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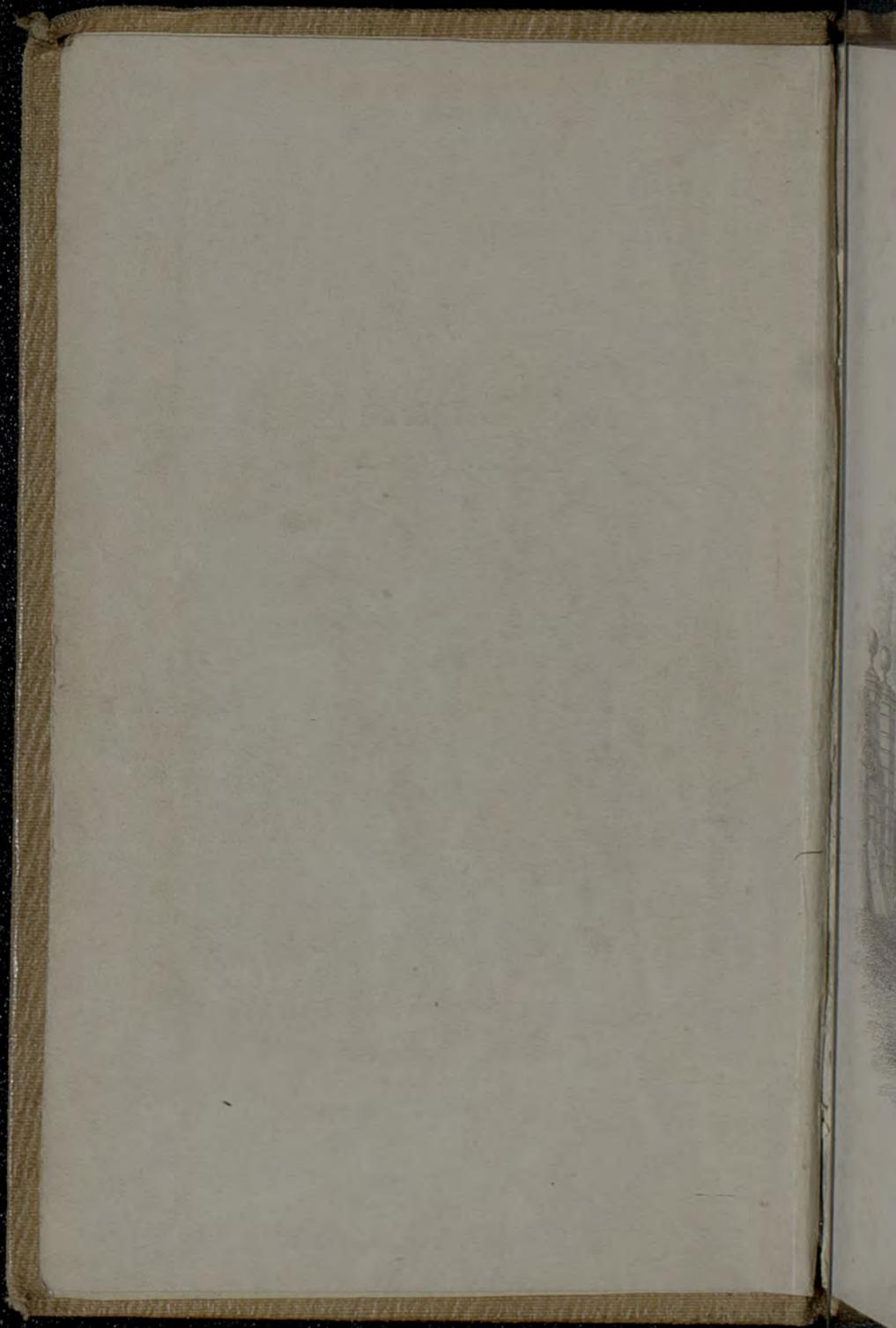
From

Miss Lockayne

to

Emma White.

June 18th 1856



WALKS OF ANGLESEY



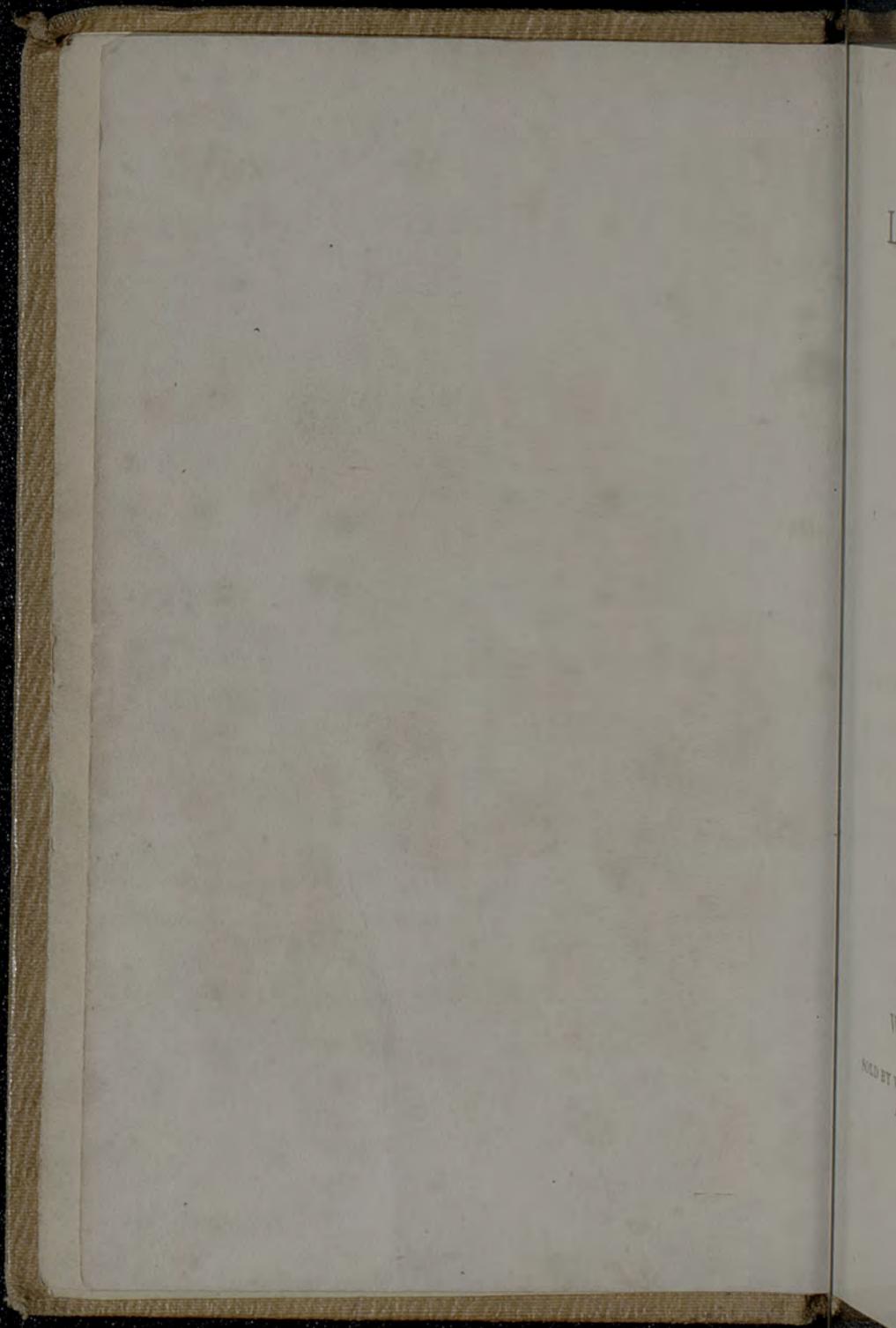
The Walk.

Page 2

Edinburgh.

WILLIAM CLERK & SON.

1838.



LITTLE ALFRED

OF

ANGLESEY.

“ Can I learn the way to glory,
From a little simple story?
Yes, I may, for Scripture tells
Jesus taught in parables.”

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LITTLE ALFRED

OF

ANGLESEY.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE ALFRED lived in Anglesey. He had a father and a mother, of whom he was very fond, and one brother named Frederick, who was a little older than himself. Alfred was about five years old, and was a good tempered little boy, and very fond of taking walks with his Papa, on the hills near them. One fine morning, as he was playing in the garden before breakfast, Frederick came running to him, and said,

“ Oh, Alfred ! I have such good news ; we have a holiday to-day, and Papa says, that as I am not going to school, he will excuse you

your lessons, and take us both across the ferry to Bangor."

"Oh! I am so glad," said Alfred, clapping his hands, "how very nice that will be; I must run and thank dear Papa."

Breakfast was soon over, for the little boys were too joyful to eat much; and, putting on their straw hats, they set off with their Papa.

It was a very pretty walk to the ferry; the road was shaded with trees, amongst which the birds were singing sweetly; and the little fishing boats with their white sails, were seen in every direction on the beautiful Straits of Menai. Alfred was in high spirits; he had not lived long in Anglesey, and his Papa had only taken him to Bangor once before, so that he had many questions to ask on what he saw. They had not gone far when they met a Welsh woman carrying her eggs and butter to the market in Beaumaris. Alfred's father asked her how she sold her eggs, but she only smiled, and, saying, "*Dim Sassenach*," which means "No English," went on.

"Papa," said Alfred, "why do not the

Welsh women speak English, and dress like English women?"

"Because they are a different nation from the English, my love; and ever since the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel, different nations speak different languages."

"But England and Wales are both governed by the same king, Papa."

"Yes, my dear, but they were not always so. Frederick, do you know what king of England it was who conquered Wales?"

"Edward the First, Papa, and it has belonged to England ever since."

"Oh!" said Alfred, "I remember Mamma read me a story about all the Welsh bards being put to death, and about the little English prince who was born in Wales, and who was so young, he could not speak when they chose him their king. Was he not murdered when he became king of England, Papa?"

"Yes, Edward the Second was cruelly murdered in Berkeley Castle. He was born not many miles from this place; some day, perhaps, I may show you the Castle of Caernarvon."

"Thank you, dear Papa, I shall like very much to see the birth-place of the first prince of Wales; but look, Fred, at all those sea gulls, how they are flying about, and what numbers there are. What do they live on, Papa?"

"They will feed on almost any thing they can find, my dear. At the mouths of large rivers they are seen in numbers, picking up the animal substances which are cast on shore, or come floating down with the ebbing tide. For this kind of food they watch with a quick eye, and it is curious to observe how such as are near the breakers will mount upon the surface of the water, and run splashing toward the summit of the wave to catch the object of their pursuit. They make their nests on the rocky cliffs."

Alfred watched the sea gulls for some time, as they fled about in all directions, and then proposed to Frederick to run a race with him. Away they went, and were soon out of sight. When their Papa came up to them, he found them seated on a stone, counting some money.

“ See, Papa !” said Alfred, “ I have found a purse full of money ! Here are four sovereigns, and fifteen shillings and sixpence !”

“ And what do you intend to do with it, my boy ?”

“ Oh ! I shall give Fred half of it, because we are partners in every thing ; and then I shall buy a kite, and a little boat, and I shall buy you a new telescope, dear Papa, because you said yours was injured.”

“ But, Alfred, are you sure you have a right to the money ?”

“ I think I have, Papa ; I found it, and I do not know who it was that lost it ; therefore, it must be mine.”

“ Do you remember the other day when you left your cane in the field, and a little boy brought it to you ? You were quite pleased with him for it, and said he must be a very honest boy.”

“ Yes, Papa ; but then the boy guessed that it might be mine, though he could not tell for certain. Now, I cannot even guess whose purse this is, so that I cannot offer it to any one. But it must belong to some person, and perhaps they

are as sorry to have lost it, as I was when I lost my cane. Shall I go and put it down where I found it?"

"No, my dear, that would be doing no good; you must use every means to discover the owner, before you can consider it as your own. Put the purse in your pocket, and we will make inquiries about it."

They proceeded on their walk; and when they arrived at the ferry, found the boat just preparing to sail. They seated themselves in it, with several other passengers, amongst whom were a lady and gentleman, and their little girl. The child seemed to be crying, for though her face was turned away, Alfred heard her papa say to her,

"Do not cry any more about it, Ellen; it is a pity you were so careless, and I hope it will be a lesson to you in future to take your mother's advice."

The little girl ceased crying, and Frederick rose and offered her his seat. She thanked him, and then seeing that he looked very good tempered, she said,

“ I have met with such a misfortune this morning, and I am so sorry about it.”

“ Have you,” said Frederick, “ what was it ?”

“ Why, as I was walking with Mamma, I asked her to let me carry her bag for her, and she refused for some time, because there was money in it, and she was afraid I should lose it ; but at last she gave it to me, and, unfortunately, in swinging it about, the purse dropped out, and I suppose it is gone for ever, because if any one found it, I am afraid they would not have the honesty to try to find out the owner.”

“ What colour was the purse,” said Alfred, “ and how much money was there in it ?”

“ It was a green purse, and there was almost five pounds in it.”

“ Then here it is,” said Alfred, his eyes sparkling with pleasure as he produced it ; “ I am so glad I found it.”

“ Oh, thank you, thank you,” replied the little girl in delight, “ I am so much obliged to you ; look, dear Mamma, here is your purse again ; this little boy found it.”

The lady and gentleman thanked Alfred se-

veral times. They had just heard his father telling the boatman that his little boy had found a purse, and asking him to inquire who had lost it; and when they found it was their purse, they thanked him again and again.

“You should not thank me, Sir,” said Alfred, “but Papa; for I should have kept it as my own, if he had not told me it was wrong to do so.”

Then turning to the little girl, he said,

“How the boat rocks about? and how beautiful the waves look dashing against its sides, whilst we go so fast along. I am so fond of going in a boat; I hope, when I grow up, I shall be a sailor.”

“Are you so fond of the water?” said the gentleman. “Well, if your Papa will allow it, I will take you and your brother some day in my boat to that island we see in the distance; as you have done me a favour, I shall be very glad to oblige you.”

The boys were very joyful when their papa said they might go, and they thanked the gentleman for his kindness. When they were

landed, Alfred asked his Papa how it happened that the water was so much higher on the beach now, than it was the last time they crossed over.

“ The tide was ebbing then my dear, now it is high.”

“ What do you mean Papa, why is it not always high ?”

“ The tide rises, or comes in, twice in every twenty five hours, and of course goes out or ebbs twice. It is nearly six hours coming in, and remains high twelve minutes ; it is the same time in ebbing, and remains low twelve minutes.”

“ And does it never miss coming in ?”

“ Never ; it returns with the same regularity every day.”

“ What makes it ebb and flow, Papa ?”

“ It is supposed that the moon has a great effect on the tides, my dear ; and it is a proof of the wisdom and goodness of God, for, if so large a body of water were not kept constantly moving, several evil effects would ensue.”

“ Then, Papa, if I was to throw something

into these straits that would float, would the water carry it to another shore?"

"Yes, my dear; unless the returning tide brought it back here again. When ships are at sea, the captain sometimes throws out a bottle, with a paper inside of it, saying that all were well on board when the vessel was in such a latitude; and it is perhaps carried many hundred miles, and picked up on a far distant coast."

"How I should like to pick one up some day," said Alfred; "perhaps I may when I am a sailor, and then, Papa, perhaps I may see the curious *pinna marina*."

"The *pinna marina*!" said Frederick, "what is that?"

"Oh! it is so curious," said Alfred; "Papa told me about it yesterday. It is a muscle found sticking to the rocks on the coast of Calabria in Italy; and when it is in want of food, it throws out on the surface of the sea, a beard so silky and brilliant that it looks like liquid gold."

"What is that for?" said Frederick.

“That is to catch small fish in; but only think, Fred, in every tuft of this beard there is a little crab, and they are called the watchmen of the muscle, because when they see an enemy approach they give notice to the muscle, who instantly draws in its shining beard, and the watchmen with it.”

“How very curious!” said Frederick; “but I am sorry it has enemies to contend with.”

“The polypus is a great foe to the muscle,” said his Papa; it watches its opportunity when the *pinna* is in search of its prey, and throws a small pebble close to the hinge of the shell, which prevents the poor *pinna* from closing it, and thus it is soon made an easy victim.”

“Papa,” said Alfred, “how many curious and wonderful things there are in the world! Yesterday you told me about the *pinna*; and the day before you gave me an account of the bees, and the way they make honey; and the day before that you told me of the pretty little humming birds, and their tiny nests; how many wonderful things there are!”

“There are indeed, my dear boy. Every

thing in creation is wonderful, from the kingly eagle to the small wren—from the lofty oak to the humble violet; all speak the power and wisdom of an Almighty Creator. Can you repeat those lines on the daisy, which you learnt last week, Alfred?”

“ I think I can Papa,” and picking a daisy, the little boy repeated the following lines:—

‘ Not worlds on worlds in phalanx deep,
Need we to prove that God is here,
The daisy, fresh from winter’s sleep,
Tells of his hand, in lines as clear;

For who but He who arched the skies,
And pours the day spring’s living flood,
Wondrous alike in all he tries,
Could form the daisy’s purple bud?

Mould its green cup, and wiry stem,
And cut its gold embossed gem?
And fling it unrestrained and free,
O’er hill and dale and desert sod,
That man where e’er he walks, may see
In every step the stamp of God.’”

“ Very well repeated,” said his Papa; “ but see, here we are at Bangor.”

Alfred and his brother Frederick spent a very pleasant day in Bangor. After resting themselves at a hotel, their Papa took them in a carriage to the slate quarries, where they were much entertained in watching the workmen. Some were blasting the rocks; some were splitting the slates; others were cutting them smooth; and others were packing them in little carts, and sending them down by the railroad to the port, from whence they were shipped to all parts of England. Alfred was highly amused at hearing the names which were given to the different sized slates; "queen's" being the largest, and "duchesses," "countesses," and "ladies," smaller by degrees. He was standing attentively watching the workmen, when his Papa called him. Alfred wished very much to remain where he was, and he thought he would stay a minute or two longer, just to see the man finish cutting that piece of slate; but then he remembered he had often been told it was his duty to obey at once, and he therefore ran directly to his father.

"Alfred, my dear," said he, "you were

standing in a very dangerous place ; they are blasting the rock near you ; I am glad you are come away."

Just then, Alfred saw all the men, who were near the place where he had been standing, running off, and immediately after, a very large piece of slate fell just on the spot where he had been when his father called him.

" Oh ! Papa," he said, " I am so glad I came directly when you called me, for if I had staid a minute longer, most likely I should have been killed."

" Most likely you would, my dear, or at least very much hurt ; always remember that prompt and cheerful obedience is the best obedience. I saw the danger, though you did not, and I am very much pleased to see that I can depend on you."

