the bottom." Accordingly, some new *hard* hay was fetched, and we were all placed upon it with one of their pocket handkerchiefs folded up, put over us to keep us warm. I suppose they thought they had given us a nice bed, but it was so *very* different from the soft one we had been used to, that nothing could feel

feel more uncomfortable. Our mother had taken the greatest care to put away all the ends of the hay, and bits of straw, and sticks with which she made the nest, lest they should hurt our little tender bodies, and had lined the inside with soft feathers, moss and hair, which with much diligence she had picked up from different places. Then she had placed us all so nicely one by the other, that nothing could be more agreeable than we were together. But now the children when they put us into the cage upon the hay, took no care that we should not push against each other, or tread upon one another's toes, or even upon each other's heads. In short we were
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in a dreadful uneasy state, whilst thus put to bed, as they called it. Nor was our situation mended when our young tormentors again visited us; for we were then taken out to be crammed with more of their nauseous food, and if we kept our mouths shut, they pulled them open by force to feed us. After this it was thought best that we should be taught to walk; accordingly we were placed upon a cold slippery table, and pushed forward, so that if we did not try to scramble on, we were thrown down upon the end of our beaks, which causes a more painful sensation than those persons who have not bills, can have any notion of. To prevent this accident, my master Tom said, " he would

would put me on a *leading string*, for he could not bear to see me fall on my face so often." He then tied a bit of thread round my throat, by which he held my head up with one hand, whilst he shoved me forward with the other. In this manner he hauled me round the table two or three times, till I thought I should have died with the fatigue I suffered. Little did he know whilst he was calling me his *dear child*, or his *little poney*, what pain he was making me undergo, at last seeing my eyes quite shut, and my limbs unable to move any longer, he took compassion upon me, and putting me into his bosom, said I should exercise no more for that time. But whilst I mention my
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my own misfortunes, those of my brothers and sisters were not less acute. During the time I was walking in the manner I have just related, one of my brothers was still more tortured by Miss Polly, who was teaching him to dance, which was done by holding both his wings extended with her fingers and thumbs, whilst she pulled him backwards and forwards, and sideways, to dance what she called a *minuet*. This dance had so great an effect on his tender constitution, and had caused so much pain to all his little delicate joints, that he died very soon after he had taken his first lesson; and by that means happily escaped the further torment he must have experienced;

enced; as Miss Polly had declared her intention of teaching him every day, till he should be able to perform all sorts of dances to perfection. The children were now called away to go to bed, and we were again put into the cage; the cold we had taken by being exposed so much to the air, and the disorder in our bowels occasioned by the improper food, with which we had been crammed, made us pass the night most wretchedly. Indeed, two more of my brothers died before morning, and my surviving sister and myself were reduced to a dreadful state of misery, expecting likewise every moment to expire under our sufferings; and fearing to see our little masters and mistresses return in the morning, lest some

new

new torments should be invented for us. Nor were we mistaken in our apprehensions, for no sooner had Tom and Sally (to whom we two surviving ones belonged) given us our breakfasts, which we swallowed with much eagerness, being extremely hungry; than they judged it necessary to teach us to fly. Foolish children! As if we birds could not tell much better how that exercise ought to be performed, than they could teach us! However, they were so conceited as to fancy they knew best; and so before our pinions were sufficiently fledged, or had strength enough to support our bodies in the air, they tossed us up as high as they could (with all their force); and as,

when we came tumbling down again, we naturally stretched out our wings, and fluttered to save ourselves, *that* the children called *flying*, and much rejoiced at their skill in teaching us the art so cleverly. "I dare to say," said Sally, "if they had been in the nest with their mother still, they would neither have known how to walk or fly; we shall bring them much forwarder than she would have done." "To be sure we shall," replied Tom, "but that is not at all to be wondered at, because it is certain that *human creatures* have more understanding, and know much better than *birds*, what is proper to be done; so come, let us give them a little more flying. Mine shall have