Alfred's rosy face beamed with delight, when he found that he had pleased his dear Papa ; and he determined always to mind what was said to him. When they had seen every thing that was worth seeing in and near Bangor, they walked home in the cool of the evening. Little Alfred felt rather tired, but he knew that com-

plaining would do him no good, so he asked his Papa to tell him something that would amuse him, and make him forget his fatigue.

“What shall I tell you?” said his Papa.

“Tell us something, dear Papa,” said Frederick, “about all those beautiful stars shining like diamonds above our heads. How many do you think there are? It seems impossible to count them.”

“There are about one thousand visible to the naked eye in our hemisphere, my dear; but astronomers have counted fifty thousand, and beyond these, there are supposed to be thousands and thousands more.”

“Look Papa,” said Alfred, “there is one very bright star; brighter than any.”

“Yes, that is the planet Venus, the brightest of all the planets.”

“How do you know it is a planet, Papa?”

“The fixed stars are less bright, and always appear to be twinkling; the planets are always moving in a circle round the sun; the stars are always in the same position.”

“How many planets are there?” asked Alfred.

“Eleven, the earth on which we live is one of them, and moves round the sun once every year.”

“I suppose, Papa, we are very near the sun, it was so warm to-day as we walked along?”

“Not very near, Alfred; the earth is ninety-five millions of miles distant from the sun, and its light which darts so quickly, is said to be eight minutes in reaching us.”

“Ninety-five millions of miles! Papa, you astonish me! how very large the sun must be to give heat at such a distance. Are all the planets at the same distance from it?”

“No. Mercury, the nearest, is thirty-seven millions of miles distant from the sun; and Venus is sixty-eight millions of miles distant; but the Georgium Sidus is eighteen hundred millions of miles distant from the sun, and is eighty-three years going once round it.”

“What a long time!” said Frederick, “but Papa, tell us something about the moon, the pale and beautiful moon.”

“The moon is the earth’s satellite or attendant, to give light to us by night. It is distant

from the earth about two hundred and forty thousand miles, and goes round it once in twenty-nine days."

"But Papa, sometimes the moon is full; and sometimes we see only half a moon; and at other times no moon at all. How is that?"

"The moon, my dear, is a dark body, and receives its light from the sun; therefore when it is between the sun and the earth, the enlightened side being turned from us, we cannot see it, till it again changes its position, but I will endeavour to explain this to you by means of the magic lantern; I think you will understand it better. In the mean time, never forget the Almighty Being, by whose wisdom these glorious bodies are preserved steady and unchanging in their course; and remember, that though he rules the spacious firmament, the actions of a little child are not beneath his notice. See! there is Mamma, looking out for us; run to her, and give her an account of what you have seen."

CHAPTER II.

“PAPA,” said Alfred one day, “I wish you would buy me some silk handkerchiefs like yours; they look much prettier than cotton ones, and I should like them better.”

“Perhaps you would, my dear boy,” said his Papa; “but silk handkerchiefs are much more expensive than cotton ones, and I cannot afford to buy them for you till you are older.”

“It is a pity they are expensive,” said Alfred, “when they are so pretty. What is silk, Papa; does it grow in the fields like cotton?”

“No. Silk, Alfred, which you so admire, and which is so much used in England, is the production of a little caterpillar; called a silk-worm.”

“A caterpillar! dear Papa, how can a little worm make such beautiful silk?”

“ It is indeed surprising, my dear, that a little worm can make a material which queens are not ashamed to wear, but it is true ; and if you like I will tell you something about them.”

“ Do, dear Papa, begin at the beginning.”

“ Each moth lays about two hundred eggs, which are placed by the persons who take care of them, in mulberry trees, and watched night and day. You have seen a mulberry tree ?”

“ Oh ! yes ; there is one at my uncle’s, and I have often eaten the mulberries from it.”

“ Well, from this little egg comes a small worm, which is fed for thirty days with finely chopped mulberry leaves, when it is full grown, and becomes a large white worm.”

“ And what does it do then Papa ?”

“ It will not eat any more ; but a little tuft of heath is given to it, on which it begins to form its ball of silk ; it is hidden from sight, and in seven days the work is finished. In this state this worm is called a chrysalis, and the balls are called cocoons. People then wind off the silk directly, lest the worm should spoil it in trying to get out.”

“What becomes of the worm, Papa.”

“It changes into a dark brown grub, which is again changed into a white moth. This moth lays eggs, and then in a short time dies.”

“I am glad they do not kill the useful little worm,” said Alfred, “but what is done with the silk?”

“The weavers weave it into the material which we use. There are large silk manufactories at Spitalfields in London:

‘There you may see them swiftly throw
The shuttle athwart the loom,
They will show you how brightly their flowers grow,
That have beauty, but no perfume.

‘They will show you the rose with a hundred dyes,
The lily that hath no spot;
The violet, deep as Italian skies,
And the little forget me not.’”

“Papa, in what countries are there most silkworms?”

“In China; the East Indies; the Morea; several parts of Italy; and the south of Spain. Before the culture of silk worms was so much

attended to, silk was so scarce that it was sold for its weight in gold; and it is said, that the Emperor Aurelian refused his Empress a robe of purple silk, on account of its enormous expense. James I., whilst king of Scotland, borrowed of one of his nobles a pair of silk stockings to wear whilst he received the English ambassador, and liked them so well, that he danced them into holes."

"How different it is now," said Alfred; "why, even our servant Jane has a silk gown: what has made such a difference Papa?"

"The improvements in arts, manufactures, and commerce, my dear. Since the time of king James, there have been so many new discoveries and inventions, that if he were able to come again and look about him, he would have almost as many questions to ask as you have."

"Tell me one question he would ask, Papa?"

"I think one of his first questions would be, what that engine was, 'which is on the rivers, and the boatman may rest upon his oars; which is on the roads, and dispenses with the service

of the horse ; which is at the bottom of mines a thousand feet below the earth's surface ; which is in the mill, and in the workshops ; which pumps, excavates, rows, carries, draws, lifts, hammers, spins, weaves, and prints.' ”

“ Oh ! Papa, I know what you mean ; the steam engine ! the clever, useful steam engine ; and Papa, do you think he would ask what was the use of a carriage ? ”

“ No, my dear, carriages were used in England in his reign, but Queen Elizabeth might ask the question. Do you remember the story of Sir Walter Raleigh spreading his cloak over the dirty road, that she might walk across it without soiling her shoes ? ”

“ Oh yes, Papa ! and how pleased the queen was. What else have we now, that they had not in her reign ? ”

“ Many things ! In her reign watches were first brought to England ; glasses such as we drink out of, were considered more precious than silver ; and looking-glasses were so uncommon and so small, that the ladies usually carried them in their pockets.”

“ Papa, did people always wear shoes such as we do ? ”

“ No, my love, shoes used to be made of raw hides, and they have been made of rushes, broom, paper, flax, silk, wood, iron, silver, and even gold. The Egyptians used for shoes the bark of the papyrus, a rush growing on the banks of the river Nile in Egypt.”

“ Oh, Papa ! ” said Alfred, “ one day long ago, you promised to tell me something about the papyrus, but I could not remind you of it, because I always forgot the name.”

“ Did I, Alfred ? then I must keep my promise. The papyrus is a celebrated plant, of which the Egyptians used to make writing paper, and from the word papyrus, our word paper is derived.”

“ Oh, then ! I shall remember it another time ; but how could they make paper and shoes from the same plant, Papa.”

“ The shoes were made from the outer, the paper from the inner bark of the rush. It needed a little preparation, and paper thus

made was generally used to write upon, till parchment was found to be a better material."

"What is parchment?"

"The skin of sheep and goats prepared in a peculiar manner. After parchment, the art of making paper from cotton was discovered, and now it is made of linen rags."

"Is it, dear Papa; how can they make paper of rags?"

"I should like to take you to a paper-mill, my love, but as there is not one near us, I will try to explain it to you. The rags, when carried to the mill, are first sorted and cut into small pieces. As they are very dirty, they are then put into large chests, and boiled with lime for a few hours; and not being yet clean, they are put into an engine, which again washes and cuts them up very small. After this they are bleached to make them white; they then go again into the washing engine, and then into the beating engine, which grinds them up into a fine pulp. This pulp is then sifted through a web of the finest wire, and after being pressed, squeezed, and dried, it

becomes the beautiful and useful substance called paper."

"It is very curious," said Alfred; "but, Papa, where can they find rags enough to make so many books as there are in England?"

"There are people, my love, whose business it is to procure rags; but we have not rags enough in this country, therefore, Italy and Germany export or send them to us. It is not unlikely that the sheet of paper on which you wrote your copy to-day, once formed part of the coarse blue shirt of an Italian sailor, on board some little vessel in the Mediterranean; or it might, a few months ago, have existed in the shape of a tattered frock, whose shreds covered the sturdy limbs of the little shepherd boy, watching his flock on the plains of Hungary."

"I never thought," said Alfred, "that it cost so much trouble to make paper; I shall be more careful than ever not to blot my copy book. Is it made into books at the mill, Papa?"

"No, it is put into quires and reams, and

then sold. A quire of paper is twenty-four sheets, and a ream is twenty quires."

"What is the name of the river on whose banks the papyrus grows, Papa?"

"The Nile; do you know who was exposed there in a cradle made of these rushes?"

"Moses, was it not?"

"Yes; there is scarcely any rain in Egypt, and the country would be barren and unfruitful if the river Nile did not annually overflow its banks, and leave behind it a rich slime or mud, which fertilizes the soil, and produces an abundant harvest."

"Papa, does not the useful camel live in Egypt?"

"It does; can you tell me any thing about it?"

"I cannot remember all you told me about them, Papa; but I know they are very patient and gentle creatures, and used by the people there to carry burdens, as God has made their feet suited to the sandy deserts, and they are able to drink so much water at one time, that they can travel several days without requiring

more. When they are loaded, they kneel down to receive their burdens, and will rise of their own accord when they have as much as they can bear ; but if the drivers put on too much, they will set up the most piteous cries till some of it is taken off."

" Very well, Alfred ; you remember so well what you hear, that it is a pleasure to tell you more."

" Oh ! and I remember you told me that the hair of the camel was made into the most beautiful stuffs ; that its flesh when young was good to eat ; and that its milk was rich and nourishing."

" Yes, but here comes Frederick from school. Well Fred, are you inclined to take a walk ?"

" Indeed I am, Papa ; it is such a lovely evening, and the steam-packet is just coming in ; but I must first tell you, dear Papa, that I am at the top of my class now, and I intend to keep there if I can."

" That is right," said his Papa ; " I am glad to hear you make such a good resolution."

" It was difficult work to get up there though,

I assure you, and I thought once or twice I would try no more; but when I said so to Dalton, who is in the class above me, he told me not to despair, and related to me such a pretty story about perseverance, that I determined to try, and I succeeded."

"That's a brave boy," said his father, shaking his hand, "ever act thus, and I shall be proud of you; do you conquer difficulties, and never let difficulties conquer you. But what was the story?"

"He said that there was once a working carpenter in Ireland, who was making a bench for the justices at the court-house, and was laughed at for taking such pains to smooth and plane the seat of it. He smiled, and said that he did so to make it easy for himself, as he was resolved, if he could, to sit upon it before he died; and he kept his word. He was an industrious, honest, respectable, and kind-hearted man. He succeeded in all his endeavours to acquire property; his character was respected, and he lived to sit as a magistrate upon the very bench which he had sawed and planed."

“What a nice story,” said Alfred; “it was very kind of Dalton to tell it to you, Fred; now Papa, Mamma is ready, let us set off. Which way shall we go, Mamma?”

“Suppose we go to the green at Beaumaris,” said his Mamma, “the tide is coming in, and it will be very pleasant there.”

“That will be delightful,” said Alfred, “and then we can see the packet come in.”

They accordingly proceeded to the green, and when they arrived there, found the packet just entering the bay. It was a very pretty scene. The gaily decked boat with its band of music, and thronged with passengers, was advancing rapidly towards them, seeming almost conscious of her power, as she proudly walked over the yielding waves; the fishing-boats were returning home with all their sails set, to catch the evening breeze; and here and there were seen a few larger vessels at anchor, waiting for their cargo of slates. On the blue waters of the Menai there was scarcely a rippling wave; whilst the mountains in the distance, illuminated by the last rays of

the setting sun, appeared like purple amethysts.

“Mamma,” said Alfred, after he had stood for some time watching the passengers from the packet, “how nicely I could sail my little boat this evening; may I run home and fetch it, and will you and Papa be so kind as to walk along the beach to that pool of water, which you said was a safe place?”

“You may, my love,” replied his Mamma, “go and fetch it, and we will walk slowly on.”

Alfred had much pleasure in sailing his little boat on the pool of water which the tide had left on the beach, and Frederick good-naturedly assisted him to trim the sails; whilst their father and mother sat on a stone seat at a little distance. Some boys about their own age were standing near the pool, but as they seemed rude and noisy, Frederick and Alfred did not speak to them. After they had amused themselves for some time, they brought their little vessel to shore, and began to pick up pebbles on the beach, to ornament a little grotto they were making in their garden. Alfred had found a

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of the 5th of June 1840

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very pretty one, and was running to show it to Frederick, when to his surprise he saw that the party of boys had seized his boat, and were carrying it off towards the sea. He ran after them, as fast as he could, and begged they would return it to him; but they paid him no attention, and in spite of his entreaties, put his little vessel in the water, and pushed it from the shore. Alfred endeavoured to recover it, but the tide was then going out, and though Frederick had run to his assistance, it was soon carried far beyond their reach.

Poor Alfred looked very sorrowful as he saw his favourite going farther and farther from him; but when a sudden gust of wind overset her, and she gradually sunk from his view, the little boy hid his face on Frederick's shoulder and burst into a flood of tears. His Papa, seeing something was the matter, now came towards them, and asked the cause of Alfred's grief. Having heard it, he inquired where the boys were gone.

“Oh! Papa,” said Frederick, “they ran off as soon as they had done the mischief; I wish

you could find them, and punish them well for their ill nature."

"I am determined," said Alfred, drying his tears, "that I will be revenged on them: I will hide their cricket ball, or tear their kites, or do something to tease them before long."

"Hush, hush, Alfred," said his Papa; "remember who has said, 'vengeance is mine.' The boys have acted very unkindly towards you, and very mischievously; but still you must forgive them."

"How can I forgive them, dear Papa?" he replied, as his tears burst out afresh, "how can I forgive them for taking my dear, dear little 'Fairy;' I should not have minded so much if it had been my ball, or my top, or my wheelbarrow; but to take my pretty boat that I had just painted, and that I loved so; I cannot forgive them!"

"My dear child," said his father, sitting down and taking him on his knee, "I am very sorry for the fate of your little vessel; it was a very pretty one, and I know you were fond of it, and it may be difficult for you to forgive

the boys who took it from you, but still you must endeavour to do so. They were very ill natured; but if you were to tear their kites, or hide their cricket ball, you would be as ill natured as they were. Show them a better example. Think of Him who has told us to 'love our enemies,' and 'do good to them which hate us.' 'He has left us an example that we should follow his steps;' and what does your little hymn say;—

He was insulted every day,
Though all his words were kind;
And nothing men could do or say,
Disturbed his heavenly mind.

Not all the wicked scoffs he heard,
Against the truths he taught,
Excited one reviling word,
Or one revengeful thought.

And when upon the cross he bled,
With all his foes in view,
'Father forgive them,' Jesus said,
'They know not what they do.'"

Alfred did not answer for some time; he

seemed to be thinking on what his Papa had said to him.

“Well Papa,” he replied at length, “I will forgive them, and I will try to forget what they have done to me.”

His father affectionately embraced him, and taking his hand, they proceeded on their walk. He was much pleased with his little boy, and he told him so many amusing anecdotes, that his spirits gradually recovered, and in a short time he was quite ready to be harnessed, and to gallop along the beach as Frederick's horse. As they were returning home, the two little boys ran a great way before their father and mother, and arrived on the green, quite out of breath. They sat down to rest themselves, when on looking round, Alfred saw near them the very boys who had taken his boat. They appeared ashamed when they saw Frederick and Alfred, and went to a distant part of the green. When they were gone, Frederick perceived that they had left something behind them, on the grass, and on going to see what it was, found it to be a kite.

“ Alfred,” said he, “ those boys have left one of their kites here by mistake ; what shall we do with it ?”

Alfred looked at the kite, then at Frederick, and then he thought of his boat ; he paused for a moment, and then said,

“ I have forgiven them, Fred, and I will do to them as I should wish them to do to me. I will take them their kite, and perhaps another time they will not be so unkind.”

Frederick and he accordingly carried the kite to the boys, who looked very much surprised and ashamed when they saw them bringing it, and scarcely knew what to say ; at length one of them stepped forward and said,

“ We are very much obliged to you, but we do not deserve such kindness.”

Alfred gave him the kite, and then bounded with a light heart and joyous step to his Papa. When they arrived at home, Frederick told him what Alfred had done, which highly pleased him. Pressing his little boy to his heart, he said,

“ My dear son, you have indeed taken a noble revenge, and I am more pleased with you

at this moment, than if you had brought me thousands of gold and silver. You have won a victory over your own evil heart, and you have followed the example of that blessed Saviour, who is now, I doubt not, looking upon you with an eye of love. Is it not better to have acted thus, than to have taken a sinful revenge? You are happy yourself; you have made your mother and me happy, and above all you have done what was pleasing in the sight of your Heavenly Father. May he ever bless and keep you!"

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CHAPTER III.

The next morning Alfred was up at an early hour, and had written his copy, learned two lessons in geography, and even had a nice run in the garden, before the bell rung for breakfast. He came in, his face glowing with exercise and good humour, and exclaimed,

“ Papa, we have nearly finished our grotto, and it now looks quite pretty. We have put that large piece of coral you gave us opposite to the entrance, and we have paved the floor with oyster shells; but Fred and I were wondering this morning where coral could come from, and what it is; perhaps you would tell me whilst we are at breakfast, and then I can tell Fred in the evening.”

“ I will, my dear boy,” said his father; “ but first can you tell me from whence tea comes?”

"Tea, Papa," said Alfred, "comes from China, and was first brought to England in the reign of Charles the Second. Now, Papa, what is coral?"

"Coral, my love, is a substance formed at the bottom of the sea, by small animals called polypes, who make it their habitation. It is found in great abundance in the Mediterranean, and Red Seas, and there are people employed to procure it."

"And for what do they use it?" asked Alfred.

"It is cut into beads for necklaces; and made into various ornaments. When I went last summer to Paris, I saw at the Tuilleries, a very fine specimen of sculptured coral, a chess-board and men."

"Is it always red, Papa?"

"No; there is white coral, but it is considered of little value."

"How many curious and beautiful things are made by little insignificant creatures," said Alfred. "It seems so wonderful that Mamma's dresses are the production of a little worm, and

that some of her pretty ornaments are made by still smaller animals."

"Yes, Alfred; it shows us that nothing was created in vain. Every creature that is in the world was made to be of some use in it."

"Most creatures are of some use," said Alfred; "but I can scarcely think that every one is. Come, Papa, now I think I shall puzzle you; of what use in the world is the common sparrow? It is destructive to the corn; it is not good to eat; it cannot sing; it is not even pretty; and if you can tell me of any use that it can be, I shall wonder very much."

"The common sparrow, my dear, low as it seems in your estimation, is of very great use. It lives upon caterpillars, which, if not destroyed, would do a great deal of damage in the garden and the field; they also feed their young upon butterflies and other winged insects, each of which, if suffered to live, would be productive of several hundreds of caterpillars. It has been calculated, that a single pair of sparrows will, during the time they are feeding their young,

bring to the nest about four thousand caterpillars every week."

"Four thousand!" said Alfred, "why they are indeed useful, for I know what harm caterpillars do. Papa, I shall like the sparrow better for the future; but do all birds feed upon insects?"

"Oh! no; the great vulture of Egypt destroys the eggs and young of crocodiles, which otherwise would increase so as to become intolerable; the bittern, which we used to see in Lincolnshire, feeds upon frogs, mice, and other animals; the heron subsists chiefly on fish, and the——"

"Stop, dear Papa, how can a bird catch fish? it has no fishing-rod."

"They have no fishing-rods certainly," said his Papa, laughing, "but they are famous fishers notwithstanding. They wade into the water, and seize the fish as they pass by; and will sometimes stand for hours motionless in the water, waiting for their prey. It has been said, that a single heron will destroy nearly three thousand carp in a year."

"I remember to have seen a heron," said Al-

fred; "now, Papa, will you tell me something about the beautiful kingfisher?"

Before his father could reply, a servant entered with a note, and said there was a box in the hall, which a boy had left, saying there was no answer required. As soon as he had read the note, Alfred's Papa smiled, and told him to go into the hall and fetch the box. When Alfred had brought it, he desired him to open it. The box was corded, and Alfred was very impatient to know what could be inside of it, which made his Papa smile so much, and look so pleased; but he had read the story of "Waste not, want not," and he, therefore, carefully and patiently untied the difficult knots, and the box was opened.

"Oh! Papa, here is a beautiful boat!" he exclaimed, as he took from it a gaily painted little vessel, rather larger than the one which he had lost; "only look how nicely it is finished; and see," he continued, as his eyes sparkled with pleasure, "how many pretty flags it has, and how beautifully it is rigged. Oh! here is the name under the figure-head, 'The Revenge;' can this lovely boat be for me, Papa?"

“ Yes, my love, it is for you. Come here, and I will read this note, which tells from whom it comes.”

The note was directed to Alfred, and was as follows :—

“ SIR,—We are very sorry for the injury we did you in destroying your little boat last night, and entreat your forgiveness. Your generous conduct to us afterwards, in returning our kite, when you might have torn it to pieces, has taught us a lesson of kindness which I hope we may never forget. Pray, accept from us the little vessel which accompanies this, and which we beg you will call ‘ The Revenge,’ in remembrance of your kind and forgiving disposition.”

“ Now, Alfred,” said his father, perceiving the thoughtful air of his little boy, “ you see the effect your conduct has produced ; and I trust, my dear child, that you have also learned a lesson which you will remember to the end of your life. The boys are not only sorry for their fault, but they feel towards you respect and

love; and, quite contrary to your expectations, have given you a boat better than the one they destroyed. Fetch the Bible here, and read the last verse but one of the twelfth of Romans."

Alfred read the following verse:—

"Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

"Yes; now, Alfred, you see the meaning of that passage; you have by returning good for evil, melted down your enemies into love and kindness, and I hope you will act thus through life. Come, we will go and write them an assurance of your complete forgiveness."

When Frederick came home in the evening, he was much pleased to hear that Alfred had received so pretty a boat; for he was very fond of his little brother, and being older and wiser than he was, he endeavoured always to set him a good example. The evening was very wet, so that they could not take their usual walk; and after tea, Alfred did not forget to tell Frederick of the coral rocks in the Red Sea. He was much surprised, and said, he thought all

the ornaments of that kind, worn by ladies, were dug out of mines.

“No, my dear, not all,” said his father; “the most valuable of your Mamma’s ornaments are a set of pearls, which are found inside of those shells with which you have paved your grotto.”

“Pearls found in the oyster shell, dear Papa! How do they come there?”

“They are formed there, it is supposed, in consequence of some external injury which the shell has received.”

“But, Papa,” said Alfred, “we never find pearls, and we have eaten many oysters.”

“They are not to be found in all oysters,” replied his Papa. “Those pearls of your mother’s came from the island of Ceylon.”

“But are there no pearls ever found in England?”

“Yes, there are many found in the River Tay in Scotland, and in the Conway in Wales, and, indeed, in many parts of Britain; but the most valuable are procured from the Persian Gulf, and the Island of Ceylon.”

“What makes them so valuable?” said Frederick; “they can be easily obtained, can they not?”

“By no means,” said his Papa. “Those oysters lie at the bottom of the sea, and can only be procured by diving for them.”

“That must be very tedious work,” said Alfred, “for I suppose the divers can only bring up one or two at a time, for want of breath.”

“That would be tedious indeed, Alfred; but at each plunge they return with more than a hundred oysters, which they bring up in a bag fastened round their necks.”

“Oh! Papa,” said Frederick, “pray, tell us something about the divers of Ceylon.”

“The pearl fishery, my dear, always begins in the month of April, at which time a great number of boats, each containing a captain and twenty men, proceed to the banks where the oysters lie. Ten of these men row, and ten dive; five plunging at one time. Each diver goes down by a rope, with a stone at the end of it to make him sink; and he carries with him a knife to detach the oysters, and a bag to

put them in. As soon as they touch the ground, they gather the oysters as quickly as possible, and having filled their bag, they quit their hold of the rope with the stone, and pulling another which is held by the sailors above, they ascend again into the boat, and the other five divers go down."

"And how long can they remain without breathing, Papa?"

"About two minutes, and they descend forty or fifty times in a day."

"Now, Papa, for the pearls; how do they get the pearls out of the oyster?"

"When the oysters are taken out of the boats, they are placed in pits dug on the seashore, where they continue for ten days, till they are corrupt and dried. They are then opened, and the pearls are found inside. One oyster sometimes contains many pearls, and sometimes a hundred have been opened without finding one of value."

"What is done next, Papa?"

"The pearls are first sorted according to their size; then cleaned, polished, and bored,

and washed in salt and water to remove any stains."

"Why are they bored?" asked Alfred.

"To arrange them on strings, and this is the most difficult task of the pearl merchant, as he is obliged to be very particular in classing them according to their value."

"What is a pearl necklace worth, Papa?"

"A handsome necklace of pearls, smaller than large peas, is worth from two to three hundred pounds; smaller pearls do not cost so much. The king of Persia has a pearl so large and pure, as to have been valued at one hundred and ten thousand pounds."

"Then, Papa, surely these buttons cannot be pearl though we call them so, for Mamma said they only cost a halfpenny apiece."

"No, my love, they are mother-of-pearl, which is the inner part of the shell of the pearl oyster; and which is made into snuff-boxes, buttons, counters, and other articles."

"I like what you have told us very much, dear Papa," said little Alfred, as he took his favourite seat on his father's knee. "Can you

tell us of any thing else which Mamma wears, and which is difficult to be procured?"

"Let me see," said his Papa; "why, yes, there is something she wears which I heard you admiring the other day, and which came from a bird in the south of Africa."

"From a bird," said Alfred, "then it must be feathers. Oh! I know, you mean her ostrich feathers. But are they difficult to be obtained?"

"Very. The ostrich can run so fast, and see so far, that it is very difficult to get within shot of him."

"But if those who hunt them were to mount a horse, and gallop as fast as they could, would they not overtake him then?"

"No; they run faster than the swiftest horse can gallop. The only way is, for several horsemen to go on different sides of a large plain, and hunt them backwards and forwards till their strength is exhausted, and they can run no more."

"But they can fly, I suppose?"

"No, their wings are too short for flight, but

they use them so as greatly to assist their speed. These ostriches are very tall, Alfred, taller than Papa; and a blow from the wing or foot of one of them is able to break a man's leg."

"What large birds they must be, Papa."

"They are, my dear. An ostrich egg is so large, as to be equal in its contents to twenty-four of the domestic hen; and it is the practice of these birds when they find their nests have been discovered, to break all the eggs, and leave it entirely."

"Then do the natives search for their nests, Papa?"

"Yes; the eggs are considered a delicacy; and the shells are so thick as to be cut by the Hottentots into necklaces and bracelets, whilst the Egyptians suspend them as ornaments to the roofs of their houses."

"Who are the Hottentots?" asked Alfred.

"The natives of the south of Africa," said his Papa. "The beautiful feathers which are so prized in Europe are found only on the wings of the male ostrich. But there is the

gardener going home from work, I must leave you and the ostriches, and go and speak to him."

"Oh! I am so sorry Papa is obliged to leave us," said Alfred, when his father was gone. "What can we do, Fred? it is too dark to read, and I do not like to sit idle."

"Perhaps Mamma can tell us something during Papa's absence," said Frederick; "can you, dear Mamma, you generally have some nice little story ready for a leisure minute?"

His mother smiled. "You are very fond of a story, Fred; and as you were so kind to-day in assisting your little brother in his difficult sum, when I know you were anxious to go to your drawing-book, I will try to remember one for you. People who are good-natured to others, generally find others disposed to be good-natured to them. You have just been talking of Africa, I will tell you an anecdote I met with, in reading Park's travels in that country."

Frederick and Alfred having seated themselves by her side, their Mamma related the following anecdote.

“ A party of armed Moors having made an attack on the flocks of a village, at which Mr Park was stopping, a boy was mortally wounded in the fight. The natives placed him on horse-back and conducted him home ; whilst his mother preceded the mournful group, proclaiming the excellent qualities of her son, and, by her clasped hands and streaming eyes, discovered the inward bitterness of her soul. The quality for which she chiefly praised the boy, formed of itself an epitaph so noble, that though he was a poor little heathen, any child in Britain might be proud of it. ‘ He never,’ she said with pathetic energy, ‘ never, never told a lie.’ I hope I may ever be able to say the same of my own dear boys,” continued the affectionate mother, “ I have never yet found you telling me an untruth, and I trust I never may. Let nothing ever tempt you to tell a lie : it is not only mean and contemptible, but exceedingly sinful to do so. Frederick, you have heard of the famous George Washington the American patriot ?”

“ Oh ! yes, Mamma ; I was reading about him only yesterday.”

“ Well ; when Washington was a little boy about your age, Alfred, his father had a favourite cherry tree, which he valued very much. One day George had a hatchet given him, and being anxious to try this new plaything, he went about hacking all the trees in the garden, not passing by even the cherry tree, without considering the mischief he was doing. When his father came home, he went as usual to visit his favourite tree, but to his surprise and grief saw that it was quite ruined. He was very much vexed, and going to the servants, inquired who had done the mischief, but they did not know ; and he was quite at a loss who the offender could be, when on seeing George come in, with his hatchet in his hand, he asked him if he could tell him who had spoiled his cherry tree. George saw his father was much vexed, and he expected he should be severely punished, but he disdained to tell a lie, and therefore replied, his cheeks glowing with crimson as he spoke.

‘ Papa, I cannot tell a lie, it was I who did it ; I spoiled your cherry tree with this hatchet.’

‘ My noble boy !’ said his father, catching

him up in his arms, ' you are forgiven ; I would rather lose a hundred cherry trees, were their blossoms of silver, and their fruit of gold, than that my son should dare to tell a lie.' ”

“ That is a very pretty story, Mamma,” said Alfred. “ Did you say George grew up to be a celebrated man ? ”

“ He did, my love ; and through life preserved his integrity and love of truth. But it is your bed-time my dears ; and here comes Papa, looking surprised to see you still up.”

“ Oh ! Papa,” said Alfred, running to him, “ I have a great favour to ask you. May Fred and I go down to the pool to-morrow morning before breakfast, and launch ‘ the Revenge ? ’ ”

“ That is a favour indeed,” replied his Papa, “ I am afraid I cannot grant that request ; you will be drowned in the Menai, I fear, and what should I do without my boys.”

“ But Papa, if we promise you we will not go near the Menai, and no farther than the pool, will you let us go ? ”

“ If I was sure of that, I might give you leave perhaps, but may I depend upon you ? ”

“You may indeed Papa; we will not break our promise.”

“Well, I will trust to your honour; you may go; but remember, not beyond the pool, and not near the Menai.”

“Thank you, thank you, dear Papa,” exclaimed the boys; and affectionately kissing their kind parents, Frederick and Alfred retired to rest.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Well Alfred,” said his Papa, as he met his little boy the next morning at breakfast, “ how did ‘ the Revenge ’ behave herself ? ”

“ Beautifully, dear Papa ; she is an excellent boat, and you cannot think how pretty she looks in the water with all her sails set.”

“ And you see, Papa, you may depend on us,” said Frederick. “ I assure you we did not go beyond the pool or near the Menai ; you will trust us again, will you not ? ”

“ I will my dear boy ; when you say you will not do a thing, I can depend on you, because I have never yet found you break your word.”

“ Dalton and some of my school-fellows were down there,” said Frederick, “ and they admired Alfred’s boat so much, and as they

asked why it was called 'the Revenge,' I told them the reason."

"What were those pretty lines which Dalton repeated when he saw the boat?" said Alfred.

"I cannot remember them all," replied Frederick, "but one verse was,

' She danced upon the waters,
Beneath the morning sun,
Of all old ocean's daughters
The very fairest one.

' A shower of spray before her,
A silvery wake behind,
A cloud of canvass o'er her,
She sprang before the wind.'

"And I suppose in your eyes, my Alfred, your little boat is the very fairest of all boats; but Fred, if you have no objection, you may go and ask for a holiday. The gentleman whose purse Alfred found, and who promised to take you in his boat to Puffin Island, has sent to say he purposes going there to day, and has requested that I will accompany you."

"Oh! that is too delightful!" said Frederick,

and snatching up his hat, he darted across the lawn to obtain the required permission, and was out of sight in an instant.

He soon returned with his request granted, and the delighted boys having equipped themselves for the expedition, went, at the appointed hour, with their Papa to the beach at Beaumaris, and found the gentleman had just arrived. He was quite pleased to see their happy little faces, and welcoming them to his boat, in a short time they set sail. It was a very fine day, and they enjoyed themselves exceedingly; they were quite surprised when they returned home in the evening to find it was nine o'clock; the day had seemed so short to them.

“Oh! dear Mamma,” said Alfred, running in, “we have had such a delightful day! Papa and Mr Stewart shot so many puffins and sea-gulls, and we have brought home one puffin, and Papa says he will have it stuffed, and it shall look as if it was alive again.”

“And is it not curious,” said Frederick; “the sea-gulls all live on one side of the island,

and the puffins keep possession of the other side?"

"Very curious," said his Mamma; "I suppose they are afraid they shall quarrel if they live together; but what have you there, Fred?"

"Two puffins' eggs, Mamma, which I found. The puffins make their nests in holes in the ground, and there is never more than one egg found in each nest; and Mr Stewart said that the young puffins were taken before they were quite fledged, and having been pickled, were sold as a delicacy."

"And Mamma," said Alfred, "we had our dinner on a rock, and the waves were dashing at our feet; it was so pleasant; and after dinner Mr Stewart read us a very pretty story about a lion; his little boy went with us, he is about Fred's age, but not nearly so good tempered, is he, Papa?"

"No, my dear, he is not, and I was very sorry to observe the undutiful way in which he behaved to his father. I do not like in general to speak of another person's faults

but, as I know you observed his bad conduct, I think it right to say a word on the subject."

"In what way did he behave?" asked Alfred's Mamma.

"In a very naughty and disagreeable way, my dear. He had none of that cheerful and willing obedience which is so pleasing in a child. When we arrived at the island, he wished to bathe; but Mr Stewart not knowing much of the beach, did not think it safe to allow him to do so. Instead of yielding to his father's wishes, George replied, 'Why, Papa, there can be no danger, my cousin Henry bathed here a little time ago.'"

'Your cousin is much older than you are,' said his Papa; 'besides he can swim.'

'Well; but, Papa, I wish you would let me, I am so warm.'

'That is another reason why you should not, George; it is very dangerous to bathe whilst you are so warm.'

'Oh! Papa, do give me leave; I have not bathed for so long.'

‘ No, George, I cannot allow it; you can bathe at home, but not here.’

‘ Why not, Papa?’

‘ I have told you the reason,’ said his father, ‘ so say no more about it.’

“ But George persisted in urging his request, till Mr Stewart became quite angry, and desired him to hold his tongue. Again, after dinner, he took off his jacket, and lay down on the grass.”

‘ George, my dear,’ said his father, ‘ put on your jacket, it rained heavily last night, and the grass is a little damp still.’

‘ Oh! Papa,’ said George, ‘ it is not at all damp here, I shall not take cold.’

‘ Remember, George, you are not long recovered from a severe cold, taken in much the same way.’

‘ Oh! it had been raining all the morning that day,’ replied George, ‘ and that is very different.’

‘ Yes, but you took that cold in consequence of your disobedience. Rise, and fetch your jacket.’

‘ My jacket is out on that rock, Papa ; I am sure it is not worth while to go and fetch it.’

‘ Is it not worth while to prevent an illness ?’ said his father ; ‘ you know your mother was half afraid to let you come.’

‘ Oh ! Mamma is always anxious and afraid,’ continued the disobedient boy ; ‘ I never saw any one like her.’

‘ I am sure you give her cause enough for anxiety,’ said his father, with a sigh. ‘ Come, come, George, do as you are desired.’

‘ What is the use of it, Papa ? I am so much more comfortable without that hot jacket.’

“ And so he would have gone on for an hour, had not his father insisted on his obedience ; and very slowly and reluctantly George at last fetched his jacket, but not till he had been long enough without it, to take a very bad cold.”

“ A sad account, indeed ! You see, my dear boys, how disagreeable disobedience makes a child ; and I hope that whenever you feel inclined to prefer your own will to that of your parents, you may think of George Stewart, and the pain he must have caused his kind father this day.”

“Mamma,” said Alfred, “I should think George had never learned the fifth commandment; do you think he would behave so if he had?”