ten

ten more tosses this lesson, How many shall yours have?" "O! mine," replied Sally, "shall have *twelve* at least." My heart sickened at the thought of what we were now to go through; and after having one of my sisters expire with the fatigue of dancing the day before, I expected nothing less than that we should both die under the violent exertion we were now to make. "Now," said Tom, "let us begin together; and when I say *up*, let us both toss them at the same time, and try which of us can throw them the highest, and mind whose bird will fly down the fastest. O! how I dreaded the sound of the signal, as he kept me in his hand, gently raising

me a little way up and down till he pronounced the fatal word *up*, with a loud voice, and away we both were tossed into the air, as high as the children could fend us. I will not attempt to describe the sensations both of horror and pain which this exercise occasioned, as it is far beyond my power to give you any idea of it. I think I may venture to say, that it was *wretchedness* in the extreme; and I think I may also say, that if children knew what we poor creatures feel, when they are only amusing themselves with us, they would not be such cruel wretches as to torment us in such a manner. I suppose we should have gone on till our ten and twelve tosses had
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been over, had not a most fatal accident put an end to this exercise. After we had been thrown up three times, we were so exceedingly fatigued that we had not power to extend our wings so as to break the violence of the fall, but came down almost like stones; and my dear sister dislocated her leg; but, poor thing! she did not long endure the misery it occasioned, for, as her mistress was putting her on the ground to see if she could walk, a cat, which Sally had not observed, jumped upon her, snapped her up in its mouth, and ran away with her in an instant. She gave one scream, poor dear creature! as the beast seized her in its jaws, but never spoke another word.

My

My master, upon seeing what had happened, popped me into his pocket, and ran after the cat as fast as he could go; the cat, however, out-ran him, and scrambled over a wall, where, I suppose, she enjoyed the feast she made of my beloved sister. I was dreadfully afflicted at this accident, but I felt some consolation at the thought, that although I was thus deprived of her company, and left without a single creature to speak to, yet still she was released from all farther trouble, and would never again be tormented by being either taught to walk, to fly, or to dance. I was now put into my solitary cage, and left for some time to indulge my sad, melancholy reflections. I was
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at last roused from my meditations by the entrance of my master, Miss Sally, and the cat. Horror overspread my mind upon the sight of my sister's murderer; but still more was I alarmed upon finding my cage taken down and set upon the floor, whilst Tom dragged the cat, by its two fore paws, close up to me, rubbing its nose against the wires of my cage, as if going to put me into its mouth;—then, whilst he held her in that position, Sally with a switch she had in her hand, beat her very heartily. I could not imagine what all this fresh cruelty could be for; my fright was beyond any thing I had before experienced;—and the cat, I am sure, must have suffered greatly,
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not only from the whipping it received, but also from the manner in which Tom held it, and by putting its nose so hard against the wires of the cage. How long this scene would have lasted I cannot tell, had not the children's mother come in and put an end to it, by severely reproving them for such conduct.—“Dear mamma,” said Sally, “we *must* do it; we are only breaking the cat of meddling with birds—she has taken my bird quite away, and eat it up. We have only this one left of all the nest, and if we do not cure the cat of her tricks, she will eat *that* the first time she can get it, a great cruel beast!” “Indeed,” replied her mother, “I do not think she is half
so

so cruel as you children are; it is her nature to eat birds if she can catch them, and she puts them out of their pain in a moment; whereas you torment them day after day by your playing in the manner you do with them. Birds were created to fly about in the open air, and enjoy their liberty, and not to be pulled about and teased as you tease them, by teaching them to walk, and to fly, and to dance. How should you like it, if some great giant was to come and hold you up by your two legs, and make you hop about on your hands till you was almost tired to death? and that might as well be done to you, as for you to lead the poor birds about by their wings,
and