“He has most likely learned it, Alfred; though I should fear he has never thought about it, nor considered how hateful in the sight of God, is a disobedient child. George Stewart does not now care for his mother’s anxiety about him; but the time will come when he will shed bitter bitter tears at the remembrance of his conduct towards her; and should he live to be a man and have children of his own, they will in all probability cause him to feel some of the pain and sorrow he now gives his father. All sins will meet with their punishment hereafter; but disobedience, it has been often remarked, finds it in this world, as well as in the world to come. Good-night, my darlings, it is late; but forget not Him who has preserved you this day on the watery deep, and brought you home again in health and safety.”

A few days after their excursion to Puffin Island, Frederick and Alfred finished making

their grotto. They had taken much pains in the arrangement of the shells and stones, and with the assistance of the gardener had trained honeysuckle and clematis round the pillars, and made it look very pretty. They now came to their Mamma, and requested that she would allow tea to be carried there that evening, and that she and their Papa would favour them with their company.

“What does your Papa say, my dears? If he has no objection, I have none.”

The boys turned their inquiring eyes toward their father, who was busily engaged in writing.

“Will you, dear Papa?” said little Alfred, putting his arms round his father’s neck, “will you drink tea in the grotto to-night?”

“In the grotto?” said his Papa, looking up, “no, my dear, I cannot, to-night. I shall be very busy all the evening, but you and your Mamma can take tea there.”

“Oh! no,” exclaimed both the boys, “I am sure we should none of us enjoy ourselves without you; we will wait till to-morrow evening, when, perhaps, you will not be so busy.”

“ Frederick, my love,” said his Mamma, “ I wish that you and Alfred would go to that poor woman who lives in the cottage on the hill ; I want to send her some money.”

“ What, to the poor widow with four young children ? O yes, I will go ; where is the money, Mamma ?”

“ Here, my love, give her this ; and tell her to send down her eldest girl to me to-morrow morning, and I will give her some work to do.”

“ I will, Mamma,” and the little boys departed.

“ Well, my dears,” said their Mamma, as her little boys joined her at the tea table, “ had you a pleasant walk ?”

“ Very pleasant, dear Mamma ; we returned home by a road which was new to us, and we found some petrifications.”

“ I am so glad I took the money to the poor woman, Mamma,” said Frederick ; “ for, when we arrived at the cottage, she had nothing in the house to eat, and she said she really did not know where she could look for help. She was so grateful for your kindness.”

“ And the poor little children,” said Alfred,

“ were all crying for food when we went in ; and they actually screamed with delight, when their mother sent one of them out to buy a loaf. I am very glad we went.”

“ And I shall be very glad you went,” said his Mamma, “ if it has made you feel for the miseries of others. You, both of you, seem to pity the poor woman ; but can you give her nothing but your pity ?”

“ Indeed, Mamma,” said Alfred, “ I am very sorry for her, but I do not see what I can do. Can you tell me of any way in which I could assist her ?”

“ Have you not threepence weekly, for pocket money ?”

“ I have, but what would that be ? I will gladly give it to her, but so little cannot be of any use.”

“ Yes, Alfred, still less will be of use. I will only ask a penny a week from each of you for this poor widow and her family ; are you willing to give it ?”

“ Oh ! yes, Mamma !” cried the boys, “ but a penny a week is very little.”

“It is but little, my dears, but you cannot afford to give more at present; and little as it is, it will be of service to the poor woman. The money box shall be kept in the library, and when any of your young companions come to see you, you can ask them if they have a stray penny for it. We will not open it till Christmas, and then you shall take the contents to the cottage.”

“Oh! that will be a nice plan,” said Alfred; “I have one penny left, I will go and fetch the money box.”

“Here, Alfred,” said Frederick, when he returned, “I have twopence left; it shall go into the box as a beginning.”

“But Fred, you were going to buy two new arrows with that.”

“I was, but I will make some instead; to be sure they will not be so good as those we buy, but I will make them do.”

“And when you are shooting with them, Fred,” said his father, “remember that the twopence, with which you would have bought new ones, has contributed to feed those starving

children, and the clumsy appearance of the arrows will give you pleasure. Here Alfred, my boy, bring the box this way."

"Oh Fred! Papa has put five shillings in, and Mamma half a crown. Are we not rich? how pleased the poor woman will be at Christmas. Here come the candles; now I can see what is written on the cover of the box;— 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.' That is a verse from the Bible, Mamma, is it not?"

"It is, my dear, I hope you will remember it."

"Mamma," said Frederick, after he had been drawing for some time, "what is the tallow of which candles are made?"

"The fat of sheep and oxen, love, which is melted in water, boiled several times, and cleared with alum."

"And how do they make them so round and smooth?" asked Alfred.

"The boiling tallow is poured into leaden moulds, in the middle of which cotton has been placed to form the wick, and it is then

left till it becomes hard. Common candles are made by tying the wicks on a long stick, and dipping them several times in the hot tallow, till they are of the size required."

"Is there not a tree called the tallow tree?" said Frederick.

"Yes, it is a native of China, and bears a fruit enclosed in a husk, like that of the chestnut."

"And do the Chinese make candles of any part of this tree, Mamma?"

"They do; by melting the kernels which the husk contains, and adding a little oil: they are superior to our tallow candles, but inferior to wax."

"Oh! Papa," exclaimed Alfred, "I have made one of the towers of my castle so crooked; will you lend me a piece of Indian rubber to rub it out before it falls down? Thank you, Papa; how useful Indian rubber is!"

"It is," said his father; "and that piece shall be yours, Alfred, if you can tell me what it is, and from whence it comes."

"This large piece! Oh! thank you, dear

Papa. I think I know what it is, but I am afraid I forget from what country it comes."

"Well, what is it?"

"It is the dried juice of a large tree growing in—in—Oh! I remember now, in South America. The Indians make incisions in the tree, and the juice, which is of a milk white colour, oozes out."

"Good, boy; but how is it converted into the state in which we use it?"

"They receive it in clay moulds as it flows from the tree, and these are hung up in smoke, till the rubber gradually hardens, and is fit for use. The Indians make it into bottles, boots, and other articles, and water cannot penetrate it."

"Very well remembered, Alfred; the Indian rubber is fairly yours. Now, Fred, you have been talking of candles, I will give you this new pencil, if you will tell me from whence that brilliant light is procured, which is now so much used in lamps, instead of oil?"

"You mean gas, Papa. I must give up the pencil, I fear, for indeed I do not know what it is; will you tell me?"

“ Gas, my dear, is a sort of inflammable air, found in various substances, but chiefly in coal ; and which, on a candle being applied to it, produces a brilliant light. You know what cannel coal is ? ”

“ Oh yes ! that coal which gives such a very bright light. Is gas made from that ? ”

“ Yes ; the best gas is procured from cannel coal. This inflammable air or gas, is conveyed from the reservoir in which it is made, in iron pipes laid along the streets, under ground ; and smaller pipes convey it into the lamp-posts and houses. But I will give you one more chance for the pencil : are there more than one kind of oil ? ”

“ Yes, Papa, there are two or three different kinds. There is train oil, which is the fat of whales, and is used in lamps ; there is lintseed oil, which is pressed from the seed and pods of flax, and is useful in medicine, and the arts ; there is neats' foot oil, procured from the feet of oxen, and used for preparing and softening leather ; and there is sweet or olive oil, which is procured from olives.”

“ Take the pencil, Fred. I must think of more puzzling questions for to-morrow evening ; and now go on with your castles, whilst I finish this letter.”

CHAPTER V.

THE next evening, the little party assembled at tea in the grotto, and Frederick and Alfred were the happiest of the happy. They had gathered nosegays of wild flowers, and tastefully arranged them ; and their little gardens had afforded them a beautiful bouquet for the tea-table. Their father had invited their school-fellow Dalton to join them, and their mother had plentifully supplied them with fruit and cakes. All were pleased and happy ; even the little birds in the trees around them seemed to sing more sweetly and joyously than usual ; and Frederick and Alfred felt very glad that they had never been so cruel as to rob the nests of the little songsters, who now repaid them with their grateful melody.



The Grotto

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“Why, Frederick,” said Dalton, as the tea things were being removed, “you have made a very pretty grotto; I wish I was as clever.”

“Oh, I did not do it all myself,” said Frederick; “Papa was so kind as to assist us in the most difficult parts; the carpenter made the seats; and the gardener helped us to train the flowers round the pillars.”

“And what do you suppose made us first think of making a grotto?” said Alfred; “but you would never guess, so I will tell you. Papa had been giving us an account of the ingenious little beavers, who build their houses so cleverly; and Fred and I thought that, if such little animals could make such nice strong houses, we surely might contrive to make a grotto.”

“And did you meet with any difficulties, Fred?”

“Many, I assure you; but we were determined to persevere.”

“Papa,” said Alfred, “how much I should like to go to America, and see the beavers building their houses! I am sure I should never be tired of watching them cutting the trees down

with their teeth, dragging them along the water, and carrying the mud and stones in their paws. Is it not cruel for people to hunt them?"

"Why, my dear boy," said his father, "I do not know that we can call it cruel, as animals were created for the use of man; and the beaver trade is a source of considerable profit to those employed in it. You know that the fur of the beaver is manufactured into hats; that its skin is made into gloves; the American Indians are partial to the flesh; and they use its teeth for cutting and hollowing wood. They are certainly very interesting creatures, and I have no doubt you would be amused in watching them. Do you know where Hudson's Bay is?"

"Yes, Papa; in the northern part of North America."

"Well, a gentleman who had resided for some time in the Hudson's Bay country, saw, one day as he was out shooting, five young beavers sporting in the water; leaping upon the trunk of a tree, pushing one another off, and playing a thousand interesting tricks. He approached

softly, concealed by the bushes, and prepared to fire upon the unsuspecting creatures; but a nearer approach discovered to him such a similitude between their gestures and the infantile caresses of his own children, that he threw aside his gun, and left them unmolested."

"I am glad he did not kill them," said Alfred. "Papa, I wonder if we could teach our dog Neptune to build himself a house, as the beavers do."

"No, my dear, I should not think you could. It is the extraordinary instinct of the beaver, which enables it to construct its dwelling; Neptune is clever in a different way. See! even now he knows we are talking of him. Poor old Neptune! you did what no beaver could have done, when you rescued my boy from a watery grave."

Neptune wagged his tail, and appeared highly pleased with the caresses bestowed on him. He was a fine Newfoundland dog, and a general favourite in the family, as indeed he deserved to be; for, when Alfred was about three years of age, he had been saved from drowning by the

sagacity of the faithful creature, which plunged into the water to his assistance, and carried him safe to shore.

“My father gave me a very interesting account of the dogs of the Great St Bernard, when he returned from Switzerland,” said Dalton. “He told me he had seen one of those noble animals which was decorated with a medal, in commemoration of his having saved the lives of twenty two persons, who but for his sagacity must have perished.”

“Oh! Dalton,” said Alfred, “do tell me something about them,”

“There is a convent situated near the top of the mountain called the Great St Bernard, not far from one of the most dangerous passes of the Alps. Amongst those mountains the traveller is often overtaken by the most severe weather, even after days of cloudless beauty. A storm comes suddenly on; the roads are rendered impassable by the snow; and the avalanches, which are immense masses of snow or ice, are swept into the valleys, carrying trees and crags of rock before them. The hospitable

monks of the convent open their doors to every stranger who presents himself, and their rooms are crowded with the cold, the weary, and the benighted. But their attention to the distressed does not end here. They devote themselves to the dangerous task of searching for those unhappy persons who have been overtaken by the storm, and who would perish but for their charitable succour. In this they are remarkably assisted by the noble and sagacious dogs in their establishment. The unfortunate traveller who has lost his way, and is benumbed with cold, quite exhausted sinks upon the ground, and the snow soon covers him from human sight. But though the sufferer may lie ten feet beneath the snow, the keen scent of the dogs will discover him. They scratch away the snow with their feet, and set up a loud and solemn howl, which brings the monks to their assistance. One of the dogs always carries a flask of spirits tied round his neck, for the use of the fainting man; and another has a cloak tied on his back, with which to cover him."

"They are indeed useful and noble creatures,"

said Frederick. "I remember seeing a print of one of them, which, having found a child whose mother had been destroyed by an avalanche, induced the poor boy to mount upon his back, and thus carried him to the gate of the convent."

"Papa," said Alfred, "do you really think dogs understand what we say, when we are not speaking to them?"

"They certainly do sometimes, my dear. I remember to have read an instance of this kind, which is very remarkable. A mongrel, a great favourite in a farm house, was standing by, whilst his mistress was washing some of her children. Upon asking a boy whom she had just dressed, to bring his sister's clothes from the next room, he pouted and hesitated. 'Oh then,' said his mother, 'Mungo will fetch them.' She said this by way of reproach to the boy, for Mungo had not been accustomed to fetch and carry. But Mungo was intelligent and obedient, and without further command, he brought the child's frock to his astonished mistress."

"He must have been a clever dog," said Alfred; "but how much ashamed the little boy

must have been! Can you think of another anecdote for us, dear Papa?"

"Another," said his Papa, smiling; "well, I think I remember one more, equally curious. A surgeon of Leeds, whilst out walking, found a little lame spaniel. He carried the poor animal home, bandaged up his leg, and after two or three days, turned him out. The dog returned to the surgeon's house every morning, till his leg was perfectly well. At the end of several months the spaniel again presented himself, in company with another dog, who had also been lamed; and he intimated, as well as piteous and intelligent looks could intimate, that he desired the same kind assistance to be rendered to his friend, as that which he had received himself."

"That was very curious indeed," said Alfred; "now, Papa, tell us something about the Esquimaux dogs."

"Not now, my dear; the carriage is at the door, and I am going to take you to see the cromlech, at Plas-Newyd; you can read an interesting account of the Esquimaux dogs in

the little book entitled 'The Menageries,' which is in the library ; and there you may also read the anecdotes I have told you."

"Can I, dear Papa? I will certainly read it to-morrow ; but what is the cromlech, which we are going to see?"

"It is a stone, Alfred ; but you will know more about it when we arrive at Plas-Newyd. Now, put on your hat, your Mamma is waiting."

It was a lovely evening, and the little party greatly enjoyed their drive to Plas-Newyd, the seat of the Marquis of Anglesey, beautifully situated on the banks of the Menai. The boys were much astonished when they saw the cromlech, which consisted of a very large stone supported by five others, forming an appearance something like an immense table. But they were still more astonished when their father told them that it had been there for many hundred years, and that no one knew for what purpose it was erected.

"But what is it supposed to have been intended for?" asked Dalton.

“It is generally supposed that those cromlechs, of which there are many in Britain, particularly in Anglesey, were erected by the Druids, as altars whereon they sacrificed human victims. Alfred, do you know who the Druids were?”

“Priests of Britain, Papa; whose principal residence was in this island, where they were held in great veneration by the people.”

“How many men must have been employed to have lifted up this large stone!” observed Frederick.

“It seems impossible that any number of men could have lifted it,” said his father; “but how, or in what manner it was raised, must be a matter of conjecture. Can you tell me Frederick, how the Druids were clothed when they sacrificed?”

“In long white garments. They placed on their heads the tiara, or sacred crown, a wreath of oak leaves, and a serpent’s egg, and they waved in their hands a magic wand.”

“How dreadful it was to sacrifice human victims,” said Alfred; “what became of the Druids, Papa?”

“Numbers of them were put to death by the Emperor Nero’s command, when Britain became a Roman province.”

“I am glad I did not live in those days, Papa,” said Alfred; “perhaps they would have sacrificed me; perhaps, on the very spot where we are now standing, poor little boys may have stood, waiting for their cruel death.”

“They may indeed, Alfred,” said his father. “How thankful ought we to be for the change which Christianity has wrought in this island! But come, we will walk through the grounds.”

“Papa,” said Frederick, after he had silently walked for some time by the side of his father, “what a long time those altars have stood! I think it is very interesting to see such things. When I am a man, I hope I shall be able to go and visit all those places where there are any remains of antiquity.”

“Where would you go, Fred?” asked Alfred.

“I would first go to the pyramids of Egypt, which, you know, are considered one of the seven wonders of the world; then I should like to go and visit the ruins of Pompeii, a town

which was overwhelmed by an eruption from Mount Vesuvius, more than seventeen hundred years ago, and has remained buried and undiscovered till lately ; and then I would go and spend months in viewing Rome, the ancient mistress of the world ;—oh ! I should have so many places to see.”

“ Stop, Fred,” said little Alfred, going to his brother, and taking him by the hand to secure his attention ; “ first, tell me what are the pyramids ? I have seen pictures of them, but I do not know much about them.”

“ Nor does any one,” replied Frederick ; “ they were erected so very, very long ago, that no one can tell who built them, or for what purpose they were intended.”

“ How strange ! are they very large, Fred ?”

“ Very ; the largest pyramid covers eleven acres of ground, and is five hundred feet in height.”

“ What a height ! why, it must look like a mountain ; but, Fred, what do people think about them, for many must have tried to find out what they were intended for ?”

“ I believe the general opinion is, that they were built by the children of Israel whilst in bondage in Egypt, and were intended as sepulchres, or burying places for the kings of that country ; but nothing certain can be known about them.”

“ Oh yes ! I remember reading, in the Bible, about the hard tasks which the Egyptians gave the children of Israel to do. I do not wonder now that you would like to visit the pyramids ; but you said they were one of the seven wonders of the world ; what were the other six wonders, Fred ?”

“ I will tell you their names, but you must ask Papa to talk to you about them, for he can do it so much better than I can. They were, the statue of Jupiter at Olympia ; the walls of Babylon ; the tomb of king Mausolus ; the temple of Diana at Ephesus ; the palace of Cyrus ; and the Colossus at Rhodes.”

“ Thank you, Fred ; I will learn them before I go to bed, and then I shall be wiser to-day than I was yesterday. Now, let us go and see what Dalton is looking at so earnestly.”

After wandering about the grounds of Plas-Newyd for some time, and again visiting the cromlech, Mr Howard and his family re-entered the carriage, and drove slowly homewards.

“ Well, Alfred,” said his father, “ do you think you shall dream to-night of the Druids ?”

“ Perhaps I may, Papa ; but I was just now thinking that to-morrow is the day for me to write grandmamma a letter, which I promised her I would do once in three months, and I shall have so much to tell her.”

“ Then I hope that your letter will be an amusing one, and that your grandmamma may find you are improved in your writing ; you know she always compares your letters.”

“ I think she will,” said Mrs Howard ; “ the last copy-book I saw had not a single blot in it, and it appeared to me that much pains had been taken with the writing.”

“ I am glad to hear it,” said his father ; “ that is the way to improve, my dear boy ; whatever you do, endeavour to do it well, and let each week find you wiser than the preceding one.”

But what is this crowd? some one is hurt, I fear. My good woman, is any thing the matter?"

"Oh! yes, Sir," replied the woman, "a poor little boy has been dreadfully hurt. He was driving his father's waggon, when the horses became unruly; and in endeavouring to stop them, he was knocked down, and the wheels went over him."