and then call it *dancing*." "I am sure mamma," replied Tom, "if you think it *hurts* them, I will not do it any more, for I do not want to give my little bird any pain; I only wish to make it tame and fond of me." "I do not think," answered his mother, "that to make any living creature *fond* of you can be to teaze and torment it. It may be the means of making it hate and dread you; but I am sure it can never induce it to *love* you." "What had I best do then to make it love me?" enquired Tom. "Give it its liberty, and let it fly away," said his mother; "and then it will have some just cause to love you." "O, but mamma," replied the boy, "I cannot
not

not do that, for then I should lose my bird entirely. Besides it cannot fly, neither can it feed itself; so that I am sure it would be cruel to turn it out to be starved to death, or else eat up by the cat." "Well then," said his mamma, "as the poor thing has been so unfortunate as to come into your hands, you may at least avoid tormenting it by pulling it about. Let it live in the cage; or if you want it to be tame, let it sit upon your finger when you feed it. And do not cram it so much at a time, but give it only one or two mouthfuls at once, and feed it every quarter of an hour; and then, perhaps, it will soon learn to pick; and as it has never known the pleasure of liberty,

it may live comfortably enough in the cage; and you may let it hop about the room sometimes, and that will make it much tamer than playing with it as you now do." Tom followed his mother's advice, and soon found the reward of so doing, from the speedy improvement which took place in my health and beauty. A short time after receiving my food in so much more wholesome a manner I recovered strength sufficient to hop about my cage, and jump up and down from the perch. I also began to feed myself, and finding my master had left off tormenting me, I had no objection to fly to him, as he always gave me some nice little morsel to eat whenever I did so. He

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likewise

likewise gave me liberty to fly about the room whenever he was in it, to guard me from danger; and in short, as my sorrow for the loss of my dear brothers and sisters wore away by time, I began to lead a very comfortable and easy life; nor have I any thing to wish for, excepting the society of some of my own species, and the liberty of flying at large in the open air."

"That," said the parrot, who here interrupted the sparrow, "is all I have to make *me* uneasy, for I am taken very great care of. My mistress, I really believe, loves me better than she does any of her children; at least I very frequently see her beat them, and she never speaks to me

but in the kindest manner. One day she whipped a little boy, of three years old, very severely, because he took away a bit of nice cake, which she had given me for my dinner. The child said, he had not taken it but she insisted upon it that he had, which was very true. So she said, she would make him remember stealing my food, and then denying it. She then took a rod, and whipped him most heartily, telling him at the same time, that if ever she knew him guilty of the like fault, she would punish him in the same manner again. This I thought extremely kind of her, for to be sure the cake was very nice, and I was sorry to have it taken from me. Her husband came in just after she

she had whipped the child, and enquired what was the cause of her displeasure. "He has been a very naughty boy," said she, "he has taken away the parrot's victuals to eat himself, and then told a lie about it, and denied having done so." "That is a sad thing, indeed!" said her husband. "I think any child who tells *lies*, well deserves to be severely punished." Then taking hold of the child's hand, "Why," said he, "did not you speak the truth, Will? Why did not you tell your mother, that you had taken the parrot's victuals, and then she would not have been angry with you? There was no harm in your having done that, if you had owned what you had done, and not

told a story about it." "To be sure," rejoined my mistress, "the crime would not have been near so bad, had he owned the truth; but yet I cannot be of your opinion, to think there would have been *no harm* in stealing the cake from the parrot." "Stealing the cake," repeated her husband, "I should not have called it *stealing*. To be sure Will had no business to take it out of the cage, after you had put it in; and he ought not to have done it.—But yet, had he honestly confessed that he had eaten it, I cannot say, I think his crime would have been very great, nor would he then have deserved much punishment." "Indeed," replied my mistress, in an angry tone, which