"Poor child! is he sensible?"

"No Sir; they have carried him home, and the doctor is sent for; but I fear he is almost killed."

"Who is the child?" asked Mrs Howard.

"He is Farmer Jenkins' eldest son, Ma'am, and as dutiful and good a boy as ever breathed. They live up there at the house among the trees."

"Oh! Papa," said Frederick, "it was one of Farmer Jenkins' sons who showed us the way home when we missed our road on the hill, and was so civil and attentive; perhaps it is the same boy, do let us go to the farm, and see if we can be of any use."

“We will, my dear,” said his father; “but I am afraid we can be of little help to the sufferer.”

On arriving at the farm, they found that the poor boy was still insensible. The doctor was with him, and in answer to their inquiries, told them he had been much hurt, but he hoped he was not in any immediate danger, though he should be able to speak more decidedly in the morning. Finding that they could be of no assistance, and not wishing to intrude longer upon the agitated and afflicted family, the little party now returned home.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Oh ! Papa,” said Alfred, as he met his parents the next morning at breakfast, “ you have been taking a walk, and you forgot to call your Alfred ; I should have been so pleased to have gone with you.”

“ I should have been glad of your company, my dear boy,” replied his father, as he affectionately kissed his rosy cheek ; “ but I have been to Farmer Jenkins’, and I thought the walk rather too far for you before breakfast.”

“ And how did you find his poor boy, Papa ?”

“ He is very ill, my dear ; the doctor seems to have but little hope of his recovery.”

“ Oh ! I am so sorry ; how old is he, Papa ?”

“About twelve, I should think. He suffers greatly, but not a murmur escapes his lips; and he told me he thought he was on his death-bed, and did not wish it otherwise, as it was the will of his heavenly Father.”

“Poor boy!” said Alfred, as his eyes filled with tears, “how I should like to see him.”

“I will take you and Frederick there this evening, Alfred,” said Mr Howard. “I should like you to witness the patience, the resignation, and the humility of this poor boy. I understand he has been for some years a regular attendant at the Sunday school, and his mother tells me no weather prevented his going there. She spoke in the highest terms of his dutiful and affectionate conduct, and said that he gave her nothing but pleasure and comfort.”

“And how does the poor woman bear this affliction?” asked Mrs Howard.

“She is in great distress, as you may well suppose; but little William endeavours to comfort her, and tells her it is sent in mercy.”

“Papa,” said Alfred, “do you think he would like some strawberries? I can pick a little

basketful from my garden, and take them to him this evening."

"He might perhaps eat a few, my dear boy ; you can take some at any rate, and try. Now let us go to the study ; I hope we shall be very industrious this morning."

Alfred said his lessons very well that day. He wished to please his kind parents, and determined to try to be as great a comfort to them as little William Jenkins was to his. Accordingly he took great pains in writing his copy, and doing his sums ; he was careful not to waste his time ; and when his Papa was called out of the room, to see a person who wished to speak with him, Alfred, instead of immediately leaving his books, and beginning to play, as some little boys would have done, sat quite still, and steadily learned his lesson in geography ; and he was rewarded for his attention and obedience by the approving smile which his dear Papa gave him when he returned ; and when the lessons had been said, and the books all put neatly away, the little boy, thanking his father for his kind instruc-

tions, ran with a step more bounding and joyous than that of the young fawn, to meet his brother on his return from school.

At the appointed hour in the evening, they were both ready to accompany their father to the farm,—Alfred with his little basket of strawberries, and Frederick with a small nosegay of the best flowers in his garden. On their arrival there, they found Mrs Jenkins alone ; her husband and two younger sons being in the fields. She had been weeping bitterly, and in answer to their inquiries, told them that her son was not in so much pain as he had been ; but that the doctor had just told her he could not live many hours. She could say no more, for her heart seemed ready to break. Mr Howard endeavoured to console her, reminding her that this heavy affliction came from the hands of a most merciful and all-wise God ; and that her child was early taken from a world of sin and sorrow, to the presence of that Saviour whom he had loved and served during his short life upon earth.

“ Oh ! Sir,” replied the poor woman, “ it is

that which comforts me. My precious child tells me he has no fear of death, that he is going to heaven, and is quite happy. Oh! it is a bitter trial; none but mothers, who have lost sons such as he is, can tell how bitter." But God's will be done! Perhaps Sir, you and the young gentlemen would like to walk in and see him; he is very grateful for all your kindness."

"I should like to talk with him a little, if he is able to bear it," said Mr Howard. "I have brought my little boys here, Mrs Jenkins, to show them how calmly and happily that child can meet death, whose faith is fixed on the Rock of Ages."

The poor mother opened the door for them to enter, but unable to control her emotion, she was obliged to leave the room. Her little boy was lying perfectly still, apparently asleep; but as Mr Howard and his sons approached the bed, he opened his eyes, and his pallid features brightening as he spoke, he exclaimed,

"Oh! Sir; this is very good of you; you are very kind; but I cannot thank you now."

"No thanks are necessary, my dear child,"

replied Mr Howard, as he took a seat by his bedside ; “ my little boys are very sorry to see you suffering so much, and they have brought you some fruit and flowers to refresh you.”

“ They are very kind,” said William, “ very kind ; I am so fond of flowers ; but I do not suffer much pain now, Sir ; I have been able to sleep a little this evening.”

“ You have been reading, I see,” said Mr Howard, as he took up a small but well worn Bible, which lay on the bed.

“ No, Sir, I cannot read now ; I shall never read again ; but I have been listening to my dear mother, O ! Sir ; I feel so thankful that I read that blessed book when I was in health ; for now, when I can do nothing else, I can think on its sweet promises.”

“ It was well indeed that you did, William ; but do you not expect to get well again ?”

“ No Sir ; I know that I am going to die.”

“ And are you not afraid to die ? You have been a great sinner ; are you not afraid to appear before that holy God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ?”

“ Oh ! I know I have been a sinner,” replied William, as his eyes filled with tears, “ a great sinner ; but I trust that the Lord Jesus has washed away my sins in his precious blood. He alone can save me.”

“ But do you think he *will* save you ?” said Mr Howard.

“ Yes Sir ;” he replied, his countenance immediately assuming an expression of hope and joy ; “ I know he will save me ; for he has said in his holy word, that he will cast out none that come to him. My Saviour has taken away the sting of death ; I am not afraid to die.”

“ And did you always feel as you do now, William ?”

“ Oh ! no, Sir ; I used to be afraid to think of dying ; I did not love my Saviour ; I used bad words ; I was walking on the broad road to destruction ; but

‘ Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God ;
He, to save my soul from danger ;
Interposed his precious blood.’ ”

Mr Howard did not speak, for the little boy seemed exhausted with talking, and closed his eyes. In a few minutes his mother came into the room, to see if he wanted any thing.

“Mother,” said William, as he observed the expression of bitter grief on her countenance; “dearest Mother, do not weep for me; I am happy, quite happy; and I shall soon be where sin and pain never come.”

“Oh! my dear, dear child,” exclaimed the afflicted mother, “how can I part with you? what shall I do when you are gone?”

“Say,” replied her son, as he took her hand, and affectionately kissed it; “say, dearest Mother, ‘the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’”

“Do you remember any of the texts you learned at the Sunday school?” asked Mr Howard, after a pause.

“Sometimes I do, Sir; but my head is very weak. I was thinking just as you came in, of the one I learned last Sunday, when I little thought it would be the last time I should ever go there. ‘For what is your life? It is even a vapour,

which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' Perhaps, Sir, you would be so kind as to read a chapter to me."

"With pleasure, my dear child;" replied Mr Howard; and taking the Bible, he read the fifth chapter of the Book of Revelations, whilst William listened with the deepest attention. When he had finished, Mr Howard rose to depart. "Farewell, my dear child," he said, as he affectionately embraced, for the last time, this young disciple of the Lord Jesus; "you will soon be singing that triumphant song yourself, and joining in the hallelujahs of the blessed. Farewell! trust in Jesus. He will never leave you, nor forsake you."

"He will not," replied William, as he lifted his hands and eyes to heaven, and a sweet smile played upon his countenance; "blessed Saviour! 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me?'" Then thanking Mr Howard and his sons for their kindness, he said, "Good bye, Sir, I shall thank you better in heaven.

Farewell," he said to Frederick and Alfred, who with tears streaming down their cheeks, had each taken a hand of the dying boy; "may God bless you for ever and ever! Choose Christ for your friend whilst you are in health, and he will not forsake you when you come to die. Farewell!"

Mr Howard and his sons walked for some distance on their road homewards in silence. They were all deeply engaged in thinking over the scene they had just witnessed. Frederick and Alfred had never before seen any one so near death as little William appeared to be; and their minds had been forcibly struck with the calm and happy expression of his countenance, as he declared his belief that Jesus had washed away his sins. Though he was evidently, at times, suffering much pain, he uttered not a murmuring word; all was gratitude, peace, and joy.

"Alfred, my love," said Mr Howard, "do you know how it is that that little boy is so happy and composed in the prospect of death?"

“He seems, Papa, to have a confident hope that he shall go to heaven when he dies.”

“Yes, my dear, and his hope is well founded. Early in life little William came to Jesus. He learned to know him, to love him, and to serve him; and he was enabled, through grace, to subdue his evil passions, to become a dutiful child, and an affectionate brother. Now, his Saviour is with him; he comforts him; he supports him; he speaks peace to his soul; and assures him, by his holy word, that his sins are forgiven him; that his pardon is sealed; and that an eternity of happiness is his portion and reward.”

“But, Papa, William called himself a great sinner.”

“And he is one, Alfred; though he has endeavoured to do his duty, he has yet fallen far short of it; but God knows the desire of the heart, and pardons him for the sake of that Saviour on whom he has trusted. Young as he is, you see, my dear boys, little William is not too young to die; and happy, happy will you be, if should death come to you as suddenly and as

unexpectedly as it has to him, you are so prepared to meet it."

When they arrived at home, the little boys gave their Mamma an account of what they had seen and heard. She was much affected, though she could not but rejoice that the last hours of the poor boy were so peaceful and happy. Frederick asked his Papa to send, the first thing the next morning, to inquire how he had passed the night. He did so; but when the messenger returned, he informed them that little William was no more. He had died during the night; and departed so peacefully, that his mother, who was watching by his side, knew not for some minutes that he had breathed his last. The last words he was heard to utter, were, "Precious Jesus, I am thine." Frederick and Alfred shed many tears when they heard of it; but their father reminded them that William was now happy, and beyond the reach of sin and sorrow. He then went over to the afflicted family, and offered them every consolation and assistance in his power.

The funeral of little William took place on

an early day in the ensuing week ; and Mr Howard and his two sons, as well as a great number of the neighbouring farmers and cottagers, who wished to pay this last mark of respect and affection to one whom they had all loved, followed him to the grave. He was borne thither by six of his companions at the Sunday school ; and as the earth hid from their view the remains of William Jenkins, young and poor as he was, there was scarcely a dry eye amongst the assemblage. As they returned home, at the close of the solemn and affecting service, each person had something to say in praise of the departed boy. The fathers spoke of his clever and industrious habits, and pointed him out to their sons as an example of filial obedience. The children lamented that he was gone, who had always been ready to assist them in their little difficulties, and was never cross or unkind ; whilst the mothers remembered that it was William who was ever the first to do an act of kindness, or to endeavour to assist the destitute and afflicted.

Alfred and Frederick returned slowly home,

thinking much of the occurrences of the last week; and though in a few days the usual light-hearted spirits of childhood returned to them, yet they frequently talked to each other of the useful life and happy death of William Jenkins, and endeavoured to imitate his example.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE ALFRED had a high sense of honour. He was never known to commit a mean action; or to do a thing when his parents were not looking at him, which he would have been ashamed for them to have known of. If his mother sent him into the garden to gather her some fruit, though like most other little boys he was very fond of strawberries and gooseberries, and though he could have eaten many without its being found out, yet Alfred never took one without his Mamma's permission. He always remembered that the eye of God was upon him, and that he has said in his holy word, "Thou shalt not steal." If his father said, "Alfred, you may take a walk, but do not go into the town," he was sure of being obeyed by his little son, even though the tempting spectacle

of Punch and Judy was being exhibited in the next street, to the delight and amusement of his young companions.

When he had the misfortune to break or injure anything, he always went immediately and confessed his fault; and when any mischief had been done in the house, and the question was asked Alfred if it was he who had done it, and he answered "No," he was always believed. There was no occasion for him to say, "Upon my word, I did not do it," or, "Upon my honour, I never touched it;" as he always spoke the truth, his word was never doubted.

One day his Papa and Mamma were going out to dinner. Alfred had not been very well in the morning, and as his mother left him, she said, "Alfred, my love, if your headach continues, I should wish you to take this medicine."

"Oh! dear Mamma," said Alfred, "my headach is almost gone now."

"I am glad to hear it, but if it does not quite leave you, I should wish you to take the dose. I am going out, but remember Alfred, I trust to your honour."

Alfred sat down, and began to read; the pain in his head was not so bad as it had been, and he hoped that in a short time it would be quite gone, as he did not at all like the idea of taking the bitter draught which stood on the table. In about two hours he shut his book; his head now pained him very little, and only at times; but still it was not quite well; and though he did not mind it at all himself, yet he remembered that his Mamma had trusted to his honour; therefore, taking the cup in his hand, the conscientious and dutiful little boy swallowed the unpleasant contents.

A few days afterwards he was walking with his Mamma when they met a large drove of cattle. Alfred and his Mother stood on one side of the road as they passed, for some of them looked rather wild; Mrs Howard expressed her surprise that there was no driver with them.

“ Oh! Mamma,” said little Alfred, “ there is the man some distance behind them. He trusted to their honour not to hurt us.”*

* This remark was actually made by a child of four years old.



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Mr Howard was always ready to answer any of the inquiries of his little son ; and Alfred had every day many to make. One evening whilst they were at tea, Alfred looked up earnestly in his Papa's face, and said,

“ Papa, how very much I have to learn ! I shall never be as clever as you are.”

“ You have a great deal to learn, Alfred,” replied his father ; “ but by acquiring a little knowledge every day, you may become clever in time. I was once as ignorant as you are, but I was anxious to receive instruction, and careful to remember what I learned. I shall always be glad to impart to you any useful knowledge, as I hope you have a wish to improve.”

“ Then may I ask you a few questions, dear Papa ? for there are many things even on this table, which I want to know about.”

“ Certainly, my dear ; as many as you please.”

“ Well, Papa, I was just thinking what the china could be, of which my tea-cup is made.”

“ It is made of a hard rocky stone like flint, which is ground to a fine powder, and then mixed with a sort of soft clay.”

“ And how is it made into different shapes, Papa ?”

“ It is mixed into a fine paste, after which it is moulded into shapes ; then painted, gilded, and lastly baked in a furnace.”

“ And why is it called china ?”

“ Because the first brought into Europe came from China ; and the Chinese still excel in the manufacture of it. There is a famous pagoda at Nankin, which has a coat of china all over it, and looks extremely beautiful.”

“ I know where Nankin is” said Alfred ; “ but what is a pagoda ?”

“ A pagoda is a Chinese place of worship.”

“ Cannot the English make china, Papa ?”

“ Oh yes ; the towns of Worcester and Derby are famed for their china manufactories.”

“ Were those beautiful china vases in the drawing-room made in England, Papa ?”

“ No ; that is called Sevres china, and is made in France. There is a celebrated porcelain or china manufactory at Dresden, a town on the river Elbe in Saxony.”

“ Thank you, Papa,” said Alfred ; “ now will

you answer me this question? You said the other day that the tea-tray was japanned; does that mean that it came from Japan?"

"No, Alfred; the tea-tray is made of prepared paper, varnished over, and painted; and it came from Birmingham."

"Then why is it called Japan?"

"Because the first pieces of this ware were brought to England from Japan; but we can now imitate their art of japanning so well, that we need not send so far for our trays and cabinets."

"Oh! Papa," said Frederick, "it was the Japanese who took Captain Golownin prisoner, about which there is such a pretty story in 'The Winter Evenings.' I do not much like them."

"They are a clever people, Fred, though they have some curious customs."

"Have they, Papa? do tell me some of them."

"They admire black teeth; they get on horseback on the right side, instead of the left, as we do; when they wish to show respect to

any one, they uncover their feet; and when they mourn for a friend, they wear white garments. They have an emperor, but his feet must never touch the ground; his hair, beard, or nails are never cut; and his food must all be dressed in new vessels."

"Then I am sure I should not like to be the Emperor of Japan," said Alfred; "now dear Papa, will you tell me of what glass is made?"

"Glass, my dear, is made of sand, flint, and an alkali."

"What is an alkali?"

"A kind of salt, found in the ashes of burnt vegetables. Frederick, tell your brother how the art of making glass was first discovered."

"Some Phœnician merchants having been shipwrecked on the coast of Syria, and finding plenty of the plant kali, made with it a fire on the ground; and the ashes of it mixing with the sand, produced, to their astonishment this beautiful substance."

"Then, Papa, what did people use for windows before the discovery of glass?"

"They principally used horn, such as you

see in lanterns. Glass windows were first known in England in the time of Henry the Second; and then they were considered a mark of such magnificence, as to be suitable only for palaces and churches."

"How well it was that the merchants made a fire," said Alfred; "many great discoveries have been made in that accidental manner, have they not?"

"Yes, several; the great copper mine in this island, which is the largest in Britain, and employs more than a thousand workmen, was accidentally discovered by digging in a garden."

"What is the use of copper, Papa?"

"It is used for a variety of purposes; such as sheathing the bottoms of ships; covering houses; engraving pictures upon, &c. Copper mixed with tin, makes bronze; and with a larger quantity of tin it forms bell-metal, of which bells are made. There are three kinds of copper; the common, the rose copper, and the virgin copper; they all come from the same mine, the difference between them is in the preparation. And now, Alfred, I am going to ask

you a question. I have told you of what the glass sugar bason is made; will you inform me from whence the sugar comes which it contains?"

"Sugar, Papa, is the juice of a beautiful plant growing in the West Indies, called the sugar cane. It is like a tall stick, with long green leaves, and a bunch of silver-coloured flowers at the top; the juice contained in the pith of the cane is carefully squeezed out, and boiled several times, and it undergoes many processes before it is brought to the state in which we use it."

"Is the sugar cane of any other use?"

"Yes; from the molasses, or coarse part of the sugar, rum is distilled; the tops of the canes and the leaves serve as food for cattle; and the remaining part for firewood."

"I am glad, my dear boy," said Mr Howard, "to see that you remember so well what you are told; it is a great encouragement to me to tell you more. Is there any thing else on the tea-table with the nature of which you are unacquainted?"

“ Yes, Papa, I wish to know what salt is, and where it comes from.”

“ There are three kinds of salt, my dear ; common salt, rock salt, and bay salt. Common salt and bay salt are extracted from sea water ; rock salt, which is of a finer sort, is dug out of mines.”

“ Papa,” said Frederick, “ is there not a very curious salt mine near Cracow, in Poland ?”

“ There is, my dear ; it is so large that it is supposed to contain salt sufficient to supply the wants of the whole world for several thousand years.”

“ But why is it curious ?” asked Alfred.

“ Because it is inhabited, and many of the persons employed in it seldom see the light of day. It likewise contains several chapels, which, with all their ornaments, are formed of rock-salt ; and when illuminated, the mine sparkles so as to be extremely beautiful. Near the town of Cardona in Spain, there is a mountain of salt five hundred feet in height. Alfred, can you tell me of any one who was changed into a pillar of salt ?”

“ Lot’s wife was, Papa, for turning to look back upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.”

“ Yes ; her looking back showed an inclination to go back to the wicked Cities of the Plain, from which God had commanded her to flee.”

“ Papa,” said Frederick, “ does not the Dead Sea now cover the place where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah used to stand ?”

“ It does ; and a most gloomy and fearful spectacle it presents. The Dead Sea lies in a hollow surrounded by high mountains ; and the water of it is so salt and bitter, that not only will no fish live in it, but no plants grow on the neighbouring shores. Well is it called the Dead Sea ; it is seldom visited, and no ship has floated over its waters since the cities were destroyed,—an awful monument of the justice of God. But it is almost your bed-time, and before you retire, I have a little present to make. Here, Fred,” continued Mr Howard, taking a little book from his desk, “ I have much pleasure in presenting you with this small volume of poems. I received to-day from your master such a satisfactory and pleasing account of

your general conduct and industrious habits at school, that I am delighted to reward you."

"Thank you, dearest Papa," replied Frederick, as his intelligent dark eyes sparkled with pleasure; "I hope I shall continue to improve, and become all you wish me to be."

"I hope you may, my dear boy," his father affectionately replied, "I hope you may; and I do not think you will disappoint me. Now, let us hear the first poem in your little book, I see it is called 'The Better Land.' Read it slowly and distinctly, that Alfred may understand you."

Frederick then read:—

"THE BETTER LAND.

Child.

I hear thee speak of a better land,
Thou call'st its children a happy band.
Mother; Oh! where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance through the myrtle boughs?

Mother.

Not there, not there, my child.

Child.

Is it where the feathery palm trees rise,
 And the date grows ripe under sunny skies?
 Or midst the green islands of glittering seas,
 Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
 And strange bright birds on their starry wings,
 Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?

Mother.

Not there, not there, my child.

Child.

Is it far away in some region old,
 Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold?
 Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
 And the diamond lights up the golden mine,
 And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand,
 Is it there, sweet mother, that better land?

Mother.

Not there, not there, my child.
 Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy,
 Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy,
 Dreams cannot picture a world so fair,
 Sorrow and death may not enter there.
 Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
 Far beyond the clouds, and beyond the tomb,
 It is there, it is there, my child!"

"How very pretty that is," said Alfred, when

his brother had finished reading. "I know where the feathery palm trees rise, Papa ; and where the pearl gleams forth, and where the coral strand is ; but will you be so kind as to tell me what is a fire-fly, and where it is that they glance through the myrtle boughs ?"

"A fire-fly, my dear, is a small fly found in Asia. Their bodies are luminous, and they are capable of emitting and concealing their light, as regularly as if it proceeded from a machine of the most exact contrivance. They are to be found on the banks of a river in Siam in great numbers, and in the night cause a most brilliant appearance. There is in South America a fly, called the lantern-fly, which emits such a very radiant light, that with the aid of one of them a person can see to read at night. This splendid insect is of service to travellers ; three or four of them, tied to the end of a stick, being frequently used at night instead of a torch. But we must say good night, my dear boys ; may we endeavour so to walk through this earthly wilderness, that we may one day have a joyful meeting in that better land !"

CHAPTER VIII.

“Come, Papa,” said Alfred, as he tapped early one morning at his father’s bed-room door, “it is almost six o’clock, and you know you promised to take me a walk this morning. Do not go to sleep again, Papa.”

“That is scarcely possible,” said his father laughing, “after the pains you have taken to awake me. Is it a fine day?”

“Oh yes; a lovely day; and I am quite ready.”

“Very well; take a run round the garden; I will not keep you long waiting.”

Alfred went to his garden; and, having pulled up a few weeds which had appeared during the night, he gathered a nosegay for his Mamma’s dressing table, which he was in the habit

of doing every morning as long as there were flowers in his garden. In a few minutes his Papa joined him.

“ Well, Alfred, which way shall we go? you must choose the walk you know, as you were up first.”

“ Then, Papa,” replied Alfred, smiling, “ do you not think it would be a pretty walk along the beach, now that the tide is high; and then we can return by the upper road.”

“ Yes, my little sailor; I think it would; we will go that way. But, Alfred, you are so fond of the sea, that I do not know how you would find amusement, were we to remove to an inland county.”

“ Oh! I should find amusement in other things then, I suppose; but I am very fond of the sea, and I wish I was old enough to be a sailor. Look now, Papa, at all those little vessels skimming over the surface of the water; and see how very calm it is, though it was so rough yesterday; there is scarcely now a wave to be seen. And then, Papa, when it is stormy weather how beautiful it is to see the waves

dashing against the rocks, and to hear the loud roaring noise they make ; and there are so many curious and wonderful creatures to be found in the great sea, are there not, Papa ?”

“ There are indeed, my dear. The sea, and all which it contains, must inspire every thinking mind with feelings of admiration and astonishment. But, Alfred, you must remember that a sailor’s life is one of hardship and danger, though he may visit foreign countries, and admire the wonders of the deep.”

“ True, Papa ; but there are dangers and difficulties every where. Do you remember the day you took me over that large man-of-war at Plymouth ? was it not a beautiful sight ? I thought I should never have been tired of looking at it. Papa, who was the first man that found out the way to build a ship ?”

“ The first vessel we read of as floating over the waters, is the ark of Noah, and since that time various have been the improvements in the art of ship-building. Our men-of-war are now like floating castles on the ocean.”

“ Do you know,” said Alfred, “ when ships first carried guns ?”

“ The first English ship, which carried guns, was one named ‘ The Great Harry,’ built by Henry the Seventh, the largest and most splendid vessel that had ever sailed upon the Atlantic; though most vessels at that time had but one mast, she had four; she carried eighty guns, and a crew of seven hundred men.”

“ What became of her ?”

“ Owing to the carelessness of her crew, she was burnt in the dock-yard at Woolwich.”

“ How unfortunate !” said Alfred; “ her fate was something like that of the Royal George, though not quite so bad, for I suppose her crew had time to escape; and the Royal George with its eight hundred men went down in an instant. Which was the first English ship that ever sailed round the world, Papa ?”

“ The Pelican, commanded by Sir Francis Drake, who lived in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This ship was, after its return, shown as a wonder for many years at Deptford; and when, through mere decay, it was broken up, a

chair was made of its planks, which is still preserved in the university of Oxford."

"Had the English never sailed round the world till the time of Queen Elizabeth?"

"No; America was only discovered in 1492, and Elizabeth began to reign in 1558; how many years was that after Columbus' voyage in the first ship that had ever crossed the broad Atlantic?"

"Sixty-six, Papa."

"Well, that was not long, considering the great difficulty Columbus had in persuading his crew to summon up courage to continue the voyage. Several times they threatened to return; they had never been so far from land before, and they knew not where they were going; and at last they became so mutinous, that Columbus was obliged to promise that, if he did not see land before the end of three days, he would abandon all further search."

"And did he discover land, Papa?"

"He did; and all his troubles and anxieties he considered as well repaid, when he beheld the island of San Salvador."

“ He must have been pleased, indeed. Was Columbus an Englishman ?”

“ No ; he was a native of Genoa, in Italy ; and his vessels were fitted out by Ferdinand and Isabella, the king and queen of Spain. Christopher Columbus affords us a striking example of patience and perseverance. Through a long life he experienced the most trying disappointments ; ridiculed by those who had not sense to comprehend his schemes, and slandered by others ; but he surmounted all obstacles, and to the surprise of every one, added a New World to the dominions of the king of Spain. Look ! look ! do you see the squirrel running across the road. How nimble the little creature is.”

“ Oh ! he is gone,” said Alfred, “ and I wanted to see him more closely. I suppose squirrels are very timid, Papa ; and we frightened him.”

“ They are in general timid ; but when compelled by want of provisions to quit their abodes, as is the case sometimes in Lapland, where they are found in large numbers, they seem to be suddenly endued with great courage. They

travel directly forwards, in amazing numbers, with a determination to overcome every difficulty; neither rocks, forests, nor even the broadest rivers can stop their progress."

"Not broad rivers! Papa. As they cannot swim, how do they contrive to cross the rivers?"

"The way in which they manage it is very wonderful. When they arrive at the edge of the water, and perceive its breadth, they return in a body to the nearest wood, in search of bark, which serves them instead of boats, and upon which they boldly commit themselves to the mercy of the waves; every squirrel sitting on its own vessel, and using its tail as a sail, to fan the air."

"Oh! Papa, how very curious they must look; and how do they get across?"

"Alas! though they set out with every circumstance in their favour, it frequently happens that the whole navy is shipwrecked; for the poor little mariners are not aware of their danger, and are so badly provided against a rough wave, or a slight gust of wind, that they are upset in a moment. The dead bodies are

thrown by thousands on the Lapland shore, where the inhabitants collect them for the sake of their flesh and skins."

"Poor little creatures!" said Alfred. "Is not the fur of the squirrel made into muffs and tip-pets, Papa?"

"It is; but it is not considered of much value."

"Which are the most valuable furs?"

"Those of the ermine, the sable, the chinchilla, and the bear."

"Would the great white bear live in England, if it were brought here, Papa?"

"I should think not very long; our climate would be too warm for him. There was one brought here from Greenland a few years ago, but it was very restless, very furious, and always in motion. To keep him tolerably comfortable, the keeper was frequently obliged to throw over him buckets full of cold water."

"Hunting the bear must be a dangerous employment; they are very revengeful, are they not?"

"Very. I was reading not long since of a

bear, which had been wounded by the crew of a boat, belonging to a ship in the whale fishery ; and, with a steady determination to be revenged, it ran along the ice towards the boat. On its way, it received a second shot, which rendered it still more furious ; it swam to the boat, and in attempting to get on board, received a blow with a hatchet from one of the crew, which cut off its fore-foot. Notwithstanding the loss of its foot, and its two other wounds, the animal continued to swim after them till they arrived at the ship ; when it immediately ascended the deck, and the crew having fled into the shrouds, would have been pursued there by the persevering bear, had not a shot from one of them laid him dead upon the deck."

"What a ferocious creature ! I wonder people will venture to hunt such animals."

"The hunting of the brown bear, the fur of which is much more valuable, is a most profitable pursuit, as every part of this animal is useful. Besides the fur, the leather made from its skin is so strong as to be used as harness for carriages ; its flesh is excellent, resembling pork ;

and the paws are considered as a great delicacy in Russia, even at the emperor's table. The hams are salted and dried, and sent to all parts of Europe; the oil which you use on your hair is made from its fat, and the shoulder blades are, in Kamtschatka, converted into sickles for cutting grass."

"They are useful, indeed," said Alfred; "now, Papa, tell me what kind of an animal is an ermine?"

"It is a beautiful little creature, found in the northern parts of Siberia, Russia, Norway, and Lapland. Its colour is in the summer brown; but that great Being, who cares for the meanest of his creatures, has wisely ordained that, on the approach of winter, these defenceless animals should change the colour of their skin to white, which being similar to the snow of those cold countries, they are not so easily seen by their enemies. The tips of their bushy tails are alone as black as jet."

"Why is their fur so highly valued?"

"Because, for many centuries, it has been used for lining the robes of our kings and

nobles ; and because it takes so many skins to make anything ; each little tail belongs to a whole skin."

"Of what fur is Mamma's muff made?"

"Of the sable, which is a small animal resembling the weasel, and found in Siberia, Kamtschatka, Russia, and the northern parts of America. The fur of the sable is much esteemed."

"How are they caught, Papa?"

"Generally in traps and snares, to avoid hurting their skins ; but they are very active little animals, living in holes under ground, and it is some trouble to catch them."

"I should like to join the sable hunters on one of their excursions," said Alfred ; "I should think they must lead a very pleasant life."

"Far from it, Alfred ; the life of a sable hunter is one of hardship, fatigue, and peril. The skins being in the highest perfection in the winter, the sables are chased only at that time ; and the intense cold, which the hunters have to endure, you can scarcely imagine. They have

to penetrate through large and trackless forests, from which they have no way of securing a retreat, but by marking the trees as they advance; and if they should lose the trace of these marks, they must inevitably perish. They have often to bear the extremes of cold and hunger; and instances have been mentioned of sable hunters, when their provisions have failed, being reduced to the necessity of tying thin boards tight to their stomachs, to lessen the cravings of hunger. Besides all this, they are in constant danger of being overwhelmed and lost in the snow."

"Poor men! I did not know they had so many hardships to endure. But what is the name of the other fur, which you said was valuable?"

"The fur of the chinchilla, which is a small animal, with a beautifully soft grey fur, found in South America."

"Are not tiger and leopard skins much esteemed?"

"Yes; the skin of the tiger is highly valued all over the east, particularly in China; that

of the beautiful but savage leopard, I believe you have seen."

"Yes; my uncle George has one. Is the skin of the lion of any use, Papa?"

"It formerly was considered as a badge of great honour; it now serves both as a mantle and a bed for many of the African tribes."

"The lion is not found in America, is it?"

"No; only in Asia and Africa."

"Is it possible to tame the lion, Papa?"

"It has been tamed, my dear. Mark Antony, the Roman general, was publicly drawn in his chariot by two of those noble creatures."

"Is it not said that the lion prefers the flesh of a Hottentot to any other creature?"

"Yes; and it seems to be a well established fact. There is an interesting anecdote related of the escape of one of them from a lion."

"Do tell it to me, dear Papa."

"A Hottentot, who was servant to a farmer, had endeavoured for some time, but in vain, to drive his master's cattle into a pool of water, when at length he espied a huge lion crouching in the midst of the pool. Terrified at so un-

expected a sight, he darted off, leaving the cattle to shift for themselves. The lion, however, disregarding the herd, made directly after the Hottentot, who, breathless and half dead with terror, scrambled up the first tree; at the same moment the lion made a spring at him, but missing his aim, fell to the ground. In surly silence the formidable creature walked round the tree, casting every now and then a dreadful look towards the poor Hottentot, who had crept behind some large birds nests to hide himself. After he had been silent and motionless for a length of time, he ventured to peep over the side of the nests, hoping that the lion had taken his departure, when to his great terror and astonishment, his eyes met those of the animal, to use his own expression, 'flashing fire at him.' In short, the lion laid himself down at the foot of the tree, and stirred not from the place for four and twenty hours. He then returned to the pool to quench his thirst, and the poor Hottentot scampered off to his home, which was about a mile distant, as fast as his feet could carry him. It afterwards

appeared that the persevering lion had returned to the tree, and from thence had traced the Hottentot by the scent, within three hundred paces of the house."

"What a dreadful fright the poor man must have been in," said Alfred; "I suppose that nothing frightens a lion?"

"Not so; it is well known that a firm and undaunted conduct will sometimes deter savage animals from attacking us; and that the more we appear to fear them, the bolder they become. A man, of the name of Jacob Kok, was one day walking over his grounds (situated somewhere in the south of Africa), with his gun loaded, when he unexpectedly encountered a lion; he fired but did not hit him. Alarmed and panic-struck at the failure, he instantly fled; but, being soon out of breath, and closely pursued by the lion, he made a stand, and presenting the butt end of his piece to his enemy, determined to sell his life as dearly as he could. This conduct had such an effect on the lion, that it likewise made a stand, and presently after laid himself down within a few paces of him, seem-

ingly quite unconcerned. In this critical and alarming situation they both remained for half an hour, when the lion rose up, and at first went away slowly, step by step, as if it had a mind to steal off; but as soon as it was at a greater distance, it bounded away at a great rate. So you see, even the king of beasts is sometimes overawed. But here comes Fred to tell us that his Latin and Greek have given him an appetite for his breakfast."

CHAPTER IX.

FREDERICK and Alfred did not forget the poor widow and her children, but every week each took from his small allowance a penny for the poor box. Not that they were *obliged* to give it, or that their Mamma always asked them if they had put it in; but these little boys had been early taught the duty of self-denial, and they now experienced a real pleasure in the practice of it. Often, when they had given to a wounded sailor, or a famished orphan, the penny intended to have been spent on a ball of string, or a bag of marbles, they had, in witnessing the gratitude and thankfulness of those whom they relieved, deeply felt the truth of that saying, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

Alfred had one evening taken the poor box into the drawing-room for contributions, and was remarking to his father that it felt so heavy, he thought many stray pennies must have found their way into it; when the sound of carriage wheels, and a loud knocking at the hall door, announced an arrival; and the next minute, Mrs Howard was clasped to the heart of her brother, to whom she was tenderly attached, and whom she had not seen for several years. He was accompanied by his son, a fine boy about the age of Alfred; and, after the affectionate greetings were over, Captain Talbot informed his sister, that, if she and Mr Howard had no objection, he would leave his boy with them for a few days, till he returned from Dublin, where he was going on business of importance.

“We shall be most happy,” replied Mrs Howard; “Alfred, I am sure, will be delighted with his company; but surely, my dear Arthur, you are not going to run away from us?”

“Indeed I must, Emily, run away this very

night; I am to be in Dublin to-morrow morning; but I hope to be able to stay a week with you on my return; I must become acquainted with my little nephews here. Fred I remember; but who is this, with his merry face?"

"That is Alfred; quite a young sailor, I assure you; and one who often talks of his uncle, Captain Talbot, and the good ship the Vanguard."

"A young sailor, is he? then we shall soon be good friends; but what have you there, Alfred? a Noah's ark?"

"No, uncle," said Alfred laughing; "it is a poor box, and quite ready for any contributions."

"And what is to be done with its contents?"

"Oh! they are to be given, at Christmas, to a poor widow with several children."

"A poor widow! then here is my mite," said the Captain, as he slipped a piece of gold into the box; "the widow and the fatherless have always a claim on my compassion."