(which I thought was very kind of her), "I would have punished him, or any one else who dares to take the victuals from the sweet bird, after I have put it into her cage." "Pough! Nonsense!" said her husband, "you make yourself quite ridiculous about that foolish parrot; he then walked out of the room, taking the little boy with him. My mistress very kindly would not let me suffer by the child, and therefore gave me a slice of cake, twice as large as that he had taken from me. "There my *sweet beauty*, my *pretty polly*," said she, "you shall have your cake. Come my dear bird, come and stand upon your own mistress's hand, while you eat it." She then took me out of
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the cage, and kindly fondled me all the time I was eating, declaring repeatedly that she would severely punish whoever dared to affront me. And indeed she is as good as her word, for if any of the children presume to touch me, she always sends them away with a severe reprimand. But notwithstanding all her fondness of me, I am very far from happy; even her very tenderness often times distresses me, by giving me those kinds of food, which I do not like; and keeping me frequently covered up beneath a great thick green baize bag, for fear I should be too cold. But above all, as Mrs. Sparrow just now observed, the want of some of my own relations most distresses me,
and

and casts a melancholy gloom over my whole life, in spite of all my fond mistress can do to make me happy."

Here the parrot ceased speaking; and after a pause of a few moments, one of the fish, from within the glass globe broke the silence, by saying, "I do not at all wonder to hear those birds lament their misfortunes, who are shut up in solitude, and debarred the conversation of any of their species. But yet I think their state is much preferable to ours, who are confined within these very narrow glass walls, without even the comfort of breathing the element, which our nature requires in order to keep us in any tolerable degree of health, or ever having one single mouthful
of

of food, such as our appetites could relish. I see, my friends, you look surpris'd at hearing me say we breathe not the *element* we want, because you see we are in water, and it is water we were born to move in. But though the drop we are confined in may be called *water*, it is as different almost from our native pond, as light is from darkness; and as little agrees with our constitutions, as it would with that of our cruel keepers, if they were always to be shut up in a close little room, filled with smoke, or some nauseous fumes. Our pond was large and open to the rain and winds, which constantly refreshed and invigorated us; it was also deep, so that we could at any time, by diving

ving in it, avoid either the too great heat of the sun, or too much cold from the external air. It was also always fresh from the springs which were rising at the bottom of it. It was likewise well stored with plenty of every kind of victuals we could wish; nor was there a moment in the day in which we could not partake of the most dainty repast. There too, we had numbers of our fellow creatures, with whom we could sport and converse at our pleasure; and ample room to retire into solitude, when we wished to enjoy the calm repose of quiet meditation. But here we have not one of these blessings;—we have space for no other exercise, but that of moving round and round in one regular

regular motion, without the power of either darting backward or forward, or even diving downwards. When the sun shines upon us, the glass in which we are imprisoned, reflects his beams with such intense heat, that the whole of the water we move in, is rendered nearly boiling; at least so it seems to our delicate feelings, and almost kills us with its unwholesome warmth. At other times, it is as much too cold, and benumbs our faculties. Then it is so pent, and rendered so unpleasant for want of free air and refreshing showers, that we scarcely know how to breathe; and when the human creatures who attend us, give us what they call *fresh water*, we are

are as much distressed by the violent effect such a sudden change has upon breathing, as it is called by all land animals. Added to all these misfortunes we have no food, or at least very seldom, and then only such as is extremely distasteful to us. Sometimes we are favoured with what is called bread. Perhaps you, my friends, may know what it is, and may be some of you do not dislike it. But it is so extremely different to our native food, as to be quite disagreeable to us; this, however, we have not often, and I overheard the other day, why it is so seldom granted us. A child who was looking at us, and frightening us through the glass (for though our nature is

so extremely timid and bashful, as to give us great alarm at the sight of every object, yet we can never have the happiness of concealing ourselves for a single moment.) A child, I say, who was looking at us enquired what we had to eat? "O!" replied the person to whom we belong, "they do not eat much; they can live without food, as well as with it. I now and then give them a little bread, but I do not like to let them have it often, because it makes the water look thick, and gives me more trouble to clean the globe." Well! thought I to myself, this is cruelty in the extreme! To think of locking up poor living creatures in such a state of continual imprisonment and wretchedness,

wretchedness, and then grudge the trouble of letting them have food! Surely, of all created beings, the *human-race* is the most inconsiderate and cruel! Such was my thought upon hearing the reason why we were kept in a continual state of hunger. And I was still more confirmed in my opinion, when I recollected what I had seen during the time I lived in happiness in my native pond; for well do I recollect the barbarity I there witnessed committed by some of the same human race, upon many of my finny companions. It even now makes me shudder to think of it; but I will mention it, in order that you may form a just opinion of

that being, who calls himself *man*, and *rational*.