Alfred warmly thanked his uncle for his generosity, and then hastened to assist his Mamma in picking up some work which had fallen on the ground. He was a very obliging little boy, and always attentive to his mother, and in this respect was a pattern to all little boys and girls. If he saw that she wanted a chair, he flew to reach it; if she dropped any thing, it was instantly picked up by her attentive little son; if she needed any thing, Alfred was ever ready with an offer of his services to procure it for her. Such words as "Oh! Mamma, it is so warm, I cannot go;" or, "Well, Mamma, I will fetch it for you, when I have finished making my kite," were never heard from Alfred. He loved his Mamma dearly, and was always pleased when he could be of use to her.

After taking a cup of coffee, Captain Talbot proceeded on his journey to Dublin, promising to return in a few days. Frederick and Alfred now did all in their power to amuse their cousin William, and to make him comfortable, and they succeeded; for he was an intelligent and good-humoured boy, though unfortunately, as an only

child, he had been allowed too much of his own way.

The next morning, Alfred took William into the garden, with which he was highly delighted. He admired the grotto very much, and asked more questions than Alfred could answer, about the shells and curiosities which it contained; but when he came to the little portion of ground which had been given to Alfred as his own, and which, now in neat order, bloomed with flowers, his admiration was very great. "And did you really sow the seeds, and plant the flowers yourself, Alfred?" he exclaimed; "how nicely you have done it! I wish I had a garden; we have none in London. But look, Alfred, at all the weeds in this corner; shall I pull them up?"

"Oh no! they are not weeds; that is mustard and cress, and it will be fit to eat to-morrow."

"Mustard and cress! and sown by yourself? Oh! Alfred, I must have a garden; and here comes my uncle, I will go and ask him to give me one."

Mr Howard kindly promised to give William a small piece of ground, and also some seeds and flowers, and Alfred offered him the use of his spade, rake, and watering-pot. William was delighted; the gardener was then desired to mark out the ground, and Mr Howard and the boys went out to buy the seeds.

“ Well, Alfred,” said his mother, as her little boy sought her in her dressing room, on his return home, “ how do you like your cousin ? ”

“ I like him very much, Mamma, but——.”

“ But what, my love, why do you hesitate ? ”

“ Why, Mamma, sometimes he is very passionate, and if I do not instantly do as he wishes, he is so angry ; he is not like Fred.”

“ No, my love, he is not ; but you must not expect every boy you meet with to have such a sweet temper, as your brother has ; and you must remember that William is an only child, and has been greatly indulged by all his relations.”

“ But is not that a pity, Mamma ? because William cannot expect to have every thing he wishes as he grows up.”

“ It is a pity ; but, as your cousin is not deficient in sense, and has kind and good parents, I hope he will become wiser in time. It is a grief to his father and mother to see him so passionate, and they endeavour to impress upon his mind the surest way of subduing his evil temper. Do you know what that way is, Alfred?”

“ Yes, Mamma, I learned it in my hymn yesterday.

‘ And first, the best, the surest way,
Is to kneel down at once and pray.
The lowly Saviour will attend,
And strengthen you, and stand your friend.
Tell him the mischief that you find
For ever working in your mind ;
And beg his pardon for the past,
And strength to overcome at last.
But then you must not go your way,
And think it quite enough to pray ;
That is but doing half your task,
For you must *watch*, as well as *ask*.
You pray for strength, and that is right,
But then it must be strength to fight.
For where’s the use of being strong,
Unless you conquer what is wrong ?

Remember too, that you must pray,
And watch, and labour, *every* day.
Nor think it wearisome or hard,
To be *for ever* on your guard.
No ; every morning must begin
With resolutions not to sin ;
And every evening recollect
How much you've failed in this respect.' ”

“ True, my dear child ; I hope when you feel your evil passions rising, that you will not forget the way to subdue them. Now, go to your cousin, be kind to him, and bear with his little failings, remembering how often Frederick has borne with yours.”

“ I will, dearest Mamma,” replied the affectionate boy, as he kissed his kind parent ; “ and I will remember also what Papa told me the other day, that where I find *one* fault in another, if I look within my own heart, I shall be sure to find *two*.”

The next morning, William and Alfred were up at an early hour, busily employed in preparing the new garden. For some time, all went on pretty well, but at last William was tired

with work to which he was so little accustomed; he did not find digging so easy as he had imagined, and he became cross, and out of temper. He threw down the spade, and took up the rake, but held it in such a very awkward manner, that Alfred could not help laughing. William looked still more angry at this, and asked Alfred what he meant by laughing at him.

“I have done laughing now, William, and I beg your pardon for it; but if you were to hold the rake this way, you——.”

“I shall hold it the way I choose,” said William in a passion; “I suppose you think you know every thing because you have a garden.”

“No, indeed,” said Alfred smiling, “I know very little, but——.”

“There you are laughing again! I will not be laughed at, and I will make you repent it,” exclaimed the passionate boy; and running off to Alfred’s garden, with one blow of the rake he demolished his favourite rose tree.

It was now Alfred’s turn to be angry. Vexed at seeing the beautiful shrub, with all its

blossoms, in a moment struck to the ground, he flew after William, who, seeing him coming, made his escape through the garden gate. Before Alfred had arrived there, the thought struck him that he was not doing right; he stopped, and the words of his mother rushed into his mind; he felt glad that William was gone, for he thought that in his anger, he might perhaps have hurt his cousin. Slowly and sadly he returned to his garden, and he was still gazing on his fallen favourite, when Frederick approached.

“Why, Alfred,” said he, “what is the matter? you look the picture of despair.”

Alfred pointed to the rose tree, and in a few words told Frederick what had happened.

“Well, never mind, Alfred,” said his brother, “part of your rose tree is still safe, and it will bear more roses in time. I dare say William is sorry for what he has done.”

“He may be sorry, Fred,” said Alfred, as a tear started to his eye; “he may be sorry, but that will not give me another rose tree. It was the only one I had, the pride and ornament of

my garden ; and now I shall not have a single rose for Mamma's nosegays."

"Do not care for that, Alfred," said his affectionate brother, as he kissed away the tear which now trickled down his cheek, "you shall have as many roses as you please for Mamma from my garden, and I will give you cuttings of two or three different kinds ; see, here is a beautiful moss-rose for this morning's bouquet."

"Thank you, dear Fred, you are very kind ; but I will not rob you of your flowers."

"Oh ! you must take it ; you know Mamma is so fond of a rose ; and now let us go in, breakfast is ready."

"We will," said Alfred, from whose brow the clouds had now passed away ; "but, Fred, do not say any thing about my rose tree. I am sure William is sorry for it ; and I have quite forgiven him."

They went in, and found William and their parents seated at the breakfast table. Their cousin blushed as they entered, but nothing was said of what had occurred, and the breakfast passed over as usual.

“ Alfred,” said William, when he was again alone with his cousin, “ I was in a passion to-day when I destroyed your rose tree, and I am very sorry for it ; will you forgive me ?”

“ Oh yes, William, I forgave you long since, so we will say no more about it.”

“ You are very good natured, Alfred,” said his cousin, “ and I love you very much ; I will try not to go into a passion again.”

But notwithstanding William’s good resolutions, he was frequently in a passion during his stay at his uncle’s.

Mr Howard gave his nephew some mustard and cress seeds, and showed him how to sow them in his garden. William was much pleased, and went every morning to see if they had begun to spring up. In a little time, he had the delight of perceiving something green appearing above ground ; and one morning he ran into his uncle’s study, exclaiming,

“ Oh Uncle ! my mustard and cress is all come up ; but it is the strangest thing ! it has sprung up in the shape of words which you can read.”

“ In the shape of words, William ? you must be joking.”

“ No indeed, Uncle, I am not ; they are words I assure you ; you can read them quite plainly, ‘ DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD BE DONE UNTO.’ ”

“ Indeed ! ” said Mr Howard, “ that is strange ! It seems as if your garden wished you to remember that sentence, and therefore caused the mustard and cress to spring up in that shape.”

“ Do you think so, Uncle ? Well, it need not have taken the trouble, for I have learned it in my catechism.”

“ You may have learned it, William ; but do you always act as if you remembered it ? ”

“ Yes, Uncle, I think I do ; I am kind to others, and I wish every one to behave to me as I do to them.”

“ Do you ? ” said his uncle ; “ then, Alfred, go to William’s garden, and pull up all his mustard and cress immediately.”

“ Oh ! no, dear Uncle,” exclaimed William ; “ do not tell Alfred to do such an unkind thing ; pray do not.”

“ But, William, you told me a moment since, that you wished every one to do to you as you did to them.”

“ Yes, Uncle, so I do ; but do not pull up my mustard and cress ; pull up any thing but that ; I am sure Alfred does not wish to be so unkind.”

“ No, William ;” said Mr Howard, “ I think that Alfred would be as sorry to pull up your mustard and cress, as he was when he saw you destroy his favourite rose tree.”

William’s look of entreaty instantly changed to one of sorrow and shame. Going up to his uncle, he threw his arms round his neck, and with tears implored his forgiveness.

“ I am very sorry, dear Uncle ; indeed I am. I did very wrong, but I was in a great passion. It is right that Alfred should destroy my mustard and cress, as I destroyed his rose tree.”

“ My dear William,” affectionately replied his uncle, “ Alfred has no intention of so doing ; it was not from him that I learned the destruction of his favourite. I saw from my window all that occurred ; and wishing to give you a lesson

which you would not easily forget, I sowed the seeds in the form of those words 'Do unto others as you would be done unto.'

"Oh! Uncle, I am so ashamed of my passion, and Alfred is so kind, though I now know what pain I must have given him. I wish I was not so passionate; tell me, dear Uncle, how I can become as kind and forgiving as Alfred is."

"You must first, my dear child, pray humbly and earnestly to God for his holy Spirit, for without that, you can do nothing; and you must strive against your passion, and if you feel it rising, be determined it shall not conquer you. You will find the task a difficult one at first, but every victory you gain will render it less so. If your passion should unfortunately get the better of you once or twice, be not discouraged; persevere; and with the help of Him who is mighty, and ever ready to assist those who look to him, you will succeed in your endeavours."

"Thank you, Uncle," said William; "I will try to remember what you have said to me, and I hope I shall become a different boy."

CHAPTER X.

“ WELL, boys,” said Mr Howard one fine morning, “ which of you would like a drive to Caernarvon Castle to day ?”

“ All of us, Papa, I am sure ;” said Frederick. “ Will you take us there ?”

“ Oh yes ;” said Alfred, “ I am sure he intends doing so ; shall I go and tell John to put the horses in the carriage, dear Papa ?”

“ No, Alfred, you need not do that,” said William, “ for I heard my uncle order the carriage himself. But, uncle, what is there to see at Caernarvon, and how far off is it ?”

“ It is distant about twelve miles, my dear ; and there is nothing to see but the ruins of an old castle.”

“ But,” said Frederick, “ it is a very fine old castle, and in a state of great preservation, considering its age.”

“ How old is it, Fred ? ”

“ It was built in the year 1282, therefore it is more than 550 years old.”

“ Oh ! I should like to see such an old place as that,” said William. “ How many events have taken place since it was built, and how many different people must have been in it.”

“ Well, William,” said Mr Howard, “ I will take you there, if you will tell me in whose reign the castle was erected ? ”

William paused, and thought a little. “ Let me see ;—it was built in the year 1282, that was in the reign of Henry the Third ; no, no ; in the reign of his son Edward the First.”

“ Yes. Now, Alfred, can you tell me what king of England was born in the castle of Caernarvon ? ”

“ Edward the Second, son of Edward the First ; he was the first Prince of Wales.”

“ Was he born there ? ” said William ; “ oh ! I should indeed like to see it ; for I have been at Berkeley Castle, where he was so cruelly murdered.”

“ Well,” said Mr Howard, “ here is the car-

riage, and as you all seem agreed on the subject, put on your hats, and jump in."

They seated themselves in the carriage; and the horses, setting off at a rapid pace, soon brought them to the Menai Bridge. After admiring this beautiful structure, and the ingenuity of the man who first invented a suspension bridge, Alfred was going to ask his father some question concerning it, when Willam exclaimed,

"Look, uncle, there is a poor boy crying so; and another with his hand bleeding greatly; he must have hurt it very much; do stop the carriage, and see what is the matter."

The carriage stopped, and Mr Howard asked the poor boy how he had hurt his hand.

"Oh! it is not much, Sir," he replied, as he endeavoured to staunch the blood with his handkerchief; "we were breaking stones, and my brother accidentally hit me with the pick-axe; and poor Charlie is crying so about it, though it is a mere scratch."

"No, indeed," said his younger brother, "it is a deep wound. I have hurt him very much, and he will have to work all day with that bad hand."

“Indeed,” said Mrs Howard, “you should not use it to-day; go home, and get it bound up.”

“I cannot go home, ma’am,” replied the boy; “I must work, or we shall get no supper to-night. There, Charlie, do not cry any more; it has almost done bleeding.”

Mrs Howard now remembered that she had some court plaster in her pocket-book; and having kindly dressed the poor boy’s hand, she gave him some money, commending him at the same time for his fortitude; and his brother drying up his tears, the carriage drove on.

“Papa,” said Frederick, “that must be a brave little boy; for his hand must be very painful, though he makes nothing of it, for fear of distressing his brother.”

“He certainly seems able to bear pain,” said his father; “and has brought to my recollection an anecdote I read some time since, of a gallant Spaniard, who likewise possessed great command over his feelings.”

“Who was he, Papa? do tell us about him.”

“His name was Lopey, my dear; and he seems to have had the affections of his mind

under rare command. He was called out from his tent by a sudden alarm. His servants armed him in great haste, and although he told them that his helmet pained him exceedingly, they insisted that it could not be fitted better. The brave Lopey had not leisure to contest the point; he rushed to the combat; fought with success; and on his return, unlacing his casque, and throwing it down on the ground, together with his bloody ear; 'There,' said he mildly, to his awkward servants, 'was I not right when I told you how much you hurt me in putting on my helmet?'

"He must have been very good-tempered," said Alfred; "I shall think of him the next time any one hurts me. Can you tell us another anecdote, dear Papa?"

Mr Howard said that he thought it was Alfred's turn to tell one now, and in such pleasant conversation the time flew swiftly by.

On their arrival at Caernarvon, they immediately proceeded to the castle, and spent some time in examining that ancient building. They explored the dark passages; went into the di-

lapidated apartments; ascended the eagle tower; and saw the very room in which young Prince Edward was born. After they had quite tired themselves, they began, with the assistance of the servant, to prepare dinner. They had brought some refreshments with them, and Alfred and William laid the cloth on the grass, in the courtyard of the castle. Considering it was the first time they had ever done such a thing, they performed their task very nicely; and the merry little party greatly enjoyed their rustic dinner.

When the repast was concluded, Frederick asked his Papa if there were many old castles in Wales.

“There are the ruins of several, my dear; built about the time of Edward the First, when this country was the scene of war and discord.”

“Are there not some fine old castles in England, Papa?”

“Yes; many of which are famed, as this is, in English history. Come, Alfred, I know you love a puzzle; which of our kings was murdered in Pontefract Castle?”

“Richard the Second, Papa,” replied Alfred

with a smile ; pleased that he could answer his father's question.

“ William, can you tell me which of our English sovereigns was entertained with such magnificence by the Earl of Leicester, at his castle of Kenilworth ? ”

“ Queen Elizabeth, Uncle, who did not mind giving her courtiers a box on the ear, when they displeased her. In her reign the Spanish Armada was defeated.”

“ What was the Spanish Armada ? ” asked Alfred.

“ It was a fleet of ships, sent out by Philip, king of Spain, to invade England.”

“ And how did Elizabeth evince her modesty, and trust in God, after the defeat of the Invincible Armada, as the Spaniards called it ? ” asked Mr Howard.

William could not tell ; but Frederick answered.

“ Most of the vessels were shipwrecked ; and Elizabeth, ascribing the victory less to English bravery alone, than to the merciful interposition of Providence, ordered a medal to be struck,

which represented a fleet beaten by a tempest, and falling foul of each other, with this inscription,—‘ He blew with His winds, and they were scattered.’”

“ Well remembered, Fred. Now, Alfred, which of our kings was confined as a prisoner at Carisbrook Castle, in the Isle of Wight?”

“ I do not think Alfred has read so far as that in English history,” said Mrs Howard; “ but, perhaps, Frederick can tell.”

“ Was it not Charles the First, Papa, who was afterwards beheaded?”

“ It was, my dear. Now which of you can tell me of a sad event which happened at Corfe Castle, in Dorsetshire?”

“ I know that, Papa,” said Alfred. “ Edward, surnamed the Martyr, was cruelly murdered here by order of his treacherous mother-in-law, Elfrida.”

“ A cruel mother-in-law, indeed,” said his father; “ but there is another castle famous as being the place where the beautiful but unfortunate Mary of Scotland was beheaded. William can you tell me to which I allude?”

“ You mean Fotheringay Castle, in Northamptonshire, where she suffered death, after an imprisonment of nineteen years in England.”

“ Papa,” said Alfred, “ I saw the other day, in my English history, something about the wars of the roses. What could it mean? how could roses fight?”

“ It was not the roses who fought, Alfred; but the people who wore the roses. Those wars were between the rival houses of York and Lancaster; and to show on whose side they fought, the friends of the house of York wore a white rose, and those of Lancaster a red one.”

“ What a sad thing a civil war must be!” said Frederick; “ have there been many in England?”

“ Yes; there have been several, my dear. We ought to be very thankful that our country is now in a state of peace. On this very spot where we are now seated so quietly, many a bold knight has stood, ready to mount his steed, and shout his war cry on the battle field; and if these massive walls around us could speak, what tales of other days they would be able to tell!”

“ They would indeed,” said Mrs Howard;

“ they must have witnessed many a gay and stirring scene, when the warlike Edward held his court here. Through that old archway many a young warrior, with a heart beating high for glory, must have passed; whilst, perhaps, from that tower the handkerchief of his ladye-love, waving an adieu, spurred him to the contest. Where are they now? all gone! all cold in the grave! even their very names are forgotten; and still the old castle stands; and will stand, most likely, long after we and our children are alike cold in the dust.”

“ It is indeed a scene calculated to make us humble,” replied Mr Howard; “ but suppose we now take a walk round the walls of the town.”

To this the little party all agreed; and, bidding farewell to the castle, they proceeded to view every thing worthy of notice in the town. As they were walking down one of the streets, Alfred perceived a little boy, about two years of age, standing in the middle of the road, at the moment that a carriage was advancing at a rapid pace, and the child unconscious of his danger. He loudly called to him to come out

of the way, but the child either did not hear, or did not understand him; and instant death would, in all probability, have been his fate, had not Frederick darted forwards, and catching the boy in his arms, carried him to the footpath. At this moment the mother of the child appeared, anxiously looking for her boy, whom she had just missed; and when Mrs Howard told her the extreme danger he had been in, and from which Frederick had rescued him, she burst into a flood of tears. With many heartfelt expressions of gratitude to Frederick, she informed them that it was her only child; that if any thing had happened to him, she never could have lived; and that she should pray for blessings on the head of his young preserver every day of her life.

“How strong,” said Mr Howard, when the woman had left them, “how deeply rooted is the affection of a mother for her child; and how little do children know the pain and anxiety parents suffer on their account! The most dutiful, the most affectionate son, can never repay to his mother the debt of gratitude and love he

owes her; how melancholy then, how lamentable is the case of a child, who, after all the kindness and care bestowed on him, is a grief and trouble, instead of a comfort, to his parents!

‘Tis sharper than a serpent’s tooth,
To have a thankless child.’”

The boys listened with attention as Mr Howard spoke, and they each inwardly resolved to endeavour to be a blessing to their kind and good parents.

As they drove home, Mrs Howard highly commended Frederick for his humanity and activity in rescuing the poor little boy from a situation of so much danger; but he replied, that the praise was due to Alfred, for he was himself looking in at a shop window, at the time, and was not aware of the child’s danger till he heard his brother’s voice calling to him to get out of the way.

“Then you both deserve praise,” said his mother, smiling; “without Alfred, you would not have known of the perilous situation of the child; and without your activity, he would most likely have been killed.”

CHAPTER XI.

It was Sunday; and the sweet chiming of the bell of the parish church was reminding the neighbourhood of the sacredness of the day, and summoning the inhabitants to the house of God, as Mr Howard and his family slowly followed the train of worshippers. On this day, the day which God has commanded us to keep holy, Frederick and Alfred walked quietly and seriously by the side of their father and mother. They had been taught to consider the majesty and greatness, the purity and holiness of the Almighty Being they were about to worship, and they did not dare to enter his temple in a trifling manner or with trifling words on their lips. And whilst there, they did not stare about them, and forget the pur-

pose for which they came. No ; they remembered that the eye of that God who will not be mocked, was upon them ; and they knew that though they might move the lip, and bend the knee, he would turn a deaf ear to their prayers, if they did not seek him with their whole hearts. They always remembered the text, and generally, on their return home, they could repeat some portion of the sermon. Alfred found this rather difficult at first ; but, when his father told him that he must one day give an account to God of every sermon he had heard, and of the way in which he had spent every Sabbath, he determined to try to be more attentive ; and by fixing his eyes on the clergyman, and endeavouring to keep his thoughts from wandering, he soon found that he could remember almost as much as Frederick could.

“ Alfred,” said William, as they returned from church, “ do you like Sunday ? I am always so glad when it is over.”

“ Glad when it is over, William ! why should you be glad ? I like Sunday better than any day in the week.”

“Do you? why I find it so dull; we are always obliged to be so quiet and grave on a Sunday, and there seems to be nothing to do.”

“Oh! I have always plenty to do,” said Alfred; “and we all seem so quiet and happy; it is such a day of rest, and all is so peaceful and still; we hear no noise, but the bleating of the sheep, and the singing of the birds to-day.”

“Yes, it is more like a day of rest here than it is in London,” replied William; “but what do you find to do all day, Alfred?”

“Why, before breakfast, I learn a hymn and some verses in the Bible; and when we come home from church, I tell Papa the text, and all I can remember of the sermon, and he writes it down in a little book, that I may look at it when I am grown up to be a man; and then after dinner, I say what I have learnt to Mamma; and if I say it well, she gives me some money to put in the poor box; and then, when Fred and I have read some chapters in the Bible, she talks to us about heaven; and tells us stories of good little children, who have died so happily; and she reads to us, and

sometimes we sing a hymn. And after we come from church in the evening, if we have been very good boys all the week, she takes us with her to the cottage of a poor old man and woman, and we read the Bible to them, because they cannot read themselves. Oh! I like Sunday very much."

"Well, Alfred, I will go and learn a hymn, and say it to my aunt after dinner; I should wish to like Sunday as much as you do."

Mrs Howard was much pleased when, after dinner was over, her little nephew repeated to her, very nicely, a hymn, and some verses from the Bible. She told him he was a good boy; and then as they drew their chairs round the open window, which commanded an extensive and lovely prospect, she asked Frederick which was the portion of Scripture they were going to read.

"It is the second chapter of Mark to-day, Mamma," replied Frederick; "about Christ curing the man sick of the palsy."

When they had finished reading the chapter, William remarked,

“That the man must have been very strong, to be able to take up his bedstead and walk away with it; and I cannot think, Aunt,” he continued, “how they could contrive to carry the bedstead with the man on it, to the top of the house.”

“It was not such a bedstead as we use, my dear,” said his aunt; “a mat and pillow, to this day, are all the bedding of the common people in the East, therefore it was easily rolled up and carried. The houses also are very different from ours; the roof is quite flat, and the people walk, and sometimes sleep on it. The paralytic, then, being carried to the flat top of the house, by stairs on the outside, a part of the ceiling was easily lifted, and he was let down into the midst of the room where Jesus then was.”

“Thank you, dear Aunt,” said William, “I am glad you have explained that passage to me, for I have often wondered at it.”

“Some of the customs of the East are so different from ours, that they require explanation. In this chapter, you have just read, that ‘No

man putteth new wine into old bottles ; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled ;' now it would be difficult to understand that passage, did we not know that in Eastern countries the wine bottles are made of the skins of sheep or goats, consequently are liable to burst. Alfred, my love, turn to the tenth chapter of St John's Gospel, and read the first five verses."

Alfred did so.

"Now," said his Mamma, "you would scarcely understand that parable from what you see of the sheep-folds in England ; but in some of the southern countries of Europe, and in the East, the shepherd calls each of his sheep, though he may have some hundreds, by a different name, which they understand ; and in leading them to pasture, he goes before, whilst they follow, and obey his call."

"I like your explanations, dear Mamma," said Alfred. "I was reading this morning the parable of the man who gave a wedding feast, and I did not quite understand it ; perhaps you would explain that to me. The master of

the feast seemed to think one of his guests had no business there, because he had not on a wedding-garment. Now, if Papa gave a wedding-feast, he would not think so."

"No, my dear; but in the East, on such an occasion as that, each invited person was clothed in a white robe, provided for him by the master of the feast; therefore, when he saw a person without such a garment, he knew that he had refused to put it on. So it will be, my dear children, in the last great day. If we are then found clothed only with our own good works, if we have despised the glorious robe of our Saviour's righteousness, we shall likewise be cast into outer darkness."

"But, Aunt," said William, "surely we shall have done something good in the course of our lives; will not those good actions speak for us in that day?"

"No, William; because the best action we ever did in our lives has not been free from sin; and sin God hates. You look surprised, but if you think for a moment, you will find it is too true. You have just repeated a hymn;

you said it very nicely ; you seemed to think of what you were saying ; and thus, instead of wasting your time, you have remembered the Sabbath day, to keep it holy ; all this was right, and I doubt not, pleasing to God ; but tell me, my dear boy, was there not sin mixed up even in this ? did you not feel some pride, a small spark of self-esteem, at the very moment you were repeating it ?”

William paused for a moment.

“ Well, dear Aunt,” he said at length, “ you have guessed rightly. I did feel proud as I was saying it, for I was thinking I repeated it much better than Alfred did ; and I was thinking also, that I would tell grandmamma, and that she would give me some money for having learned it. But Aunt, if God takes notice of sins such as those, who can be saved ?”

“ Those who put their whole trust in Christ Jesus, and depend on him alone. But I will endeavour to explain this to you. Alfred, why ought we to love the Saviour ?”

Alfred replied, “ We love him, because he first loved us.”—1 John iv. 19.

“ How did he show his love for us ? ”

“ God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”—Romans v. 8.

“ Why did he die for us ? ”

“ For Christ also hath once suffered for sins : the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”—1 Peter iii. 18.

“ Ought we not to love him very much for what he has done for us ? ”

“ Yes, dear Mamma ; very much.”

“ Then tell me, Frederick, how must we show that we love him ? ”

“ Jesus says, ‘ if ye love me, keep my commandments.’ ”—John xiv. 15.

“ What are his commandments ? ”

“ To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.”

“ And can we do this, without the help of the Holy Spirit ? ”

“ No ; it is impossible. But Jesus has said, ‘ Ask, and it shall be given you.’ ”—Luke xi. 9.

“ But when you find that your very best actions are polluted by sin, what can you do ? ”

“ I must pray to God, to pardon for Jesus’ sake what I have done amiss ; and beg him to give me his Holy Spirit, that I may serve him better in future.”

“ Alfred, my child, do you think the blessed Saviour will hear you if you pray to him ? ”

“ Yes, Mamma ; for he says ‘ I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.’ ”—Proverbs viii. 17.

“ Do you think you shall be happy in this world, if you choose the narrow path of religion ? ”

“ I do, Mamma. ‘ Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’ ”—Proverbs iii. 17.

“ And do you think you shall be happy in the world to come ? ”

“ Yes ; ‘ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.’ ”—1 Corinthians ii. 9

“ Then, my dear children, let me impress upon your minds the great importance of your early choosing that path. Think how much you will

have to answer for, if you do not. You know the way; oh! endeavour to walk in it, or it had been better for you never to have heard of it. Look to Jesus; he is ever ready to assist you; he will guide you, and lead you to him, for he loves little children. Should earthly friends fail, he is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother; should afflictions come, he will be your comforter. He will make you happy here, and happy hereafter."

Mrs Howard then rose, and, fetching a book, asked the children if they would like to hear an account of a good little boy; they joyfully assented, and she read the following pleasing anecdote.

"Some years ago, when I was going a journey, I met with a pious lady in a coach, who gave me a very pleasing account of her little son. She said that, some time since, she had a long and very dangerous illness, during which she was unable to attend to her family, or to pursue many plans of doing good, in which she was engaged. She was a collector for the Bible and Missionary Societies; but could not now

go her rounds. Her little boy was very sorry to see her so ill; but began to think what he could do to help and comfort her. He begged his mother would not be uneasy about the societies; and proposed that he and the maid should supply her place. The mother agreed; and off he went with the maid, taking the entry-book and bag for the money, and going from house to house, as happy as he well could be. And this work he undertook during the whole of his mother's illness. And so much was his mind impressed with pity for the poor heathen, by being thus brought to think more about them, that his mother told me he had expressed an anxious wish ever since, not only to be a minister of Christ, if his life was spared, but to be a missionary.

“She then told me, that nothing could exceed his tender care of her, when she was ill in bed. One day, when she was at the worst, and the doctors had given up all hope of her getting better, his little heart was ready to burst with sorrow. And though only eight years old, he knew what would be the greatest comfort to his

dear mother, and he went up to her bed-side, and said; ‘Mother, would you like me to read to you out of the Bible?’

“He then chose a chapter, which he thought would suit her best; though his heart was so full, he could scarcely get through it. And then, closing the Bible, he said, ‘Mother will you let me pray for you?’

“He then looked to see that the door was shut, and nobody near, and knelt down by the bed-side, and prayed that it would please God to make his dear mother well; but that, if that were not his blessed will, he would support and comfort her, and take her soul to heaven when she died. The mother was quite overcome by her dear child’s conduct. God heard his prayer; she got better; and stated to me with much delight, that her boy was going forward in his holy course; and that she hoped, should his life be spared, he would indeed become a minister of Jesus Christ.”

“Thank you, dear Mamma,” said Alfred, “that is a very pretty story.”

“Yes;” said his mother, “it is very pretty,

and quite true ; we will now read another chapter in the Bible, and then it will be time to go to church."

" Mamma, may we read my favourite, about Daniel in the lion's den ?" said Alfred.

" You may, my love."

When they had finished reading, they put away their books, and accompanied their parents again to church. The text that evening was, " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Even William remembered this text, and on his return home could tell his uncle part of the sermon. He begged that he might accompany his aunt and cousins to the cottage ; and, as he read a portion of the sacred volume to the old couple, and observed the deep and earnest attention, the intense eagerness, with which they listened to every word of that book which is able to make us wise unto salvation, he thought he had never been so happy in his life.

As they were returning home, William's temper was put to a trial. He was walking by the side of Alfred, when the latter, who was talking

earnestly to his cousin, stumbled over a large stone; and, in trying to save himself, by catching hold of William's arm, he unintentionally pushed him into a small pool of muddy water. Now, few things could have vexed William more than this; for he was a remarkably neat boy, and always careful, when he walked out, not to soil his clothes. But now he was a sad figure; his clean white trowsers were splashed up to the knees with mud; and for a moment William felt very angry. He was on the point of going into a great passion with Alfred, when he fortunately remembered the good advice his uncle had given him; he was determined he would say nothing; but it was a hard struggle to the little boy; for hitherto his passion had always conquered him; and now he was resolved to conquer his passion. It was a great effort,—but he silently offered up a prayer to God for help, and the struggle was soon over. He was now able to turn with a smiling face to Alfred, who had known nothing either of the splashes, or the conflict in his cousin's heart; and William felt very happy that he had been enabled to

restrain his passion ; happier, far happier than he had ever felt when he had given way to it.

“ Papa,” said Frederick, as they took their seats at the tea-table, “ I do not think poor old Andrew will live long ? his cough was very troublesome to him to-night, and he said he was wearing away very fast.”

“ Most likely he will not last much longer,” replied Mr Howard ; “ he is very old ; but he still likes to hear you read.”

“ Oh ! yes, Papa ;” said Alfred ; “ he was so attentive this evening ; and he seemed so sorry when we left him.”

“ Poor old Andrew ! it is a pity you cannot go to him more frequently. But I believe he has a grandson who can read.”

“ He has ;” said Frederick ; “ but Andrew can scarcely understand him, as he is obliged to spell almost every other word. I wish I had time, I would go and read to him every day, but I am so much at school.”

“ But I have time,” said Alfred ; “ do, dear Papa, let me go ; he said he could understand

me ; and I can go every day after breakfast for half an hour. May I?"

"You may, my dear child ; and may you, from the words of that blessed book, speak peace to the old man's mind."

"How quickly the Sunday has passed away!" said William, when the servant had removed the tea things ; "I never liked it so well before."

"I am glad to hear you say so, my dear boy," replied his aunt ; "because it shows you, that, though there is a marked difference between this and the other days of the week, yet the Sabbath need not be a dull day. Oh ! far from this, I hope it may be to you a delight ; a day of peace, holiness, and rest. Now, my dears, we will sing a hymn before prayers, and then it will be your bed-time."

Mrs Howard and the little boys then sang the following hymn.

"The light of Sabbath eve
Is fading fast way ;
What record will it leave
To crown the closing day ?

“ Is it a Sabbath spent
 Fruitless, and vain, and void?
 Or, have these moments lent,
 Been sacredly employed?

“ How dreadful, and how drear,
 In yon dark world of pain,
 Will sabbaths lost, appear,
 That cannot come again!

“ Then in that hopeless place,
 The tortured soul will say:—
 I had these hours of grace,
 But cast them all away!

“ God of these Sabbath hours,
 Oh! may we never dare
 To waste, in thoughts of ours,
 These sacred days of prayer.”

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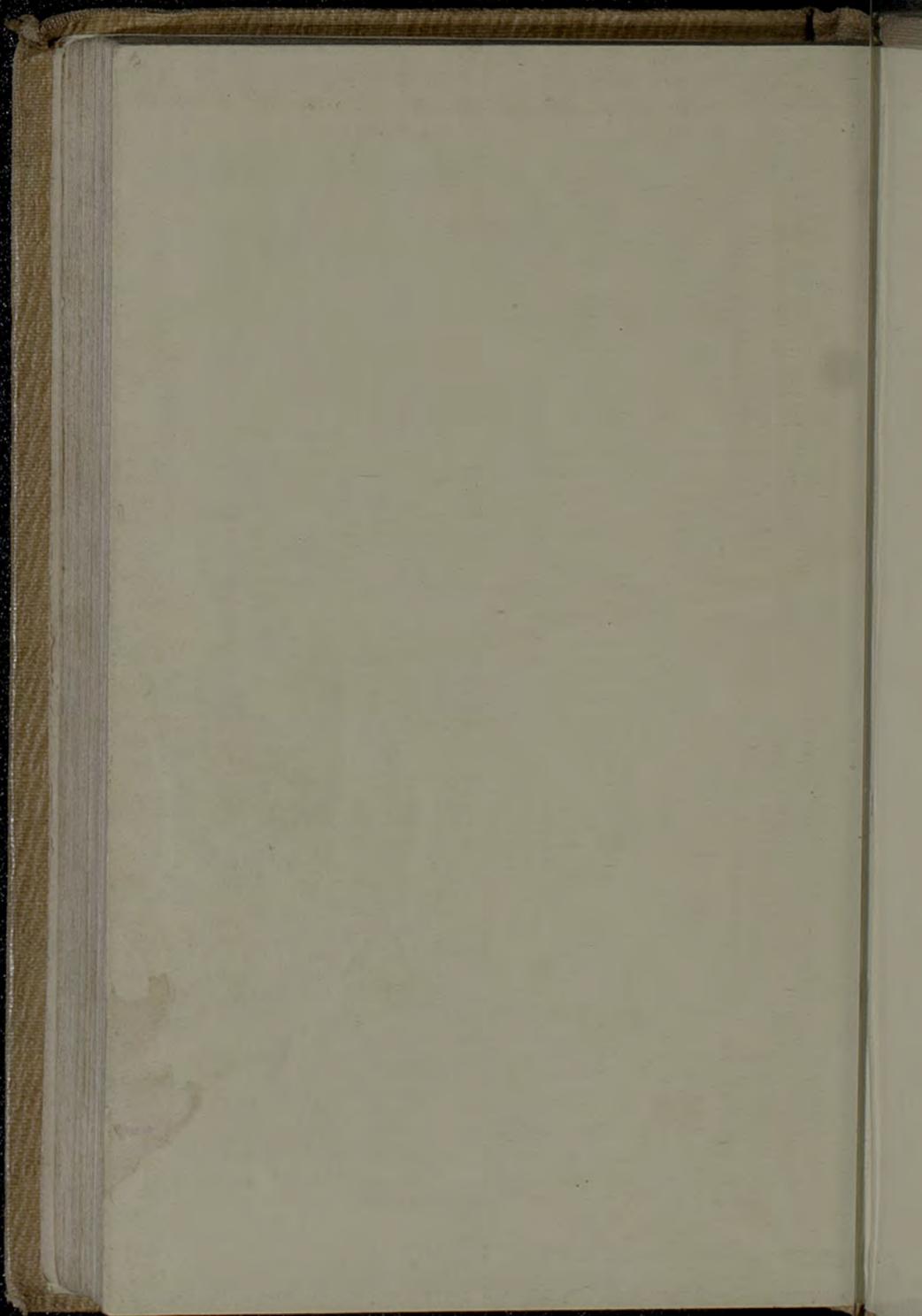
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