Could you believe it possible, my friends, some of these *rational* creatures would frequently come to the side of our pond, and sitting down upon the grass take *living* worms, and run a sharp hook all through their bodies! then, whilst they were in the agonies such treatment occasioned, they threw them hook and all into the water, tied to the end of a very fine and long line; the other end of which was fastened to a long stick, which they held in their own hands. Upon seeing a worm fall into the water, it was but natural for a fish to go to eat it up; and you know there would have been no cruelty in that,

that, as it would have been killed instantly. But think, my friends, upon the dreadful state of the poor fish, who, taking the worm, swallowed also the barbed hook upon which it was spitted; and found it stick fast either within its jaws or stomach. Oh! how I have seen the poor animal flirt itself with the agony it suffered, which the human creature on the shore no sooner found to be the case, by the shaking of the line, than up he drew it out of the water, hanging its whole weight upon the hook which it had swallowed, and then the cruel, unreflecting wretch, *pulled* out the hook, without the smallest regard to the sufferings of the poor wounded fish, whose inside was most

dreadfully torn by so doing. Only think, my friends, what must be the anguish occasioned by swallowing a sharp iron hook into your stomach, or even having it stick fast in your jaws; and then to have the whole weight of your body upon it; and as if that was not torment sufficient, again to have it forcibly dragged out, and the poor victim thrown by, in all its agonies, to lay gasping in torments upon the grass, or in a basket with more of its fellow sufferers, who have been treated in the same barbarous manner. And all this have I frequently witnessed merely for the *pleasure* of the human race; and the more of our unhappy brethren they have thus tormented, the better I have

have heard them say has been the *sport*, as they have called it. Alas! that *reasonable* beings should take so little thought of their actions, or so little reflect upon what effect their *sport* may have upon living creatures, who feel, let me tell them, whatever they may suppose to the contrary, *as acutely as they could do themselves*. But I ought to beg your pardon, my friends, for taking up so much of your time with my reflections on the cruelty of man; happily there is none of the species present, and if there was, he could not understand my language.

Mrs. BENFIELD here stopped reading. Her children all looked at her, expecting her to proceed. But find-
ing

ing she did not, Peggy begged she would go on, and read them some more, for she liked the conversation of the dumb creatures prodigiously. "So do I," said all the rest, "so pray go on." "My dears," replied Mrs. Benfield, "I can go on no farther; for the leaves are so torn, I cannot make out what the lamb, the duck, or the squirrel said, though I remember it was something to the same purpose. I think I have read you a great deal, nor did I imagine I could have made out half so much as I have done." "I am sure," said her son Henry, "we are all much obliged to you for your pretty story; but pray, Madam, will you be so obliging as to inform us how the different

different beasts and birds you have been reading of, all contrived to leave their different houses and cages and meet together? "Upon my word, my dear," replied his mother, "it has been puzzling me as much as it has you; nor can I at all recollect how it was supposed to be done. I know that part of the book which is torn out, accounted for the different animals meeting together, though I quite forget in what way. But, however, if you have been entertained with their conversation when they were assembled, we will not mind by what means they got together. But now, my dear children, it is quite time you should all go to bed; indeed some of you ought to have been there

there a long while ago.—So good night to you all; and let the several complaints of my poor dumb animals teach you never to teaze or torment any living creature: for the Bible tells us, that a merciful man will be merciful to his beast.”

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